Strength through unity

by MW Bro. Robert D. McSween

It seems as though the year has just started and now we approach the end where it is time to turn the reins over to others. I must say that the year has been one that I will never forget and also one where I can definitely say that there is a lifetime of pleasant memories to look back upon. Let me also assure you that those who are about to take the reins will do you proud and that the future does indeed look bright.

We have accomplished many things this year. The theme for the year has been “Strength through Unity” and this has been our strongest point of achievement. Not only has your Grand Lodge been successful in this area but more particularly the lodges and districts have done a tremendous job in showing “Strength through Unity”. We have seen a growth in attendance at lodge meetings and district meetings. We have seen a complete turnaround in the interest towards Freemasonry. We have seen tremendous support for both the Job’s Daughters and DeMolay in our lodges as well as our concordant bodies. It has been a year of learning more about ourselves and the concordant bodies, and through this we have become stronger because we are working—more now than ever—as a team. Individually we have been successful, but as a team we have become powerful. We have a much better understanding of each other and are better able to assist one another. We are able to do this because we now know more of each other and are better able to speak intelligently of one another.

We have had invitations sent to us from concordant and appendant bodies where we were able to attend their meetings. The first one of such was the Vancouver Van Zor Grotto. This is believed to be the first time that a Grand Lodge had been invited to a Grotto meeting in all of North America and was a very special meeting for all who attended. The second such meeting was with the Order of the Eastern Star. The Worthy Grand Matron invited Grand Lodge to attend one of her official meetings in Vancouver. This is believed to be the first time that this has ever happened in Canada. Again this was a very special meeting and the room was packed. We also had a meeting with all of the concordant and appendant bodies in February and again this proved to be not only successful but rewarding in the fact that we they were able continued on page 2
Our Grand Master
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to explain to us what they are doing for the good of humanity and to promote their personal goals. All of this only goes to prove that we are working better as a team, yet we are not making any changes in the way we do things. We are just doing things together, where we are permitted.

I cannot forget the District Deputy Grand Masters and other Grand Lodge officers who have done an outstanding job. They have been a definite asset to Grand Lodge and the districts through their support to the lodges and Grand Lodge. I do not think that the year would have been as successful without their efforts. One of the things that I told them at the start of the year was to make the very best effort to do all that they could because they would never again be given another opportunity to have made this year a year that I will miss from this year it is the "Surprise Visits" that not only I have been making but also that some of the lodges and districts have adopted. This has really been the highlight of my year as I am certain it has been a highlight for some of the lodges, and it is something that I am very happy to have done. I have seen the lodges as they really are and what I have seen, I have enjoyed. Even though the Masters of the lodges were somewhat nervous it was fun for everyone else. Of all the things that I will miss from this year it must be these surprise visits. Although I did not make it to all of the lodges, the rumours were out there that there might be a visit and this added even more to the enjoyment of attending the lodges on these types of visits.

What I have said so far is about the Grand Lodge Officers and the lodges but what I have not said much about until now are the brethren of the lodges. The brethren of the lodges have been the backbone of Grand Lodge and the lodges. Without their efforts and continued support there would be no Grand Lodge nor any lodges for that matter. They are the unsung heroes that we seldom mention. They are the ones to whom all Grand Lodge officers and lodge officers owe everything. The brethren have made this year a year that I will never forget. Their untiring efforts and support have been unwavering and in all their work they have never asked for credit in our success. I cannot express my thanks in simple words or begin to thank them enough for what they have done. They are the ones who can make a year a success or a failure and I am so grateful that this year has been successful.

When I was elected Junior Grand Warden in Victoria I realized that my masonic life would never be the same. Having experienced what I have gone through in the last four years I know that without the support of the brethren we are simply doomed to failure, and I can easily say to all of you, that I am so very proud to know you, the brethren of this masonic jurisdiction, and I am proud to say that I am a freemason. Thank you for a great year.

Masons online

W. Bro. Norm Ryder has established the top-level domain name, workingtools.ca, for brethren who would like to promote Freemasonry with their email address. Information on how this works, and how it can also benefit our Grand Lodge, can be found at workingtools.ca/email.htm, or email W. Bro. Ryder at norm@workingtools.ca.

A forwarded account would allow you to change your account host without changing your email address, or for brethren who do not have their own email account, a hosted account option might be of interest.

Chaplain’s Corner

by VW Bro. Doug. Sowden

Grand Chaplain

There is three errors in this sentence. Find them.

Most people quickly spot the two spelling and grammatical mistakes, and then pause to find the third error. Try to determine the third error, before you read the last paragraph of the column for the answer.

Sometimes in life I try to comprehend what is happening, and cannot. Events overwhelm my understanding, and I cannot figure out the puzzle of life... or even the Sudoku puzzle in the morning paper.

At these times I recognize that my powers are limited. There are parts of this wonderful universe that are beyond me, and my limited mind.

When I think of the Cosmos, and the distances involved between heavenly bodies, my brain becomes boggled (googled?) by the numbers involved. Can you picture the distance to the nearest star, even knowing that light travelling at 300,000 kilometres per second takes eight minutes to reach it? How does your mind deal with the fact that the next nearest star is 4.3 light years away? Then stretch your brain to visualize 200 billion light years...

The limits of our thinking abilities can be stretched. We can, and should, reach out to the unknown. Try these “mind stretchers”, and see what the following phrases bring to your mind. Take a moment or two to ponder each of these concepts: larger than an infinite sum; when time shall be no more; the smell of blue; world without end—or the physical reality of a Klein bottle, the inside of which is also the outside.

Scientists delight in delimiting the many intricate interactions that take place in our world. Biochemists are learning more each day of how atoms and molecules interact to produce DNA, to digest food, to conquer diseases. The more explanations and theories they develop, it seems the more their fields of study expand. From bodies to organs to tissues to cells to molecules to atoms to quarks—the deeper we delve, the more complex the subject and the harder the questions become. Who created the quark? What is light?

In Squamish, School District 48 provided the course in three schools. These courses were coordinated by Mount Garibaldi Lodge No. 127 with Bro. Nick Pascuzzi.

Province wide, St. John Ambulance reports that 25,000 students annually receive this training with a positive response from both teachers and students.

Real masons?
by Stanley W. McDowell

All freemasons are not members of a lodge, nor are all lodge members real freemasons. A real freemason never talks about what the world owes him, the happiness he deserves, the chances he ought to have. All that he claims is the right to live and play like a man.

A real freemason is dependable. His simple word is as good as his Bible Oath and he does a little more than he promises. He is just as honest in the dark in his own room as he is in public.

A real freemason does not want pull, tips, favours; he wants work and honest wages. He treats his fellow men as he would have them treat him.

A real freemason is loyal to friends and guards their reputation as his own. A real freemason honours a woman, any woman. He will not hurt a woman, physically or morally.

A real freemason minds his own business. He does not judge other people or speak unkindly to them. He always has excuses for others, never for himself. He is patient and charitable to them. To himself he is strict.

A real freemason is glad to live and not afraid to die. He is a real man, the finest, best, noblest, most refreshing thing on all the green earth.


Letters

Bro. Christo Pandelidis of Camosun Lodge No. 60, Victoria, writes in response to the article on the angle of the masonic compasses (April 2006), pointing out that, although the image trademarked for use in Canada is set at 45°, the compasses depicted in our Grand Lodge seal is set at slightly over 53°. To Bro. Pandelidis, “It is apparent that the square and compasses are inscribed in the square.” Your editor suggests that the angle was probably derived at by placing the points of the compasses directly below the ends of the set square, which presents a pleasing design, but no deeper significance.

RW Bro. E. Martin Dick, of Pythagoras Lodge No. 194, Vancouver, writes in response to the article on masonic weddings (April 2006), describing his experience as a Marriage Commissioner in British Columbia. He has
Toleration

by: W Bro. George Moore
Education Officer, District 23

One of the greatest things
that I have admired about
masonic lectures is their
ability to focus on particular
words and present them
to the brethren in a new or
expanded context. Words such
as “improvement”, when
coupled with “intellectual”, “moral”,
“spiritual” or perhaps “social
order.” “Harmony”, when used
to describe how it enables us
to do everything together, for
without harmony there would
be discord and ultimate failure.

Other words such as
“Obedience”, “Zeal”,
“Fidelity”, “Justice” and
“Enlightenment”, all have their
own stories to tell. A more
accurate description is probably
that they present a deeper
meaning than one would
normally observe. Many of
these words are presented
through the ritual, thereby
encouraging the participant
to think repeatedly about their
meaning, so that it can be
presented to the brethren in
the proper context. It also
creates a huge void between
those who have performed the
ritual and absorbed the
meanings and those who have
merely listened to the lecture
and perhaps forgotten most of
it, even if they understood it in
the first place. This is one of
the many differences between
the involved and the
uninvolved, between those
who “get the message” and
those who do not.

Toleration is one of those
great words that assist to
present many thoughtful
lessons about life, how we
should try to live it and how we
should treat others as they go
about living their lives. In
Freemasonry, we are taught
to war incessantly against intoler-
ance and one would think that
the best way to conduct this
war would be to practice
tolerance, leading by example
so to speak. There are many
within our Craft who do this
and I have been fortunate
even to know and to be able
to spend quality time with
several of them. However,
several is not enough, and we
still hear the ugly voice of
intolerance whether it be the
young among us who are
critical of the old ways, the
aged who are reluctant to
change, or the brethren who
are critical of every movement
and word if it is not performed
to meet their ideas of how it
should be done. Freemasonry
takes us a step further; it
teaches us to be tolerant even
of intolerance. We have all
been young, we will all—God
willing—be old, and we have
all made many errors. We
expose our ignorance repeated-
ly as we strive towards moral
and spiritual excellence. This is
not a bad thing, but an accept-
able and necessary part of our
lives. It reminds me of the old
axiom “it is better to have tried
and failed than not to have
tried at all” because it is
through failure that we learn.

True toleration holds that
every man has the same right
to his opinion and faith that
we have to ours. We appear to be
very good at the “faith” part of
this lesson; for I can truly say
that during my masonic career I
have never heard any brother
voice an adverse comment
about another brother’s faith.
This statement is particularly
apropos to the history being
created today, as we are
bombarded constantly by the
media with opinion and reports
of violence amongst warring
factions, often related to creed.
Our tolerance over opinion
doesn’t seem to fare so well.

I am sure that this, to some
degree, is inherent in us and
many of us feel very strongly
sometimes that ours is the one
true way. This may well be so,
and Freemasonry clearly
teaches us that everyone has
the right to expression. But we
must not forget that others
have the same right, and what
another person—who is equally
honest and sincere—firmly and
conscientiously believes, is the
truth to him.

We are taught to guard
the reputations, respect the
opinions and be perfectly
tolerant of the errors of each
other. So let’s give each other a
break and offer the helping
hand of tolerance that we
might improve and grow
together in harmony. Let us
remember that all actions have
consequences, and we must be
just, if judging others.

How fortunate we are as
freemasons to have the benefit
of the lessons of toleration and
all of the other great lessons
that Freemasonry presents to us
with such simplicity and
passion, leaving no room for
error or misunderstanding. How
fortunate we are to belong to a
fraternity that offers a common
ground upon which to grow,
the tools to guide us along the
way, and the option to set our
own pace. How fortunate we
are, not only to be part of such
an elite organization, but to
have the ability and opportunity
to introduce this privilege,
observer proper protocol of
course, to all men who are
searching for improvement,
belonging, knowledge and the
host of other good things that
Freemasonry offers.

Now is the time, and now
will always be the time, to
practice true toleration. We
should inform each new
petitioner that we are indeed a
tolerant society and upon
entering our gates one of the
things that will be expected
from him is the practice true
tolerance.

Palmer Cox

The Brownie illustrations
that have graced our pages for
the last seven years were the
work of Canadian author,
Further information and illus-
trations can be found online at
freemasonry.bcy.ca/brownies