

St. James Lodge No. 47 F. & A.M.

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Stated Communications: 1st & 3rd Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.



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AUGUST 2003 – SEPTEMBER 2003



Un-Masonic Conduct Among the Troglodytes

The Baron de Montesquieu (1689–1755) -- who was initiated into Masonry in London in 1730 -- was one of the leading philosophers of The Enlightenment. His concept of "Separation of Powers" was incorporated into the U. S. Constitution, and his emphasis on mankind's natural and inalienable right to pursue happiness directly influenced Thomas Jefferson in the latter's writing of The Declaration of Independence.

In Montesquieu's satirical fiction, *Persian Letters*, published in 1721, the Persian traveler Uzbek comments on European culture.

His friend Mirza writes to Uzbek, to ask whether man is made happy by self-indulgence, or rather by the practice of virtue.

In reply, Uzbek remarks, "With truths of a certain kind, it is not enough to make them appear convincing: one must also make them felt. Of such a kind are moral truths." He then tells Mirza of the ancient Arabic tribe, the Troglodytes.

After slaughtering first their foreign ruler and then their own elected representatives, the Troglodytes agreed, "...that each one would look after his own interests, exclusively, without considering those of others," and with no regard for equity, justice, or charity.

In years of low rainfall, the Troglodytes in the low countries fared quite well, but the Troglodytes in the hills suffered and starved, because of crop failure. In years of excessive rainfall, the hill-dwellers benefited from their favorable drainage, and it was their low-country neighbors who suffered.

Two Troglodytes joined forces to take the land and property of a third, who was prosperous. Once they had done so, one of the two turned on the other, slew him, and took sole possession of the spoils. Soon, though, two other Troglodytes slew this one and took the land from him.

A Troglodyte who had wool sold it at twice its worth to another Troglodyte who was in desperate need of wool. He congratulated himself and set forth to buy grain. Alas, no one had grain to sell, except the Troglodyte to whom he had just sold his wool. The price of the grain immediately quadrupled.

For these Troglodytes, devoid of civic virtue, life truly was, as Thomas Hobbes (1558–1679) would have predicted, "Nasty, poor, solitary, brutish, and short."

Among the Troglodytes, only two families survived. They were located in a remote area. They thrived and prospered because they practiced equity, taught their children virtue, and made them realize that true self-interest is always linked with the interests of others -- that "justice to others is charity for ourselves". Even the Troglodytes, it would seem, had Masons among them.

Ah, but in their virtue, even these Troglodytes ultimately created a level of luxury that undermined the practice of virtue, itself. They elected a king -- an especially virtuous old man who did not want the crown. He recognized that the others merely wished to appoint him to enforce virtue on them so that they would be free to focus on the enjoyment of their luxury and would no longer feel any obligation to see to their own virtuous deportment. He knew that having delegated to him the responsibility for imposing virtue, they would then, sooner or later, defy his efforts to do so.

He wept for them.

PAST EVENTS

Aug. 7 Examination followed by Two Fellow Craft Degrees
(End Casual Summer Attire)

Aug. 21 RWB Clayton Borne III, Grand JW, Guest Speaker being prevented due to I-12 traffic, Bro Avadhesh Prasad, JW of Swarn Jayanti #312 Noida, India spoke on Masonry in India. The GAOTU moves in mysterious ways. Other guests were Bro. Frank Allison, Blazing Star and Chuck Julian, PM, Capitol.

Aug. 28 Special Comm @ 6 pm -- Three MM Degrees

REMEMBER GUEST NIGHT

Bring your spouse!

Thursday, September 4, 2003!

DINNER at 6:30 PM

invite your friends.

Bring in all the good men you know.

Invite each to bring his spouse.

They'll thank you later.

**THIS IS BY FAR OUR MOST POWERFUL TOOL FOR ASSURING
THAT OUR BELOVED LODGE WILL BE PRESERVED FOR
FUTURE GENERATIONS.**

**HELP US TO FILL THE BLUE ROOM WITH GOOD MEN
AND THEIR WIVES!**

Nov. 12, will be a very important date for Masonry in Louisiana. Dr. Margaret Jacob, UCLA Prof. of History and a world renowned scholar of *Masonry's role in The Enlightenment* will be featured speaker at the regular meeting of The Baton Rouge Masonic Forum. Admission fee with be \$50 per person. For further details see your Scottish Rite Trestleboard or contact Bro. Naresh Sharma, Bro. Larry Wade, or Bro. Bill Mollere.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW

MASTER MASON DEGREE

IN FULL REGALIA

SPECIAL COMMUNICATION

Saturday Morning

November 15, 2003

St. James Lodge

Breakfast at 7 a.m.

Ceremony at 8 a.m.

ALL REGULAR MASTER MASONS INVITED.

OF COURSE

If evening meetings are not for you,
then **this is your golden opportunity.**

If you need **transportation**, please call

WM Larry Wade

928-3401 (Office)

769-0298 (Home -- evenings)

SW Frank Dedman

927-8196(Home)

JW Ken Streater

753-9337(Home)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW

FUTURE EVENTS

Sep. 4 **Guest Night (Open/meal 6:30)**

Sep. 11 **(Special; 6 p.m.) Entered Apprentice Degree**

Sep. 18 **Fellow Craft Degree**

Sep. 25 **(Special, 6:00 p.m.) Confer FC Degree**

Oct. 2 **Past Masters' Night (Open/meal 6:30)**

Oct. 16 **French Lodge EA Degree Demonstration**

Nov 6 **Shrine Presentation**

Nov 15 **MM Full Regalia Spec Comm (bkfst @ 7; degr @ 8)**

Nov. 20 **Thanksgiving Feast (Open/meal 6:30)**

Illness, News and Relief

Bro. David Martinez announced at the last meeting he was stepping out the Line as MC because his work requires that he travel so much that he doesn't believe that he can, at this time, do the station justice. He will continue to come to meetings when possible. David is an exceptional young man and St. James needs men like him. Fortunately, he is not leaving the craft. We wish Bro. David the best. Bro. Mac Little has graciously agreed to assume the post of MC; Bro. Steve Newman will move to SS.

W: Bro. John Perkins has been in room 418 of the Baton Rouge General Hospital on Bluebonnet at 8585 Picardy Avenue since about Monday 8/11 for a heart catheterization. He contracted a staph infection. He covets your prayers and your best wishes.

On Tuesday, 8/12/03, our Treasurer, WB. Zollinger, was admitted to OLOLRMC because of a tear in his thoracic aorta -- no aneurysm, just a dissection. His treatment will be medical; no surgery is anticipated. We will all, of course, have him and his family in our hearts and in our prayers.

Our condolences go out, along with our prayers, to our Secretary, WB. Lloyd Gerald Pence, for his recent loss of his brother.

MASONIC EDUCATION

"Old Tiler Talks" by Carl Claudy -1924 JOKE

"I never saw much point in this joke about 'sitting up with the sick,'" began the New Brother to the Old Tiler, "but since I joined the lodge I do. I used to think it was a pretty good idea; that a lodge member should sit up with a sick brother seemed real brotherhood. Now I find we don't, so I see the joke."

"Do you, now! How keen is your sense of humor?" answered the Old Tiler. "Who told you we didn't sit with our sick friends?"

"Why, no one. But if we did, I'd have heard of it, wouldn't I?"

"Depends on the length of your ears. Yesterday I tried to buy a hat. The salesman showed me one and said it was twenty-five dollars. I asked him where the holes were. 'What holes?' he asked. I told him I meant the holes for the ears of the jackass who would pay twenty-five dollars for that hat.

If your ears are long enough, maybe you can hear about our sitting up with our sick friends. But I presume you are hard of hearing?"

"In small towns a few decades ago, nurses were few. When a brother was sick we often sat with him, to cheer him, hand him water or medicine, doing what we could. In modern days there is less need for such help. But don't think we never do. Last month the Master called for volunteers to stay all night in a house where an old lady was dying. Our brother from that

house was out of town. The old lady had a daughter and a nurse, but the daughter was afraid to be alone. We had sixteen volunteers, and every night for a week two did their part. All they did was sit there and read, but who knows what comfort they were to that distracted daughter? The old lady finally died and in the day time. It looks as if what we did was wasted effort but the old lady might have died in the night; our brethren were there to help if she did. The daughter knew her husband's brethren were within call so she slept secure in the protection Masonry threw about her."

"You say 'we don't sit up.' Don't confuse 'sitting up' with actually resting erect in a chair. No brother of this or any other good lodge is reported sick but he receives a call from the Master, Warden, chairman of the committee on the sick, or some brother. It makes no difference whether the brother is wealthy or poor; we see what we can do. Most members of the lodge are fairly prosperous citizens, able to look after themselves, but even so a sick member is human enough to value the interest the lodge takes. Knowing that his mighty brotherhood is anxious about him acts as a tonic. The sick man may be too ill to admit us to his bedside, but they tell him about it, and it heartens him.

"I was one visitor and a streetcar motorman was the other on duty last week. We visited an ill banker, president or director in half the companies in town. You never saw a man more pleased than Mr. Rich Man. He had us shown to his room and talked lodge and asked questions and wanted information about the fellows just as if he was a poor man like the rest of us. He happens to be a real Mason as well as a wealthy man. He wrote a letter to the Master and said our lodge visit had done him more good than his doctor, and wouldn't he please send us or some other brethren again."

"I called on a sick brother too ill to see me. I saw his wife and his home and it was easy to see the brother needed help. He was too proud or his wife didn't know enough to ask for it. So I reported and we sent our own doctor and nurse and paid some bills and generally managed until the brother got well. He paid back every cent, little by little, but he says he can never repay the kindness."

"Sitting up with a sick lodge member' may be a good alibi for the poker player; I don't know. I have read it in joke papers. But I never thought it funny, because I know how well Masonry does care for her sick, and how much it means to an ill man to have his brother take an interest in him. If you know any sick, tell us. If you hear of any, tell us. And if...say, did you ever visit a sick brother?"

"I never had the chance," defended the New Brother.

"You mean you never made the chance!" countered the Old Tiler. "Will you go to the sick committee and ask for duty, or will I report your name for that duty to the Master? Or do you want to go on thinking it's a joke?"

"I got an earful, didn't I?" responded the New Brother. "You tell me to whom to go!"

Note: the 'Old Tiler' stories use an archaic spelling. We spell it Tyler.

Visit <http://www.calodges.org/no442/Old%20Tiler%20Talks/OldTilerTalksMenu.htm> to read more "OldTiler" stories.

Thanks to those who have commented on the 'Old Tiler' stories. -bz-
Send newsletter submissions to Bob Zinn, bz@chem.lsu.edu



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