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Let your light so shine

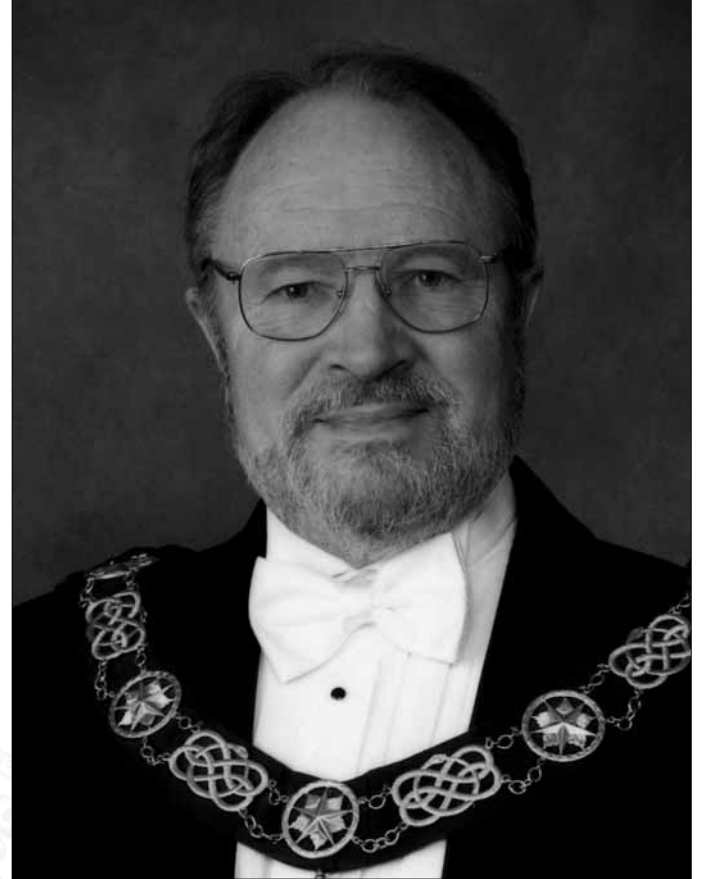
by MW Bro. Isaac Brock Brower-Berkhoven

Thank you for being here today at the 135th annual communication of The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon. In the decisions made at this communication, I trust you are satisfied that the Craft has deliberated wisely and well, and that we have made adjustments to meet the requirements of today and for the future. I wish to acknowledge my sponsors into the Craft: MW Bro. Myron Lusk, of blessed memory and VW Bro. Nick Wengreniuk, of Evergreen Lodge No. 166, Grand Registry of Alberta, I would like to thank the two Past Grand Masters of my BC mother lodge, MW Bro. David Laughlin Gibson who obligated me and MW Bro. Douglas R. Grant for the charge, and of course, my sponsors in all the offices of Grand Lodge for which they

have nominated me — RW Bro. Peter Thornburn and RW Bro. Don Wrightman.

I wish also to extend my appreciation to the visitors to our Grand Lodge Communication: thank you for attending. To the elected and appointed officers who have accepted positions in Grand Lodge, and to the committee members who have readily accepted positions in this Grand Jurisdiction, please accept my sincere congratulations and thanks.

It has been said that the mantle of leadership rests heavily on the shoulders of he who wears it, and after witnessing the commitment and contributions of my predecessors this point becomes quite apparent. The Craft in British Columbia and Yukon has been well served by the leaders of the past and I



MW Bro. Isaac Brock Brower-Berkhoven, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon for 2006 - 2007.

now give you my commitment that I will do my utmost to devote the same attention to the task at hand.

From my viewpoint as Deputy Grand Master this past year, several items concerning the future of Freemasonry come to mind. First and foremost we must make every effort to have programmes in place within each lodge that will ensure that attendance is rewarding, to help stem the flow of demitting members and to encourage the absent members to participate. Let us all take some share of the

responsibility in ensuring these adjustments take place. Since there is a need for all of us to become involved, I have chosen the lighthouse as my emblem and my theme for the year— "Let your light so shine" . We all have a responsibility to use the talents we have been given for the betterment of humanity.

Let your light so shine—by faithfully attending your lodge as often as possible. Do not overlook the joy and satisfaction that comes from visiting the brethren in other lodges.

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Our Grand Master from page one

Let your light so shine—by lending assistance to the officers and the committees of our lodges. An attitude of "been there, done that" or, "tried that; it won't work" does little to strengthen the lodge or to make it a show-piece which will attract new members from our communities.

Let your light so shine—by encouraging absent members to become more involved: pay a visit, make a phone call or offer a ride. Bear in mind that it is the contact that is important and not necessarily getting the brother to sit in lodge.

Let your light so shine—by extending the right hand of fellowship to our newer members, offer to mentor them as they begin their journey and generally contribute by seeing that they are not neglected at a very crucial time in their development. Ritual is what makes Freemasonry work; it helps us in our relationships with others and it gives us as freemasons a sense of identity and helps us to understand the tenets and principles of the Craft.

The mentoring system is the back-up, but not a substitute, for the responsibility of the proposer and seconder to their own candidate. We must all ensure that once we have initiated a brother we take great care of him and guide him through the intricate ceremonies and precepts of the Order. It is not good enough to leave him in complete isolation until the next regular meeting. That can potentially be the recipe for losing another brother.

Let your light so shine—by advising and taking advantage of the information to be found in the many publications available through our Grand Lodge Library and the Masonic Information Center to support your mentoring efforts.

Let your light so shine—by supporting the Bursary fund, the Benevolence Fund, the Masonic Foundation, the Masonic Community Charities Fund. Participate in the "We Can Help" programme and, by all means, do all you can to assist our Cancer Car Project as drivers, dispatchers, computer operators, car washers and day captains.

Let your light so shine—by taking on additional responsibility by joining a concordant body: Scottish Rite; Royal Arch; Van Zor Grotto; Order of Secret Monitor—and then join the Shrine freemasons, become active in the Order of Eastern Star or Amaranth in your community. Get involved with Job's Daughters and the DeMolay. This would give further evidence of full masonic family participation and make us all stronger.

Let your light so shine—by preparing a new slate as we reflect on our individual records and resolutions of the past and consider how we can make a new start with a clean slate and fresh outlook.

Let your light so shine—in your communities, and inform the public what freemasons stand for and what we believe in. In this age when society is struggling to cope with the fallout from the continued lowering of standards both moral and ethical, we need to take a firm stand. This is probably one of the most important issues facing the Craft today and we can reach out and help Freemasonry become a beacon of light and hope in this struggling world of apathy and indifference.

Let your light so shine—by spending time with your families on Saturday or Sunday morning. You can always find time in the seven nights available, or time to practice when the morning Sabbath service is over, so that we are not seen to be competing with religious orders. We not only need to do what is right by not

competing with religious orders, but we need to *appear* to do what is right. After all, by our *Constitutions* we are not permitted to have picnics until after 1300. The same standard should apply to lodge practices and the washing of Cancer Cars.

It is important to spend quality time with our families. At one time the seventh day of the week was known as the Sabbath. This day was reserved for some of life's most important, yet commonly neglected pursuits, including spending time with one's family and hours of deep reflection, self-renewal and re-creating. It provided hardworking people with a chance to renew their energies and spend time living life more fully. However as the pace of life quickened and more activities began to compete for people's attention, this wonderful tradition was lost along with the tremendous personal benefits that flowed from it.

Stress itself is not a bad thing. It can help us perform our best, expand beyond our limits and achieve things that would astonish us. Just ask any elite athlete or lodge ritualist. The real problem lies in the fact that in this age of global anxiety we do not get enough relief from stress. To revitalize and re-create yourself and nourish the deepest part of you, plan for a weekly period of peace—a weekly sabbatical—to get back to the simpler pleasures of life, pleasures that you may have given up as your days grew busier and your life more complex. Bringing this simple ritual into your weeks will help you reduce stress, connect with your more creative side and to feel far happier in every rôle of your life.

I look forward to continuing the leadership and education programmes with the Masters, Wardens and Deacons which have been so successful throughout the year. I look

forward to attending special events in each district and will endeavour to assist in delivering Long Service Jewels as well as attending other milestones and social events, joint meetings, Grand Masonic Day, and community parades. I look forward to the opportunity to meet and greet as many of you as possible at the events of the year.

We will continue to monitor demits, continue to expand participation in Excellence and Achievement Awards and continue rewarding the lodges with certificates of continued service to the community for 50 years, 75 years and 100 years or greater. Your team of elected and appointed Grand Lodge officers is enthusiastic and excited about the year ahead as we meet the challenges and reap the rewards with you. We sincerely ask for your support and encouragement and would invite each of you to join as we "let our light so shine", as we reach out and help someone become part of something special.

As it has been said, "don't hide your light under a bushel". Let your light so shine and help Freemasonry become a beacon unto mankind.

Just before we close Grand Lodge we wish to honour MW Bro. Dennis Marsh, Past Grand Master, the brother who was instrumental in spearheading the Cancer Car Programme, thereby giving us the flagship project which gives the Craft such meaningful visibility. He accomplished this with several others whom I will name, not to the exclusion of anyone I may have inadvertently missed.

At this time, RW Bro. Grand Director of Ceremonies, accompanied by the VV Brother Grand Marshal: you will escort MW Bro. Dennis Marsh to the East where we will present him with a certificate with this inscription in commemoration of that event eighteen years ago:

"Most Worshipful Brother

Dennis Marsh , PGM

"In recognition of your vision and determination in creating the BC Cancer Car Program, which provides a valuable service to humanity and helps make Freemasonry visible in the community in a very meaningful way.

"Let your light so shine."

We will present the inaugural Dennis Marsh medal, to be worn as a breast jewel, to show the high esteem we have for the foresight and perseverance in getting this programme into place. This jewel will be presented to all brethren who have laboured in the Craft as participants for at least five years in all aspects of the Cancer Car Project. On receipt of this jewel you are hereby authorized, as will be all other recipients, to wear this with the distinction it so richly deserves.

Brother Grand Director of Ceremonies, accompanied by the Grand Marshal, you will also present MW Brothers Gibson, Grant and Hargrove, the team who made this programme viable. I also present you with this lapel pin which may be worn by all brethren of the Craft and Canadian Cancer Society partners. This lapel pin gives recognition to our partnership with the Canadian Cancer Society as it bears the square and compasses of Freemasonry and the logo of the Canadian Cancer Society, the daffodil, both of which are recognizable world wide.

Brethren, assist me to close this Grand Lodge. ■

Lessons learned

by W Bro. Dan Zrymiak

As freemasons, we are encouraged to attend the events of the concordant bodies to show our support and offer our guidance and mentorship. This year, I have taken a particular interest in the Job's Daughters Bethel that

meets in our lodge hall, and have had the pleasure to participate in their installation and Past and Fraternal ceremonies. In turn, they have paid our lodge a visit and displayed their Cross Ritual.

What I had not anticipated was that I would end up being the recipient of their positive influence. I just wanted to share a few lessons I was privileged enough to learn with the hope that sharing them will not only make us more humble, but better practitioners of Freemasonry by following their examples.

Respect for patriotism and ceremony

At meetings, *O Canada* and *God Save The Queen* are sung proudly and accurately. At Remembrance Day, the Job's Daughters are the first at the cenotaph, and stand quietly and respectfully throughout the ceremony. These are traits which all Freemasons should adopt.

Direct communication to get results

Rather than relying solely on email and voice messages, the Honoured Queen asserts herself in meetings and obtains the commitments for upcoming events and visits. This creates visible accountability, and ensures correct communication. Freemasons need to be more clear and direct so that their desired results will occur.

Showcase your talents in ritual

The ritual is not seen as a chore or a burden, but as a chance to shine and display talents and preparation. Rather than mumbling or rushing through a piece, freemasons should follow the example and allow the beauty and poetry of the words to resonate throughout the hall. This will make everyone more attentive to the lessons and wisdom contained in the ritual, and will encourage more participants to deliver such pieces.

Treat shortcomings with positive enthusiasm

When freemasons miss a line or confuse some words, often they will become angry or frustrated. In contrast, the Job's Daughters will giggle, smile, and continue the ritual without losing composure or confidence. Ritual should be a source of joy, not anger; and when we realize that our flaws are quickly forgotten in a supportive and forgiving environment, we will be more enthusiastic about taking on the larger parts.

Involve the families

One of the challenges to membership involvement in our craft is that time spent at lodge is time away from families. The parents have to be involved as drivers, chaperones, and organizers; but the time spent together is constructive. Family and Freemasonry should not be mutually exclusive but complementary and interdependent, where time spent with one aids and benefits growth in the other.

My opinion is not unique, but is shared by several distinguished brethren in the Craft. One Past Grand Master expressed his opinion that the Jobies represent the best characteristics in Freemasonry. Our Grand Master-elect commented that the Honoured Queen could teach a few Worshipful Masters about leadership and organization.

Anything held in such high esteem by our top practitioners is certainly worth our time and attention. ■

Chaplain's corner

VW Bro. Mark S. Dwor, Grand Chaplain

We collectively, both as members of Canadian society and as Craftsmen, know less about the *Bible* than our grandparents did. We certainly are far less knowledgeable about the *Bible*, its stories, and the commentaries about them then were our brethren in the

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eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when our rituals were basically finalized.

This lack of connectedness to the underlying references deprives us of much of the riches and moral teaching found in our rituals. This year I will address this to try to make our masonic life more rewarding.

The first topic is why the *Bible* must be open when we are at labour. There is nothing hidden in the Volume of Sacred Law, and there is no current social convention that makes the contents more meaningful merely by opening this book. You make a solemn oath in court on a closed *Bible*. A minister of the crown takes an oath of office on a closed *Bible*.

We are reminded where our hands were placed when we took our obligations. Masonic art is full of open *Bible* images.

From the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, what distinguished a Protestant church from a Roman Catholic church was a *Bible* on the altar "usually open to symbolize the immediate connection between believer and the word of God" (*Whose Bible Is It?* 2005). The open *Bible* along with much of our structure is copied from a church ritual the early freemasons knew and understood. The Craft has never been exclusively Protestant by any means; the second Grand Master was Catholic and, in 1732 the first Jewish Master of a lodge was installed. Tolerance is not yet a perfect ashlar – but we have strived for it from the beginning. The importance of the open Volume of Sacred Law is not just where it came from, but what we have done with it and the continuity of the values it symbolizes.

Centenary

The spirit of that venerable Australian, MW Bro. John "J.J." Miller, was felt by all present at the Freemasons' Hall on West Eighth Avenue, Vancouver, as

Lodge Southern Cross No. 44 celebrated her centenary on Saturday, 17 June 2006.

The lodge's daughter lodge, **Commonwealth Lodge No. 156**, received a formal reception, then the Grand Master-elect, RW Bro. Isaac Brock Brower-Berkhoven and his suite were received.

At that point, the lodge was called to refreshment, and wives and non-masons were invited in for the various presentations.

A musical interlude was given by the senior member of the lodge, VW Bro. Worth Connolly, a member of the Craft for 61 years. Special pins struck for the occasion were then given to all present.

A history of the lodge, from its founding on 15 June 1906, was presented by RW Bro. James G. Bennie.

The usual Lodge Southern Cross festive board customs—lodge secrets, never to be disclosed—were observed. Bro. Ben Quick, of **Yarra Glen Lodge No. 762**, Melbourne, Australia, surprised the crowd by breaking into a song about Cootamundra, hometown of MW Bro. J.J. Miller. An impromptu speech by Mrs. Eileen Chammen, widow of the late W Bro. Colin Chammen, revealed social activities of the lodge in the 1950s—lodge secrets, perhaps also never to be disclosed.

The celebrations were entirely organized by junior members of the lodge—all of whom have joined within the last few years—giving the lodge renewed life and an excellent start toward the next hundred years.

More details of this event will appear in your Grand Historian's annual report.

Lodge notes

On 4 May 2006 **Perfection Lodge No. 75**, New Westminster, celebrated the



Grand Master's Itinerary SEPTEMBER 2006

1	Fri	Bellingham Bay No. 44	Bellingham, WA
9	Sat	Annual Melon Festival	Kettle Falls WA
9	Sat	District No. 6, 7	Casual reception Castlegar
10	Sun	Supreme Queen	Daughters of Nile Vancouver
12	Tue	75th Anniversary	Lynn Valley 122 North Vancouver
13	Wed	Coffee with the Craft	Port Alberni
14	Thu	Installation	Westminster No. 174 Langley
15	Fri	Installation, Lodge of Education & Research	Vancouver
17	Sun	At Sea	
19	Tue	Grand Master of Alberta Ominica No. 92	Smithers
20	Wed	Coffee with the Craft	Smithers
23	Sat	District No. 19	Chetwynd No. 187 Chetwynd
24	Sun	Church Parade	Chetwynd
27	Wed	Installation	Funeral Lodge No. 1 Vancouver
28	Thu	60 year jewel	Mt. Lebanon No, 72 Vancouver
28	Thu	Board of General Purposes, Past Officers	Vancouver
29	Fri	Concordant Bodies	Vancouver
30	Sat	Rob Morris Society	Vancouver

Fortieth Annual Canada Night with RW Bro. Glenn Allan, then Junior Grand Warden, as the traditional guest of honour. In his address RW Bro. Allen outlined the true meaning of *O Canada*, a song which we perform often, perhaps without ever realizing the true meaning of the anthem. The many brethren, friends and invited guests present enjoyed the Shrine Pipe and Drum Band and those performing the traditional Flag Patrol.

On 17 May 2006 **Ashlar Lodge No. 3**, Nanaimo, conferred the Master Mason degree on Bro. Norman Henderson whose examinations and work have been crisp, accurate, and extremely well done. He said that he has many friends who are freemasons and is glad that he decided to join the Craft. Bro. Henderson is eighty-eight years old.

Our Grand Master, MW Bro. Isaac Brock Brower-Berkhoven will be in attendance when **Lynn Valley Lodge No. 122**, North Vancouver, celebrates

its seventy-fifth anniversary on 12 September.

This past May **Mount Lebanon Lodge No 72**, Vancouver, hosted a team of Senior DeMolay conferring the Fellow Craft Degree. The Nine O'clock Interpolation Ceremony, an important aspect of DeMolay ritual was also performed by the DeMolay Degree team under the direction of RW Bro. James G. Bennie.

Bro. Robert Neall, a one-year Master Mason, of **Northstar Lodge No. 167**, Surrey, reports that he is proud to be a freemason, having seen the generosity of his brethren when reports that a freemason was in serious distress came to their notice.

A pub night fund raiser was organized with donations coming from brethren, the lodge and Grand Lodge, all going to assist an unemployed brother with a family, a mortgage and a cancerous brain tumour.