



THE TRESTLE BOARD • Fort Jackson Lodge No. 374, A.F.M.

Volume VIII, Issue 2

Spring 2008

GREETINGS FROM THE EAST!

Master's Message

Brethren:

It has been a fast 5 months and things couldn't look better for the future of this great lodge. We have so far raised three brothers to the Sublime degree of Master Mason with one more due in April and another in June. We have two petitions to read at our April business night, so we are looking forward to a busy summer.

Our business nights have been great. It is wonderful to see so many brothers come out and be with us as we move to bigger and better things within our lodge.

This summer looks like we will be quite busy with our fund raising events, doing volunteer work throughout the community and being true Masons.

One big event is the lodge picnic May 17th at Weston Lake on Fort Jackson.

We are looking forward to a fun filled day of brotherly love and friendship, so bring your family and friends and come be with us.

We will be having our spring cleanup on May 31st at 0800. Come join us as we need help in some of our projects. Contact WB Wallace Wright or myself if information is needed.

The next Past Masters breakfast will be May 12th at the *Lizard's Thicket* on Beltline at 0800. Look forward to seeing everyone.

The fund raisers for this year are scheduled as follows:

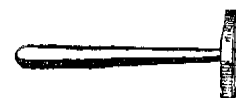
- August 23 - BBQ SALE (The sisters from Eastern Star will be doing a bake sale in conjunction with our BBQ sale.)
- November 24 – BOSTON BUTT SALE

Also, mark your calendars for our annual *Ladies Night* which will be held on September 12 at the Fort Jackson NCO Club.

Fraternally,

Alex Roberts

Worshipful Master



THE BALLOT BOX

Don F. Nesbit, 33°

“Remember, white balls elect and black cubes reject. Be careful how you vote.”

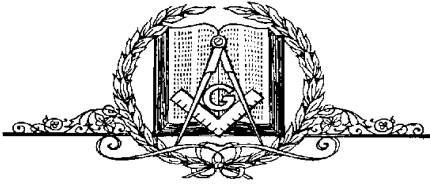
How many times have we heard the Master admonish us before the line forms to cast our vote on a new petitioner for the rights and privileges of being a Freemason?

How many times have we given thought to the procedure of the ballot box, particularly its long tradition and far-reaching consequences?

Let's take the example of a Lodge in a small town, though the principles surrounding Masonic balloting relate to any Lodge, small or large. In our typical town, everyone knows everybody, and first names are the order of the day. One of the best known citizens is Jim, a butcher, who is affectionately known as “Big Jim” due to his size and brawn gained from handling sides of beef. The owner of another butcher shop, about three blocks away from Jim's establishment, is Bert.

Jim is a member of the local Blue Lodge. He attends all the meetings he can and is content to sit on the sidelines watching his Brothers do the work. Occasionally, he will take part. Lodge has been open and the members are all in their seats. The Secretary has finished reading the minutes, and the Master has called for applications. The Secretary

See *Ballot Box*, Page 3



LODGE CALENDAR

STATED COMMUNICATION – 1ST THURSDAY

COVERED DISH DINNER – 3RD WEDNESDAY

EASTERN STAR – 1ST MONDAY

GRAND LODGE ANNUAL COMMUNICATION

APRIL 24-25 – GREENVILLE, SC

MASTER MASON DEGREE & PAST MASTERS' RECOGNITION BREAKFAST

**APRIL 26 AT THE LODGE
8:30 A.M.**

ENTERED APPRENTICE DEGREE

**MAY 8 AT THE LODGE.
EAT AT 6:30; WORK AT 7:30 P.M.**

**PAST MASTERS' BREAKFAST
MAY 10 – LIZARD'S THICKET ON BELTLINE BLVD.
8:00 A.M.**

**LODGE FAMILY PICNIC
MAY 17 – WESTON LAKE, FORT JACKSON
INFO FORTHCOMING**

**MASTER MASON DEGREE
MAY 22 AT THE LODGE
EAT AT 6:30; WORK AT 7:30 P.M.**

**BBQ FUND RAISER
AUGUST 23 AT THE LODGE**

**BOSTON BUTT FUND RAISER
NOVEMBER 24 AT THE LODGE**

FORT JACKSON LODGE NO. 374 2008 OFFICERS

WORSHIPFUL MASTER

Alex Roberts

Ph. 348-9786

aroberts345@bellsouth.net

SENIOR WARDEN

Harold L. Nobles, PM

Ph. 776-0495

nobles_h@bellsouth.net

JUNIOR WARDEN

Joe Rush

Ph. 957-8385

joegrush100@aol.com

SECRETARY

Edgar W. Cagle, PM

Ph. 782-7068

eagerbeaver53@bellsouth.net

TREASURER

Wallace G. Wright, PM, PGP

Ph. 787-7705

wgw53@wmconnect.com

SENIOR DEACON

Eddie Comeau, Sr.

Ph. 779-1160

scgolfer50@hotmail.com

JUNIOR DEACON

Walter Reed

Ph. 347-9179

wreed1@sc.rr.com

SEN. STEWART

Charles M. Warner, Jr.

Ph. 337-3913

Chuckwarner123@aol.com

JR. STEWART

John Thorne

803-629-5353

CHAPLAIN

Rev. Robert L. Blackwell

Ph. 776-1788

TILER

Larry Simonson, PM

Ph. 419-9247

kuhdamm@wmconnect.com

announces there is an application and proceeds to read it. "Hey!" one of a group of three sitting in the north, says. "Did you hear that? Didn't they say Bert? That's Jim's competitor down the street!"

All heads in the room turn automatically turn to Jim who is sitting on the south side of the Lodge Room. Jim doesn't look up. Everybody knows of the competition between the two men, how each tries to outdo the other to get more business. What would the feeling be in the Lodge with the two most competitive businessmen in town as members of the same Lodge?

The Master announces that the petition is received, and a committee is appointed to visit with Bert. The members know the petition will come up next meeting for vote. Would Jim be present at the next meeting? Some of the members not present tonight would, no doubt, hear the petition and be present at the next meeting.

At the next Stated Meeting, the lodge is opened, and the minutes of the last meeting are read. Upon approval of the minutes, the Master announces the committee has made a full and favorable report. After the usual admonishment by the Master, the members line up and cast their ballots. Everything is quite as the Senior Deacon stands to the north of the altar, after the inspection by the Junior and Senior Wardens.

Jim is sitting quietly in his normal seat in the South. All eyes seem riveted on, first, the Junior Warden and, second, the Senior Warden as the as the members hear the words "fair in the South" and "clear in the West." Suddenly Jim is ten feet tall! There is no black cube in the box!

Obviously, he cast a white ball, as did every other member present, for his competitor in business. Jim was now truly a big man in more than physical size in the eyes of his Lodge Brothers. This, indeed, is Masonry in action!

In due time, Bert received his first, then Second, then Third Degrees. Jim had asked to be his coach and prepare him for his proficiency in each Degree. After each session of questions and answers, they would just sit back and talk. One night, Bert asked, "Jim, you and I are rivals in business, why didn't you blackball me when my application was voted on?"

Jim said, "Bert, that is not what Masonry is all about. You are just as good a man as I am, maybe better. Masonry looks at the good in men. It ignores the trivialities and differences of opinion and station. We don't exclude a man from becoming a Mason just because we don't like the way he dresses or disagrees with us on certain matters."

In the past the ballot box in the Blue Lodge has been misused on occasion largely due to ignorance on the part of the members. The petition for membership is first read in Lodge to familiarize the members that a man is seeking to join the Masonic Fraternity. If any member knows of any valid reason why he should not be admitted, he must, in some Grand Lodges, seek out the Master and make that reason known. The Master will discuss the matter with the objector and learn all the details. If necessary, he will ask

for counsel with Past Masters or other knowledgeable Brethren. He cannot accept hearsay or other than first hand knowledge of information which would exclude the petitioner from becoming a Mason. If, after due deliberation, he deems the man unworthy, the Master will withdraw the application and have the Secretary notify the applicant of the action taken.

A simple statement at the next Stated Meeting that the application was withdrawn will suffice. Explanations can be made to any inquirers in private. If a member was not present at the reading of the petition, but is sitting in Lodge when the balloting is about to take place, if he has a valid objection to the petitioner, he should approach the Master and ask that a recess be declared at which time he will inform the Master of his knowledge. After the Lodge is recalled to labor, the Master will announce that the petition has been withdrawn for further investigation. An investigation will be made before the petition is again submitted or withdrawn.

All things being equal, the black cube will never be used in the Masonic balloting procedure. However, in order to prevent a possible error, it remains as a safeguard to protect the Fraternity.

Source: *The Scottish Rite Journal*, May 2002

**BROTHER**

This word is one of the oldest, as it is one of the most beautiful, in any language. No-body knows where or when it originated, but it is certain that it existed in the Sanskrit, in a form strikingly similar to that used by us. In Greek it was phrater, in the Latin frater, whence our "fraternal" and "fraternalism." It has always meant men from the same parents, or men

knit by very close blood ties. When associated with "initiation, which has the general meaning of "being born into," one can see how appropriate is its use in Freemasonry. All of us have, through initiation in our "mother" Lodges, been born into a Masonry and therefore we are "brothers," and that which holds us together in one great family is the

"Mystic Tie," the Masonic analogue of the blood tie among kinsmen.

Source: *100 Words in Masonry*



Fort Jackson Lodge No. 374
4735 Fort Jackson Boulevard
Columbia, South Carolina 29209



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