

May 24, 2011

NEWS RELEASE

*Becky Jessen
Marketing Director
(970) 256-6205
bjessen@gjhosp.org*

Mystery of the Community Hospital 1964 Cornerstone's Unusual Contents Solved

Grand Junction, Colorado - On May 10, as part of the Community Hospital National Hospital Week celebration we opened a cornerstone box that was originally placed July 25, 1964, in what was then, our newly built hospital. The cornerstone was placed during a Masonic ceremony in a tradition that dates back centuries. One of the earliest written records of this Masonic ritual came from the 1739 celebration of the New Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

The Masonic ceremony includes officials of the building being constructed, and their guests. The Masons parade to the construction site and engage in a ceremony that opens and closes with a prayer. A square, a level and a plumb are used to check not just the stone itself, but to remind all present of their virtue, equality, and rectitude. The stone is consecrated with corn, wine, and oil. The cornerstone is the first stone placed above ground, and is usually at the northeast corner of the building.

What did we expect to find when we opened ours? Typical contents would include a local newspaper, list of persons attending the ceremony, information about the ceremony, and objects placed in the deposit by the Masons. We found many of those items with one very unusual and mysterious addition. The cremated remains of Frank M. McBroom.

Mr. McBroom passed away on May 25, 1964 and was cremated locally, however he was not a Grand Junction resident, nor had any apparent connection to the area or the Masons. There appeared to be no explanation for this very unusual placement of remains in a cornerstone.

Thanks to the investigative work of Kim Hollingshead, from the Mesa County Coroner's Office and Steve Rauch, Community Hospital Medical Librarian our own CSI case has been solved. Mr. McBroom's next of kin, a grandson from Pocatello, Idaho will take possession of the remains and shed insight on this mystery at a reception, Wednesday May 25, (the anniversary of Frank's death) at 3 p.m. in the Community Hospital lower level conference room.

###

Community Hospital Just the News Quarterly Newsletter

April 2011

Community Hospital Cornerstone Capsule to be Opened

by Steve Rauch, medical librarian

During National Hospital Week in May, Community Hospital will open a box that was placed in 1964 in the cornerstone of the newly built Osteopathic Hospital. Such cornerstone deposits were placed during a Masonic ceremony that dates back centuries. One of the earliest written records of the ritual came from the 1739 celebration of the New Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

Such celebrations continue today; local Masonic Lodges host Masons from around a state and the Grand Lodge to commemorate the construction of a building. The ceremony includes officials of the building being constructed, and their guests. The Masons parade to the construction site and engage in a ceremony that opens and closes with a prayer. A square, a level and a plumb are used to check not just the stone itself, but to remind all present of their virtue, equality, and rectitude. The stone is consecrated with corn, wine, and oil. Local officials usually speak at the occasion.

The cornerstone is the first stone placed above ground, and is usually at the northeast corner of the building. The foundation stone is usually the first stone laid underground in building a masonry structure. The capstone is the topmost stone that completes the structure. Some abbreviations on the Masonic cornerstone or plaque require explanation: MW Grand Lodge means Most Worshipful, AF & AM means Ancient Free and Accepted Masons. There are sometimes two dates (as in our case): A.D. 1964 and A.L. 5964. The A.L. means Anno Lucis, year of light in Latin. The Masonic calendar traditionally dated from 4004 BCE - the creation of the universe, Anno Mundi, as computed by Archbishop James Ussher in 1650-54. In the mid-18th century the Masons started using Anno Lucis dates.

The first use of the words time capsule was applied to the torpedo shaped object buried at the 1939 World's Fair in New



M.W. Grand Lodge members display plaque before placing it into the cornerstone of Osteopathic Hospital (now known as Community Hospital) in 1964.

York City. The plaque marking the location lists some of the contents: tooth powder, bifocals, asbestos shingle, and zippered tobacco pouch. A second time capsule was buried when the 1964 World's Fair was also held in New York City. This capsule contained artifacts from a newer generation: a checkered bikini, credit cards, a Beatle's record, filter cigarettes, and freeze-dried foods.

The time capsule concept runs throughout history and across cultures. Artifacts about buildings were intentionally placed in caches in ancient Assyria. When a statue toppled at the Christchurch cathedral during a recent earthquake, two time capsules were found in the plinth. Time capsules have played major roles in the plots of some recent films: the 2009 science fiction thriller *Knowing* and the 2001 South Korean romantic comedy *My Sassy Girl* (although not in the 2008 American remake).

What can we expect when ours is opened in May? In some other cases, the cornerstone artifacts include a local newspaper, business



Chris Thomas, CEO Community Hospital, holds the cornerstone capsule after crews uncovered it during a recent renovation of the emergency department.

cards of persons attending the ceremony, information about the ceremony, and objects placed in the deposit by the Masons. We will find out if the employees and trustees entrusted any other relics to the box for our discovery on Tuesday, May 10.