

The Burlap Sack

Alvin Lester and I were pulling our boat out of the water. It had been a cold, windy day on the lake, and we had only caught two small stripers, neither of which was large enough to keep. I was rubbing my right hand after dipping it into the livewell to remove the plug — it was so cold it felt like it would break off. We pulled up to the pumps, and I went inside to pay as Alvin topped off the tanks.

As I stood at the counter, I noticed George Elder at the stove. George is an okay guy, but not the brightest light in the community. Artis Lang came in the door with a burlap sack in his hand.

George spoke up immediately, “Artis, whatya got in the sack?”

Artis replied, “Fish.”

“Well, Artis,” said George, “if I guess how many fish you got in that sack, will you give me one of them?”

Artis replied, “George, if you guess how many fish I got in this here sack, I’ll give you both of them.”

George thought for a minute and said, “Three.”

“Sorry, George,” said Artis, “you missed it by two.”

I paid for the gas, got a couple of King Edward cigars and went out to the truck to tell Alvin about George and Artis. We laughed all the way to East Mombo.

Alvin is our immediate past master at Acacia 357. He’s my Masonic Brother, and good fishing buddy. Alvin is remarkable for what he doesn’t do at lodge - he never, never, has anything bad to say about anyone. He is always there to help and he sets a fine example for all of us.

Sometimes we are all guilty of standing out front of the lodge after a meeting, maybe leaning against our cars or across the side of a pickup, and rehashing the events of the evening. Maybe the master did something contrary to the way we think things should be done, or maybe we were in the minority when a ballot was taken to support some lodge activity.

I’ve learned from Alvin that a good Mason doesn’t talk about someone behind his back, and that if he feels something is amiss, he should approach a Brother privately and help him make things right.

Alvin is a good Mason, always supportive. I want to do all I can to be like him.