



Trestleboard

A monthly bulletin of information for the members, families and friends of
Blackmer Lodge #442, Free and Accepted Masons, California, USA

July, 2006

Volume XCIII, Number 7

"WHAT DO YOU MOST DESIRE?"

*"...but the Lord shall be unto thee an
everlasting light, ..."*

Is. 60:19

In each degree of Freemasonry, the candidate is asked what it is that he most desires. The answer is always the same: "light." Symbolically, the word "light" means knowledge, but in Freemasonry it specifically means knowledge about man's relationship with God, nature and humanity. Since Freemasonry does not claim to possess all knowledge, it has no secret scrolls to pass along, or hidden codexes to share with new candidates. Instead, Freemasonry gives the candidate the necessary tools whereby he himself can explore the glories of God, nature and humanity for himself.

To assist the candidate in his quest for light, Freemasonry offers yet another symbol from which a spiritual exercise emerges: "darkness." If one listens carefully to what is said about being brought into the light, one also hears that he is necessarily brought out of darkness. In order that the candidate may better understand what this truly means, consider this thesis: it is essential to create light from darkness. That thesis supposes that the light that any person holds is polarized at two poles between which there is only darkness.

Within the domain of human consciousness there actually exist two kinds of darkness. One is more commonly referred to as "ignorance," while the other is the darkness of higher knowledge. The problems of ignorance are left to the schools to resolve. It is the latter darkness of higher knowledge with which Freemasonry is concerned.

Seldom in history has man suddenly attained higher knowledge of God to such a degree that he is intellectually fine tuned with the Divine. There were several traveling the road to

Damascus the day Paul suddenly attained divine enlightenment. Yet, none other than Paul were so instantly drawn to the Lord's bosom. Like most of the rest of us, they, too, likely traveled a slower path toward enlightenment. Freemasonry regards such a slow path as normal and thus provides the very useful tool referred to as the neutralization of binaries to assist the candidate and Mason along the way.

The complexities of that tool may be simplified by clarifying it as a meditative synthesis of opposing ideas. That process was illustrated by the use of opposite poles and colors by the German scientist Wilhelm Ostwald in his work entitled *Die Farbenfibel* published in 1916. In his example, Ostwald visualized the north pole as red in color, becoming seven different colors as he reached the equator, then completely black by the time he ended at the south pole. The north pole was called the white point while the south pole was referred to as the black point.

By analogy, we are able to conceive of the white point as representing wisdom and the black point ignorance. Wisdom is nothing more than the synthesis of all sciences of human knowledge. Platonism is oriented toward this white point, while at the other end of the spectrum the black point can be represented by nihilism. The zone wherein the process of synthesis occurs is darkness of higher knowledge, or the realm of spiritual unknowing. Once the process of synthesizing is completed, the darkness is replaced by light, or the realm of spiritual knowing.

It is within that realm that one discovers what Freemasonry refers to as prudence. Prudence is the constant awareness of being between two darknesses – the darkness of the white point, on the one hand, and the darkness

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FROM THE EAST

Brethren, the Masonic Information Center* has recently put out a booklet entitled "IT'S ABOUT TIME - Moving Masonry Into the 21st Century." It is an interesting and hopefully useful work. I will bring the salient points in two parts: Part one in July, and part two in August. Here we go:

"When Memories Exceed Dreams, the End is Near". (M.Hammer)

Examining the need for Masonic public Awareness

It is no secret that participation in the Masonic fraternity has been dropping for at least 50 years. Evidence of our decline is the fact that our membership totals are at their lowest levels in more than 80 years. Hoping to stop the attrition, Masonic leaders have tried numerous initiatives: one day classes, shortened proficiencies, and a lowered minimum age at which one can petition for membership. Grand Lodges have hired public relations firms, and have paid for promotions in numerous media outlets, including newspapers, magazines, billboards, radio, and television. Each initiative, while hinting at success, has failed to arrest our declining numbers and has fallen short of rejuvenating our fraternal spirit.

For instance, one-day classes attracted many new members, but they did little to halt the ever-increasing numbers of demits and Not Paying Dues (NPD's). It was realized that getting new members was only a part of the challenge. Masons were not satisfactorily addressing ways of keeping our members involved and enthusiastic about Masonry.

Familiar excuses: "We are in a downward cycle..." Yeah, but lowest in 80 years? "We lost the Vietnam generation..." That was almost forty years ago, it is deeper than one generation. "We are all so busy..." No question about that, but worthy and interesting causes always find followers. "People no longer join the way they used to..." Every fraternal organization, many religious denominations, service clubs, and community organizations such as the PTA/PTO have all suffered membership declines. Current life-styles often require two spouse incomes. Family time is squeezed into the evenings, and very often the children have their own activities. The technology explosion has provided a source for entertainment/activity that competes with any organization requiring a time commitment. Changes surround everyone living in a modern world, and Freemasons still grouse about any increase in dues or per capita. It is time to readjust our thinking and come to realize that both time and money are necessary factors in creating a quality organization.

Throughout history both European and North American Masonic values consistently influenced people's daily lives by encouraging the right to question existing dogma, and by upholding our right to express one's own thoughts and ideas. These values promote toleration of all religious and philosophical views. The Fraternity has been a constructive, stabilizing, and enlightening force.

In today's world of high speed communications, people are impressed more by what they see and hear than by what they read. Current public's perception and opinion of Freemasonry can be summarized briefly in the following ways:

1. *Confused* Are the Masons fraternity, a religious organization or an alternative religion?
2. *Mistaken*. Only grandfathers could belong to such an old fashioned organization as Freemasonry.
3. *Oblivious* . People are not even aware Masonry still exists.

Masons are not visible in the daily life of their communities. Their identity is frequently misunderstood and misrepresented in the press and by religious critics. There is little reserve of positive memories of Masonic activity remaining in our communities. Within eye and ear range of the public, Masons have lost significance.

The model Masonic fraternity member should be easy to identify in the community by his actions and words. Public awareness of Masonry begins at a grassroots level. Masons must be visible in the community to demonstrate Masonic values in many aspects of their lives.

*The Masonic Information Center is a division of the Masonic Service Association. The Center was formed in 1993 by a grant from John R. Robinson, well-

known author, speaker and Mason. Its purpose is to provide information on Freemasonry to Masons and non-Masons alike and to respond to critics of Freemasonry. The Center is directed by a Steering Committee of distinguished Masons geographically representative of the Craft throughout the United States and Canada.

To be continued in August
Mihailo O'Zdravkovic, Master, 2006

FROM THE SECRETARY

Have a safe and sane Fourth of July. Remember our Country's birthday! This month our dine out will be on the second Monday (July 10th) due to the holiday. We will be dining out at the Home Town Buffet in Santee.

Again, it is very important that you make your dinner reservations for the Stated Meeting dinner at least by the Monday before the meeting.

There are still several members who have not paid their dues. Please Brethren take a few minutes and send in your dues. Some people do not realize that if they are suspended from a Lodge, no relative can use them as a reference in the future to become a mason, as you have to be in good standing or demitted in good standing to have your name used as a reference.

If you are traveling remember to buckle up and always use your seat belt.

Fraternally, Johnny Johnson, Secretary

Blackmer Lodge

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A monthly bulletin of information for the members, families and friends of Blackmer Lodge #442, Free and Accepted Masons, California, USA
Our objective is to disseminate information of interest to the members, families and friends of Blackmer Lodge #442, F&AM of San Diego, California, USA

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of the black point on the other hand. Prudence also teaches us that moving from spiritual unknowing to spiritual knowing is a slow process, necessarily so to avoid the candidate and Mason from being blinded by too much light at one time. By way of yet another analogy, it is much like learning mathematics in school. Before one can master algebra, one must learn to add and subtract. The initiate is not someone who knows everything. He is a person who bears the truth within a deeper level of his own consciousness that is revealed to him step-by-step.

Prudence never elaborates a system of belief, which is precisely the reason Freemasonry never instructs that one religion is preferable to any other religion. To the contrary, prudence is occupied only with synthesizing particular problems at deeper levels of consciousness. That is why the enlightened Master Mason is often able to offer a dozen different answers to dozens of different questions giving them spontaneously and without much regard or care for mutual agreement. That is so, because the quest for the whole truth begins with the proposition that nobody knows the whole truth. Therefore, there is no knowledge that is off limits to a Mason's personal scrutiny.

The darkness where synthesis occurs is the region of deeper consciousness, which philosophers have for ages referred to as the "gift of Perfect Night." From the inner darkness comes the revelations of spiritual truth, which constitute the "gifts of Perfect Night" in all their splendor. It has been also said that the search for those gifts, or the act of synthesizing opposites, is equivalent to the search for peace among nations, among people and among ideas.

Go in peace, my brother, and complete your search.



BULLETIN BY EMAIL

We want **YOU**.

To begin receiving your bulletin by email, send a note saying "I'm in!" to Coren Andrews at ctandrews@comcast.net

DINING OUT

This month our dine out will be on the second Monday, July 10th, due to the holiday. We will be dining out at the Home Town Buffet in Santee. The address is 265 Town Center Parkway. From San Diego take Hwy 94 to Hwy 125, take Hwy 125 North to Mission Gorge Rd, turn right on Mission Gorge Road to Cuyamaca, turn left on Cuyamaca go to signal light, turn left into shopping center, Home Town Buffet is on the north side of the center.

There will be a table set up for us, so after you pay tell them you are with Blackmer Lodge.

FLAG DAY EVENT

Brethren and ladies, on June 11th, 2006, at Scottish Rite Center there was the 79th Annual Flag Day Observance. As in previous years, the program was colorful and enjoyable. Patriotic Music was performed by Mrs. Jaime Campbell Lorenz, Past Honored Queen, Bethel No. 331, La Mesa International Order of Job's Daughters.

There was a Parade of Flags by the Masonic Youth Orders: De Molay, Rainbow for Girls, and Job's Daughters. The audience joined in the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem. Then there was a Buffet Breakfast of eggs, ham, and a variety of fruits.

Then the Youth Group Leaders and other dignitaries were introduced including Melvin B. Stein, Deputy Grand Master, Grand Lodge of California and the National Sojourners presented "Flags of America, Heroes of '76" an inspiring manifestation of various flags that in the last couple of hundred years have adorned various heroic Companies, Armies, and Stately Edifices. It was all done with taste, pride, and commendable artsmanship. Brother Hollowell recited a beautiful flag poem.

The whole program gave an appearance of a close and happy family outing. Proceeds, as in the past went to help Masonic Youth Groups with their programs and activities. I am glad that I was there with my lovely Lady Debby so that I can file this report. MZ, WM

BIRTHDAYS

James Easterly	7/15
Guy Francesconi	7/20
Robert Hollcraft	7/7
Ezra Johnson	7/29
Paul Jones	7/01
Donald Lee	7/28
William Nemecc	7/7
James Ogilvie, PM	7/05
David Parker	7/02
Richard Petersen, PM	7/24
Chris Quimpo	7/9
Lowman Sachitano	7/18
F. Walter Savage	7.06
Marlin Schragger	7/5
Justin Seligmann	7/13
David Smith	7/29
James Stewart	7/12
Louis Towne	7/21
Mitchell Wallace	7/09
W. Harold Williams	7/17
John Wright	7/12
Mazin Younan	7/04

Happy Birthday to these Brethren! We would like to wish you a happy birthday in person at the Stated Meeting dinner of your birth month. Please do join us and remember that your dinner is on the Lodge.

Paul Warren writes:

I wanted to give everyone an update as to why I haven't been around the lodge. San Diego is of course my home but I am remodeling a house in San Anselmo, CA (just north of San Francisco in Marin County). I have my hands full with a 1.2 million dollar fixer upper; Who would have thought? Nevertheless, the project is pretty exciting. We have gutted the house down to the studs and really could have just built a whole new house! © When finished we will have installed 10+ new glulam beams. The scariest beams are 10"x12"x17' weighing 500lbs. each.

My wife and daughter have joined me from Zhuhai, China and we are doing well.

I am looking forward to finishing the project and of course seeing everyone at the lodge.

PLEASE CHECK YOUR DUES CARD. IT SHOULD SAY "PAID THROUGH DECEMBER, 2006.

Please be considerate and make your dinner reservations early. If you are going to come to one of our dinners, make reservations. Two days in advance is sufficient, but please reserve.

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United We Stand, Together we can
 Make a Difference,
 The Family of Freemasonry

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JULY 2006 CALENDAR

JULY

- Mon 3rd** Dark
- Tues 4th** **Happy Fourth of July**
- Thurs 6th** **Stated Meeting** at 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
 Reservations must call 619-291-0465. **Business Casual with some Red White and Blue**
- Mon 10th** **DINE OUT FAMILY NIGHT at Home Town Buffet in Santee, (see article), 6:30 p.m.**
- Thurs 13th** Officers' Practice, Second Degree, 6:45 p.m.
- Mon 17th** Officers' Practice, Second Degree, 6:45 p.m.
- Thurs 20th** **Second Degree, 7:15 p.m.**
- Mon 24th** Inspector's School of Instruction - 7:00 p.m. - All officers to attend unless excused by the Inspector, call him at 619-461-5724
- Thurs 27th** Dark
- Mon 31st** Dark

AUGUST

- Thurs 3rd** **Stated Meeting** at 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
 Reservations please call 619-291-0465. Dress Summer Hawaiian
- Mon 7th** Dine-Out Family Night, location to be announced
- Thurs 10th** Officers' Practice, First Degree, 6:45 p.m.
- Mon 14th** **First Degree, 7:15 p.m.**

JULY STATED MEETING DINNER MENU

- Tender Beef and Chicken Kabobs
- Rice Pilaf and Oriental Stir-fry
- Spring Mix Salad and Assorted Rolls
- Apple Crunch and Beverages



You must call your reservations to Johnny at 619-291-0465