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From the Electoral College President

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

The spring meeting of the Electoral College, which will be held April 24th in Northern California, will mark an important milestone in the history of the College: there will be eleven members of the College, as prescribed in the Constitution of the Order. Even more important, the new appointments will achieve the most complete geographical representation of the Order that has so far existed, including representatives from Southern California(2), Northern California, the Pacific Northwest, the Rocky Mountains, Texas, the Midwest, the South(2), Washington D.C., and New England. I would like to thank R.S.S. Sabazius for the wisdom of these newest appointments.

This meeting also marks the end of the ninth year of my eleven-year term of service on the College. For more than half of that time, I have served as the president of the College. This has caused several of my brothers and sisters to question my sanity. The most frequently version consists of some variation on the question: "Are you crazy? Why would you want to deal with so much politics?"

The word politics, it seems, has a very bad rap. Whether this is a reflection of our national political life, or perhaps on the track record of politics in the occult, I'm not sure, but it is a misconception that deserves correction. Politics are, to use the dictionary definition, the "art and science of government", but more broadly, it is the art and science of working with groups of people. Only hermits can successfully avoid politics. The high and far-reaching aspirations of our Holy Order cannot be realized without considerable politics, politics of the best order.

Good politics, in a Thelemic sense, means the art of finding a mechanism whereby diverse stars with differing desires and abilities can each pursue their individual wills in harmony and cooperation. It means assigning clear-cut areas of decision making and responsibility, commensurate (hopefully) with the abilities of the individuals involved, and with enough diplomacy to avoid badly damaging any of the egos involved.

At its highest, good politics based on Thelemic principles becomes a pure expression of "love under will."

Are such ideals realistically possible in an international organization of passionately individualistic eccentrics such as our Holy Order? The answer increasingly seems to be yes, as attested by the continued growth of the Order, both in numbers and in emotional and spiritual maturity. One can point, of course, to exceptions to this trend, some of them rather spectacular, even in the recent past; but I feel that these failures are becoming more and more the exception and not the rule. And I earnestly hope

that I am not kidding myself in attributing some of this success to the growth in effectiveness of the Electoral College.

It has been my privilege during these nine years to work closely with some of the finest minds and hearts in the Order. (Three of those — Frs. Stein, Lauer, and Abbot — have become the first electors in history to have completed full eleven year terms.) During our terms of service, each of us have learned a tremendous amount about issues of "politics", and each of us certainly has more to learn. But the work is ecstasy, and although some of my friends continue to think me more than a little nuts, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve the Order in this capacity, and grateful for the beauty and wisdom of my fellow Electors.

To the greater glory of Thelema!

Love is the law, love under will

Frater H.K.

My Tenure in the Electoral College

By Fr. E.A.O.A.

(Frater E.A.O.A. was a member of the Electoral College from 1987 through 1998, serving as President from summer '88 through spring '91. He is a member and past Master of Pyramid Lodge in Buffalo, NY. He has graciously allowed us to reprint his valedictory address to the EC, given at the conclusion of his 11 year term. As a long time member of the Order and an active participant in our government, his opinions on the subject are of particular note. - Ed.)

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

Members of the U. S. Electoral College, Officers of U. S. Grand Lodge, Members of the O.T.O, Brothers and Sisters, and Friends:

Thank you for this opportunity to share my experience in the Electoral College with you. This is my last meeting as a member. I have the privilege of completing my oath as member of this body for 11 years. I served as president for a few of them. In talking to you today I am reflecting upon many aspects of the Electoral College itself and its development; my tenure as a member of that body; my hopes, aspirations and recommendations for the future of the Electoral College; and for the role in governance of the Man of Earth Triad of the O.T.O. in the United States; and of the O.T.O.

Contents

From the Electoral College President	1
My Tenure in the Electoral College	1
Profile of the U.S. Electoral College	4

itself. Much of what I say is personal interpretation of the events of the past eleven years, and summarizes my responses to them. My remarks reflect the philosophy I have applied in my decision making process as a member of the E.C.

MEETINGS OF THE COLLEGE

When I first began in 1987 physical meetings were held four times a year—at approximately the equinoxes and solstices. This was expensive of time and money—especially for me since I was then the only active member east of the Sierras at that time, and the meetings were held in California. That has changed somewhat.

As president I instituted two physical meetings a year at the equinoxes. Then solstice meetings were held by mail. The College instituted the policy of rotating the equinoctial meetings throughout the areas of the Order. This has proven very desirable. It allows the members of the College to meet more of the Man of Earth members at social functions coordinated to the meetings themselves. It familiarizes College members with local problems and situations. This rotation should be continued at the equinoxes. Two physical meetings a year seem adequate at this stage, and at which policies and procedures can be clarified.

The meetings at the solstices were then done by mail. And a satisfactory mechanism for handling routine matters has developed. In the last year, the experiment using IRC private channel may make possible improvement in the solstice meetings, and even allow for detailed discussion on policy and procedure. It appears to be another improvement. It may mean that more discussion of policy can take place at these IRC meetings.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COLLEGE

According to the by-laws of the O.T.O., the Electoral College has four specific responsibilities. These are how I view them.

1) Appointment of independent body heads. To do this wisely and preferably requires familiarity of the applicants by at least one college member. Paperwork needs to be handed in and reviewed by the Officers before being finalized on the agenda. All pertinent data should be completed and affirmed by personal contact prior to the meeting. Deadlines should be enforced so this can be accomplished before the meeting, and individual members gather any pertinent information from members of the Order in their general area.

2) Establishment of independent bodies. Basically the same principles apply to new independent bodies and the upgrading of bodies, as is suggested in item 1). It is important that when the master of a body moves, that the needs of the membership be considered paramount when moving charters. Body masters who move may start new bodies, or affiliate with existing bodies in their new location. Independent bodies are units of the Order, not the personal fiefs of body masters, no matter how long that position has been held! Personally I feel that the Order can only grow by the incorporation of new leaders regularly, and that body masters should change at least every few years to allow new “blood” to be trained and advanced.

3) Approval of Fifth Degree advancement. A procedure has evolved which respects the individuality and privacy of the process (We don’t need the situation where the vote was known to the candidate across country before the end of the meeting! Or having candidates trying to attend the meeting!). Rather than saying a person is rejected, it is better to leave

the issue as if the nomination had not been submitted. If the confidentiality of the meeting is maintained, the sensitivity of every applicant is protected.

Each applicant should be considered on his/her own merit, and not ride the coattails of another! I have always specifically questioned the synchronous proposal of closely related candidates. I worry that it is a matter of one riding the coattails of the other.

Here again, deadlines for submission of proposals should be clear and enforced, so that the necessary background checks and data can be confirmed, and lacunae filled in. The rituals follow the approval of the candidate and not vice versa.

Though there has never been a conflict, I interpret the by-laws to say that the College must approve all nominations. Hence, should there be a conflict between the College and higher governing bodies or individuals, nominees can be deleted from the College’s approved candidates, but none can be added. This would seem to be true for any Kingdom where an Electoral College exists.

4) Appointment of Revolutionary. This is a recent activation of a by-laws regulation. While the scope of available candidates is small, it is important to minimize conflicts of interests, or to have the person functioning in another major office within the Order.

5) Additionally, the Supreme and Holy King asks for recommendations for charters to initiate. While this is not a by-laws responsibility, the members of the College, collectively, should be very familiar with the Man of Earth members of the Order, especially those rising to positions of leadership and seeking initiation charters. It is a boon from the Supreme and Holy King, and a demonstration of his confidence in the EC. It is also a way of advising and protecting the King from making difficult appointments, and should be guarded jealously. However, the prerogative is his, independent of College recommendation.

PRACTICAL OPERATION

The College has succeeded well in developing policies and maintaining a high level of integrity and cooperation. When differences have occurred, it has always been “as brothers fight ye”. And mutual respect has resulted.

The Electoral College is the first level governing body of the Order. It is important that it maintain good relationships with the Man of Earth triad membership, and retain its confidence as a meaningful body. The session at the National Convention in Ohio did much, I feel, to foster that confidence on the part of the membership.

The College should function to encourage the expansion of the Order, and should assist cooperation among existing independent bodies. Now that we have a separate Nation in the United States, we operate as a College with clearly defined parameters. As the first, we probably will serve as a model for other nations as they are established. It is our responsibility to work as well, fairly and clearly as possible.

As a body established by the by-laws, the operation and minutes of the meetings stand independently. The actions of the E.C., however, are subject to ratification by other higher bodies. This has rarely been a problem created by difference. All such differences have been worked out fraternally. There is no reason

that such mutual respect should not continue.

At its meetings, the College now admit members of the Fifth Degree as guests, without voting privileges, providing they respect the confidentiality of the meeting. This brings the College to local area members of the Order, and provides better fraternal relations among them. The usual pattern has been to have a social affair open to all members of the Order after the meeting. Again, I feel this is salutary, and builds confidence in the College by those members.

As the membership of the College has expanded nationwide, it becomes imperative that the agenda be sent out not less than three weeks before the meeting. This allows for members to get cheaper transportation, and also to decide the priority of the meeting relative to his/her other activities and responsibilities.

ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

As Thelemites within the by-laws of the Order, we must each find our own role. These are my personal views as a retiring member of the Electoral College:

The formal qualifications are set by the by-laws. As probably the oldest member of the College I strongly feel that one should not begin a term after the age of about 40. I feel that the College gives experience to its members, and they should return that experience in service to the Order for a long time after they have finished their term.

The formal oath is for eleven years, without advancement. That should be maintained. The term is long, and at times I was ready to resign. However, the oath is as much to oneself as well as to the Order. It is a challenge and a duty assumed. The accomplishment is most satisfying.

One the other hand, for those who have chosen to resign early from the College, the advancement part of the oath should be maintained. I have seen such members subsequently withdraw from the Order, and other signs of bad karma.

The membership is probably best served by having staggered terms, and broad geographical representation. The functional importance of these are evident and explained above. The by-laws and oath imply that this is a Fifth Degree function, and should not be open to members of higher or lower degrees.

THE O.T.O. IN THE UNITED STATES

Since joining the Electoral College, the United States has been established as a separate kingdom under Sabazius. There have been, and will continue to be, adjustments as this first nation becomes established and operative. That includes the activity and policies of Sabazius. It will less influence the actions and policies of the Electoral College, since it has been operating under a "national viewpoint".

The Electoral College is the legislative body responsible for the Man of Earth Triad in the United States. Under the aegis of the Supreme and Holy King it operates to create harmony (a Fifth Degree function), equanimity and order. As members, our view point should encompass the good of the Man of Earth triad as a whole, rather than our regional or political agendas.

Since joining the OTO in 1983, the Order has expanded its membership, its governance, its independent bodies and its outlook to a truly national (and international) scale. Then the Order had bodies primarily in California and New York. I had to go to New York City for my Minerval through Fourth Degree initiations. To California for the subsequent ones. Now Minerval through Third are available pretty much throughout the country. Fourth and Fifth Degree rituals have been done much more widely. There is still distinct difference in thought and approach between the eastern and western brethren.

ΑΓΑΠΗ

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The use of emergency powers and regulations should be minimized. The Order is growing, but the regular rules should be followed, or changed accordingly. This makes for better harmony and understanding about the Order and its operations. Policies are operational guidelines, and the membership should expect to be made aware of the rules, and expect them to be followed. Changes in the by-laws and policies are necessary as the Order adapts to the times and to the place. But communication is the key to understanding and support.

It is important that the by-laws and policies are well known, and administered as objectively as possible, without personal biases for or against individuals.

Personally, I have tried to interpret the Law of Thelema, and contribute to the expansion of the Order when possible. Pyramid Lodge began as a camp in 1984, and has been active since. I was pleased to help in extending the OTO into the Upper Midwest area, westward from Buffalo into the Great Plains. The area has its distinctions, and has spread throughout the area from its first initiations in Cleveland in 1986. Members have achieved all degrees from Minerval to KRE. It is now represented on the Electoral College. The Middle Order members are now part of Obelisk R+C Chapter based in Buffalo. My other line has been my service to the EC, and helping it to evolve into the respected body that it now is. This is the part of my legacy that I pass down to you.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

We have been very fortunate that Magick, Book 4, has brought together material for the understanding of magic, and initiation in a Thelemic context. While the O.T.O. is a social/political order, initiation is certainly in the minds, and the goal, of many of its members. This book, together with Equinox III (10), form a firm foundation to achieve these. Since the OTO profits from the publication of these books, and they provide magical and philosophical guidance, the Order and the EC should encourage the use and practices within them as Thelemites.

Above all, as Thelemites we need to reinforce our allegiance to the principles of the Book of the Law, and to study it, as expressed in our Minerval Oath. It is our charter of universal freedom. Within the Book of the Law IS the Law..."Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law", and "Love is the law, love under will" and "There is no law beyond do what thou wilt". These statements are subject to individual interpretation according to the Class A Comment—there is no other dogma. The nature of Will is key to the process. The balance between stability and change, between orthodox and heretic, between centralized power and individual power must be guarded and protected.

Our rights at Thelemites are found in Liber OZ....Man has the right to.... Guard these jealously. Encourage these among the members of the OTO. Remember another statement from Liber Al: The word of sin is restriction.

Love is the law, love under will.



Profile of the U.S. Electoral College Circa 1999ev

President: Jeffrey Price - Fr. H'yitem k-Elohim,
Member of Horus Camp, Salt Lake City, UT. Joined the Order in 1977 and the EC in 1989.

Secretary: Soror Pagana
Member of Bubastis Lodge, Dallas, TX. Joined the Order in 1986 and the EC in 1996.

Sitting Members:

Soror S.A.
Member of Tahuti Lodge, NYC, lives in Davie, FL. Joined the Order in 1985 and the EC in 1990.

Frater Solis - Gerald del Campo
Member of Queen of Heaven Camp, Portland, OR. Joined the Order 1977 and the EC in 1992.

Soror Memento Vivere (MV) - Lauri Lowe
Member of LVX Lodge, Hollywood, CA. Joined the Order in 1987 and the EC in 1992.

Frater Veritas
No local body affiliation, Oakland, CA. Joined the Order in 1987 and the EC in 1994.

Soror M.A.S.
Affiliated with 'all bodies', lives in Indiana. Joined the Order in 1988 and the EC in 1997.

Paul Hume
Past Master and current member of William Blake Oasis, Silver Springs, MD. Joined the Order in 1991 and the EC in 1998.

Frater Mercurius - Michael Kolson
Member of Pyramid Lodge, Buffalo NY. Joined the Order in 1993 and the EC in 1999.

New Members:

Frater Melekh al-Astar
Alostrael Oasis, Calera, AL. Joined the Order in 1988 and the EC in 1999.

Christopher J Parker - Kallah Adonai.
L.V.X. Lodge., LA, CA. Joined the Order in 1983 and the EC in 1999.

Members Emeritus:

These brothers have completed their eleven year term in full.

Brother Steve A.
Member of EC from 1987 - 1998.

Brother Leroy David Lauer
Joined the Order in 1978. Member of EC from 1985- 1996.

Frater E.A.O.A.
Member of EC from 1987 - 1998.