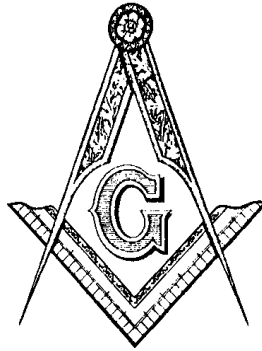


THE
NEWSLETTER
OF THE COMMITTEE
ON
MASONIC
EDUCATION



THE
GRAND LODGE OF CANADA
IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

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M.W. Bro. Gary L. Atkinson

THE GRAND MASTER

M.W. Bro. Gary L. Atkinson
The Grand Lodge of Canada
In the Province of Ontario

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TO ALL CONTRIBUTORS

Contributors are responsible for the factual accuracy of an article. Author's opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Grand Lodge A.F. & A. M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario, nor the Committee on Masonic Education.

Articles should reflect The Newsletter size and readability. Pages run 300-325 words, so normally a maximum of about 1200 words is the limit. Longer articles of special merit might be printed in sections over several issues.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Your envelope label shows when your subscription expires by indicating the last Volume and Issue you are entitled to receive. Renewal reminders are included where appropriate.

FROM THE EDITOR

I have always loved reading the Newsletter. Even better is opening it up and seeing an article I wrote! How many of you have felt that sentiment? For some reason, in the past we have had difficulty getting enough articles sent in to publish four times a year. And yet original masonic education is given nightly across the province.

We are trying to raise the Newsletter's profile in order that more people can share their researches. I ask you, the readers, to tell the brethren of your lodges about the Newsletter. Encourage anyone who gives a good presentation in lodge to send their work in. It doesn't have to be long. In fact, we also are running a contest for the shortest masonic education.

Perhaps you have lots of ideas, but just can't decide which one to work on. In the past, we have had themes for our issues. I already have a couple articles on the Masonic Apron. Let's make that the theme of the next issue! If you have anything to say about the history, symbolism or philosophy of the Apron, send it in - perhaps memories of your father's apron, or the apron of your mother lodge overseas. What happens to your lodge's old aprons? Are they in a closet, a museum or an antique shop?

The deadline for the next issue is Feb. 14 (Wow, the mid-point of February is Valentine's Day. Is there symbolism in that?)

The Editor

M. W. BRO. WILLIAM MERCER WILSON

[From a speech given by R.W. Bro. Allan J. Petrisor, now D.G.M., Member of Mercer Wilson Lodge No. 678, Woodstock on June 26 ,2005 at the gravesite of our first Grand Master, St. John's Woodhouse Simcoe]

"Let there be light." Jehovah said,
And primal darkness heard and fled;
Then, as the waters from the land;
He parted with almighty hand;
Light ridged the mountain chain with gold;
Light through the vales in glory rolled;
Light silvered ocean, lake and stream;
Light made the pall-like vapors gleam;
Light shone the forest vistas through;
Light gave the sky it's burning blue;
So shall a beam illuminate thy night;
From him who said, " Let there be light."

It is my privilege this afternoon to offer you some light into the life and times of Most Wor. Bro. Wm. Mercer Wilson, our first Grand Master and author of that inspiring poem of which you just heard an excerpt.

Born in Perthshire, Scotland, in 1813, Wm. Mercer Wilson came to Upper Canada to settle in Nanticoke in 1832.

With his good education, and being possessed of those cardinal Scottish virtues of integrity, industry and ingenuity, and despite the fact that he had no formal training in law, he had little difficulty in achieving an appointment as Commissioner, empowered to hold courts of justice, when he moved to Simcoe in 1834.

During the Upper Canada rebellion of 1837, anyone with any sort of leadership skills was drafted into service, and Wm. Mercer Wilson commanded a small company of Norfolk cavalymen who served with honour during that conflict, and was subsequently promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, commander of the Norfolk militia.

As if he didn't have plenty of work to do, minding the military and judicial affairs of the area, he imported the first printing press into Norfolk in 1840 and founded

the “Norfolk Observer”, in which he expounded with editorial eloquence. This was the first, and for many years the only, newspaper in the area. Thus, Wm. Mercer Wilson created an invaluable record of the early history of the Town of Simcoe and the County of Norfolk.

Wilson continued in the active affairs of the crown, assuming many additional legal duties, while at the same time studying Law in his spare moments preparing himself for the distinguished legal career that would follow culminating with his being appointed Norfolk County Court Judge in 1868.

As we obviously know, Wm Mercer Wilson had more than a passing interest in freemasonry, although what we don't know, and will never be able to guess, is where he ever found the time to accomplish so much.

It is quite obvious that he could not possibly have apportioned his time in accordance with the lessons derived from the twenty-four-inch gauge.

He was initiated into St. Johns Lodge, Simcoe, in 1840, subsequently serving as Master for a total of 11 terms.

He became a Royal Arch Mason in 1847 and rapidly advanced to the chair of Grand Z of the Grand Chapter for Canada in 1857.

He was elected or appointed Grand Sword Bearer in 1847, and Grand Senior Warden of the Grand Lodge of Canada West in 1848.

Masonry in Upper Canada at the time was a hodge-podge of lodges warranted under a jumble of jurisdictions, the English Provincial Grand Lodge and the Irish Provincial Grand Lodge foremost among them. Lodge secretaries may gripe and complain about the difficulties of dealing with Grand Lodge in this day and age, so they would surely sympathize with the secretaries of yesteryear who tried desperately to keep up communication with offices in England and Ireland, in an age where seven months was considered to be swift response time.

This was a troubled time in masonry, of which most of you are aware, and, like me, failed to comprehend. “In amity with” ... “not in amity with” ... bitter and un-masonic conduct among the so-styled “leaders of the craft” ... members of one lodge being forbidden to speak to members of the other lodge in the same small town. How dreadful it must have been in those days.

That masonry survived at all is a credit to the indomitable spirit of those pioneer brethren who just wanted to be masons and practice freemasonry in their lives and communities; who wanted no part in, and couldn't have cared less about the disgraceful internal politics of upper management; who looked past the gold braided uniforms of their Grand Lodge officers to try to find some real gold within the hearts of those who wore them.

William Mercer Wilson proved to be the right man at the right time; a man whose heart of gold was obvious to all who met him.

With his boundless energy, quick wit, facility with words, great powers of intuition and persuasion, Wilson was instrumental in uniting most of the lodges in Upper and Lower Canada under the new umbrella of The Grand Lodge of Canada, thereby quelling most of the animosity raging within Masonic circles that had almost destroyed the craft.

One hundred and fifty years ago, on Oct 10th 1855, Wm. Mercer Wilson was elected as the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada.

Each year at this annual pilgrimage we hear someone speak about our illustrious first Grand Master, and after so many years of oratory it is difficult to find something fresh and interesting to add to the eloquent remarks of the past. But, perhaps you haven't heard these following tidbits.

M.W. Bro. Wilson made international charity a hallmark of Canadian Masonry when he found, in 1867, that there were no funds for Disaster relief or for Charitable donations after having received an appeal on behalf of the widows and orphans of the state of Georgia following the American Civil War. That situation was soon corrected, and many thousands of dollars of Masonic charity have since found their way to needy causes internationally, including, within recent memory, some \$450,000 (in to-day's dollars, about \$4.5 million) in war relief and food parcels to Britain during and after World War 2.

The first documented masonic lodge to be established in the Holy Land, (or Palestine) dates from 1873, established at the initiative of an American Mason, M.W. Bro. Robert Morris, Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, and ably assisted by none other than our own M.W.Bro. William Mercer Wilson.

A charter was duly issued in February of 1873 for a Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, under the title or denomination of the Royal Solomon Mother Lodge, N^o

293; to meet at the city of Jerusalem, or adjacent places in Palestine, on the first Wednesday of every month.

By guess whom ?.....The Grand Lodge of Canada.

And signed, of course, by..... William Mercer Wilson.

The first meeting of Royal Solomon Mother Lodge was held in May of 1873 in the place known as “King Solomon's quarries” underneath the City of Jerusalem, and was duly reported to their Grand Master, William Mercer Wilson, enclosing as a memento an olive leaf plucked from one of the trees in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Royal Solomon Mother Lodge struggled along until 1907, when its charter was cancelled; and its history is only remarkable insofar as it demonstrates the international flavour of Freemasonry and the energy and foresight of its early leaders, including William Mercer Wilson; also causing us to marvel at the scope of the craft and its ability to communicate internationally in those pioneer times.

It has been said that M.W.Bro. Wilson’s words “could captivate the faithful, reassure the diffident, strengthen the debilitated, hearten the despondent, and guide the uncertain”. These words from his address to Grand Lodge in 1868 remain a fresh and meaningful message to all Masons of today :

“ May Masonry continue to flourish in all parts of the world, and may we , her workmen, prove equal to our profession and worthy of our exalted privileges; for, after all, Brethren, we are but just what our name conveys—merely builders, patiently but hopefully toiling on, and humbly following in the footsteps of our predecessors; trying to carry out the designs left by them on their Masonic trestle-board, and leaving the work to be continued and perfected by those who are to come after us..... let us work while it is day ; for the hour cometh when no man can work”.

On the 16th of Jan., 1875, Wm. Mercer Wilson passed to the Grand Lodge Above. He was just 62 years of age and was in his 10th term as Grand Master.

Of the many tributes offered upon his passing, none was more fitting than that by his Deputy, R.W. Bro. James Kerr, who said,

“In M.W. Bro. Wilson were embodied those attributes symbolized by the three famous pillars of the ancient temple . His Masonic wisdom was great. The strength

of his decisions was conceded by all, and the beauty of his Masonic and Christian walk won the admiration of his brethren.”

And so, we have done our best to honour him and his memory.

In 1857, Wilson Lodge No.48, now No.86, in Toronto was constituted and named after him.(Installed RW Kivas Tully as its first Master)

In 1859, Wilson Lodge No. 113 at Waterford, Ontario, was constituted and named in his honour.

In 1876, Mercer Lodge No. 347 at Fergus came into being.

In 1954 Mercer Wilson Lodge No. 678 at Woodstock was constituted. The Masonic jurisdiction roughly encompassing Oxford and Norfolk Counties has been named Wilson Districts, now Wilson North and Wilson South Districts. The cairn on this site was dedicated to his memory in 1922, and members of his lodge and brethren locally and from afar have visited here annually since that time to honour him.

In 1946 the first William Mercer Wilson Medal was presented. It is the highest honour a brother, who is not a past master, can receive and was established for Masonic Service far beyond the usual service expected of an officer or member.

May we continue to honour him and may we ever endeavour to walk in the footsteps of this most remarkable man, in whose memory we are gathered here today; that man whose writings speak to us from the past to remind us, in a time when society was never more in need of reminder, that :

“there is no right without a parallel duty,
no liberty without the supremacy of the law,
no high destiny without earnest perseverance,
and no real greatness without self-denial”

Reference materials include the books “The First Grand Master”, “Whence Come We” , “A History of the Grand Lodge AF & AM of Canada in the Province of Ontario 1855-1955” and “The History of Freemasonry in Canada” as well as histories from the different lodges named after our First Grand Master.

THE VALUE OF MEMBERSHIP

[By Wor. Bro. James O'Halloran, P.M., Star In The East No. 164, and Moira No.11 Prince Edward District, a recent graduate of the College of Freemasonry]

A few years ago my Mother Lodge had to make a drastic choice: raise our membership dues by 53% (from \$65 to \$100), or consider new accommodations. Since ours is a proud rural community the latter really was not an option. So our dues went up.

Now, we were fortunate to not lose anyone because of that decision; in fact, we explained our situation so successfully that many Brethren offered financial donations in anticipation of the dues increase. Yet the entire process of re-examining our dues structure left me wondering: why was the discussion framed around "cost" instead of "worth?" Myself included, nobody argued that local lodge membership was annually "worth" \$100. Why were we speaking about lodge membership as an expense, and not a benefit?

Let me be very clear: I would never want to see our Fraternity priced in such a way that we became exclusive. Yet, I wonder if part of our problems today hinge on our reticence to perceive and value the Fraternity appropriately. Is the price of membership so cheap that potential members are dissuaded from joining?

Consider the following:

- I buy the national newspaper each day, paying \$7.25 per week. That amounts to \$377 each year.
- My high-speed Internet service costs \$30 each month, totaling \$360 for the year.
- Cable television costs \$65 monthly, \$780 annually.

In total I pay about \$1500 annually to be informed and entertained. Television, Internet access and a daily paper are worth \$1500 to me.

Reconcile this cost to the price I pay for Masonic membership in my District. I belong to two Craft Lodges, and three concordant bodies. In total my Masonic dues total \$350. Let's just say that I also spend, on average, \$20 each week on incidental costs (gas, lunch, courses, whatever) associated to Masonry. That's another \$1040 annually. The grand total would be \$1390 spent on Masonic

membership each year. That is 7.33% less than what I spend altogether on the items listed above.

To add a further price comparison to the lodge, membership in the local Rotary club costs roughly \$350 each year. This is comparable to what I pay to belong to *five* Masonic bodies. Local Rotarians also spend \$20, on average, each week on incidental costs to belong to their organization. The local Rotary club does not even have it's own building or furnishings. It does not offer elaborate ritual combined with detailed regalia. How then does Rotary justify this membership price to its members, unless there is some perception of value?

The real question I find myself asking is, "if we love the Fraternity so much, why are we so cheap about it?" If we speak about its merits and values, and believe we offer something of benefit to mankind, why are we so miserly when it comes to the cost of membership? We begrudge per capita dues to Grand Lodge- as if the Fraternity could exist without those individuals who serve us (voluntarily, I add). Seldom do I hear Brethren speak of the "worth" of membership. Nobody seems to say Masonry is "worth" \$1500 per year. Why is that?

To be sure, in each Lodge there is probably a Brother or two who struggles to find the money to pay his annual dues. A few times I have called to ask a Brother in arrears about his situation: I will always remember the Brother whose telephone service had been restricted to incoming and local calls only. That was a very tough call.

That notwithstanding, is it time for us Masons to reconsider how we value our Fraternity? Is membership undervalued? And if it is undervalued, could that be a contributing factor to our decline in numbers? After all, we all know that you get what you pay for: a \$10 lunch at a fast-food outlet is qualitatively different than a \$30 meal at a proper restaurant. I wonder how many prospective members quietly ask themselves, "Why is Masonic membership so cheap? Is there something I'm not being told?"

Certainly value is a subjective term. Economists say "value" is determined by what the market will bear: if you can sell a product for x, then the value of that product is x. Since my Mother Lodge successfully raised its' dues by 53% and did not lose a single member because of that increase, it is fair then to say we were undervaluing lodge membership for too long.

Was there a consequence of undervaluing lodge membership? We were placed in

the situation of requiring a substantial (53%!) increase in dues, and our long-term viability is still not assured. My Mother Lodge *must* consider fundraising activities out of necessity, not out of interest or desire. We remain in a situation where it is difficult to remit the dues of a Brother who has fallen on hard times. We did not perceive membership in our lodge to be as valuable as it is, and now we are paying a real price for that.

We Masons have a great gift to offer mankind. We do take good men and make them better, and in so doing we improve the world. I think it is a shame we do not place greater value on what we offer. And I fear the consequences of someday learning we cannot continue because we have failed to value membership appropriately.

LIGHT MY FIRE

[By R. W. Bro. Barry Snider, P.D.D.G.M., Waterloo District, on his Official Visit to Temple Lodge No. 690, April 16, 2003]

We do not often think of masonry in the same sentence as lighting my fire. Generally we think of a night at lodge is somewhat subdued more serious night with ritual and education as the centrepiece. But lodge while instructing us in a moral life must also be fun. It must light a fire within us.

This "fun" is the key to the success of every Lodge. Actually, it is the key to the success of every organization. FUN! That's one of the big answers to many of our leadership problems. If our job isn't fun, then it's drudgery. Many men go to work morning after morning for only one reason; it puts the food on the table and keeps a roof over our heads. But there is no such compulsion to attend a Masonic Lodge or a Masonic function.

FUN! That's what we've got to have in masonry. We've got to make it something to enjoy. Now, I don't mean undignified and a cavalier attitude in the way we conduct our meetings and perform our ritual. I mean a sharing of philosophical values in such a way that it leaves everyone with a sense of well being. A Mason should radiate the joy of wisdom."

This can come from knowledgeable Masonic speakers who can, with a little humor, make us appreciate Freemasonry more. It could be a discussion; a Masonic play such as was presented Monday by New Dominion Lodge, a social hour or

talking over a shared beverage after lodge. It can take many directions.

The serious and well performed degree work is fun. When properly done, it leaves us with a definite sense of happiness. Fun is the pride a man feels in the presentation of good ritual. It's well-known theme of victory over death, the development of man from youth, should continually make our hearts swell with pride in the teachings of the greatest fraternal organization known to man. Teamwork is fun. Each member has an opportunity to share his knowledge with his fellows. It helps each man to grow into a leader.

Freemasonry IS fun! It was designed so by our "ancient brethren". In those Lodges where this concept is followed, there is growth because there is fellowship. These Lodges have no problem with attendance, with excellent degree work, with community relations. They are growing in strength. And they are growing leaders.

Yet we still hear the constant refrains that are lodges are in trouble due to membership, that we cannot afford our buildings. I share a view with our District Secretary that our dues are too cheap, that we wouldn't have problems with members or in maintaining our buildings if our dues were 5 times what we charge. By short-changing ourselves in what we charge we are really saying Masonry is worth very little to us. Years ago to join and maintain membership men would pay a week or two weeks' salary. Today in our nickel and dime approach to membership and dues, we harm our lodges and our craft as a whole, in not giving it proper value.

By not being somewhat exclusive, remember it is the mysteries and privileges of ancient free masonry, we have men that although fine men are not good masons. If we lower our standards in general membership it will then follow to a lowering of leadership.

We need and must have leaders that inspire our members, who light our fires. A symbol of a dying or decaying organization is one where the leaders are only caretakers, where all they want to do is get through the year and preserve the status quo.

THE REAL LEADER WILL ALWAYS:

- Give recognition
- Encourage creativity
- Request assistance

- Accept blame
- Give credit
- Seek advice
- Practice participation

THE LEADER who can go against the grain, lead, and encourage our membership:

- Desires criticism
- Seeks responsibility
- Is creative; has ideas
- Solves problems
- Works toward goals
- Initiates action
- Wants to be independent But
- Adjusts to reality

A good or progressive leader is certainly reflected in the famous quote from Robert Kennedy: “Some men see things as they are and say, ‘Why?’ I dream of things that never were and say, ‘Why not?’” This is the type of leadership we need, from Grand Lodge on down to each and every one of our lodges.

In all the things we do we should look for excellence, from our ritual, our dress, posture and demeanor in lodge. All things associated with our craft should endeavor to reflect favourably on our institution from a professional looking summons to well organized and dignified social events.

We cannot hope to learn how to improve if we are unwilling to see how others operate; what do other masons do? If you only stay within the confines of the lodges in which you were initiated, you will be the worse for it. It is like a TV, plug it in a you will only get the local station, your mother lodge, with an antenna you can get up to channel 13 or your district, with cable you have a choice of hundreds of channels or our Grand jurisdiction and satellite can give you access to channels over the world just as there are masons and lodges spread over the whole of its habitable surface. I urge you all to expand the channels of your Masonic viewing.

Brethren from Fun, giving our membership proper value, Good leadership and Masonic travelling our lodges and individual masons will be revitalized. As I have said before we must do the right things and do things right for our craft to remain and grow into the vibrant and exciting fraternity we know it can be. If we do all those things masonry will light your fire.

LODGE NIGHT

[Author Unknown, From the St. Thomas District website
<http://www.stthomasfreemasonry.com>]

1. He slowly opened the door to his locker. He hung his police uniform on the hooks and took out his suit. It was Lodge night.
2. He watched as the last employee left his business, locked the building and made the evening bank drop. He then headed off with a whistle on his lips and a spring in his step. It was Lodge night.
3. The young man helped his wife clear the table. He then said good night to his children and snuck into his room to change his clothes. Upon leaving he smiled at his wife and kissed her. It was Lodge night.
4. It had been a hard day. Navigating through the complexities of the legal system was rewarding work. It was also tiring. Normally he would have been headed home for a relaxing evening. But tonight was not normal and he felt none of the usual fatigue as tonight was Lodge night.
5. Life had not been pleasant since his wife died. His family lived far away and with each passing year it became harder and harder to do the simple things in life. And most of all he missed his life long partner. Tonight he felt a little less pain and life didn't seem nearly as bad. It was Lodge night.
6. The accident had been terrible. But there was some consolation that his skills as a doctor had saved a life. Still it would not be easy and there were possibilities of complications. But for a while he could place his worries in the hands of others as tonight was Lodge night.
7. It is hard looking for work when the job market is scarce. Each day he

faced the nameless horde of people who continue to tell him that he was not needed. He faced rejection and the possibility of hardship at every turn. Tonight he knew he was wanted and needed; it was Lodge night.

8. He sat alone in the small room wearing clothes that were not his. He had received warm welcomes from a number of men he didn't know and a few he did. Now with an ancient relic of a bygone age they told him to wait patiently, yet he looked forward to it with anticipation. It was his first Lodge night.
9. From all walks of life we come. We donate our time to an age honoured tradition. We donate our money to help those who cannot help themselves. We gather in fellowship and part in peace. For a while we can lay aside our differences and worries to bask in our shared experiences. We can talk with men who are our equals, men who work to better themselves.

Tonight is Lodge night and I am glad I am a Mason.

A PERSPECTIVE ON MASONRY

[By Nora Leeder at the 100th Anniversary of Harding Lodge No. 477, Little Britain, on Nov. 5, 2005]

On behalf of the ladies of Woodville, the District and from across Ontario who are here this evening, I would like to thank you for the invitation to join you this evening. It certainly is a wonderful opportunity to revisit old friends and to make new acquaintances, all of which are joined together in the common link of the Masonic Lodge.

The Masonic Lodge has been a part of my life for my entire life. As the daughter of a mason, Hugh Imrie, I grew up with the mystery of "lodge." Lodge nights were always rushed as supper and the chores always had to be done early on those nights and since I frequently spent time at the barn with my dad, the mumblings that my dad recited quietly to the cows during milkings became known to me as "lodge work." I think those cows knew a lot more about the Masonic Lodge than I ever will. From a young age, I would go with my mom to serve at lodge banquets. It was then that I learned that it was really important to learn to make pies! And personally as a child, I was a big fan of Grand Lodge, as my mother would always take me to Toronto to shop in the big city while dad attended the Grand Lodge

meetings. I really believe that I was more excited about Grand Lodge each July than my father was. The year that dad was District Deputy was a busy year in our home. And although I didn't really know what he did when he left the house, I remember thinking how great he looked dressed up and heading off with his black case under his arm to attend meetings throughout the district. My mom explained that in the case was an apron. Now there was another "mystery" for me. Let's face it, it's not every girl during the sixties who would admit that their dad wore an apron in public.

But, for as much as The Masonic Lodge was a part of my life, I must admit that I never truly understood what Masons were all about. It wasn't until I was much older, and perhaps wiser, that I truly began to understand that the Masonic Lodge is not just about meetings once a month and what seemed to me a strange concept, practicing for meetings. Instead it is about how you live your life every day. As I reflect, I realize now that my dad has lived his life and brought up his family with three important pillars to support and guide him – family, church and the Masonic Lodge. I believe that my dad exemplifies the true meaning of being a Mason and that he represents each Mason here this evening. I have come to understand that Masonry is not just something that you do once a month, but it defines who you are as an individual every day of your life at home, at work and in the community. I therefore feel fortunate that my husband also chose to join the masons for he also upholds those values in our home – three major priorities – family, church and the Masonic Lodge.

Ladies as we look around the room tonight, we see that the men in our lives live their lives in a way that promotes brotherhood. It makes them strong as an organization but makes them even stronger as individuals.

As Harding Lodge No. 477 celebrates 100 years of existence, we are thankful not only for being a part of this celebration but for being a part of your day to day existence as individuals in our lives. Thank you for the opportunity to celebrate with you.

BE PREPARED (FOR DAN BROWN'S NEXT BOOK)

[By R. W. Bro. John Hodder, P.D.D.G.M. Sudbury-Manitoulin District]

The Boy Scout motto "Be Prepared" may well be applied to freemasonry over the next while as Dan Brown's new novel, author of "Angels and Demons" and "The Da Vinci Code" is released. It is supposedly highlighting masonry. As we have no access to a prepublication copy, we can only assume that, if it follows the same development and style of his former novels, it will raise questions and concerns about masonry and provide misleading information and partial explanations. It will probably also place masonry in a position it has seldom been in as the readership will be huge and will represent a widespread and diverse public.

The objective of masonry should be to turn this focused and public attention to a positive and informed explanation of freemasonry.

How do we do this when our membership is so diverse geographically and has such a range of masonic knowledge; from the Master Mason to the Entered Apprentice; from Grand Lodge officers to the everyday mason; from the regular attenders to the irregular attenders to the non attenders; and to all the brethren who are unsure or uncomfortable in explaining masonry to non masons.

Here are some steps, guidelines or ideas which may be of some assistance in becoming prepared.

No. 1 :- Be positive. Take any opportunity to answer questions as best you can or take the time to find the answer and make sure that you follow up with the answer. Offer explanations to inquiries and expand with researched information as may be necessary.

No. 2 :- Do not hesitate to admit that you do not know an answer to a question as masonry is a large and complex fraternity. Remember that each mason is on a journey from the rough ashler to the perfect ashler. However, still try to find the information for the inquiring person or group.

No. 3 :- An open house in the lodge room might be a good vehicle to provide positive information. Remember that it may be wise to advertise extensively. i.e. libraries book stores, churches, etc.

No. 4 :- In each district, the D.D.G.M. should ensure that there is a plan in place and a process for access to information to positively reflect on masonry.

No. 5 :- There should be an easy access site so questions can be answered quickly and easily. This is particularly important for masons. The site should be advertised in each lodge summons as it reaches all masons. Remember that the regular mason will be front line of information and image that the public will encounter. Be positive.

Although the above has been developed with a perceived problem in view, we could consider it a method for any local or widespread concern. Remember that these are only some ideas and I am sure there are many more that others can devise.

Always remember that we believe in freemasonry and all we have to do is communicate that belief positively and sincerely.

THE CABLE TOW

[By Bro. Bogdan Marin of Grand River Lodge No. 151, Waterloo District]

What is Freemasonry? A beautiful system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.

Symbols. If you think deeper, our world, our life is full of symbols. We just do not know their meaning, and therefore we tend to ignore them. However, in spite of our ignorance, they still exist, making our life and our world worth living. Freemasonry, as its definition expresses it, is based on symbols. All the ceremonies from the 1st to the 3rd degree are full with hidden and not so hidden symbols.

Let us take for example the ceremony of the 1st degree, the "Initiation". All of us have taken it, and I hope, all of us still remember it clearly. The candidate enters the Lodge blindfolded, dressed, or rather undressed, with a cable tow having a running noose around his neck. Holding him by the arm and the cable tow the Junior Warden guides him around the Lodge. Reaching the altar he has to take his Solemn Obligation, and then he is asked what his predominant wish is. He answers: "Light". The Chaplain recites the first verses from Genesis, and the

blindfold is removed enabling him to see the "Light".

Let us reformulate this whole first part of the ceremony. The candidate enters the Lodge, from the outer world, and he is blind, having a physical connection with the Lodge, or the new world, through the cable tow. From the moment he takes upon himself the Solemn Obligation, there is no need for the physical connection. A stronger one, a moral connection, replaces it. Actually, the candidate is reborn in the new world of Masonry. The physical link, like an umbilical cord, the cable tow is replaced by a moral obligation towards the Lodge. And because the cable tow, i.e. the connection, has two ends, similarly the physical link is replaced by love from the Lodge towards him. In the beginning the newborn is connected to the mother by an umbilical cord, and when he sees the light, the cord is severed and replaced by love. This is how we all were reborn in the new world full of mysteries and symbols of Freemasonry. I know for sure that after my initiation nothing was the same. Everything was different at once.

THE GRAND AND ROYAL SIGN

[By R. W. Bro. Raymond Daniels, P.G.J.W.]

"After the completion of the M.M. degree and before closing the lodge in the M.M. degree, the candidate should be instructed and given the opportunity to perform the G. and R.S. and repeat the words."

Guide Lines for Lodge Officers in the Mechanics of the Work (1985) p. 20

Bro. _____ It is my privilege to give you your first sixty seconds of Masonic Education as a Master Mason. The Third Degree is not the end, but rather the beginning of your life-long quest for further light in Masonry. During the ceremony you were first informed that there are three signs - two casual and one penal. Then you were told that there are in reality five, corresponding to the Five Points of Fellowship. Now I must tell you that there is another which has not yet been mentioned: It is THE GRAND AND ROYAL SIGN which is used by all the Brethren in the Ritual Opening and Closing of the Lodge in the Third Degree. You have already discovered that many of our rites and ceremonies refer to the construction by King Solomon of the Temple at Jerusalem. The Grand and Royal Sign comes to us from the elaborate Dedication of the Temple. The scriptural reference to the sign may be found in 1 Kings, Chapter 8, Verse 22: "And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven." In order that you may

participate fully with us in the Closing Rites and Ceremonies, I will demonstrate the Sign and rehearse the Words that accompany it with you...

MASONIC DECK OF CARDS

[By R. W. Bro. H. Daniel Knox, P.D.D.G.M. Waterloo District, currently W.M. of Wilmot Lodge No. 318. Article reprinted from the Records of Medwayosh Council, Allied Masonic Degrees,]

As we are all aware, many of our brethren travel to many countries of the globe. In many of these countries Masonry is not accepted and in fact is prohibited. An example of this would be Saudi Arabia. Brethren who wish to practice our Craft must do so as an underground movement. I am told by a very reliable source that there are men who have the Masonic furnishings and jewels in a miniature form and transport them from place to place, mostly in private homes. They never meet in the same place twice in approximately two years so as not to be found out. If a foreigner is caught, he is jailed for approximately two weeks or until his deportation papers are prepared and he is deported. If a native is found out, very serious consequences apply, as much as life in prison.

One of our brethren overcame this hurdle by carrying a simple deck of cards with him which became his Ritual, Almanac, Calendar, and most important his Volume of the Sacred Law.

He had taken his cards to Lodge one evening when the Worshipful Master approached him as to their use. His explanation was as follows:

The **Ace** - in the Pythagorean System, the number one is identified with reason, because it is unchangeable. It reminds us there is but one Supreme Being whom we ought humbly to adore.

The **Duce** or Two is opinion - there is strife and disorder. Also, it is the representative number of the pillars of Fire and Cloud, the import of which is found in the Volume of the Sacred Law.

The **three** - three is the perfect number. The ancients believed their world to be ruled by three Gods: Jupiter (Heaven), Neptune (Sea) and Pluto (The Underworld).

The fates controlled birth, life and death. The Trinity is the basic Christian Creed, and Jesus arose from the dead on the third day. The numeral three describes Masonry almost in its entirety: three Greater Lights, three lesser lights, three degrees, three working tools in each degree, three Grand Masters, and the list goes on.

The **four** is associated with Justice and Solidarity, it reminds us of the four tassels representing the four cardinal virtues: Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice.

Five is the mystic number of the Pythagorean System and philosophy because it is the sum of 2 and 3, the first even and odd numbers. The wounds of our Redeemer were five, two in the feet, two in the hands, and one in the side. It also calls to mind the five noble orders of architecture.

The **six** represents the six days the Great Architect of the Universe laboured to build his temple and rested on the seventh.

Seven is the sacred number and the luckiest. There are seven days in a week. Seven deadly sins:

Pride, Wrath, Envy, Lust, Gluttony, Avarice, and Sloth. There are seven virtues as well: Faith, Hope, Charity, Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice.

Eight is the number of the Beatitudes (*Matthew 5:3-11*): one of which comes to mind "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God".

The **nine** refers to the number of stars visible in the Lodge Room: seven in the West, one in the Mosaic pavement, and the bright morning star in the East.

The **ten** denotes strength and goodness, the Ten Commandments, the original Landmarks of Masonry and the very foundation of our Society.

The **Jack** or Knave alludes to that nefarious Fellowcraft Jubelum, who when his companions Jubela and Jebelo failed in their attempts, felled the Grand Master Hiram Abif.

The **Queen**, "The Widow", "Is there no help for the Widow's Son?" I am sure as

we have travelled through life, when circumstances have dictated it, there has been an answer to this question.

The **King** - can only have reference to King Solomon.

In Closing - a quick summary -

- There are 365 spots in the deck of cards: the number of days in a year.
- 52 cards in the deck: the numbers of weeks in a year.
- 12 face cards: the number of months in a year.
- There are 4 suits: the number of seasons in a year, also referred to as Spring - the time of childhood, Summer - the time of youth, Autumn - the time of manhood, and Winter - the time of old age

A PERSONAL TAKE ON MASONIC MORALS

[By R. W. Bro. James F. Kirk-White, P.D.D.G.M., Muskoka-Parry Sound District, on his Official Visit to Golden Rule Lodge, September, 2003]

Brethren, I decided that my first message as District Deputy Grand Master should reflect upon my personal Masonic values. Which I am happy to say, coincides with our Grand Master's chosen themes of "Back to Basics" and "Masonic Education".

At our regional DDGM orientation seminar in Huntsville, the Grand Master expanded on the Back to Basics theme:

He commented that he will continue to place emphasis upon the 'practice' of those basic virtues that are an integral part of the Back to Basics program - Honesty, Reliability, Loyalty, Fidelity, Brotherly Love, Charity and Forgiveness. He added that these should be an inherent part of every Mason's life and should be practiced as a matter of course.

In explaining the inclusion of Masonic Education to that theme, he stated: The Basics will be supplemented with increased emphasis upon Masonic Education. He believes that Masonry and Education are synonymous terms and hopes that by "going back to school" we can create a greater awareness among our Brethren of the true meaning behind our ceremonies, particularly to those newer members.

As I said earlier, tonight I would like to reflect upon Masonic values that affect me personally. To do so, I did some research on MASONIC MORALS. My researches discovered a brief paper prepared By Rabbi H. Geffen; Entitled: PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY OF MASONIC MORALS.

(Brethren, I must tell you that it was his opening sentence which immediately caught my attention, I will explain this in a moment.) He stated...

"We can not understand Masonry, if we do not comprehend our spiritual strength."

I'll repeat that... We can not understand Masonry, if we do not comprehend our spiritual strength.

Let me explain why that particular sentence struck me so: For years I have been using a tag line on all my emails, I apologize as I have no idea who wrote it, but it goes like this:

'We are not human beings on a spiritual journey, but rather spiritual beings on a human journey.'

I've always liked that quote because deep-down I firmly believe that when one 'prioritizes' their spiritual being, one will spend more time and energy in strengthening that being. I read that quote many times a day.

Rabbi Geffen explains how to identify and strengthen the spiritual being -so let's continue.

"How is it possible for us to obey the precept: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Might we not also ask, how is it possible to love our neighbour like our self?"

There are contradictions in man's psychology; man possesses contradictory power of two different forces within him - fighting each other. Spiritually he is on one with his Creator, and bodily, materially, he is like an animal, a beast.

Freemasonry urges the study of morals and ethics to improve the candidate, to uplift man's deeds and thoughts, to change them from evil to good.

Man will never commit a sin or do a noble deed without an innermost cause originated in the depths of his soul. Man will never seek improvement, if he will not come to the realization that he is in need of it. He sees himself always innocent, fine and good; even with the recognition of his defects- he magnifies his greatness and goodness.

The Talmud says: "Man observes all the plagues save his own."

It is very difficult for man to stand such an examination; he will always excuse and justify himself, and will not recognize his own faults. Not only to others, because he is ashamed, but even to himself, to his own conscience -he will not confess. A spiritual blindness embraces him and he can not see.

But sometimes man comes to a moral awakening; he feels he is blind; he looks for light, is in search for knowledge and improvement. (As I look around the room, I see we all identify with that statement.)

Freemasonry is a study of life. Masonry is a world-psychology; it embraces life with all its forms and ways, all the possibilities of various men, nations, generations and epochs. Its teachings are not limited by space and time.

Masonic teachings reveal to us the secret of creation of man. That he consists of two parts; that heaven and earth are anticipated in him -a soul of everlasting life - and the dust of the earth. It is impossible for man to free himself from this combination.

The pious man can not cast off from himself the dust of the earth; neither can the wicked free himself completely from the ever living soul.

Masonry tries to root out pride and arrogance, by teaching the candidate lessons of humility; it strives to instill the teaching of equity and equality, that all men are brethren, that one chain links all our Craftsmen together, the chain of brotherly love and friendship.

The Talmud says, when a man commits a sin he mutters "I wish nobody could see me doing it." It proves that in the depths of every man's soul, even the most sinful, there are some noble thoughts and strivings, a sense of shame. The wicked is not willing that anyone should see him committing a crime -he feels a sense of self-condemnation.

Yet, in the heart-deep of the pious man, in spite of his good deeds, sprouts the sense of pride and boasting. Masonry teaches the lesson of secrecy in order to discourage arrogance and conceit.

Masonry psychology teaches that the Man should at all times examine himself. Consider the cause of his deeds and what motives prompted him to such acts.

Thus he will bring his life under better control, become wiser from day to day, and

reach a better self-recognition. Thus he will become a Craftsman, gifted with Masonic wisdom, whose greatness of soul is akin to the divine."

Let's combine his first sentence with his last sentence.... We cannot understand Masonry, if we do not comprehend our spiritual strength. But when we do, we will become Craftsmen, gifted with Masonic wisdom, whose greatness of soul is akin to the divine.

The psychology and philosophy of Masonic morals benefits each Freemason for a lifetime, and thereafter as well. By practicing Back to Basics, by embracing those Masonic virtues, we will accelerate the strengthening of our spirituality thus making us better men.

Brethren, once again I would repeat my email tag line... "We are not human beings on a spiritual journey, but rather spiritual beings on a human journey." I like to think that every time I shake hands with a Mason, it is our spiritual beings that are communicating.

Now, let us take a moment to go beyond our selves. There is another Masonic virtue that is very compelling to me, and that is Brotherly Love. Brotherly Love must be shared, and it is here where our lodge members collectively and individually have a job to do.

The following brief story is a great example of a brother doing that job. It was inserted in the Wilson South District notice by R.W. Bro. Ken Guiler, and it was adapted from a message presented by one of Ken's Minister friends. It is entitled:

"The Silent Message"

A member of a certain lodge, who previously had been attending meetings regularly, stopped going. After a few months, the Master decided to visit him.

It was a chilly evening. The Master found the brother at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire. Guessing the reason for the Master's visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a comfortable chair near the fireplace and waited. The Master made himself at home -but said nothing.

In the grave silence, the Master contemplated the dance of the flames around the burning logs. After some minutes, he took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth all alone. Then he sat back in his chair, still silent.

The host watched all this in quiet contemplation. As the one lone ember's flame flickered and diminished, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and dead.

Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. The Master glanced at his watch and chose this time to leave; he slowly stood up, picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it.

As the Master reached the door to leave, his host said, with a tear running down his cheek, "Thank you so much for the fiery lecture. I shall be back in lodge next meeting."

Brethren, we live in a world today which tries to say too much with too little. Consequently, few listen.

Sometimes the best words are the ones left unspoken. And, sometimes actions speak louder than words. But at all times the job is there ...waitingfor each of us.

The Grand Master often quotes Mathew 5/16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works.." Brethren, the Grand Master would like this to be the guiding principle for all Masons.

I would like to close with the motto of our Grand Lodge which is: "Audi, Vide, Tace." Freely translated it means ...ListenSeeBe Silent.

And that's exactly what I now intend to do -be silent. So Brethren, for your warm hospitality, and for being so attentive, thank you very much.

FROM THE ARCHIVES: UNIVERSAL FREEMASONRY

[By W. Bro. Emery Gero, Andor Gero Lodge No. 726, originally published in Vol. 1 No. 4, February 1982]

We have to distinguish between Masonic Spirit and organisation. No one knows what constituted the Ancient Landmarks; each Masonic writer, or historian, or jurist, has set up his own Landmarks, and termed them Ancient, and the jurisdictions have adopted them, depending on who has been their patron saint. Originally the Landmarks were set up as a guide, to distinguish the Masonic Fraternity from many other societies which were at the time occupying the attention of intellectual England. In spite of, and notwithstanding the Landmarks, Freemasonry grew and changed until, today, no historian will suggest that our Freemasonry is the same as it was in 1717. Then the order was distinctly Christian in character and ritual; today, we pride ourselves on the universality of Freemasonry, welcoming Christian, Jew, Parsee, or Mohammedan, provided he believes in God and the Brotherhood of Man. And Freemasonry does not even set up any specifications as to the nature of God, except that he is a just God, Creator and Controller of the Universe.

Having set up our standards, we begin separating the legitimate from the illegitimate; all those who agree with us are considered "legitimate", and those disagreeing "illegitimate". One jurisdiction does not place its Sacred Volume on the altar, but places it on the Master's pedestal. Another jurisdiction is persecuted, and for self-protection, is compelled to become interested in the political situation to protect itself from complete disintegration. Here is a jurisdiction, whose parenthood is somewhat obscure, but which is honestly endeavouring to practice the principles of charity and brotherhood to the best of its ability. A Grand Lodge perfectly regular in every way is found to be working in the same territory as another "legitimate" Grand Lodge; American-Canadian jurisprudence specifies that only one Grand Lodge may occupy a territory at the same time. All these are, according to Canadian standards, illegitimate. We notice another jurisdiction which has all our required landmarks, but its legitimacy is all that it has to support it. It fails to practice what it preaches, and stands for nothing in the territory which it occupies. And occasionally, we find some being taken out of the legitimate, and placed in the illegitimate class, or vice-versa.

As Masonry spread out of England in the early 18th century, it changed according to the history, political situation or ethnic background of a given country. In Europe they generally placed more emphasis on the intellectual work, the lodges recruiting members mainly from the upper classes, and from the

Intelligentsia. Masonry was more a gathering place for the elite, even if not necessarily for the kings and nobles, but for writers, teachers, politicians, or sometimes leaders of the financial and economic community. Though soon enough an animosity, and later open breach developed between progressive Masonry and the dogmatic Catholic Church, there were many high ranking priests who took part in the work of the lodges. The persecutions by Catholic rulers and dictators limited the development of Masonry in certain countries, while in some, like England or Sweden, the monarch, if male, was usually the head of the Grand Lodge.

On this continent Masonry thrived freely - Members were not restricted, or subject to persecution. In the countries of Europe the numbers of the brethren were relatively low, but in America, they seem to concentrate more on enlisting an ever increasing number of members, and many jurisdictions emphasise, the ritual and charity work, more than Masonic education and intellectual work. In many European countries there were concurrent jurisdictions, to name a few: Germany, France, Czechoslovakia, and this helped to raise the standard of Masonic activity.

Though the Old Charges, the first codification of Masonic rules, was printed in 1723, literacy was far from being widespread, particularly in Eastern Europe. Printing was expensive, and very few people could afford to buy books; never mind learning to read and write. Even the nobles usually kept a secretary, who not only wrote their letters, but also read those received. So our rituals were not always available in written form, but were usually passed by word of mouth, from one generation to the next. This procedure occasionally resulted in distortions, and translations sometimes caused further changes.

Because of national characteristics, they also changed from time to time, and due to persecutions, even more secrecy was required in all communications. It is not surprising that, in spite of the original common root, by the early 20th century, when the work came out in printed form almost everywhere, there were large discrepancies between the rituals of different jurisdictions. Some customs, like wearing gloves, were kept in certain countries, whilst dismissed in others. The presentation of one lady's glove on an initiation is almost unknown on this continent. The character of the very important part of the European style initiation ceremony, which takes place in a separate darkened chamber, was completely changed when transplanted to America. Even signs, words and passwords, knocks, were either changed, or interchanged between degrees. In the central European ritual, used in Austria-Hungary, partly in Germany, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and also in some South American lodges, the words of the first and second degrees are interchanged, and a password exists also in the first degree though not always used. This is the one which is used here in the third. Lodge regalias are worn in most of the lodges, not only in Europe, but on other continents too, and as I

mentioned in the beginning, the V.S.L.is not necessarily placed on the altar, but on a table in front of the W.M. As a matter of fact, an altar does not necessarily exist, but a carpet, like our tracing board in the lodges, and the three lights of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty are placed around it, with usually a flag in the fourth corner.

Though they are different organisations, different rituals, I believe in the universality of Freemasonry; and may I close my words quoting one of our famous Hungarian writers and masons of the 18th century, Ferenc Kazinczy, who said: "Masonry creates a small circle of good hearted people, within which we are able to forget all the great inequality, which exists in the outside world. A circle in which both the king and a person of the lowest station are equal brothers; in which we are able to forget the senselessness of the world, and we shed tears of joy as we see that it is love of the common good which stirs every member, as if they had but one single soul; we find much truer friends than in the outside world; where everybody is trying his best, according to his ability, to ease the burdens of his fellow men; where every member is obliged to read and to study, also to teach the others, as instructed by his brother Masons.,

VSL IN SINGAPORE

[Author unknown. From the Newsletter of Wyndham Lodge No. 688
<http://www.sentex.net/~calc/newsletter.html>]

A copy of a scroll in the anteroom of Lodge Singapore No. 7178 E.C. describes the Volumes of the Sacred Law reposing in the Lodge Room and is accompanied by the following explanation:

The sacred Volumes reposing in this Lodge are at this present time (1968) six in number and are as follows:

- (1) The Holy Book of the Sikhs, being the Sri Guru Sahib. There have been relatively few Exaltations of Sikhs in this Lodge and until this volume was presented to the Lodge, the Holy Bhagvada Gita had been used.
- (2) The Holy Bhagvada Gita is the Holy Book of the Hindus and this Volume may be opened and touched by hand but not by the lips.
- (3) The Khordeh Avesta of the Zoroastrian Faith being the Holy Book of the Parsees, may be treated in the same way as the Holy Bible of the Christian Faith.
- (4) The Holy Koran of the Muslims. With regard to touching and sealing the Holy

Koran, an overall picture is somewhat difficult to convey as the customs vary in different countries. The Imam of Kedah has, however, stated that the Holy Koran should be held above the head of the person taking an oath that such a person may neither touch nor seal it. Another accepted method of dealing with this problem is for the VSL to be treated in exactly the same manner as with the Holy Bible, but with the difference that the Holy Koran should be covered. Obviously, it is the duty of the Sponsors to ascertain the method appropriate for our particular purpose.

(5) The Holy Bible of the Christians which comprises two parts, i.e. the Old Testament and the New Testament. As regards the Craft, it is the Old Testament which is acted upon.

The Books of the Old Testament, which are contained in the Holy Bible are treated by those of the Jewish Faith in the same manner as by the Christians.

(6) There are two main sects of Buddhists, i.e. the Hinayana and the Mahayana. The former are from India, Ceylon, Burma, Cambodia and Thailand, and the Mahayana (Northern) generally hail from China, Korea and Japan. The Hinayana do not recognize a Supreme Being, but there may of course be exceptional cases. The Mahayana sect acknowledges a Supreme Being and their Holy Book is the Dhammapada; being the 1st Book of the original twelve containing 423 Dhamma Stanzas. On good authority, it is understood there would be no objection to using the Holy Bible for the purpose of taking oaths, should the Dhammapada not be available.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ST. GEORGE'S LODGE NO. 15 - ST. CATHARINES.

[By Bro. Albert F. Walz, a recent graduate of the College of Freemasonry, and a member of St. George's]

St. George's Lodge was formed in 1814 and we are beginning preliminary preparations for our 200th Anniversary, as the next nine (9) years will pass quickly I am sure.

A few tidbits that may be of interest to the readers:

George Adams, an empire loyalist who was Provincial Grand Master in 1820, was one of the founding members of St. George's and also became Master of The Lodge later on.

In 1846 annual dues were 1 pound, 3 pence and might be paid in either Canadian or English currency. Each Degree had its own fee and all business was conducted in the 3rd Degree.

On October 30th. 1848, Grand Lodge under G.M. Sir Alan McNab convened at St. Catharines to lay the corner stone of the new town hall. The silver trowel used on the occasion was presented to the Grand Master. In 1958 some one hundred and ten years later, this trowel turned up in a large department store in Perth Australia! No one seems to know how it came to be so far away. Through the kindness of the Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Western Australia, it was returned to our Grand Lodge, which in turn had it presented to the mayor of St. Catharines in March 1960.

On July 7, 1857 due to the large number of affiliated and new affiliated members of the craft, in the city and area. it was decided that the formation of a new Lodge under the jurisdiction of the G.L. of Canada, would be highly conducive to the general proficiency of masonry. Immediately a group of St. George's members began meeting to form a new lodge, which became Maple Lodge #103 G.R.C. receiving its charter on July 29, 1858.

A couple of other interesting meetings took place over the past 100 years.

On February 21, 1907, the past masters of 3 lodges held an emergent meeting to initiate a candidate. Twenty-three (23) members of St. George's and one hundred seventy-one (171) visitors representing thirty-seven (37) lodges attended, coming from both sides of the border.

On January 20th 1910, a second overflow meeting was held. Union Lodge #7, Grimsby conferred the 2nd Degree on one of their own candidates. Merritt Lodge #168 Wetland, initiated a candidate, and the Masonic Temple in St. Catharines was dedicated. Twenty-two (22) members of St. George's Lodge and two hundred and five (205) visitors representing thirty-four (34) lodges attended.

As St. George's approaches our 200th Anniversary, the officers and members will be working diligently to put on a memorable show and who knows, maybe we can break the hundred year old record for attendance!

Also. some information regarding the present time:

To help commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Grand Lodge, St. George's arranged with the Niagara Parks Commission in Niagara Falls, Ontario to have a floral display depicting the occasion, erected in Queen Victoria Park on the Niagara Parkway, in Niagara Falls, where millions of visitors from around the world would be able to see and photograph it.

QUESTIONS OF THE FRATERNITY

We hope that readers continue to enjoy the challenge. Here are three more questions:

1. In how many ways can a Mason be made a Right Worshipful brother?
2. The three lesser lights are placed in the E, W and S. Why is there none in the N?
3. What is the significance of the colour blue in our lodges?

You are free to answer any or all of these questions. Please quote sources. Please send answers in writing to:

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2366 Cavendish Drive,
BURLINGTON, ONTARIO.
L7P 3B4
Fax: 905-315-7329
Email: iain.mackenzie@sympatico.ca

W. Bro. Richard Byrd writes:

My answers for questions asked on pages - 40 & 41 - of the Newsletter for September 2005 Vol. 20 No.1 are as follows.

Q1. If a Past Master from Columbia wishes to affiliate with your lodge and is accepted, what rank does he carry in Ontario?

A) Ref. B of C - (2005), Section 365

A Past Master of a lodge under this Grand Lodge who has been registered in the books of Grand Lodge, or a Past Master of a Grand Lodge recognized by this Grand Lodge is entitled to his rank as a Past Master as from the date of affiliation, in any lodge with which he may affiliate.

Q2. If the Master receives a complaint in writing against a member of the Lodge, what should he do?

A) Ref. B of C - (2005), Section 411 (b)

Where a complaint is received by any Mason, he shall deliver it forthwith to the Master of his lodge except where the complaint is against the Master of his lodge, in which case it shall be delivered to the District Deputy Grand Master of the district in which the lodge of the Master is located. Upon receipt of the forward the complaint together with any supporting documentation to the Grand Secretary.

Q3. May a Masonic certificate be exhibited in a public place?

A) Ref. B of C - (2005), Section 171

NO, It is improper for a Masonic certificate to be exhibited in any public place.

I found that the Newsletter was a great resource for me when I took the Masonic College Course. Your questions asked are an enjoyment to research and my appreciation goes out to all associated with this fine publication.

Sincerely and fraternally

W. Bro. Richard A. Byrd F.C.F.

Secretary - Salem lodge No.368, Brockville

CUSTODIAN'S CORNER

Editor's Note: The following questions and responses are reprinted from the Supplement to the booklet "Questions and Answers". The questions have been compiled over several years from Lodges of Instruction held under the authority of the Custodian of the Work. The booklet is available in printed format from the Grand Lodge Office

Question 1: If a candidate has another Book of Faith, (a) how is it placed, and (b) where is it opened?

Response: The Holy Book of the candidate may be:

- (a) placed between the V.O.S.L. and the S. & C.'s for the obligation. See the Guidelines for Officers on p. 6 no. 3.
- (b) opened at the place chosen by the candidate.

Question 2: What is the hand placement when the candidate has another Book of Faith?

Response: As called for in the ritual, the L.H. supporting... and the R.H. covering. See the Book of the Work on p. 50.

Question 3: Where are the landmarks listed in our jurisdiction?

Response: Our Grand Lodge has never listed the landmarks as such. Some Grand Lodges have done so, and there is an excellent article in "Freemason at Work", by Bro. Harry Carr where he expounds on this subject. We in our jurisdiction rely on the definitions and admonitions contained in the Book of Constitution and in the Ritual.

Question 4: Where can the ancient charges, which are summarized and read to the Master elect, be found?

Response: The six "Ancient Charges" were first published in 1723 in Anderson's Constitutions. They are to be found in the Book of Constitution, Part VI, immediately before the summary, which is read to the Master elect at every Installation. They are:

- I. Concerning God and Religion.
- II. Of the Civil Magistrate, Supreme and Subordinate.
- III. Of Lodges.
- IV. Of Masters, Wardens Fellows and Apprentices.
- V. Of the Management of the Craft in Working.
- VI. Of Behaviour.

Three hundred years later they still have great relevance, in this, the third Millennium, to every mason.

BOOK NOOK

[By R.W. Bro. Wallace McLeod, Grand Historian]

Freemasons for Dummies By Christopher Hodapp. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing. 2005. Pp. xvi, 368, 45 illustrations; soft cover. List price, \$19.99 US; \$25.99 CN. Order from commercial booksellers.

Don't get angry at the title of this book. It doesn't mean that Freemasons are dummies. The John Wiley publishing company began issuing a series of books entitled *For Dummies* in 1991, and has produced dozens of popular and useful manuals, which are intended to educate those who don't know too much about a particular topic. *PCs for Dummies* and *The Internet for Dummies* have been bestsellers for years, and tell many things about the chosen topic that outsiders will not know. This new one is a very fine book, and even every Mason can learn a lot from it. The author, W.Bro. Chris Hodapp, is an Indiana Freemason; and the Technical Editor is our own W.Bro. Nelson King of Toronto, editor of *The Philalethes* magazine.

There are nineteen chapters in all. In them the author deals with every aspect of Masonry: the history (a good outline), the philosophy (brotherly love, relief, and truth), the duties of the lodge officers, the lessons of the three degrees, the symbols and their significance, the appendant and concordant orders, the familiar lies uttered by anti-Masons, and so on. He demonstrates why politics and religion are forbidden topics within the lodge. He makes it quite clear that the only real secrets of Freemasonry are the modes of recognition (words, signs, grips, steps), and he refuses to divulge them.

He provides the names of nearly 150 Masons who were famous in many fields: politicians, explorers, scientists, entertainers, athletes, soldiers, businessmen, composers, authors. He cites the various conspiracies that have been falsely attributed to Masons, such as the Illuminati, Jack the Ripper, Italian Lodge P2. He also refers to ten impressive buildings with Masonic connections that are worth visiting, including Rosslyn Chapel in Scotland, and the immense Masonic Temple in Detroit.

Since the number of our members reached its peak in 1959, the membership has been steadily declining. But in the last few years there have been recent developments -- classes of candidates, public advertising, the use of the internet, and European Concept Lodges; and Hodapp argues convincingly that

Freemasonry is still relevant.

If, after all this, you want to become a Mason, he tells you how to go about it, and what you will have to go through in order to make the grade. To facilitate making contacts, in case you don't know any Masons, he provides the addresses of all the Grand lodges (mainstream and Prince Hall) in the USA and in Canada.

At the end of the book Hodapp quotes the text of what is regarded as the oldest Masonic Document, the Regius Poem of about 1390; and he also gives the Ancient Charges from Anderson's Constitutions of 1723.

Altogether, *Freemasons for Dummies* is easy to use, and clearly written, with little touches of humour. The chapters are divided into short sections, and so you can read it carefully from cover to cover, or simply open it at random, and read a paragraph. Good for Masons, as well as for cowans. Highly recommended!

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