

The Trestleboard

Unity Lodge No. 367 F & AM

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The Master's Words

The light is brightest just before it burns out.

For a society that is not supposed have politics, Freemasonry seems to have more than a fair share of it. Man by his nature is a social and political animal. We carry with us insecurities such as jealousy, suspicion, hate. As Masons, we are taught to subdue our passions. To do what is right for Freemasonry. But we are just men that are Masons. We are not that different than the members of any other society.

I think the "bubble" of membership we saw 40-50 years ago may be responsible for the issues in Lodge today. Then men were joiners, and had a basic need to become part of groups, clubs, and unions to support a national recovery from multiple wars and the threat of the atomic weapon. In the world of today, there is a general lack of trust and loyalty in our society and men are recognized for and expected to be a rugged individual as opposed to joining a team effort. This has created a need to compete as opposed to cooperate.

Although the idea of Freemasonry is to work together, many of us have difficulty leaving the day to day problems of the outside world behind us when we walk through the doors of our Lodges. As our membership declines, many are beginning to panic over the fraternity's future. And instead of trying to work collectively to change this situation, we are choosing sides as to who has the true correct vision to perpetuate the fraternity, the traditionalists or the reformists. The traditionalist tends to be unbending and the reformist seeks to change the status quo. I agree there are some traditions that should be observed in Freemasonry, but not at the expense of losing touch with the rapidly changing world all around us. It is this lack of cooperation that is fueling the politics of Freemasonry at all levels. The reality, of course, is that we need a careful balance of both traditions and reforms; you simply cannot have one without the other.

Look at the religions of the world today. Some of them are so out of sync with today they sound like we are still in the times of the Crusades. People ridicule their customs and beliefs. But their hard-line traditionalists claim they have the true faith and everyone else is an infidel. Reformists, on the other hand, see the traditionalists as barbaric and believe they have a more contemporary perspective on their religion. Politics at this level is about who has the dominant ideal and seeks control. It then turns vicious and is at its ugliest when it becomes us vs. them. And we see those same concepts in operation at our Lodge.

A lot of it is so bizarre; it would probably curl your hair if you have any. Some of it is very disturbing, but most of it comes down to petty politics.

Masonic politics is typically at its ugliest during elections when Brothers may be charged with un-Masonic conduct for "electioneering." I find this all rather interesting as I believe our process for electing officers is far from perfect. Further, I don't think I have ever seen a Lodge election where there isn't some form of politics involved. Nevertheless, instead of admitting there is electioneering in Lodges, we pretend it doesn't exist.

What concerns me more is when Masonic politics turns dirty, which I refer to as the "dark-side" of the fraternity and something we do not like to discuss. An Example of this is a couple of Masons from a Lodge, who shared no Brotherly love for the officers, started a campaign to oust the officers over an alleged infraction. First, they openly verbally made unsubstantiated accusations to any brother in ear shot within Lodge instead of discussing their supposed concerns with the officers of the Lodge. They berated some of the officers and brothers for their dress, mannerisms and nationality. The result being some of those officers will not move up the progressive line and in one case, requested a transfer to a different Lodge. Second, they sent a letter to top level Grand Lodge officers without any attempt to resolve their issues with the Lodge or at the District level. So much for "whisper good counsel". They then were able to bend the ear of Grand Lodge Officers who, acting upon their hearsay, had to perform an investigation.

Now the big question, "Why was this done?" The accusers had a deep-seated resentment over the Lodge officers who reformed the Lodge and, in the process, overturned some of the Lodge's traditions, many of which were enacted years ago by the accusers. But instead of presenting their concerns to the officers, they circumvented protocol and went straight to the Grand Master. Bottom-line: this had nothing to do with Masonry, but rather a clever ruse to seek retribution for other issues. The result is that the Lodge has and will continue to suffer due to the political upheaval (e.g., members starting to go to other Lodges), and the officers who, up until now thought they were doing the best they could for the Lodge are leaving. Also, some brothers said they just won't come to Lodge if any of the accusing brothers are elected Master of the Lodge. That sort of response just lowers us all to their level.

Problems like this with Masonic politics makes one wonder why there isn't a separate judicial branch in Freemasonry to prohibit such shenanigans from happening. Inevitably, I suspect we will be plagued with these back handed politics for quite some time.

We join Freemasonry for a lot of different reasons, one of which is that we might find a forum where we will be honestly and fairly treated "on the level." There is enough contention in the world without having to add another layer.

Consequently, politics has an adverse effect on membership and attendance.

Want to drive people away from Lodge or inhibit participation? Bring on the politics.

There is an old expression in psychology whereby, "You cannot treat a patient if he doesn't know he is sick." Perhaps the best way to address Masonic politics is to stop kidding ourselves that it doesn't exist. We would all like to believe Freemasonry is above the fray of politics, but we are not. After all, we are only human and, as such, politics is a natural part of human life. Once we admit this, we can then devise suitable rules and regulations today's Masons are more familiar with and promote how to best work and best agree.

NOTE: The opinions expressed in this essay are my own and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of any Grand Masonic jurisdiction or any other Masonic related body.

Fraternally yours,
Wayne Budwick
Worshipful Master
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From the Secretary's Desk

IN MEMORIAM: The roll of the workmen has again been called and Brothers Rudy Kuzel and Robert E. Meyer answer not. A Masonic service was held for Brother Robert Meyer at the Hansen Funeral Home. May they find eternal rest in the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Gutters and a down-spout was replaced above the front door of the lodge by a contractor. The drain tile from the down-spout was put in by Brother Richard Anderson and helpers, Gene Welter, Milt Bergerson & Jim Dowell. The drain tile was donated by Bouterse Construction. Keith is a relative of Richard. We all thank you, Keith.

Jim Dowell and Vince Shuler touched up the shed with paint & sweat. It was warm back then. The lodge is going to be resided with vinyl. The boss man for this job is Brother Gus Orozco. He will need some help. So if you can, let Gus know, don't keep it a secret

Election of officers for Unity Lodge will be on November 5, 2009 at 7 p.m. Plan on attending.

Good Luck to all the deer hunters. Brothers, if you are in or going to an assisted living home or hospital for some time, let me know so someone from lodge can visit and let the brothers know what is going on.

Last but not least, thank you, Brother Bob Burgermeister for all the help you have given me in getting the records and Trestle Board out on time and you also make a good Chaplain. [This plug cost me only \$20 – Ed.]

Remember Wednesday mornings-coffee and rolls and you never know what else.

Your Secretary,
Harold "Babe" Kreuser



November Birthdays

11/01 Brian J. Samuelson
11/02 Jerry J. Brown
11/06 Adam M. Stoll
11/13 Bruce H. Eggert
11/16 David M. Cogshall
11/17 Edward H. Schiller
11/17 Eugene J. Welter
11/21 Oral E. Congdon Jr
11/23 Spencer J. Howe
11/24 Thomas A. Eide
11/24 Frederick C. Duprey
11/28 Milton O. Bergerson



Note:

The resolution brought to the Lodge for a \$50 assessment failed to pass at the October 15 Stated Meeting.

Since the assessment was to be used to pay for the vinyl siding on the Lodge building, several brothers have made donations towards that funding. You are encouraged to do the same. Any amount you can afford would be appreciated.



The Editor

I finished reading "The Lost Symbol" by Dan Brown today. It's a really good story, fast moving with a lot of twists. Mr. Brown did a very good job of representing the Masons as "Good Guys". I caught him giving away only one "secret", which wasn't identified as such. If you caught it, let me know.

Want to reach a couple hundred Brothers every month? Advertise in the Trestleboard. Ask me how.

See you in Lodge!

Fraternally,

Bob Burgermeister
Editor, Webmaster and Chaplain
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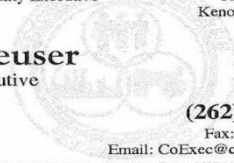
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Dates to Remember October/November 2009

October 23 -- Friday - Area 1 School of Instruction – EA Degree 6:30 PM
October 29 -- Thursday – Fall District meeting 7pm, Dinner 6pm
November 5 – Stated Meeting 7 PM (Election)
November `19 – Stated Meeting 7 PM
Every Wednesday – Lodge Clean Up with coffee and rolls 8 AM, and Degree Practice 10 AM.

November Masonic Anniversaries

Stephen E. Hunt
Jeffrey B. Woosley
Oral E. Congdon Jr
Edward H. Schiller
Gerald S. Hansen
Paul L. Whiteside
Bruce T. Haubrich
Alvin F. Pryse Jr.
Richard D. Sadlon
Ronald E. Nelson
John J. Schappert
Anastasios Kokkinakis
Pat R. Kuhner
Joseph P. Fanfarillo
Thomas Hamilton
Mark E. Goertler
Thomas R. Walker



Trestleboard Deadline is the 15th of every month. Please submit articles via email to: webmaster@kenoshamasons.com

Found in Bro. Jim's wallet:



Why does the ritual use so many repetitions, as in “duly and truly”, worthy and well-qualified”, etc. ?

Several “word pairs” in Masonic ritual make interesting studies; “duly and truly”, “worthy and well-qualified”, “free will and accord”, “parts and points”, “hele and conceal”. At first glance it may seem that these are so arranged only for emphasis. In Middle English writing, especially in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when Freemasonry was in the process of formation, England had two languages. One was Norman-French, the other Anglo-Saxon. To make sure of understanding, word pairs were much in use, a word of similar meaning being taken from each language.

The apparent redundancy of expression in a number of places in Masonic ritual may be traced back to these Middle Ages. The perpetuation of such usage now, when clarity of thought and understanding might be served as well with one word, is one of many proofs that Freemasonry delights to cling to the ancient and venerated because it is venerated and ancient.

(from “101 Questions About Freemasonry”. Thanks to Vince)