

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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OCTOBER 2003 – NOVEMBER 2003



To All New Masons

Your challenge is to emulate the Past Masters of your Lodge.

These men have volitionally placed themselves "in the line", answering the call of duty, to contribute the ideas and to do the work that have made Masonry

what it has been, have sustained it through years of intractable decline, and have brought it to you alive and well, as the noble institution that it still is, available now for your enjoyment and your gratification. You should do no less for future generations.

Masonry is a, "...society of friends and brothers, among whom no contention should ever exist, but that noble contention, or rather emulation, of who best can work and best agree."

The American Heritage Dictionary's definition of "emulate" speaks of excelling and competing to excel --

em-u-late (ɪmˈy...-lɪt) tr.v. em-u-lat-ed, em-u-lat-ing, em-u-lates.

1. To strive to equal or **excel**, especially through imitation. 2. To **compete with** successfully; approach or attain equality with.

Don't, then, just criticize or praise your Past Masters. Emulate them. Take up the challenge. Strive to become equal to or superior to them. This is what The Craft needs from you. "To emulate" is not simply to passively admire. Neither is it to merely imitate. "To emulate" entails "to vie with" -- "to compete" -- to strive to be equal to **or better than** that which is emulated. This is the challenge that you must meet, if Masonry is to be there for future generations.

To meet this challenge, you will need, in proper proportion, idealism -- imagination -- and realism -- pragmatism.

The existentialist philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard, has written that optimal human functioning requires a proper balance of imagination and reality. An excess of realism, says Kierkegaard, if not balanced with a proper proportion of imagination, can lead to depression and functional paralysis. And, an excess of imagination, not balanced by an adequate grounding in reality, can lead to psychotic despair.

Perhaps the Japanese proverb says it better -- "Imagination without action is a dream; action without imagination is a nightmare."

Sadly, there has, in fact, occurred, over the past 40 years, an "intractable decline" in Masonry -- part of the broader picture of a more or less identical decline in all voluntary service organizations, as Prof. Robert Putnam has so ably demonstrated in his exhaustively-researched sociological treatise, Bowling Alone.

As the population has increased, the absolute number of Masons has precipitously declined. Forty years ago, we represented approximately 2.67% of the total population of this country. We are now approximately 0.39% of the population. This is a drop from 267 per ten thousand to 39 per ten thousand -- a decline to 13.4% of the past proportion. We have lost 86.6% of our ability to impact our culture -- to have an influence on the "law of public opinion" or "Moral Law" that Enlightenment leaders such as John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and that Viennese "Man Without Prejudice", Josef von Sonnenfels -- most of them Masons -- regarded as so vital to the safeguarding of civil society -- to protecting the civility of the *milieu* in which we and future generations will seek to thrive.

This decline in the, "...influence and power of The Fraternity..." has been accompanied by an agonizing and perhaps not entirely coincidental decline in the happiness and wellbeing of the men, women, and children around us.

You, young Masons, inherit the task of halting and reversing Masonry's decline.

Arm yourselves with Brotherly Love; promote Relief; staunchly adhere to Imperial Truth. Practice the four cardinal virtues of Fortitude, Prudence, Temperance, and Justice. Counsel Honesty and Integrity. To these virtues, add Imagination, Pragmatism, Faith, Knowledge, and Work -- unceasing Work. You will thus provide worthy role models to be emulated by Masons beyond your own time.

And the chain of brotherhood will thus remain unbroken, from the timeless mists of the past into the unfathomable reaches of the future. From Mozart, back, even, to the time of King Athelstan and beyond, the chain has stretched forward to you. It now rests in your hands.

Godspeed, my brothers.

PAST EVENTS

Oct. 2 Mr. Davis Rohrer + PM Night (Open/meal 6:30)
Oct. 9 (**Special**, 6:30) Examine EA, examine two FC;
Confer FC Degree

Oct. 16 French (Scottish) Rite EA Degree Demonstration
Thanks to Bro. Henri Thibodeau and numerous Brethren from Monroe and from the New Orleans area, we were privileged to view the Masonry of Mozart, Haydn, Desagullier, Rudyard Kipling, and Voltaire -- the European Masonic Rite. This is the Masonry of Mozart's great opera, "The Magic Flute".

Enlightenment Gala

Wed. 11/12/03, 6 p.m. Ashley Manor

Payment of \$50/person should be made by check **ASAP** to Bro. Bill Mollere, 10525 Rondo Ave., Baton Rouge, LA 70815-4845.

If you miss this event, you'll wish that you hadn't done so. Wives, non-Masons, and prospective Masons are welcome.

THREE MASTER MASON DEGREES

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

FUTURE EVENTS

Nov 6 Examine MM, FC Catechism; Shrine Presentation

Nov 15 (**Special**, bkfst @ 7; degr @ 8) 3 MM, Full Regalia

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

Menu, Fried & Smoked whole turkeys, Cornbread dressing w/giblet gravy, possibly bean almandine casserole, cranberry sauce, possibly pecan &/or pumpkin pie dessert

Dec 4 Necrology; Election of officers for 2004

Dec 18 (Open/meal; 6:30) Installation of elected officers for 2004

"Rays of Masonry" by Dewey Wollstein -1953

DEGREES AND LIFE

We cannot introduce innovations in Masonry. However, this does not mean that we cannot put something of ourselves into Masonry. It is the responsibility and duty of everyone who has a part in conferring the degrees to not only speak the words but to deliver their meaning. His own heart must reach the heart of the candidate. Together with the words there must be a feeling that the lessons are not related to life, but are life.

Moral lessons are taught men by good mothers and good fathers. Men are morally qualified before they are qualified to become Masons. The great purpose of Masonry then is to make possible a system of moral development which will widen the path of improvement. When the lessons of Masonry fail in the objective of creating a living philosophy, a philosophy that helps to make life a richer, fuller experience, then the greatest good is lost.

A great poem becomes even greater when one takes the time and effort to study the state of mind of the author, and to clearly understand the thought and inspiration behind the printed words.

So it is with the lessons of Masonry. We must take that which is warm, pulsating, alive, and drive it into the heart of the candidate.

A KT Uniform Exchange

Brethren, our brothers of the Downtown YR Bodies have asked us to announce that anyone having KT swords or other uniform items that you wish to sell to younger SK's may notify SK Joe Richard at 924-7965 or by e-mail at jrjrichard71@cox.net.

Illness, News and Relief

Brethren, it is with sadness that you are notified that Brother James Hodges Reed joined the Celestial Lodge on Saturday, October 11, 2003.

We are saddened to report, too, that on Sep. 26, St. James member Bro. Ron Borskey was raised to the Celestial Lodge. We received notice of this matter just one day too late for inclusion in last month's Newsletter. We are grateful to Bro. Borskey's nephew, Bro. Clay Borskey of New River Lodge in Gonzales for communicating this information to us.

"Old Tiler Talks" by Carl Claudy -1924

THE HALLOWED OLD

"Old Tiler, let's start a campaign to buy new jewels and furniture."

"I have heard that before," answered the Old Tiler to the New Brother. "What's the matter with our jewels and our furniture?"

"So old-fashioned!" returned the New Brother, disgustedly. "I visited Corinth Lodge last night, in their beautiful new temple. All new paint, new mahogany furniture, new leather, bright and shining new jewels and all. It rather made me ashamed of our outfit."

"But Corinth is a new lodge," protested the Old Tiler.

"And this is an old one," retorted the New Brother. "Why should we let the new lodges beat us?"

"We don't. We have them beaten seven ways," returned the Old Tiler, puzzled. "Our old furniture and jewels are beautiful in themselves, and are hallowed with age and memories."

"Don't you believe in lodges making progress and getting new things? Can't we outgrow our temple?" asked the New Brother.

"We can. I doubt if we have. But a new temple is one thing, and new fittings quite another. The only beauty in modern fittings is their newness. There is no musk of age about them; no feeling of these having watched Masonic sights which have been worth seeing. We may have a new temple someday but when we give up our hundred-year-old Master's chair and the crude jewels our officers have worn more than a hundred and twenty years I want to see it from the Grand Beyond."

"Well- I never thought of it that way..."

"You are not the only one, retorted the Old Tiler. "Let me tell you a little story. In 1789, I think it was, a lodge in Trenton, N.J.- Trenton No. 5- built a temple. It is two stories high. Below is one big room, probably a refreshment room. Above is a lodge room. Atop that, an attic. Built of stone it was, and built to last.

"Trenton Lodge grew much too big for the little lodge room. In 1867 the old building became a school. Later it was used for

commercial purposes, The brethren of Trenton Lodge, in those days, were too close to their old home to know what they were doing to it. They let it go.

"Years passed, and sentiment grew. Trenton began to make parks and change its streets. The old Masonic building was to be torn down to make room for a street. By now sentiment was all to the fore. So the Grand Lodge picked up the old building, lock, stock, and barrel, and moved it to land it owned, and laid another cornerstone with impressive ceremonies in 1915. Now the old building is a house of Masonic and patriotic relics, carefully and lovingly restored. Much of the old furniture was recovered. The East, a niche in the wall, had been boarded up to make a square room. That sacrilege was removed. The ceiling had been papered; when it was repapered, they found a sculptured sun, with radiating rays, directly above the Altar and seven stars, and a moon. They had been lovingly restored.

"Lafayette and Washington trod the boards in that floor. The old building was made when memories of Washington crossing the Delaware were fresh. The old jewels of the lodge are carefully preserved. If you were a member of Trenton Lodge No. 5, would you want to see all this thrown away for a new outfit?"

"Well, er- no. But does Trenton Lodge meet there?"

"No. They meet in a new temple immediately adjacent to the present site of the old building. Trenton Lodge has a vast pride in this ancient possession; it is a Mecca for the visiting Mason. Perhaps our old lodge will become such someday.

"I am an old man, and I love old things. I try to be progressive; I am accustomed to electric lights and steam-heat. But I could never be reconciled to diamond-set jewels for Master and Wardens. The Bible on the Altar our first Master gave us four generations ago is hallowed to me. I believe in progress, in comfortable meeting places and settings worthy of Masonry. But let us not discard the old merely because it is old. Let us cherish the hallowed old; when great history, patriotism, sacrifices, accomplishments are woven into the old, then should we cherish them.

"Such a lodge as this lodge. To wear the jewel a hundred Masters have worn is an infinitely prouder joy than to wear for the first time the newest and most elaborate jewel. To take an obligation on a Bible on which thousands have been obligated is holier, though not more binding, than to do so on a new Book.

"Let us have a new temple when we must; let us even have new carpets and new lights. But let us keep our old and time-worn jewels; let us stick to our old Bible; let us keep our memories and those objects around which memories cling, for of such stuff are the dreams of men. When a man thus dreams, his Freemasonry touches the heart because it comes from the heart."

"You ought to have been-- why, Old Tiler, you are a poet!" cried the New Brother.

"Humph!" snorted the Old Tiler. But he fingered his old sword, not unpleased.

Note: the old tiler stories use a different spelling of tyler than we use.

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