

Rufus And Clarence

Our new grand master visited our district last week, and Acacia 357 had the honor of being the host lodge for the meeting. There was a fine crowd as all the lodges in our district were well represented. The meal was outstanding, old acquaintances were renewed, and a fine time was had by all. Our new grand master is a fine Brother who is quite sincere in his service to the Craft. He gave a very good talk, and we all left inspired to do a better job as Masons. I had some time to sit across from Brother Warren Thomas, a past grand master of some years ago. He shared some things I'd never really thought about. He said that before he was appointed to Grand Lodge line, he thought that the Grand Lodge officers were all wealthy, all college educated, all sort of puffed up over themselves, and were generally a political lot.

“Well, Warren said, it just isn't that way.”

“They aren't like I thought. They're just like the rest of us — some have a few bucks, some don't — some have College degrees, some don't — some are a bit puffed up, but most aren't, and few are really politicians like I thought.”

“But they do have one thing in common — all of them — they are all good Masons who want to do their best to serve the Fraternity.”

After talking with Warren, I'll be a bit more careful about my assumptions — things really aren't always as they seem, and so it was with Clarence...

There were two old geezers living in the northern part of our county, Rufus and Clarence.

They lived on opposite sides of the river, and they hated each other. Every morning, just after sun-up, Rufus and Clarence would go down to their respective sides of the river and yell at each other.

“Rufus!” Clarence would shout. “You better thank yo'r lucky stars I can't swim... er I'd swim this river and whup your butt!”

“Clarence!” Rufus would holler back. “You better thank YOUR lucky stars that I can't swim... er I'd swim this river and whup your skinny butt!”

This happened every morning for twenty years. One day the Army Corps of Engineers comes along and build a bridge. Still, every morning, every day for another five years this yelling across the river goes on, even with the bridge.

Finally, Mrs. Rufus had had enough. “Rufus!” she squallers one day. “I cain't take no more! Ever' day for 25 years you been threatenin' to whup Clarence. Well, there's the bridge... have at it.”

Rufus thought for a moment... chewed his bottom lip for another moment. "Woman!" he declared, snapping his suspenders into place, "I'm gonna across that thar bridge and I'm gonna whup Clarence's butt!"

He walked out the door, down to the river, along the riverbank, came to the bridge, stepped up onto the bridge, walked about halfway over the bridge, looked up...
TURNED TAIL AND RAN SCREAMING BACK TO THE HOUSE, SLAMMED THE DOOR, BOLTED THE WINDOWS, GRABBED THE SHOTGUN AND CRAWLED, PANTING AND GASPING, UNDER THE BED!!

"Rufus!" cried the wife. "I thought you wuz gonna whup Clarence's butt!"

"I was, woman, I was!" he whispered.

"Rufus!" she cried, "What in tarnation is the matter?"

"Well," muttered the terror-stricken Rufus, "I went to the bridge... I stepped up on the bridge... walked halfway over the bridge... looked up..." "And?" asked Mrs. Rufus, breathless with suspense.

"And," continued Rufus, "I saw a sign that said 'Clearance, 10 feet, 6 inches' he ain't never looked that big from the other side of the river!"