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The wearing of gloves

What are the rules regarding the wearing of white dress gloves in lodge?

There is no defined policy in this jurisdiction regarding the wearing of white gloves by officers or members. Our *Book of Constitutions* does not include gloves in the description of regalia. Our *Lodge Officers' Guide*, under "Dress" [p. 81] does not mention gloves. Gloves are only mentioned twice in this jurisdiction: under General Regulations for a masonic funeral service, found in *Forms and Ceremonies*, regulation 10 [p. 108] requires brethren to wear white gloves; and in the Ancient Work Master Mason degree, brethren representing the Fellowcrafts wear white gloves.

Without constitutional precedence, the wearing of gloves devolves to the will and pleasure of the Grand Master as regards his officers, and the individual lodge masters as regards their lodges whilst at labour. This places an obligation on our rulers to be aware of

the historical precedences of our Craft and the traditions of our jurisdiction and the separate lodges.

In continental European Freemasonry it was the practice to present new members with two pairs of white gloves, one set for himself and the other for his wife. This was at a time when the wearing of gloves was common, the social conventions were understood, and no rules of usage were required or recorded. This was also the case during the period of the founding of the English Grand Lodge in 1717.

The first recorded evidence of white gloves being worn by a freemason comes from the records of the Kilwinning Lodge in Ayrshire, Scotland of January 15, 1599. Still presented to new initiates in England, they are accompanied with the explanation that the white of the gloves represents innocence and purity, symbolically denoting a purity of action, rectitude of conduct, and a never-ending argument for



The Prince Rupert Masonic Association recently organized a display at their local public library commemorating "Over 90 years of Freemasonry in Prince Rupert". The display included photographs of Past Grand Masters from Prince Rupert, explanations about the Cancer Car Project, masonic bursaries, masonic symbolism and the masonic apron. 'Becoming a Freemason' and 'Cancer Car Project' pamphlets, about a dozen books, and periodicals about Freemasonry (some recently purchased for the library by the local lodges) were available to be loaned from the library and an apron, collar, jewel and other masonic paraphernalia were in a display case.

higher thoughts, nobler deeds, and greater achievements.

In the Christian Church of the Middle Ages, white linen gloves were always worn by bishops and priests in the performance of ecclesiastical although not liturgical, functions. Catholic theologian, William Durandus (1220-1296), wrote "by the white gloves were denoted chastity and purity, because the hands were thus kept clean and free from all impurity."

M. Didron, in his *Annales Archéologiques*, notes that as far back as the thirteenth century operative masons and stone-cutters are depicted as

wearing gloves, and masters recorded as presenting gloves to the workmen.

There is ample precedence for the wearing of gloves while at masonic labour — and it has been said that white gloves form an integral part of correct masonic attire — but the specifics are left to the sensibilities of the masonic rulers of the day. Should all members or only officers wear gloves? Should gloves be removed while shaking hands in greeting or whilst communicating pass grips? Should they be removed when placing hands on the VOSSL? Should they be removed

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The wearing of gloves from page one

when raising or obligating a candidate? If gloves are required of officers, whose is the responsibility to supply them? These are questions without absolute answers.

Masonic usage, supported by ecclesiastical tradition, is that if gloves be worn, there is no need to remove them for any part of the work. The gloves, and the wearing of gloves, has a spiritual and moral lesson and there is no disrespect in leaving them on during all parts of our rituals. While there are those members who believe that gloves should be removed when approaching the altar or VOSL, or communicating tokens, the awkwardness of gesture discounts any gain in piety or gentility.

A different case is the candidate himself. An article in *Freemasons' Chronicle* of March 31, 1956, tells us: "It has always been regarded as essential to the binding quality of an oath, that some part of the swearer's bare flesh should be in contact with the sacred object. No such consideration can apply in regard to the person who administers the oath, nor in the case of the imparting of a token, but solely to the candidate himself, who must of course remain throughout with ungloved hands."

The same article further tells us: "There again in connection with the social custom of hand-



Through life but few
can go
Without some touch
of woe.

W Bro. Palmer Cox

shaking, as well as the masonic sphere, a strangely exaggerated notion of gentility seems to have crept in, from Victorian days, that it is impolite not to remove gloves to do so. Socially, the custom, from olden days is, indeed, entirely the reverse, as shows the fact that in France, where polite social manners are said to have found their birth, it is, for instance, regarded as an appalling *gaucherie* for a man to shake hands with a lady, with his own hand ungloved."

These opinions are not universally held, and it is the wise master who consults with his brethren before imposing his own opinions on his lodge. ■

Our members

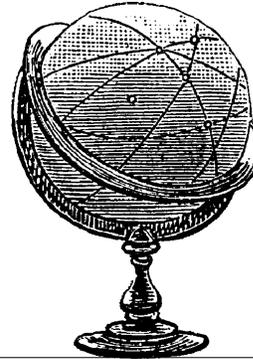
The late RW Bro. Frank Johnson was a dedicated member of **Sidney Lodge No. 143** and the Sidney Shrine Club No. 42. An orphan who never married and had no close relatives, his family was the masonic brotherhood. He served as DDGM and Grand Steward, was WM of Sidney Lodge in the mid 1980s and was a charter member of the Sidney Shrine Club No. 42.

Generous to a fault, he often gave without recognition to the lodge or shrine, or to needy members. He also established a scholarship fund within Sidney Lodge for students in the Sidney area to take post secondary studies in forestry and environmental subjects.

On his death, RW Bro. Johnson left his entire estate to be divided between the Queen Alexandra Hospital for Children in support of the Gizeh Shrine program with that hospital (\$82,593.68), the BC & Yukon Masonic Bursary Fund (\$82,593.68) and the Sidney Lodge Frank Eeley Johnson Masonic Bursary Fund (\$40,000.00).

His constant and untiring dedication to Freemasonry and Shrinedom will be long remembered.

The Right Reverend Robert D. Redmile, Grand Chaplain for this jurisdiction for 1998-2000 and one-time Chaplain for the Royal Arch Masonic Home, was, this past September, consecrated as Christian Episcopal Church Bishop Co-adjutor for the Anglican Diocese of Richmond. ■



OUR MASONIC WORLD

Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island must be such a beautiful, picturesque spot — no one wishes to leave it. In perusing the *Proceedings* of the Grand Lodge of PEI for 2001, we find the retiring Grand Master's family has lived on the same farm for four generations, while the incoming Grand Master's family goes that one generation better.

Prince Edward Island's meeting for that year fell on June 9th in Summerside, with a Divine Service the previous evening, a custom once *de rigueur* in BC. MW Bro. Leigh Newcombe made the astonishing revelation in his address that he didn't take too seriously the lower chairs he filled in Grand Lodge, then became afraid when installed as Grand Master as he realised his responsibilities. He carried them out just fine, consecrating a daylight lodge, attending a

lobster bake, ice cream feed, family picnic, and added to the dignity of his office by riding on a float in a Gold Cup and Saucer Parade. He also made three Master Masons "Honourary Past Masters", which presumably is allowed under their constitution.

The Deputy Grand Master also gave an address, as that officer once did in BC, and revealed the Eastern Conference of Grand Masters is now on hold until a use can be found for it.

The Board of General Purposes spent several meetings concerned with the future of the lodge in Souris. The Board actually allowed a "prospective member" into one of its meetings to discuss the moribund lodge's business! Nonetheless, a new slate of officers was picked, and three petitioners eventually initiated, so the board is delighted with the success.

The jurisdiction has only 17 lodges and, as of the end of 2000, 990 members, having lost 35, 16 were raised, 29 died.

There is no procedure in PEI for a demitted freemason to be reinstated, so the Committee on the Condition of the Order recommended something be done about it. As for the membership decline, it remarked "some actions...taken to try to slow, stop and even reverse this slide have often been controversial, and some have clearly done more damage than good. There seems to be only one pattern of successful measures: a return to the multiple activities that in earlier times attracted high attendance rates from existing members. Lodges that have not increased their dues to keep up with cost inflation now claim they cannot afford such activities; cannot even afford meeting notices. They are leading the decline."

The Committee on Membership offered its suggestions: "Open House (at least once a year); Open Installation;

editors@freemasonry.bc.ca

Games Night (cribbage, crokinole, rook, etc.); Recognition of Members; Parade Involvement; Ladies Night; Monthly notices; Programmes (short talks, trivia, etc.) and Breakfast or Supper Meetings." It's hard to fathom the necessity of open installations but harder to fathom lodges not notifying members of meetings. The Committee also noted the Grand Lodge budget is limited, suggesting "perhaps a flea market could be held to raise funds." Will our Finance Committee take note?

Despite financial constraints, the Grand Lodge handed out 23 \$400 bursaries and five \$700 scholarships.

The Grand Lecturer revealed his office is "an awesome one." So awesome, only one lodge requested his services.

The PR Committee recommended that future committees be appointed from the "Sitting" Grand Master's mother lodge. Wouldn't members skilled in PR be a better choice?

It should be noted that our own W Bro. Lionel Buller attended the session, as did a brother raised in 1927.

Submitted by VW Bro. James Bennie, PM, Lodge Southern Cross No. 44.

100 years

Whitehorse Lodge No. 46 will be celebrating their hundredth anniversary in 2003, the lodge being warranted on June 11, 1903.

During the summer of 1901 a picnic was held to entertain masonic visitors from Skagway, Alaska. Forty or more local freemasons attended and the prospect of seeing a lodge in Whitehorse was a serious topic of conversation.

Subsequently, at a meeting held on December 27, 1901 it was decided to apply to the Grand Lodge of Manitoba for dispensation to start a lodge. Dispensation was granted on

March 2, 1902 and a warrant for Whitehorse Lodge No. 81 was issued on June 11, 1903.

The celebration, on the weekend of June 6 - 8, 2003 will be a fun-filled three days of fraternal get-togethers and ladies' programmes.

Our Grand Master, MW Bro. William O. Walls, will be in attendance and will make his official visit to District 11 at this time.

This will be an opportunity to tour northern BC and the Yukon before attending our Annual Communication in Dawson Creek on June 21-23, 2003.

Charity

This past summer the BC Masonic Foundation donated \$8,000 to the Prince George Hospice Society to assist in their funding of the Rotary Hospice House which accepts admissions from all parts of northern BC.

2 to grow

The **Grand Lodge of Iowa** recently announce its "2 to grow" award, presented to a brother who is the top line signator of two or more successful petitions: one petition to replace himself and one petition for the fraternity to grow. The award includes a lapel pin and certificate of recognition. Iowa is one of a number of jurisdictions conferring the three degrees in one day.

Lodge notes

On Thursday September 19, 2002 eight brethren and one visitor from **Perfection Lodge No. 75**, New Westminster, journeyed to Seattle for **Occidental Lodge No. 72** GRW Past Master's Night. For many years Perfection and **Thomas M Reed Lodge No. 225** GRW had annually exchanged a trowel; however,

when Thomas M Reed Lodge surrendered their charter and affiliated with Occidental Lodge the trowel exchange ceremony was retired. As a result of the amalgamation, Occidental Lodge became Perfection Lodge's sister lodge. Many friendships have continued and new ones formed. However it was felt that something was needed to replace the trowel exchange. Consequently, on September 19th W Bro. Larry Lorentsen, assisted by W Bro. Horst Bosek and W Bro. Erik Kristiansen, presented Occidental Lodge's Worshipful Master, W Bro. Richard Castleberry with a beautifully hand-crafted gavel and container which was constructed by RW Bro. Hugh Campbell of Perfection Lodge. Hopefully the gavel exchange will continue to cement and maintain wonderful fraternal friendships for years to come.

Tweedsmuir Lodge No. 152, Burns Lake, will be celebrating its 50th anniversary this March. Of special note is the 50 year history of **Vanderhoof Lodge No. 119**, Vanderhoof, installing their officers and the return of the favour by Tweedsmuir Lodge in January.

A personal journey

RW Bro. C. William Ferguson

Freemasonry is a personal journey and therefore it means different things to different people. You must find the answer by yourself. However, we do have some answers given to us: our ritual tells us that it is a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. We are also told that it is a way of life: an organization that makes good men better. My favorite definition is that Freemasonry teaches us to think clearly and behave better—to think without prejudice and superstition and to behave with



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The Library at Grand Lodge

100 YEARS OF FREEMASONRY IN WHITEHORSE

Visit the North June 6-8, 2003, before attending Grand Lodge!

To receive a newsletter and the full programme, contact: **Whitehorse Lodge No. 46 Centennial Committee** 104-212 Main St. Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2A9 t: 867-667-6714 f: 867-667-7997 e: jterice@hotmail.com

<http://freemasonry.bcy.ca>

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faith, hope and charity, with brotherly love, relief and truth, with temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice, and with virtue, honour and mercy.

Let us take one of these precepts: brotherly love. What does this mean to us? It means that we should be just, kind, amiable and virtuous—among other things. Indeed, there are many levels of meaning to our principles and tenets. We will arrive at some of the truths of Freemasonry—if we study its literature, listen to and understand its ritual and have before us examples of what a true freemason is or should be and we will meet those examples many times at our lodge meetings if we are looking and listening. Nevertheless, the best way to learn about something is to get involved in it—in a word: participate. And then, having learned what it is about, we must put those ideals into

practice, spread the light of masonic knowledge so that we become a beacon of truth to those both within and without our lodges. Let us so conduct ourselves so that we keep our brethren within our lodges so that they grow into citizens that will make this world a better place to live in.

So what is Freemasonry? It is the most ancient and honourable self-improvement system in existence.

Our aim is to improve the inner being of each of us and this by its very nature is a very personal and individual quest. Freemasonry has been teaching us how to think and how to behave. Isn't it about time we tested ourselves to see how we are doing? This is the era of accountability. Have we been a waste of time and effort in the great scheme of things? What do we want to achieve? What have we done? Have we any goals or plans—or do we just

Freemasonry online

For brethren who are new to the internet, or overwhelmed by the plethora of information available, this short list of websites may be of some use. We obviously recommend our own website <freemasonry.bcy.ca> as a starting point.

The Transaction of the Scottish Rite Research Society
<http://www.srmason-sj.org/web/heredom.htm>

Grand Lodge 2002 Annual Communication in Dawson Creek
<http://www3.telus.net/freemason/gl2002/>

Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076
<http://www.qccc.co.uk>

The Masonic Service Association of North America
<http://www.msana.com>

Paul M. Bessel, Masonic Leadership Center
<http://bessel.org/>

Library and Museum of the Supreme Council, 33°
<http://www.srmason-sj.org/library.htm>

Philalethes Society
<http://freemasonry.org/>

Essays, articles and links on or about Freemasonry
<http://web.mit.edu/dryfoo/www/Masons/>

Pietre Stone's Review of Freemasonry.
<http://users.iol.it/fjit.bvg/freemas.html>

Freemasonry Today
<http://www.freemasonrytoday.co.uk>

Quick Index to masonic information.
<http://www.cacr.caltech.edu/~rfire/masonry/>

Is It True What They Say About Freemasonry?
<http://members.aol.com/adehoyos/chap1.htm>



GRAND MASTER'S ITINERARY NOVEMBER, 2002

2	Wed	District No 16	Trinity Lodge 98	Vancouver
4	Fri	Principal Officers Meeting		Prince George
4-6	Fri-Sun	Masonic Workshop		Prince George
9	Wed	District No 25	Richmond Lodge 142	Richmond
11	Fri	District No 12	Queen Charlotte Islands	Lodge 189
16-18	Wed-Fri	Western Canada Conference	Canmore	Alberta
19	Sat	100th Anniversary	Harmony Lodge 37	Grand Forks
23	Wed	75th Anniversary	Confederation Lodge 116	Victoria
26	Sat	Scottish Degree Team,	Richmond Lodge 142	Vancouver
28	Mon	Past and Fraternal	Bethel 40, Job's Daughters	Richmond

float from day to day?

The grand design is there but what can you do to make certain that you are a successful part of that grand design? If you are going to achieve anything — make your life meaningful — you must take the time to evaluate and plan ahead.

Set aside a part of each day or each week to evaluate yourself. Try a simple test you have made for yourself — such as asking yourself if you have been just, kind, amiable and virtuous? Now plan your day, your week, or your future. Be imaginative. Take a delight in life and remember the ideals of Freemasonry. Form a vision of your future.

If you develop a plan on paper you will find that you are more likely to realize that plan. If you have listed your goals on paper, you can refer back to your list and see how you are progressing or change it to meet your present needs.

Sometimes we only see the grim side of things instead of the great miracle of life. Our ritual informs us to be happy and to convey that happiness to others. Our vision of the future must be positive. One that arouses our enthusiasm, reflects our true desires, gives us a great purpose and enables us to be happy within

ourselves. Now is the time to develop your vision of the future—for yourself and for Freemasonry.

In Freemasonry, the hour glass is a symbol of time. In the first degree we are taught that each day should be divided into portions. And that those portions should be used in different ways, but basically in service to God and our fellowmen. Time is precious. The sands of time are running out. Make certain you achieve your dreams now. Evaluate your life and plan your future now. Live a good and happy life.

Excerpted from our Senior Grand Warden's address to the Western Conference.

Our website

As part of our ongoing programme of improving our Grand Lodge website, lodge secretaries are asked to visit <freemasonry.bcy.ca/lodges/> and confirm the information provided for their lodges, as well as the accuracy of the locator maps for their lodge halls.

Please contact our webmaster with suggestions for further improvements and additions to our website.