

From The East

We start a new year with our newsletter *The Guiding Light* and also a new Masonic year here at Fredericksburg Lodge. As we put together new goals and ideas for our Lodge, I wondered what is it that we would need to accomplish? I, for one, know we must act in a manner to make everyone at our Lodge feel comfortable, invited and needed. We could make a big list of what need to achieve this but I thought it better to just mention one. That would be 'Unity.' Why 'Unity?' Well, when I searched for the definition of this word online I found this:

- a. The state or quality of being one or united into a whole: "The Founding Fathers had abhorred the concept of parties, fearing that they would undermine the unity of the nation through factionalism" (Julian E. Zelizer).
- b. The state or quality of being in accord; harmony: "The judges ruled in unity on the matter."
- c. The state or quality of being unified in an aesthetic whole, as in a work of literature: the novel's thematic unity.
- d. A whole that is a combination of parts: a group of ideas that taken together constitute a unity.
- e. Singleness or constancy of purpose or action; continuity: "In an army you need unity of purpose" (Emmeline Pankhurst).

I believe that this is exactly what we need. Not only will we move forward in our Masonic work for ourselves, families and the community, but we will improve the fraternity locally for future generations to come.

Now, acting in Unity doesn't mean we lose our individuality. I read this recently and I now share with you. "Unity is the ability to master and harness our individuality and diversity towards a common and higher objective. Rather than to "deny" them, it is to "unite" them – to utilize them as a means towards a higher end, not as the end of a higher means.

In practical terms, this means that we allow ourselves to be bound together by that which is higher than ourselves – higher than our individuality and diversity. For true unity to exist there must be the recognition of higher (Divine) morals and principles for which we are willing to yield our individual mind and heart."

I remind, and share with the readers, the meaning of unity within the Lodge. We apply this daily, first in our homes and community, for as a quote says, "Unity is strength... when there is teamwork and collaboration wonderful things can be achieved." May we achieve many great things in our Lodge this year with the help of the Great Architect of the Universe and the labors of the Brethren.

Sal Pacheco, Worshipful Master

The West Gate

Last month, I spoke about the investigation process and the importance of that committee and the trust that the Master and brethren put in their job to investigate a candidate. This month, I would like to talk about the ballot process. We all know that "the white balls elect, and the black balls reject," but there is a little more to it than just that.

Ideally, the brethren, after hearing the petition, would begin to try and learn a little about the man involved even if they are not on the committee. Hopefully the petitioner has come to lodge, shared a meal, or been involved in a

project to get to know the brothers. This is the perfect opportunity to meet him and do your own interview of sorts. Ask about his background, family and career. Why does he want to become a Mason? We should not just rely solely on the investigating committee if we have the chance to visit with the prospective brother.

Prior to the ballot, the secretary will read the report of the investigation committee. We must listen carefully to the findings of the committee. Did they all find similar information, or were there discrepancies in the three reports? Did they all find the man favorable or not? Being well informed means knowing what you are voting on and not just going with the flow because you heard favorable from all three reports. You may know something about the man that no one else does. Be careful that it is factual and not just rumor. Remember, we are guarding our West Gate to see that none should pass except those who are duly qualified.

The actual ballot requires no more than 2 blackballs to be favorable. Three blackballs reject for one year. Four blackballs reject for two years, while five or more reject for three years. The vote is done via the ballot box and is considered secret. The only people who see the box are the wardens and the Master. The real burden lies with the Junior Warden. It is a must that he counts the men who vote to be sure that number matches the ballot box. We trust that no Mason would be dishonest and vote twice, but we also trust the Junior Warden to be sure by doing his job well. Once the ballot box has passed from both Wardens to the Master, the question is then asked three times whether the vote was favorable or unfavorable. The Wardens will report on what they found in the ballot box. The Worshipful Master may have received a protest from someone unable to be present in lodge that evening and this could factor into his call as favorable or unfavorable. A protest can be lodged prior to the meeting by a brother who is unable to attend. It can be done in writing, one on one, or over the phone. The law book goes into greater detail on filing a protest.

Once the Worshipful Master announces the ballot, it is final. It must be done before the end of the meeting. He may call for a re-ballot if necessary, before announcing the final ballot. This entire process is very important to the lodge. We, as members, should be careful how we vote. We should not only trust the investigating committee to do their job, but we should also make the effort to learn more about a petitioner. Balloting is not just limited to membership, it could also pertain to affiliation, expulsion, reinstatement and or restoration. Remember we all took an oath to stand to and abide by the rules and regulations of our lodge. It is important to be familiar with proper investigations and balloting in our duty as a Mason.

Randall S. King, Senior Warden

The South Gate

Recently, I was asked to be on a petition investigation committee, which started me thinking of that responsibility. From the Petition Investigations Manual published by the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. comes the following:

"No Mason could be charged with a higher or more noble and rewarding responsibility than he who is charged with the responsibility to be a guard at the entrance porch of the Temple."

On a petition for membership, a man has been recommended (vouched) by two Brothers and has three more Brothers listed as references (vouched). Prior to positive ballot on a petitioner, he will have been vouched for by the three members of the investigating committee. Eight different Brothers will have vouched for a man prior to becoming a candidate for the degrees.

"Vouch" can be defined as:

1) to assert or confirm as a result of one's own experiences that something is true or accurately described.

2) to confirm that someone is who they say they are, or they are of good character

3) to give a guarantee

4) to supply supporting evidence or testimony

5) to give personal assurance

The investigating committee must rely on the Brothers that have recommended and the Brothers listed as references to determine the character of the petitioner to help establish enough information to make an educated recommendation to the Lodge.

The point of this discussion is prior to recommending or being a reference for a petitioner you should know him well, not just a casual acquaintance or because another Brother says the man is a good man. Get to know him so that when he does become a candidate for the degrees of Masonry, he truly comes under the tongue of good report.

George Hahn, Junior Warden

Mouth To Ear

What is the source of evil? I assert, without fear of contradiction, that evil exists. Aside from personal experience, I see reports of evil acts in the daily news, be it homicide, suicide, war, or terrorism. I see evil personified in literature, as, for instance, the person of Satan in the Holy Bible, Mephistophales in the legends of Faustus, and of the evil Lord Valdemort in the Harry Potter series of books. I see evil within my own mind as I struggle with the temptations of daily living. Decisions, choices, alternatives, druthers..., all confounded by my goals, desires, emotions, and ethics, challenge me to subdue my passions and exercise my own morality. I come full circle here, I am back to a basic decision, good or evil? What should I do? How should I act?

Albert Pike (*Morals and Dogma*, p.702-703) persuasively suggests that, "There must be somewhere a Being that not only conceives of (moral truth), but constitutes it. ... It is a LAW. We do not establish that law ourselves. It is imposed upon us despite ourselves: its principle must be without us. ... so all the moral principles centre in a single principle, which is The GOOD. This absolute GOOD must necessarily be an attribute of the Absolute Being. ... God is necessarily the principle of Moral Truth, and of personal morality. Man is a moral person, that is to say, one endowed with reason and liberty. He is capable of Virtue: ..."

Carefully study The Knight of the Sun. Pike argues free will, and demonstrates that evil action is the consequence of wrong choice on the part of an individual human. Our challenge in this life is to make correct choices, and avoid evil action.

Saint Paul is reported to have struggled with this issue. Indeed, his writings reflect his view that human sin at the time of Christ, and even today, traces back to "original sin". His arguments lead him to praise the Grace of God, which forgives sinners even undeservedly. His arguments suggest that sinners are not necessarily responsible for the results of their action, and become the basis for much of the ethics of Christianity today.

Pike provides a significant, alternative argument. Study pages 702 to 708 in *Morals and Dogma* carefully to discover a very oriental, philosophical, and logical discussion, clearly justifying the metaphorical placement of the WM in the East, establishing His role in opening and governing the day, setting the craft to work, and giving proper instruction. The symbolism found within the Lodge reflects the Hermetic tradition, "As above, so below." Assume your responsibility and open your eyes to the ancient truths that are the basis of our Masonic traditions.

Fred Ayers, Secretary, SWKSRC

Labors of the Craft

Danny Poole will be cooking his famous Chicken Spaghetti for our Stated Meeting Meal on Monday, August 10th. Side dishes and desserts are welcomed.

The Breakfast Boys Social Club will convene this month on Tuesday, August 18th at Sunset Grille beginning at 8:00 AM. All Masons and friends are welcome.

The Lunch Bunch will meet on Monday, August 24th at Gatti's Pizza at 11:30 AM. All Masons, wives and friends are always invited.

We currently have one EA who is studying to do proficiency in all three sections, one EA who is preparing to do his proficiency in the First Section, and one EA who is preparing to do his proficiency in the Second and Third Section. In addition, we have one Master Mason who will be doing his proficiency at Stated Meeting on Monday, August 10th.

Words of Wisdom

“Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

- Sir John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton -

“Those who are most moral are furthest from the problem.”

- Saul David Alinsky -

“Almost anything is easier to get into than out of.”

- Agnes Rogers Allen -

“Eighty per cent of success is showing up.”

- Woody Allen -

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”

- Edmund Burke -

Tongue in Cheek

The Jewish Elbow

A Jewish grandmother is giving directions to her grown grandson who is coming to visit with his wife.

"You come to the front door of the apartments, I am in apartment 301. There is a big panel at the front door. With your elbow, push button 301. I will buzz you in.

Come inside and the elevator is on the right. Get in, and with your elbow, push 3rd Floor.

When you get out, I'm on the left. With your elbow, hit my doorbell. OK?"

"Grandma, that sounds easy, but, why am I hitting all these buttons with my elbow?

"What You're coming empty handed?"

Wise Italian Grandfather

An old Italian man in Brooklyn is dying. He calls his grandson to his bedside,

"Guido, I wan' you lissina me. I wan' you to take-a my chrome plated .38 revolver so you will always remember me."

"But grandpa, I really don't like guns.. How about you leave me your Rolex watch instead?"

"You lissina me, boy! Somma day you gonna be runna da business, you gonna have a beautiful wife, lotsa money, a big-a home and maybe a couple of bambinos. "

"Somma day you gonna come-a home and maybe fina you wife inna bed with another man.

"Whatta you gonna do then? Pointa to you watch and say, 'Times up!' "?

Irish blonde...

An attractive blonde from Cork, Ireland, arrived at the casino. She seemed a little intoxicated and bet twenty thousand dollars in a single roll of the dice.

She said, "I hope you don't mind, but I feel much luckier when I'm completely nude." With that, she stripped from the neck down, rolled the dice and with an Irish brogue yelled, "Come on, baby, Mama needs new clothes!"

As the dice came to a stop, she jumped up and down and squealed. "Yes! Yes! I won, I won!" She hugged each of the dealers, picked up her winnings and her clothes and quickly departed.

The dealers stared at each other dumbfounded.

Finally, one of them asked, "What did she roll?" The other answered, "I don't know - I thought you were watching."

MORAL OF THE STORY

Not all Irish are drunks, not all blondes are dumb, but all men...are men!

Recipe of the Month

Holiday Spice Bread

By Ruth Davis

1 cup sugar

1 cup packed brown sugar

2 eggs
2 cups buttermilk or sour milk
1 cup vegetable oil
1 teaspoon chopped walnuts
1 cup raisins
4 cups flour
Vanilla Extract
1 teaspoon Apricot Brandy (optional)
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1 teaspoon allspice
1 teaspoon cloves

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Cream sugar, brown sugar and eggs together. Add oil, vanilla and brandy. Mix together. Sift flour, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice and cloves. Add to egg mixture alternately with buttermilk. Stir in raisins and walnuts. Fill greased 1 pint wide mouth canning jars with perfectly straight sides, a little more than half full. Place filled jars on cookie sheet and bake at 350 degrees for 4-45 minutes, or until tested done like cake. Cool 10 minutes in jars. Remove from jars and cool 15 minutes on racks.

Wrap each loaf in plastic wrap while still warm. Finish cooling on racks. Freezes great if you want to make ahead of time.

Note: To make sour milk, mix 2 cups of milk with 2 tablespoons white vinegar and mix together. Let stand for 5 minutes before using.

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