**Masonic Experience - W Bro. Ian McIlwaine**

**Mt Garibaldi Lodge No. 127**

Per our discussion, I have made a list of 6 points of Fraternity that I believe makes Mount Garibaldi a successful lodge.

1) Respect tradition, respect the elders' voices.  Mount Garibaldi does a great job of making sure we keep to traditions of our former Brethren.  As younger officers come through, the elders appreciate the respect that is given to the Order and our Lodge practices in particular, so we work well together with mutual respect.  We also ensure that new, younger officers, are well informed about the expectations of working within these simple parameters, it's a working formula anyways, so it is an easy buy-in.

2) All the deep discussions are held at the BOGP.  This keeps any heated debates off the floor of open Lodge and makes the environment friendly to visitors, also keeps the pace of the meeting moving along.  Of course, comments are welcome, but we have an agenda of what is going to be discussed so the Brethren can come and voice their opinions at the BOGP if wanted.

3) Check your ego at the door.  We like to do good ritual but we also like to not take ourselves too seriously that we can't laugh and welcome joyful discussion in open Lodge.  We will call to hear the voices of sick brethren or ones that are out of town, to make sure everyone feels a part of the Lodge.

4) Not least but so important to have a stalwart, experienced, reliable and dedicated Secretary that communicates well to all members.

For Mount Garibaldi Lodge, VWBro. Crowston is the epitome of such a central part of our Lodge.

He is our go to person for all queries and advice, in addition to being super efficient with his usual secretarial duties.

**Britannia Lodge No. 73 - W. Bro. Ken Perrson**

Britannia’s members put forth both in and behind the scenes to ensure that our core values and standards that our forefathers developed are maintained and even improved by involvement of all members. There is a very high level of inclusiveness in Britannia that lends to this success; ultimately it is the communication and guidance coming from senior members as to what duties and expectations are needed to be successful at an early stage so that participation is fun and rewarding experience for all.

I would consider fellowship and lodge experience, if not the same, to be very close and go hand in hand. I can’t speak for my Brothers in this but my own personal opinion is one I have tried to convey as often as possible is to take the Craft to heart. To walk the talk so to speak, both in Lodge and without but most especially when I come to Lodge. To bring brotherly love, relief and truth in with me. Patience, understanding and kindness, these are simple words but put into play make a huge difference in a brother’s experience. Acting like a Freemason is as simple as it sounds and I think our lodge as a whole is filled with good Freemasons. The eagerness and willingness to pitch in and help comes from all of us because of our camaraderie and fellowship of getting to know one another, from our connectedness.

Additionally I think we carry that with us wherever we go and especially when we visit other lodges. In essence I think we are successful in this regard because we care about each other.

At our General Purposes meeting we discussed 10 areas that we have and are maintaining to a high standard that are working to better our Lodge and Masonic experience;

1. The quality and delivery of ritual is conferred at a very high level without any reading
2. Managing and fostering the expectations of the Brethren.
3. Atmosphere of Brethren very inviting, there is a high level of Esprit de corps
4. Officer rotation – every officer must advance through each chair
5. Every decision, all lodge work is a team effort
6. Use of the six step program
7. Strategic plan – 6 month, 1 year and 2 two Worshipful Master Plan
8. Our (unofficial) Mission statement – We want to be a Lodge that others want to visit because they had a great time and can tell their brothers they missed a wonderful meeting.
9. Monthly contact with all members and semi-monthly contact with our widows.

10. To revisit our core values, successes and weakness on a regular basis.

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| Membership development | The Lodge has received 3 or more petition in the past 12 months• Word of mouth• Referrals• Friends of current Members |
| Financial | The Lodge is in excellent financial standing and typically operates with a yearend income/expenditure positive balance• While collecting dues is challenging for the few; the vast majority remit well within the mandated timeframe• Our Festive Board and the Junior Warden's fund operates in the black, without fail, in fact has a substantial surplus• To support minimizing expenditures in that area, the Officers have taken it upon themselves to prepare special and quality meal events throughout the year |
| Degree Practice Team | There is no shortage of new Brethren learning and delivering quality ritual• We have a great "line" of young and enthusiastic Officers who proactively solicit to take upon themselves ritual work• These Brethren along with our senior Members have "bought in" to learn and deliver exceptional ritual• There is pride of accomplishment amongst us all |
| Committee work | Lodge committees tend to be manned by a small hard core of senior members• Those of us with the skill set, apply ourselves willingly to the task• The "small hard core of senior members" are those Brethren who possess those skills• When called upon, there still is no shortage of committee members |
| Regalia | Lodge regalia is all in an excellent state of presentation• Regalia is handled with care and reverence• Its state is monitored |
| Visitors | Lodge has visitors at every meeting• We present excellent closed-book ritual• Our Communications while professional and business-like are also enjoyable• We are warm, friendly and welcoming to all visitors• Our meetings generally close at a reasonable time• Visitors enjoy joining us in Lodge |
| Membership Retention | All Brethren made EA's in the past 3 years are, or are in the active process, of becoming MM's• The 2 or 3 Members who work with new candidates; continue interacting with them within Freemasonry and outside of Lodge; coffee, lunch, etc• New candidates entering into Freemasonry are coached and mentored throughout their experience and beyond• We engage our new Brethren in some form of light ritual work, or an education presentation, and they are happy and willing to take on such tasks• E.g. New MM conferred this December will present education on the Lambskin Apron in February• Those who feel they are participating, tend to remain |
| Six Step Program | Lodge members follow the six step program• We have been employing the Six-Step Program for the past several years• Aside from assessing an individual's fit (or not) within Freemasonry, it, in my opinion creates a strong bond with the seeker to the primary contact during the process, and that extends to their continued involvement in Lodge and Freemasonry• Every one of our newest Members, several of them are now Officers, have gone through the Program• I have been the lead in this with a co-lead and I would like to transfer my skills over and see a couple more involved in the "lead" aspect of the program• There is a skill set required |
| Lodge Officers | No elected officers are past masters (not including Secretary, Treasurer and DoC)• Coaching, mentoring, nurturing, camaraderie, supporting our newest Members and engaging them in the business of the Lodge may have something to do with this, and trusting them, that they can handle any task given them• On the other hand, I have never seen such a great group of young Brethren with the level of enthusiasm and commitment as our current set of Officers• And by the way, those who are standing in the wings who are not yet Officers will continue to create value for our Lodge and its future line of Officers |
| New Membership | Seekers generally come from a combination of one or more; website, personal contact and advertising• Website and referrals are about even in this regard |
| Ritual Experience | Ritual is performed in Lodge without books open and with minimal prompting• The standing agenda item at all our General Purposes meetings is that of practicing ritual• Our Officers are indoctrinated into the practice of presenting quality ritual• When preparing for degrees or new ritual, the Officers themselves request additional practice nights• They, themselves are driven to deliver excellent ritual• Their personal reward for putting in the extra effort is in knowing they were responsible for contributing to maintaining and even exceeding the level of quality for which we are known |