

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

David Thomas Dodge, W.M.

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



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Monthly News Letter for October 2006 – November 2006



November 2006

It has been said that a Master's year stands out and stands apart and will always be called by his name; it will remain in the memory of the Lodge and stand as he himself designed it to stand. This makes each Lodge Year extraordinary and individual.

As I reflect back on my year as Master, I wonder if I did everything possible to make the year as full and rewarding as I could have. The fact is, I feel that I am finally close to understanding what I am supposed to do and my time has run out. I suppose all Masters have had this feeling. I think that it would have been better to have had more new members brought into the Lodge, because without new life blood the Lodge will not survive. As a Past Master, I will continue to work with the new Masters to help the Lodge grow and prosper. I look forward to the important job of Past Master, for I believe without dedicated Past Masters, the Lodge will wither and die on the vine.

We are going to be very busy for the rest of the year. Three new candidates have to begin their journey into Masonry. We balloted on five candidates and conferred an Entered Apprentice on one during the regular stated meeting on October 19th. There will be a Special Communication on October 26th during which we will confer two Entered Apprentice Degrees.

Please pay special attention to the article by MWBr. Cabuk Jr., PGM on page 2 of this newsletter. The reminder it gives us is always timely.

New officers for the year 2007 will be elected on November 2nd and I urge all members to come to the meeting and show your support for your newly elected brothers.

We will have an open meeting on November 16th to celebrate Thanksgiving. Invite guests!

Worshipful Brother George Jones has a special program for your entertainment that I know will be VERY INTERESTING. Come out and enjoy a great evening and meal.

Be careful out there and I look forward to seeing you at the meeting place soon.

David Dodge,
Worshipful Master

FUTURE EVENTS

- Nov. 2 St. John the Evangelist & Election of 2007 Officers
Nov. 3rd **LO9M annual Table Lodge (Open)**
Nov. 16 ***Thanksgiving Program (Open/meal 6:30 PM)**
Dec. 7 **Install Officers for 2007 (Open/meal 6:30 PM)**
* Represents possible entertainment

REMINDER: Invite guests to open meetings!

Other Masonic Events –

Downtown York Rite Bodies meet regularly on the 1st Saturday of each month at 8:00 a.m. with breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Scottish Rite Baton Rouge Valley meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Acacia Shrine Temple meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. with dinner at 6:00 p.m.

The Lodge of The Nine Muses, No. 9, F.&A.M., meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month in the Red Room of St James Lodge. If you are interested in visiting, contact one of the members to find time, dress code and other details. Ernest Easterly, W.M., Ricks Bowles, S.W., Adib Shala, J.W., Sam Roberts, Treasurer, Larry Moore, Secretary, William Mollere, Chaplain, Naresh Sharma, Sr. Deacon, Danny Smith, Master of Ceremonies, Gerard Ruth, Sr. Steward, Robert Zinn, Jr Steward, Kristopher Easterly, Tyler, Tim Atkins

Sickness and Sorrow; we regret to report:

W. Bro. Bill Mote has been fighting infection in his leg for three weeks and we wish him speedy recovery.

It is with sadness that you are notified of the death of Bro. Audis Chalton Hill, a 50-year member of St. James. He died about two months ago. Brother Hill lived in Magnolia, Texas for the past few years.

M.W. Bro. Ray W. Burgess, PGM 1985, joined the Celestial Lodge on Wednesday, October 11, 2006. Our prayers for comfort go out to his Wife Melva and their family. We hold M.W. Bro. Ray in a special place in our memory for a job well done.

W. Bro. James Pecoraro joined the Celestial Lodge shortly after 9:00 p.m. Friday, October 13, 2006. Our prayers for comfort go out to Barbara and their children.

We will remember W. Bro Jim for his works in several Lodges and the 13th District.

He is a Charter Member of the Lodge of Nine Muses, #9.

We have all lost a good friend and a worthy brother.

RECENT EVENTS

Oct. 5 ***Past Masters' Night (Open/meal 6:30 PM)**

Great food, again. Special thanks to W. Bro. Frank Dedman. There were 55 attending, including 14 of the 23 living Past Masters.

W.M. Dodge expressed deep gratitude for the direction, leadership, dedication and guidance of our PMs.

He also expressed recognition and the appreciation of the Lodge to W. Bro Lloyd Pence and his Lady Carolyn for the many years of service (Secretary since 1971) and for her support of him. The Lodge presented them with a gift of a 42" HDTV. The TV can also be hooked to their computer providing a larger display to allow W. Bro Pence to see it better.

Oct 7, Baton Rouge Valley Scottish Rite initiated 27 Candidates at the one-day Fall Reunion. The Reunion was dedicated to W. Bro. Edward T. "Ned: Davis, deceased, and W. Bro. Lloyd G. Pence, who was retiring after many years as Valley Secretary.

Oct 12 Special Communication

We were visited by Bro. Shannon Walgamotte, Jr. Warden, Metairie Lodge No. 444 to observe the conferring of a Master Mason degree.

Congratulations to Bro. Edward Overton Cailleateau, our newest Master Mason. Also, visiting was Bro. Henry George Scanlan, Jr., a member of Bowen Lodge No. 240, Eightmile, Alabama.

Oct. 19 Voted on 5 Candidates, Initiated an EA

Oct 26 Special, 6 pm, EA to be conferred

The 'annual' Table Lodge is a Masonic evening you will truly enjoy.

Ladies and guests welcome!

Members of *The Lodge of Nine Muses No. 9* (formerly the Baton Rouge Masonic Discussion Group) are hosting the 2006 Annual Table Lodge on Friday, November 3rd at the Camelot Club.

III. Ronald A. Seale, 33°, Sovereign Grand Commander will be the keynote speaker. Social hour will start at 6:00 p.m. The Table Lodge will open at 7:00 p.m. III. William J. Mollere, 33°, will facilitate this memorable evening.

Below are some details:

1. Cost is \$60 per person; checks to be made out to "Lodge of Nine Muses."
2. Dress: Gentlemen, dark suits. Ladies, evening dress.
3. Assigned seating. We need names of each attendee.
4. Entrée choices to be made in advance! Choices are: Grilled 6 oz. Filet Mignon; Sautéed Snapper Amandine or Grilled Chicken with Artichoke Florentine.
5. Each attendee will receive a souvenir "Firing Glass."

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The Black Cube that Gives Masonry a Black Eye

By Joe G. Cabuk, Jr., Grand Master of Louisiana Freemasons in 2003

Extracted, by permission, from a paper read to the Wednesday Masonic Study Group, October 10, 2001

The ballot box procedure of the Masonic fraternity in Louisiana uses a secret ballot in which brothers use white balls to elect or black cubes to reject a candidate who wishes to join a lodge. The presence of even one black cube causes rejection, regardless of the number of white balls. This power to "black ball" any man who has petitioned a lodge for membership is absolute, and the brother exercising this power need not reveal either the fact or the reason that he is the one who cast the black cube. Indeed, our Law Book prohibits every Mason from attempting to learn who cast the black cube or why it was done.

This system creates a potential problem, as it gives each Master Mason absolute power but does not balance that power by a corresponding level of responsibility. It has been said, "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." By giving the power of rejection without requiring the responsibility of publicly making the case for such rejection, we thereby set the stage whereon mischief can, and does, occur.

When a Mason casts a black cube for unjust, uninformed, or petty reasons, at least six bad things happen: First, a good man is denied Masonic light and fellowship in a lodge and his pride and sense of self-worth are surely hurt; Second, his wife and family will usually know he has been rejected and they will probably talk to their friends - they will surely not paint a nice picture of "the Masons" who rejected their loved-one; Third, the brothers who signed the petition are embarrassed; Fourth, the investigating committee is embarrassed; Fifth, the lodge is denied the chance to put on the degrees and to enjoy the fellowship of a good man; and Sixth, the Mason casting the improper black cube has committed a wrong against the petitioner, against his lodge, and against all his brother Masons, where-so-ever dispersed.

I suggest that the rejection of a good man is a wrong deed done, and the wrongly-cast black cube gives all of Freemasonry a black eye.

Before a ballot is taken, the Louisiana Masonic Monitor recommends that the Worshipful Master read the entire application of the candidate, including how the Investigating Committee voted. The WM should also say "Brethren, we are about to ballot on the worthiness of Mr. (full name) to receive the degrees in Masonry. The white balls elect, the black cubes reject. Be careful of your ballot and ballot for the good of the Order."

What is "for the good of the Order?" Let us consider the case of a man who has submitted a Petition for Initiation. Let's say the lodge has processed his petition in the usual manner and it is now time to ballot. Two Master Masons who should know something about this man have signed the petition and brought it into the lodge; the lodge members have discussed and received the petition; three Master Masons on the Investigating Committee have visited the petitioner in his home and found him worthy and also signed his petition; at least four weeks have elapsed since the petition was received; and lodges within 25 miles of the petitioner's home have been notified of the petition and no protest has been received. No brother in the lodge has made any unfavorable comment against the petitioner.

[Editors note: If any of these conditions fail to be met, NO ballot need nor should be taken as the results are already known.]

Now the ballot is taken, and there is one black cube. The ballot is taken again and there is still one black cube. Why might this be? Consider some reasons why a brother Master Mason might cast the black cube:

- Perhaps he is the petitioner's medical doctor and he is aware of the fact that the petitioner is secretly using illegal drugs, but professional ethics don't allow him to tell the lodge about it.
- Perhaps he is a law enforcement officer and he is aware that the petitioner is involved in a financial scam, which will soon be made public.
- Perhaps he is a psychologist and he is counseling the petitioner's family for child and spouse abuse by the petitioner.
- Perhaps he is a banker and he is aware that the petitioner has been passing hot checks.

While all the above items seem clearly to support a decision to cast a Black Cube ballot, now consider the following:

- Perhaps the petitioner is a police officer who gave one of the brothers a traffic ticket last week.
- Perhaps the petitioner is a loan officer in a bank which recently turned-down one of the brothers for a loan.
- Perhaps the petitioner is a lawyer and one of the brothers thinks there are too many lawyers in Masonry.
- Perhaps the petitioner is a car mechanic and one of the brothers thinks we don't need car mechanics with greasy fingernails in the fraternity.
- Perhaps the petitioner speaks poor English or is not well educated.
- Perhaps one brother knows the petitioner, and he just doesn't like him and doesn't want him in the lodge.
- Perhaps the petitioner attends a particular church and one brother doesn't like this church.

How do you feel about these reasons for casting a black cube? Where should the line be drawn? Each brother must decide for himself which reasons are "right" and if any are "wrong."

We say that Masonry "Makes good men better." In the Address on Charity we tell new Master Masons that the cornerstone of our fraternity is Charity. We go on to explain that by Charity we mean the broader, grander, nobler Charity that regards all men as brothers. Note that we don't say "all Masons as brothers," but "all men as brothers." We explain to the new Master Mason that he is to practice the Charity that writes the faults of a brother on the shifting sands and his virtues on tables of enduring marble. If this is truly the case, does not a very strict standard apply to the Master Mason such that he must occasionally truly grit his teeth and, practicing that Masonic Charity which regards all men as brothers, vote "for" someone he doesn't like?

We can ask ourselves, what does the WM mean when he says, "we are about to ballot on the worthiness [of the candidate] to receive the degrees in Masonry"? What does he mean when he says "ballot for the good of the Order"? Does he mean the applicant must be "perfect", or only that he be a "good man"? Is anyone perfect? What is a "good man"?

Does not Masonry demand of me that I suppress my dislike for a particular person and accept him as a Masonic brother unless there is clear evidence that he will bring discredit upon the fraternity? If I don't learn to subdue my passions in this way, is being a Mason helping the good man in me become a better man? If I truly don't like someone and think that I will have personal problems with him being in my lodge, is it OK to remain silent and just ballot with the black cube, even though everyone else in the lodge casts a white ball? Does anyone benefit from such behavior?

Do we truly understand that when a Masonic lodge has rejected a petitioner who is well-known and well-liked in the community, the news of the rejection will get out into the community at large, despite our efforts at keeping it a secret? The writer is aware of "talk" among the non-Masons in his community about a "black-balling" which happened many years ago.

It is a fact that the rejection of one good man will deter other good men from ever applying for the light Masonry offers to the world.

Is there a black cube which gives Masonry a black eye? Each brother must decide for himself. If you decide that there is such a situation, what can be done about it? Perhaps the best we can do is to discuss this subject openly in the spirit of Friendship, Morality, and Brotherly Love, and most of all--Charity.

Send articles to Bob Zinn, bz@chem.lsu.edu

If you change phone, address or e-mail, PLEASE send updated information to Joe Richard jgr2@cox.net

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