

EDICT

To: The Masters, Wardens and Brethren of all chartered lodges of The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A. F. & A. M. of West Virginia.

Brethren:

Know ye, that by virtue of the authority vested in me as Grand Master of Masons in West Virginia, I Charles Frederick Coleman, II, do hereby order the following:

No subordinate lodge in this Grand Jurisdiction shall grant permission to Order of the Eastern Star, Mountain Chapter #136 to meet in its Lodge Building.

It is further ordered that no subordinate lodge in this Grand Jurisdiction shall meet in any Lodge room or building used by Order of the Eastern Star, Mountain Chapter #136.

I direct that this Edict be read in each Chartered Lodge at the next Stated Communication following its receipt, and that it be spread in full upon the minutes.

I further order and direct that failure to receive this Edict shall not constitute exemption there from.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Grand Master, to be effective on this eleventh day of October A.D. 2006, A.L. 6006, in the One Hundred and Forty Second year of The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of the State of West Virginia.

Charles Frederick Coleman, II

Grand Master

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EDICT

To: The Masters, Wardens and Brethren of all chartered lodges of The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A. F. & A. M. of West Virginia.

Brethren:

On October 10, 2006 at the 142nd Annual Communication of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of West Virginia a motion was made to adopt item numbers 1-16 of a document entitled Grand Master's Agenda. After discussion and failure to reach a voice vote consensus on the motion, a constitutional ballot was had. The tally of ballots having been reported, Grand Master Haas declared the motion carried.

During balloting and continuing to date a number of objections and challenges were issued. Some of the objections were made directly to Grand Master Haas and some were not. Grand Master Haas was aware, or should have been aware, of the following objections with the possible exception of numbers 7 and 12. They are as follows:

- 1) The resolutions and motions contained in the "Agenda" were not presented properly.
- 2) The resolutions and motions contained in the "Agenda" were not presented individually.
- 3) The resolutions and motions contained in the "Agenda" were not balloted upon individually.
- 4) A large percentage of the voting membership did not understand the issues upon which they were balloting nor had they ever seen the "Agenda."
- 5) A large percentage of the voting membership has still not seen the "Agenda" items.
- 6) At least one brother (not a member of the Grand Lodge) was allowed to speak on the motion.
- 7) The resolutions and motions contained in numbers 1-16 of the "Agenda" did not possess sufficient merit to be brought to the Grand Lodge floor.
- 8) At least one, and possibly two members who were only entitled to a one-quarter vote cast full vote ballots.
- 9) Balloting was conducted with ballot number 1. One member cast ballot number 2.
- 10) One member was in possession of, and deposited five full vote ballots in the ballot box at one and the same time.
- 11) Members were entering and retiring from the Lodge room during the balloting.
- 12) One full vote ballot was discovered remaining in the ballot box after the close of Grand Lodge.
- 13) Members were observed balloting out of roll call order.

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An investigation of the objections referenced in numbers 1-13 above reveals that these conditions did exist. (Whether shared by a majority or not, it is acknowledged that number 7 is a matter of someone's personal opinion.)

Know ye, that these objections merit serious consideration. Know also, that on their face, the procedural irregularities contained in numbers 1-6 above may constitute sufficient cause for setting aside the adoption of the Grand Master's Agenda. However, discussion was allowed on the Grand Lodge floor, the question was called for, and the membership voted to end discussion. In the absence of the withdrawal of the motion, the next logical step would be to proceed to a ballot. For these reasons, I am reluctant to arbitrarily substitute my judgment on these matters (1-6) for that of the Craft.

Regarding number 7 above, the merits of any resolution or proposal on the Grand Lodge floor must be decided by a vote of the membership. (Refer to Constitution of the MW Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of the State of West Virginia, Article II, Section 2) Additionally, report was made that "Agenda" items 1-16 had been reviewed by last year's Jurisprudence Committee, and I am again reluctant to arbitrarily substitute my judgment.

Numbers 8-13 above are obviously procedural errors, which can be neither dismissed nor explained away.

Regarding numbers 8, 9 and 12, an accurate tally of ballots cannot be ascertained, and it is unknown whether these irregularities could have changed the outcome of the ballot. (Grand Master Haas announced, "The vote was very close")

Also regarding number 9, it is impossible to determine whether or not ineligible members were permitted to cast a ballot.

Regarding number 10, the secrecy of the ballot was compromised.

Regarding numbers 11 and 13, the integrity of the balloting process was compromised.

Laws of Masonry, 15th edition 2005, Regulation 5, Section 5-Questions of Order, states in part "**all other questions (except questions of order) shall be decided by the vote of the members of the Grand Lodge present, voting in the manner prescribed in the Constitution.**"

See Constitution, Article II, Section 2 as to the manner of voting.

Constitution Article II, Section 2.1 number 8 states in full: "**Improper voting renders the result unconstitutional and void.**"

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Therefore, numbers 8-13 above constitute improper voting. Any declaration made by Grand Master Haas with regard to the outcome of balloting on "Agenda" items numbers 1-16, whether for or against, was made erroneously.

Know ye, that by virtue of the authority vested in me as Grand Master of Masons in West Virginia, I Charles Frederick Coleman, II, do hereby order that by operation of Masonic Law the ballot on "Agenda" items numbers 1-16 is rendered null and void, and the adoption of said items is set aside.

I direct that this Edict be read in each Chartered Lodge at the next Stated Communication following its receipt and that it be spread in full upon the minutes.

I further order and direct that failure to receive this Edict shall not constitute exemption there from.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Grand Master, to be effective on this fifteenth day of October A.D. 2006, A.L. 6006 in the One Hundred and Forty Second year of The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of the State of West Virginia.

Charles F. Coleman, II

Grand Master

EDICT

To The Masters, Wardens and Brethren of all chartered lodges of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A. F. & A. M. of the State of West Virginia.

Brethren:

A great deal of confusion exists regarding three actions taken this past year. They consist of a ruling, an edict and a directive. Each was made prior to the One Hundred Forty Second Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of West Virginia. I must therefore address these matters.

Regarding the RULING to change the way we know Landmark 8: The ruling was predicated on the assumption that the Grand Lodge has deferred to the authority of civil law to determine our age requirements. The RULING was also enacted without a precipitating incident. In consideration of this issue, I refer you to REGULATION 35 (Qualifications for Degrees) 35.1 that was adopted by the Grand Lodge in 1916, cited in 1922 and 1924. It states:

35.1 A petition for initiation into the mysteries of Masonry is, in effect, a legal document; the petitioner must therefore be of lawful age (21 years) before he can properly execute such a petition. -- 1916 Proceedings 47, 1922 Proceedings 50 and 1924 Proceedings 38.

The Constitution and General Regulations of the Grand Lodge of West Virginia as originally adopted: 1865-1882, pgs. 170&172 states in part:

"7th. In addition to these religious and moral qualifications, it is moreover necessary that every candidate for Masonry should be a free born man, of the age of twenty-one years or upwards, of good reputation, of sufficient natural and intellectual endowment with an estate, office, trade occupation, or some other obvious source of honest subsistence, from which he may also be enabled."

Clearly, the General Laws and Regulations require that a petitioner must be 21 years of age before he can execute a petition. It is also clear that the Grand Lodge has not taken any action to allow civil authority to determine its age requirements. Since the right to make General Laws is limited to the Grand Lodge, **the ruling must be reversed.**

By the same token, an EDICT was issued to overturn disciplinary action of the Grand Lodge at the 141st Annual Communication. Article I, Regulation 18 of the General Law states:

Sec. 16-Interpretation of Laws. The adoption by the Grand Lodge of a report of the Committee on Masonic Jurisprudence on the construction of any Masonic law has the full force and effect of a law of the Grand Lodge, and must be respected and obeyed until altered or repealed by the Grand Lodge. (Laws of Masonry, W. Va., 15th Edition, 2005, page 12)

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Because the Grand Lodge adopted the report of the Committee on Masonic Jurisprudence at the 141st Annual Communication, it must be respected and obeyed until altered by the Grand Lodge, and **the Edict must be reversed**. It is important to note that the proper use of the Grand Master's "edict power" is to address questions concerning the intent and interpretation of Masonic Law, and to correct improper actions. It is not to be used for the purpose of making new laws or repealing old ones. Nor is it intended to reverse action, which was supported by Masonic Law. I must admit that I respect the gesture made to expunge the records of the three brethren. Unfortunately, the EDICT was not consistent with Masonic Law. (Refer also: Constitution, Powers of the Grand Lodge, Articles III, IV and V, and: Laws of Masonry, Reg. 6)

Finally, a DIRECTIVE was issued concerning use of a Masonic Hall.

Regulation 31, Sec. 10-Use of Masonic Halls. Joint occupancy of Lodge Halls with any organization, association or order not Masonic is forbidden, except as hereinafter stated...

No organization not Masonic even though claiming connection with masonry through the family ties of its members with Masonry, shall be allowed to use the halls of the Lodges in this jurisdiction except those specifically and by name permitted by the Grand Lodge, and then only when the Lodge in each case gives its permission for such use. (Laws of Masonry, W.Va., 15th Edition, 2005, page 71)

The Laws of Masonry are clear. Since the legislative and judicial powers are vested in the Grand Lodge, **the Directive must be reversed**.

My brethren, I have labored over these matters. Through due diligence I must conclude that if the Landmarks, Constitution and Laws are to be the foundation of Freemasonry, these actions are necessary.

To avoid disharmony among the Craft, I sought counsel from the Deputy Grand Master, the Senior and Junior Grand Wardens and members of the Committee on Masonic Jurisprudence. While I realize I am solely responsible for the decisions herein, it is my desire to avoid acting arbitrarily.

It is therefore my order, that this Edict be distributed to all the Lodges in this Grand Jurisdiction, read in open lodge at the first stated communication following its receipt, and that it be spread in full upon the minutes.

It is further ordered that any person or persons having been initiated into the Mysteries of Freemasonry in this Grand Jurisdiction, of less than 21 years of age, are hereby declared irregularly made. Each Lodge Secretary is directed to immediately report such occurrence to the Grand Secretary's office.

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I further order and direct that failure to receive this Edict shall not constitute exemption there from.

Given under my hand and the seal of Grand Master, to be effective on this eighteenth day of October A. D. 2006, A.L. 6006 in the One Hundred and Forty Second year of The Most Worshipful Grand lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of the State of West Virginia.

Fraternally,

Charles F. Coleman, II
Grand Master