

## "Do You Need to Visit the Freezer"?

I just finished digging the holes and amending some soil so I could plant four pecan trees out back near the garden. I know that the squirrels will get most of what the trees bear through the years, but my Dad planted pecans, so I will plant them as well. There's a connection, and as I grow older, I become more like him - the good and the bad. I've got an arthritic knee like he did, enjoy cheap cigars, and I'm starting to say what I think more and more as the years go by. I've got two Pawnee and two Cape Fear pecan trees coming in a couple of weeks, and not knowing what the weather will be, I thought I should go ahead prepare the holes. Dad insisted that they be planted in January for the best results.

My neighbor, Basil Warren came over to help out with the digging. Basil is O.K. as neighbors go, but he has such a foul mouth that I try to avoid him. He just can't say much without cussing - sort of a blowhard. People are uncomfortable around him because of his language. I ought to tell him I don't want to hear that kind of language, but so far, I've resisted the temptation.

I don't think there's any better way to make a bad impression than to use profanity. Unfortunately, you and I know Lodge members who regularly use foul language, relish in dirty jokes, and seem to think it's a laughing matter. My Dad taught me that no man worth his salt used profanity. Through the years I have learned that he was right. I've never met a man or Mason of good character who made a habit of using profanity - never.

It's very important that Masons conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively upon themselves and the Fraternity. How can our families, or persons in our communities have a favorable opinion of our Fraternity if we demonstrate that we are not changed men who constantly work to polish our rough ashlar - our rude and imperfect state by nature? None of us are perfect - far from it, but we can certainly do something about our language. Maybe what some of us really need is an attitude adjustment.

Brother John Autrey, a member of my Lodge, Acacia #357 received a parrot as a gift. The parrot had a bad attitude and an even worse vocabulary. Every word out of the bird's mouth was rude, obnoxious and laced with profanity. Brother Autrey tried and tried to change the bird's attitude by consistently saying only polite words, playing soft music and anything else he could think of to do to "clean up" the bird's vocabulary.

Finally, John was fed up and he yelled at the parrot. The parrot yelled back, John shook the parrot and the parrot got angrier and even ruder. John, in desperation, threw up his hand, grabbed the bird and put him in the freezer. For a few minutes the parrot squawked and kicked and screamed. Then suddenly there was total quiet. Not a peep was heard for over a minute.

Fearing that he'd hurt the parrot, John quickly opened the door to the freezer. The parrot calmly stepped out onto John's outstretched arms and said "I believe I may have offended you with my rude language and actions. I'm sincerely remorseful for my inappropriate transgressions and I fully intend to do everything I can to correct my rude and unforgivable behavior."

Brother Autrey was stunned at the change in the bird's attitude. As he was about to ask the parrot what had made such a dramatic change in his behavior, the bird continued, "May I ask what the turkey did?"