



# Trestleboard

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

October, 2006

Volume XCIII, Number 10

## INTOLERANCE

*"Are ye not then partial to yourselves, and  
are becoming judges of evil thoughts"*

Jas. 2:4

Early in his Masonic career, a Freemason is instructed upon the exercise of brotherly love and told that he is to regard the whole human species as one family. That family includes the high and the low, the rich and the poor who, as created by one Almighty Parent and inhabitants of the same planet, are to aid, support and protect one another. Throughout the remainder of his Masonic career, the Mason will receive countless additional instructions about the relationship of brotherly love to the concept of tolerance, especially the concept of religious tolerance.

Most people, including most Freemasons, generally regard themselves as tolerant of other people's religious beliefs. If asked that question during a town meeting, or in any other public setting it is not likely that many would hesitate to raise their hands in proof of their tolerant nature, if for no other reason than to avoid appearing to their friends and neighbors as socially acceptable. Indeed, as opposed to merely feigning sincerity, it is likely that most people actually believe they deserve to be labeled as tolerant, especially if they happen to be citizens of the United States. Our Nation's Constitutional protection of the freedom of religion is taught to school children here at an early age. Churches of several different denominations dot the landscape, as do the synagogues and mosques. While our society can hope that such fundamental devotions to the concept of religious tolerance is accurately representative of how we act as citizens, the truth depends upon how one defines that phrase.

Wikipedia, an Internet dictionary,

suggests that the word tolerance is a recent political term used as an antithesis to the word discrimination. That same source goes on to describe tolerance as a word most people would rather avoid using; a word that is evidently universally disliked, because it starkly challenges us to understand that it means much more than merely accepting differing opinions. As an example of that distaste, one person with an excellent reputation for good character who had recently discovered the joys of a particular religion, replied with a resounding "no" when asked whether or not the new religion brought a deeper sense of tolerance. "To be truly tolerant, as I understand the meaning of that word," that person said, "means that I am being dishonest to both my religion and the beliefs I hold to be true if I accept other religious points of view."

Here, we have struck upon another definition of tolerance, one that has enjoyed widespread acceptance throughout the world: a definition that clearly implies that being religiously tolerant means not having any firm beliefs in matters of morality and God. The basic misunderstanding behind that definition is based upon a misconception that one gives up anything other than ego and self-pride when other similarly held religious beliefs are tolerated. Such is not the case, at least not from the perspective of Freemasonry.

When you tolerate other religious beliefs you are not required to adopt those beliefs as your own. Neither is it required that you find any particular truth in those other beliefs. Although the failure to do so may expose you as a very unwise and narrow person, unwilling to discover the tremendous

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**contact us**

**Lodge Office  
619-291-0465**

**FAX**

**619-291-1364**

# FROM THE SECRETARY

2006 is rapidly coming to a close. In a month we will be having Election of Officers for the year 2007.

There are still several members who have not paid their 2006 dues. Brethren take a few moments and send in your dues, this income is what the Lodge functions on, so it is very important that you keep your dues up to date.

Please note that Blackmer Lodge, as other California Lodges, does not offer a Life Membership to it's 50-year members. Please continue to pay your annual dues.

**WE STILL HAVE SOME BLACKMER LODGE CUPS FOR SALE FOR \$5.00 EACH. GET YOURS NOW.**

We had a First Degree for our newly initiated Brother Scott Raab. Lets try to attend these degrees and make these new Brothers feel welcome. We have several more applicants, so we will be having more Degree in the near future. We will also be having a 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree before the first of the year. It is very important that we have as many members as possible for this honor of becoming a Master Mason.

If you have moved or are about to move it is very important that you send or call in your new address and phone number. It costs the Lodge money every time that the Post Office has to forward your mail.

Fraternally, Johnny Johnson, Secretary



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value in diversity, that alone does not necessarily render you intolerant. To be tolerant you simply need to be willing to extend religious freedom to people of all religious traditions even though you may disagree, in whole or in part, with the teachings of those other religions.

The ritual selected by Freemasonry to impart wise and serious truths has no single source. It is not Christian, Jewish, Islamic or Hindu. It does, however, find its source in each of those religions, as well as several others. Moreover, its beauty is richly augmented by wonderful philosophical schools from the past. Ancient Egypt contributed such symbolism as east-to-west, the divine nature of the Temple, the immortality of mankind and the resurrection. Our Hebrew brothers added the symbolism of the one God, which was later reinforced by Mohammed and other Islamic writers. The Hindus led us to adopt the symbolism of the beauty of the world around us, so rich and thoroughly satisfying as to be deserving of return visits after death in the manner of the reincarnation of souls.

Pythagoras, Philo and Plato tendered to the Craft the concept of mankind's unity with God and nature. Among its many valuable spiritual contributions, Christianity taught the Craft to teach about the inner soul, the mind of man and the freedom of everyone to choose good over evil, light above darkness. As a consequence, Freemasonry's ritual is the result of the synthesizing of different beliefs and different points of view. It is no surprise, then, that the fraternity not only promotes religious tolerance, it literally breathes it into the hearts and souls of its members.

In the Fellowcraft Degree, the candidate is instructed upon the value of earnestly seeking knowledge from the various liberal arts and sciences – grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. That instruction carries with it the implication that one should avoid doctrinal adherences to conclusions that are subject to change when that which was previously unknown shed new light on the matter. The tyranny of doctrine casts an ominous shadow over religious tolerance, because unchangeable doctrine has no room for new light.

When asked if new archeological discoveries might bring a change to existing church doctrine, one prelate recently answered "no." It is not difficult to understand the reason for that answer. Change in the fundamental facts inherent in any given doctrine could undermine a church's credibility. Accordingly, the best defense against such change

was, and continues to be intolerance. The result of such a posture was illustrated most graphically during that period of history known simply as The Inquisition – a period when prelates and kings roamed the civilized world searching for heretics to burn. The Inquisition led to mass killings of Jews, gypsies and supposed witches, as well as others who were deemed not to have sincerely embraced the specific doctrine then in power.

Sadly, events like the Inquisition have permeated man's history. In Rome, those who adhered to the tenets of the fledgling Christian religion were hunted, tortured and killed by those now referred to as the "pagans." Later, after the Emperor Constantine anointed Christianity as the approved state religion, the tables were turned. Pagans were hunted by Christians and the period of torture and death was relived. Catholics and Protestants continue to kill one another in certain parts of the world, even though each religion claims to be Christ-centered. Certain Islamic sects hate each other and send death squads to eliminate the "enemy."

Freemasonry teaches that each religious doctrine contains truth and error, and will forever do so as long as doctrine remains unchangeable. Thus, Freemasonry bears a close affinity to Hermetic philosophy, the origination of which is attributed to Hermes Trimegistus. That philosophy is of an esoteric nature consisting of mysteries that are expressed in symbols. Certain disciplines drawn from that philosophy have attempted to become complete doctrines: Kabbalah, astrology and alchemy are but a few. When such intellectual-

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Blackmer Lodge

## Trestleboard

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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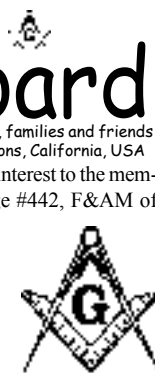
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ization of Hermetic philosophy attempts to establish unequivocal concepts it commits an abuse that is neither adopted by the philosophy itself, nor Freemasonry.

In Freemasonry, there are no theories; there is only experience, including the experience of interpreting symbols. Mystical experience is the root; the experience of acquiring knowledge may be considered the sap; and putting into practice the lessons learned from the interpretation of symbols constitutes the wood. An important lesson in this regard may be derived from the rich symbolism found in the book of Revelations, also known as the Apocalypse of Saint John.

The key to understanding the Apocalypse is the practice it by making use of it as a series of spiritual exercises that awaken deeper levels of consciousness. The seven letters to the churches, the seven seals of the sealed book, the seven trumpets and the seven vials signify a course of spiritual study. To understand those studies, one must place himself in a state of consciousness suitable to receiving revelations: concentration, inner silence, consciousness connecting with subconsciousness, followed by summarizing that which has been learned. Such effort at synthesizing, so well established in the Masonic interpretation of symbols, is incompatible with intolerance. Rather, it is highlighted by a sense of change; an awareness that no one man, one philosophy, or one religion embodies the entire truth. All that is or ever was is not entirely known and never will be entirely known.

To Freemasons everywhere in the world, the development of a tolerant state of consciousness is central to the promotion of brotherly love. One cannot love his brother, if he hates his religious doctrine. One cannot aid and support his brother, if he concludes that his pitiful condition is God's will visited upon he who practices false religious doctrine. And, one cannot rejoice in the welfare and successes of his brother when he arrogantly believes that he walks in truth and his brother follows the path of darkness. Tolerance, then, is more than simply putting up with someone else's differing religious belief: it requires embracing and loving the difference.

May the Great Architect of the Universe Bless You,  
John R. Heisner, PM

## FROM THE EAST

Brethren,

Going through some papers of the Southern California Research Lodge, I ran into an interesting article about different interpretations of the symbolism of the three degrees. Young Masons frequently ask older Masons what some symbol or event in Masonry "means," and they are sometimes disappointed that there is seldom one clear, simple answer. According to some, that is the beauty and strength of Masonry...one can find what one seeks. (Complete text of this part of the Master's message is located on **PAGE 5** which is available to all email subscribers).

On September 21st, Mr. Scott Raab became Blackmer's newest Entered Apprentice. It was a good evening. Chris Quimpo was in the East opening, obligating, closing all in great form. Worshipful Duane Ely was SW, Harold Thurber JW, Harold Weiss Treasurer, Johnny Johnson Secretary, Paul Athy Chaplin and JD and he also delivered the Charge, Mark Kaufman SD, Fellowcraft Larry Goertzer Senior Steward, Arnold Korry Junior Steward, Worshipful Micheal O'Zdravkovic was Tiler and Worshipful Coren Andrews was Marshal and also delivered a very impressive Lecture. Worshipful Galen Niedenfuhrer and Dusan Martin were enjoying the degree from the sidelines. All in all, one very memorable evening where brotherly love prevailed. The Degrees in Blackmer Lodge are of the highest quality available and a real happening in the life of a Mason but it does sadden me to see some empty seats on a Degree night. Brethren you will treat yourself to a great evening when your calendar has a proper entry and you stick to it. We should have a Third Degree in October, Second in November, The Installation in December, and if the paperwork gets done we might squeeze in some First Degrees  
Micheal O'Zdravkovic, Master

## BIRTHDAYS

Ralph Avalos	10/16
Garrett Boroda	10/30
S. Terry Block	10/08
Robert Booth, Jr.	10/02
William Bradford	10/03
Julian Cambridge	10/19
Fred Chabot, Jr.	10/16
Jeffrey Cronk	10/21
William Evenson	10/22
James Harmon	10/31
Marty Hull	10/26
Mark Kaufman	10/06
Michael Kaufman	10/23
Edward Kotler	10/22
Arthur Lewis	10/14
David Lewis	10/05
Fahmi Marini	10/24
Bijan Massrou	10/19
Ernesto Miller, Jr.	10/17
Schuyler Palmer	10/06
Gary Prodanovich, PM	10/18
Harry Rachman	10/20
Chris Reedy	10/28
James Seeto	10/26
John Townsend	10/09
Paul Warren	10/21
Keith Webb	10/04
Robert Welk	10/11
Wayne Yanda	10/08

Average age = 66.9 years old

Oldest = 94 years old

Youngest = 31 years old

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.

## DINING OUT

Dining out for October will be postponed to a later month due to Grand Lodge and needed practice and degree nights.

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for email subscribers, additional articles and information

**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.

Blackmer Lodge  
**Trestleboard**



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

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**OCTOBER 2006 CALENDAR**

**OCTOBER**

**Mon 2nd** Yom Kippur  
**Thurs 5th** **STATED MEETING** at 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.  
 Reservations must call 619-291-0465.  
**Sun 8th** **Grand Lodge Annual Communication**  
**Mon 9th** **Grand Lodge Annual Communication**  
**Tues 10th** **Grand Lodge Annual Communication**  
**Wed 11th** **Grand Lodge Annual Communication**  
**Thurs 12th** Officers' Practice, Third Degree, 6:45 p.m.  
**Mon 16th** Officers' Practice, Third Degree, 6:45 p.m.  
**Thurs 19th** Third Degree or Officers' Practice  
**Mon 23rd** 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 26th** Officers' Practice, 6:45 p.m.  
**Mon 30th** Officers' Practice/Qualifications

**NOVEMBER**

**Thurs 2nd** **Stated Meeting** at 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.  
 Reservations please call 619-291-0465. **ELECTIONS**

**OCTOBER STATED MEETING DINNER MENU**

Lemon Herbed Chicken and Baked Mahi Mahi  
 Wild Rice and Green Beans Almandine  
 Caesar Salad and Assorted Rolls  
 Pineapple Upside Down Cake  
 Beverages



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

## 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](mailto:ctandrews@comcast.net)

TELL YOUR BRETHREN

## HELPING YOUTH

If you shop at Albertsons and would like to help a Masonic Youth Group, contact Coren Andrews at [ctandrews@comcast.net](mailto:ctandrews@comcast.net) for details. It doesn't cost you a thing and can be as easy as handing the clerk your regular Albertsons card.

## COFFEE CUPS

Our Brother Secretary, Johnny Johnson has a treasure in the Lodge office just waiting for you to share. He has Blackmer Lodge coffee cups for \$5 each. Give him a call to purchase yours.

## FROM THE EAST

Brethren, Going through some papers of the Southern California Research Lodge, I ran into an interesting article about different interpretations of the symbolism of the three degrees. Young Masons frequently ask older Masons what some symbol or event in Masonry "means," and they are sometimes disappointed that there is seldom one clear, simple answer. According to some, that is the beauty and strength of Masonry...one can find what one seeks. Some examples may be found on PAGE 5 (available to email subscribers).

Oliver Day Street (Symbolism of the Three Degrees, written in 1922) talks of the lodge as representing the world, or at least the flat world that was contemplated in the past. As the Lodge symbolizes the world, the Mason symbolizes all mankind, and Freemasonry is an elaborate allegory of human life. The first degree represents the birth of the child, the second degree represents middle life and its labors including the search for knowledge, and the third degree represents the reflective stage of old age and everlasting life. He also says the first degree contains moral lessons, the second is intellectual in its purpose and spirit, and the third is an effort to make our hearts pure enough to be a fit place for the spirit of Deity to dwell.

George H. Steinmetz (Freemasonry: Its Hidden Meaning written in 1948) talks of the three degrees as representing the material nature of a man, his physical nature, and the wholly spiritual. Freemasonry is not a lodge or a ritual, but a plan for the living of a life. Man's spiritual evolution is dependent on his physical and mental attainments, but the spiritual always predominates in the complete man. This he learns a bit at a time, in Degrees, and each man must search in his own spiritual realm.

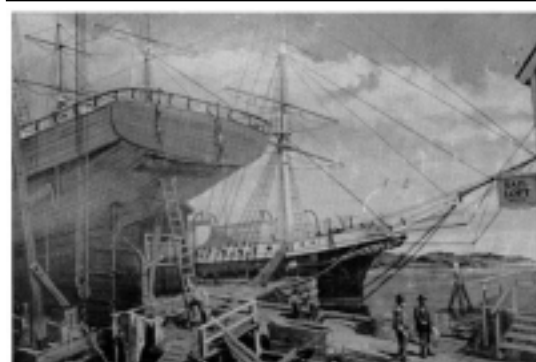
W. L. Wilmhurst (The Meaning of Masonry written in 1923) The three degrees represent a man's self-perfecting and harmonizing his body, soul, and spirit, being led from an old to an entirely new quality of life, with larger consciousness and faculties. The essence of the Masonic doctrine is that all men are in search of something in their own nature which they have lost, but that, with proper instruction and by their own patience and industry, they may hope to find.

Albert G. Mackey (Symbolism of Freemasonry written in 1869, revised by R. L. Clegg in 1952) talks of each individual Mason as being symbolic of the spiritual temple, and the Lodge of collected Brethren as a symbol of the world. He talks of the degrees as symbolizing the trials and sorrows through which man passes in his life. Another important symbol of the degrees is the search for the lost word, meaning the never ending search for divine truth.

Harold V. B. Voorhis (Facts for Freemasons written in 1953) points out four of the many interpretations of the symbolism of the third degree. (1) old age, experience., wisdom, preparation for the life to come, (2) truth and goodness will always overcome evil, (3) ignorance and brute force can destroy virtue, (4) immortality of the soul.

There are many, many more books written on interpretation of the "meaning" of Masonic degrees, which leads us to conclude that there is no "one right answer". In life, each Brother seeks for meaning through Masonic life and finds, to some degree, that which he is seeking.

M. Zdravkovic, Master



*We tore the iron from the mountain's hold, By blasting fires we smithied it to steel; Out of the shapeless stone we learned to mold, The sweeping bow, the rectilinear keel; We hewed the pine to plank, we split the fir, We pulled the myriad flax to fashion her.*

*Out of a million lives our knowledge came, A million subtle craftsmen forged the means; Steam was our handmaid and our servant flame, Water our strength, all bowed to our machines. Out of rock, the tree, the springing herb, We built this wandering beauty so superb.*

John Masefield

**"Associate yourself with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation for 'tis better to be alone than in bad company."**

**George Washington, A Worshipful Brother**