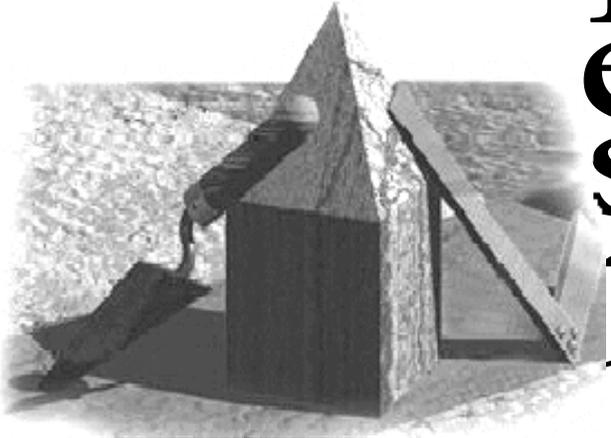


2009

January



Happy Holidays to all.

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## MASONIC LIGHT

by the Rev. Dr. James M. Floyd, Jr., MPS  
Evergreen Lodge No. 713, F. & A.M.  
Dwight L. Smith Lodge of Research, U.D., Indiana F. & A.M.

Are you a source of light, or of darkness?

We create our own reality. What we expect from life is what we receive. If we expect and look for the trouble, disagreement, and negativity in situations that is what we are sure to find. If however, we expect and look for the good, cooperative, and positive outcomes in situations that is what we will experience.

Life cannot, and does not always go smoothly. We cannot appreciate the good times and the joys that life brings without the rough times and the sadness that must cross our path on occasion. It is our response to these times that defines who we are.

Brothers, I am guilty of being a source of darkness. That is, in seeing and focusing only on the problems in lodge that I perceive need to be corrected. And in being privy to, and a part of, the occasional personality conflicts that are destined to arise in any group.

Yes, there are problems in every lodge. Yes, we do not always agree with, or get along with each other. This has always been, and always will be. But we cannot be negative about these difficulties. Our negative thoughts are like a cancer which spreads and weakens us, and those around us, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

It is easy to fall into the trap of negativity or darkness. But, with effort on our part, and the assistance of the G.A.O.T.U., we can instead choose to open our eyes to the light. My Brothers, that light is Brotherly love. Love is being positive and expecting the best life has to offer. Love is knowing that, although our human frailties will result in disagreement, where there is hope and understanding there can be the peace and harmony to work together towards a common goal.

So, for the sake of the Fraternity and your well-being, I urge you to make the commitment to change your life, to become a source of Masonic Light, that, like the Sun in the heavens, all the world can see.

# WHY THE BLACK AND WHITE CLOTHING?

by © Richard Num 30 August 1999

The following was compiled in response to a question by a Prince Hall Brother on the Internet asking why freemasons wear black and white.

This has been the custom for over a hundred years. In the 1700's freemasons did not wear black and white. In an old masonic catechism of that time there is a question asking about the Master's clothing - "yellow jacket and blue breeches" forms part of the answer. This was an allusion to the colours of a pair of compasses and a square, perhaps. There is a painting showing the Scottish poet Robert Burns in Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, Edinburgh (Scotland) on his appointment as lodge poet laureate - members of the lodge wear variously coloured coats, breeches and stockings, not black and white. This event was supposedly on 1 March 1787 ; the painting (by Brother Stewart Watson) was produced in 1846. Blue and Gold were certainly recognised as the official colours of freemasonry in the 1720's - nowadays these colours are used as the edging on aprons of Grand Lodge Officers and on their collars; private lodge officers use light blue collars and have light blue trimmings on their aprons.

A quick Internet search on the history of men's formal wear yielded two useful sites: site (1) and site (2).

>From site (1) it seems that black formal wear was invented by an English writer. The idea of wearing black for evening wear was, according to the English clothing historian James Laver, first introduced by the nineteenth-century British writer Edward Bulwer-Lytton, who utilized it "as a romantic gesture to show that he was a 'blighted being' and very, very melancholy. " And it was Bulwer-Lytton who gave further impetus to this notion of black as the color for formal wear by writing, in 1828, that "people must be very distinguished to look well in black." Naturally, the moment this statement was noted by would-be dandies, the style became decidedly de rigueur...or "cool" in modern parlance.

This was probably a reaction to the sartorial excesses of men during the time of the English Prince Regent (later Brother King George IV) when

dandies such as Beau Brummell wore more splendid apparel than females.

The original dinner jacket was "invented" by Brother King Edward VII when Prince of Wales. He was also the Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England in the last quarter of the 19th Century. He certainly made the dinner jacket fashionable, and no doubt this is why the vast majority of freemasons in Australia and some other countries wear dinner jackets (some WMs and Grand Lodge folk wear white tie and tails).

From site (2) - the tuxedo was "invented" by Pierre Lorillard IV, a wealthy man of Tuxedo Park in New York State, in 1896. His son and friends wore the first tuxedos to a white tie and tails ball. The cummerbund and bow tie (popular with many freemasons in Australia) were later additions to the "tux" outfit.

In the more tropical parts of Australia, masons wear white mess jackets rather than the sombre dinner jacket or tuxedo or tailcoat. Members of daylight lodges here wear day clothes such as a business suit or perhaps a formal sports jacket.

Frequent attenders at lodge take their freemasonry fairly seriously, and wearing formal clothes perhaps helps to set the mood. Furthermore, the "uniform" of black-and-white might mean that we pay more attention to the man than his clothes - the reverse might occur if we wore catwalk "gear" to lodge!

In many parts of the world, at least a portion of the lodge floor is black and white. As to how long these chequered or black-and-white mosaic pavements have existed in lodge, maybe someone else can answer that question. I would suspect that these pavements became fashionable in permanent lodge rooms, when chalk marks on the floor or floor coverings were no longer required to be laid out by the tyler in temporary accommodation such as taverns and hostelryes. As an aside, there is a vogue in Australia for some new lodges to meet in temporary accomodation such as clubs, so the rolled up masonic carpet (afghan) is making a comeback. Such carpets are mainly comprised of black and white squares arranged in a mosaic pattern.



## **THE IMPORTANCE OF TELEVISION IN PROMOTING THE CRAFT**

by Brother John Randolph Martin - Orange-CharlesTown Lodge No. 14 A&FM,

Brethren: The discussion of one day classes versus the need to learn the work of the craft, we get so worked up over how to make masons that we often miss the point. If we are trying to get masonry back on its feet, whether we give one day classes or one class per year is almost irrelevant! Yes, irrelevant! As many have pointed out before me, you cannot make the horse drink. But first you must lead him to the water!

Here is our answer: Television, television and television!

We know that we can sell masonry and the initiation system in whatever form it takes, we have done it! What we often cannot do, and have historically been prevented from doing, is to tell the good man that we want him. That is NOT what is proposed here! That too can be counterproductive! If a good man comes to us, "of his free will and accord", you and I you can get him initiated, passed and raise one way or another. Otherwise, if he is asked to join, the good man is just as likely not to value the experience no matter how it is conducted. Here is the crux! He must come to us in order to truly value what we have to give. So...how do we get him to come? Easy! Yes, EASY! Advertise! Do public relations things. Get in higher profile in the press. But MOST important, get on television! Television is the key, one way or the other. Television is the common denominator for all of our "brave new world". If we are willing to see this as the Shriners are beginning to do, with their excellent shrine hospital public announcements, we can blossom into this new era of electronics.

How do we know this? Great examples abound! The Navy gets large PERCENTAGE increases in recruits every time there is a new television series about the Navy (like "JAG", or even "McHale's Navy"). And we do not have to get into the television series business: Every time a "good guy" on TV is identified with an organization or cause during a show, the calls and public interest go up dramatically. Every TV station needs public service announcements, get in there and push. Those are just a few ideas to start the creativity rolling.

Some may say that the answer to the question of saging numbers and lost members is indeed that so many good men are watching television instead of coming to lodge, but as long as these men are in front of the tube, let's show them the craft as a worthwhile alternative.

Sure we need to find ways to retain members, but we are most vulnerable at the application level. Most, if not all, GLs have public relations mechanisms. If you as a member are really concerned with doing more than you are, or decry the loss of membership, put some time into this grand lodge mechanism. They

probably need your help. Because you cannot lead a masonic horse to water, you have to show it to him on television, first!!