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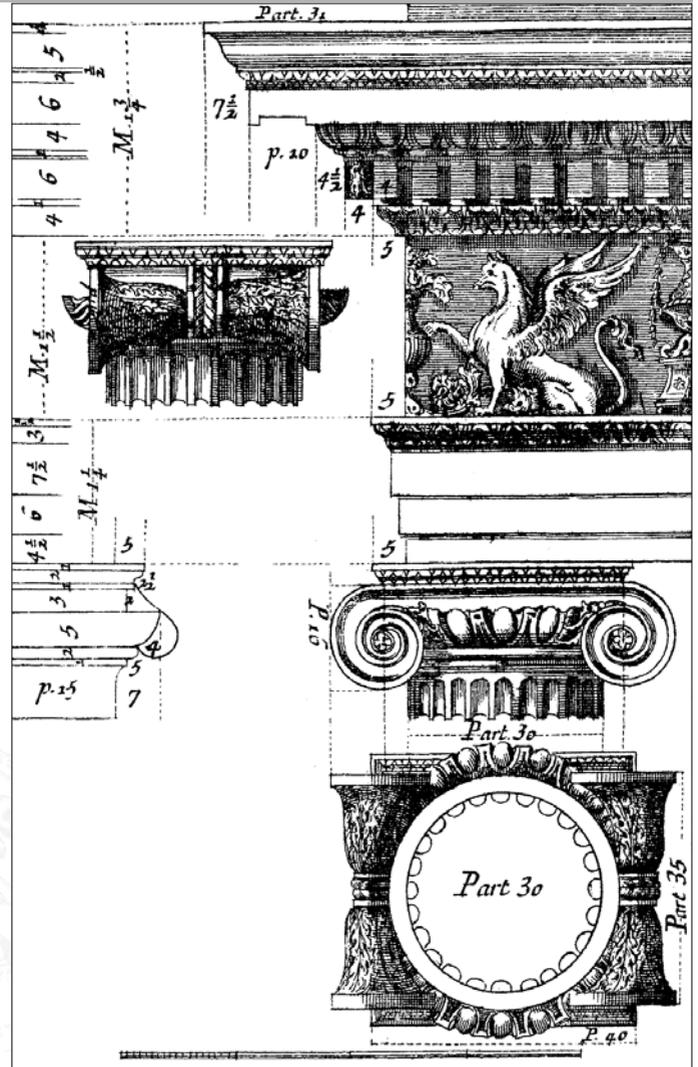
Voting rights

The Committee on Membership and Voting Rights at Grand Lodge was formed to review, report and recommend on the two conflicting proposals to change the existing voting system put forward at the Grand Lodge Communication in June 2005. These proposals were:

1. "All Master Masons in good standing attending the Grand Lodge Communication to have full voting rights."
2. "On all matters of business and election of officers, each constituted lodge shall be given one vote. The vote will be carried by the Worshipful Master or designated proxy registered with Grand Lodge. The total number of votes will equal the number of lodges registered with the credentials committee." Grand Lodge is the

governing body of all freemasons in British Columbia and Yukon, however membership in Grand Lodge is limited only to those freemasons who have presided over a lodge as Worshipful Master. Each member of Grand Lodge is entitled to vote along with the three principal officers of each lodge. There is presently a proxy system in place to ensure that the votes of the three principal officers are carried to Grand lodge. A proxy must be carried by a member of Grand Lodge.

In 2005, 10,576 freemasons were members of lodges in British Columbia and Yukon. Of this number 3,619 or 34.21% held the rank of Worshipful Brother or higher and were members of Grand Lodge with the right to vote at Grand Lodge communications. The remaining 6,957 or 65.79%, although entitled to attend



In masonic architecture, the Ionic column, combining the beauty of the Corinthian and the strength of the Doric, is adopted as representative of Wisdom. Illust.: Giacomo da Vignola, *The Five Orders of Architecture* (1563).

Grand Lodge communications, did not have the right to vote, their rights being expressed by the vote of the three principal officers who attend from their lodges or their proxies.

In 2005, there were 149 lodges in the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon. Of these lodges, 139 were represented at the annual communication in June 2005.

The total ballots eligible to be cast on Saturday were 953 or 9% of the 10,576 Freemasons in British Columbia and Yukon. Of that number, 579 were listed as Past Masters and 199 were principal officers of lodges. 175 proxies were carried. Also assuming that 1/3 or 66 of the 199 principal officers were Worshipful

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Voting rights from page one

Masters, the number of members holding the rank of Worshipful Brother or higher was 645, or 18% of the 3,619 eligible voting members.

Not all freemasons choose to proceed through the chairs and become Worshipful Master of their lodge. In their own way, they contribute to the lodge and their views would be an asset to Grand Lodge. Many of these freemasons are far more knowledgeable about the workings of our lodges than the presiding officers.

Our senior members have seen tremendous changes during their lives—in transportation, communication, entertainment and education. The young members who come into the Craft are far more knowledgeable about Freemasonry because the Internet has provided them with the means to research the Craft before they make their approach. But having said that, little information exists on the government of our Craft. These new, young minds want to be involved and are far more sophisticated than many of us were at their age. We want to keep these young people in lodge as they are our future. To do so we have to compete with a multitude of other attractions such as sports and family. These young members are used to, and want, a say in the government of the bodies they belong to and, generally speaking, they are very educated and have a lot to offer to our institution.

Some revisions are needed to the present membership and voting system of Grand Lodge to give adequate representation to all freemasons in British Columbia and Yukon. We have carefully considered the two proposals that were put forth to change the existing voting system and have concluded that there is merit in both proposals.

The proposal that " All

Master Masons in good standing attending the Grand Lodge Communication have full voting rights" has been presented, and defeated, on several occasions at Grand Lodge. Concerns that have been put forward are that Master Masons may not have the experience to understand the issues of Grand Lodge, especially younger members, and that Master Masons might be able to effect some form of block voting. Some have expressed concerns that large lodges would be able to assert more influence on voting if all Master Masons have the vote. Facility planning for our annual communications could also be affected with the increased number of attendees if Master Masons were given the vote. However, the experience of those jurisdictions which have adopted full membership and voting rights is that the numbers of Master Masons attending their Grand Communication has not increased significantly and has had little or no impact on the government of their Grand Lodge.

The second proposal, that each constituted lodge shall be given one vote, was based on the success of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand in restructuring the management of their Grand Lodge, part of which included the elimination of individual voting and the implementation of a new lodge-only voting system with proxy voting allowed. The New Zealand restructuring came about after a Management Review Committee investigated the future government of the Craft in New Zealand. Their recommendations were viewed as " radical and far-reaching" and included, in part, making all Master Masons members of Grand Lodge while also eliminating individual votes at Grand Lodge and replacing with a lodge vote with proxy voting allowed.

The effect of the second

proposal would give small lodges a level playing field with all lodges but could be viewed as prejudicing lodges with larger membership. The underlying intention of the second proposal is to have all matters to be voted on at Grand Lodge fully discussed in each lodge before the annual communication and the Worshipful Master or proxy of the lodge would reflect the wishes of the lodge.

Committee recommendation

The Committee favours a change to the membership and voting in our Grand Lodge that would embody some of the benefits of both proposals, namely:

- making all Master Masons members of Grand Lodge;
 - encouraging greater participation in the decision-making process at the lodge level;
 - creating a level playing field between larger and smaller lodges in the voting process at Grand Lodge;
- and which, in addition, would:
- easily determine the number of voting members at a Grand Communication;
 - ensure that lodges unable to have representation at any Grand Communications have the ability to appoint a freemason from another lodge to represent them; and
 - simplify the registration of voting representatives at Annual Communications.

With these goals in mind, it is our opinion and recommendation that these goals can be achieved by making the following revisions to membership and voting rights at Grand Lodge:

1. Make all Master Masons members of Grand Lodge;
2. Abolish the existing voting rights;
3. Adopt a limited voting system where each constituent lodge shall have five (5) votes at Grand Lodge and the current

Grand Lodge Officers shall have one (1) vote each. The number of votes given to each lodge would ensure that the Grand Lodge Communication would be attended by about the same number of voting representatives as under the present system. A lodge representative could be elected from the lodge's Master Masons, presiding lodge officers, Past Masters, Past Grand Lodge officers or a member of another lodge, ensuring the ability for every lodge to be represented by the most qualified and willing members available to attend. A current Grand Lodge officer would not be able to be a voting representative of his lodge as he would already have a vote through his Grand Lodge office.

4. Prohibit any member from exercising more than one vote.
5. Abolish the existing proxy system and replace it by a system for each constituent lodge to elect its representatives to vote at Grand Lodge.

To implement this system, a number of resolutions would have to be passed at Grand Lodge to amend our *Book of Constitutions*. The committee feels that all freemasons in British Columbia and the Yukon should be given an opportunity to review and comment on the contents of this report and recommendations. The report and the proposed changes to the *Constitutions* will be forwarded to each lodge secretary so that lodges and their members may forward any comments on the report and the resolutions to the committee through the Grand Secretary.

After the committee has had an opportunity to review the comments, they will submit a final report no later than 30 April 2007. In the interim, the committee will submit the

proposed resolutions to the Grand Secretary to be included in the agenda of our 2007 Annual Communication. As the question of voting rights has come up at previous Grand Lodge Annual Communications and has proved to be a controversial and emotional issue, the committee recommends that the vote on the proposed changes to membership and voting at the 2007 Annual Communication be by written ballot to allow the members to vote their conscience without peer influence and to ensure an accurate count of the results. ■

Regional Reps

by RW Bro. Stephen Godfrey
Regional Representatives to the Board of General Purposes

The Board of General Purposes includes nine elected regional representatives who represent the nine regions that were created on the recommendation of a committee established to examine the structure of the Board at our Annual Communication in 2001. The following are some questions frequently asked about the Regional Representatives.

Q. What is the difference in the rôle of the DDGM and that of the Regional Representative?

A. The DDGMs are appointed by the Grand Master to supervise the districts in this jurisdiction as his personal representative. Each DDGM supervises and supports the work of the lodges in his district and reports directly to the Grand Master. The Regional Representative is elected by the brethren and each represents his region to the Board of General Purposes.

Q. What does a Regional Representative do?

A. Attends all meetings of the Board of General Purposes; Conveys regional concerns to

the Board; Reports back to his region on the Board meetings; Obtains feedback from the members of his region on questions or other information requested by the Board

Q. How does the Regional Representative communicate with the brethren in his region?

A. Each Regional Representative chooses the best way to communicate with the brethren in his area. Following a Board meeting, some may send a commentary or report to each lodge, some may personally attend at a lodge meeting and give a report, and some may communicate through a Masters and Wardens or District Association.

Q. Who are the current Regional Representatives and what regions do they represent?

A. *Region 1* – Districts 11, 12, 19: RW Bro. Merv Markling.

Region 2 – Districts 3, 4N, 4S: RW Bro. Rick Money.

Region 3 – Districts 9, 10: VW Bro. Bill Roper.

Region 4 – Districts 6, 7, 8: W Bro. Dennis Coons.

Region 5 – Districts 18, 23, 28: VW Bro. Frank Hutchins

Region 6 – Districts 13, 14, 16, 26: RW Bro. Harry Gorkoff.

Region 7 – Districts 1, 17, 24, 25: RW Bro. Rob Feldstein.

Region 8 – Districts 5, 22 - W.Bro. Ron Yates

Region 9 – Districts 1, 21, 27: RW Bro. Bill Headen .

Q. How long is a Representative's term?

A. Each representative serves a three-year term. The terms are staggered:

Reps of Regions 1, 3, 7 are in the first of their three year term.

Reps of Regions 2, 6, 8 are in the second of their three year term.

Reps of Regions 4, 5, 9, are in their third of their three year term. These regions will conduct elections for new Representatives this year to commence their new three-year term on 1 July 2007. The DDGMs of these regions have

been informed of this and some are already seeking nominees for the positions.

Q. How is a brother elected?

A. The DDGM sends a request for nominations to all lodges in his district, with a deadline for receiving nominations. Once the deadline has passed, a list of nominees is sent to all lodges in the region. Election locations are designated in several places throughout the district and a date for the election is set. Following the election, the name of the successful brother is submitted to the Grand Secretary, who refers it to the Grand Master. The brethren so elected are declared members of the Board by Grand Lodge.

Q. Who can vote?

A. If an election is called, all Master Masons of the region can vote.

Q. Can a brother serve for successive terms?

A. If he is elected, yes.

Q. What happens if no one is nominated?

A. The Grand Master appoints a brother to the region for the three-year term, assuming he is prepared to serve a full term. Otherwise he will serve for one year and an election will be called the following year.

Q. What happens if the Regional Representative cannot attend a meeting of the Board?

A. The regional representative can submit a written report to the Board, or he can select a proxy with full voting rights to take his place at the meeting, or he may choose to attend by telephone conference.

Q. Are there travelling expenses for the Regional Representative?

A. No. Telephone conferencing is about to be put into place, and video conferencing is being considered for future years.

Q. How do I put my name forward as a candidate for Regional Representative?

A. Contact your DDGM and inform him you wish to have your name stand for the position.

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Finally, it is the wish of the Board of General Purposes that the name of the Regional Representative with a contact number be added to the notice of each lodge. It would be placed below the name of the DDGM. ■

RW Bro. Stephen Godfrey is currently chairman of the Board of General Purposes.

A quiet man

The three main charitable trusts of our Grand Lodge recently benefited considerably by the million dollar bequest of a large portion of the estate of RW Bro. James Perkins of **Vimy Lodge No. 97**. His request was that the amount be divided equally between the Communities Charity Cancer Car Program, The Bursaries Trust and the Grand Lodge Benevolent Trust. RW Bro. Perkins was a private, unassuming man and a dedicated freemason for some thirty-one years. Active in his lodge, and both Scottish Rite and Royal Arch, little was known of his life. Born in England, he was orphaned at the age of four, shortly after his family moved to Alberta. He grew up on an Alberta farm, worked as a lumberman, and as a miner in the Yukon, and on returning to Vancouver, bought into a sawmill which was later sold, providing him with the capital to go into real estate development. He was truly a man who quietly and modestly moved in the sphere of his life. ■

Chaplain's corner

by VW Bro. Mark S. Dwor
King David buys the farm
In some rituals, in the First Degree, there is a reference to King David piously praying and appeasing the wrath of God and stopping a pestilence. You

may have wondered why a story starting off with a supposedly improper census is in the ritual.

The story is at the end of Samuel II 24. Briefly, David had to choose a punishment and a short term pestilence seemed the best choice, but the pestilence killed too many people and threatened Jerusalem, so David went to the farm which was in the path of the pestilence and then prayed to protect his subjects and took on the full responsibility. He erected an altar and made a sacrifice.

Even though the farmer offered the land and the oxen for the sacrifice to David for free, David refused and paid the full price because he could not offer as a sacrifice something he got for free. That's an interesting moral proposition, but not the real reason for the reference.

The story is expanded in First Chronicles 21 and 22. Here we find out why Solomon and not David built the Temple and most importantly, we find out that this very piece of land where stood the altar upon which David prayed so piously is the specific location where Solomon built the Temple. Now, you know the full reason why this reference is in our Ritual. ■

Wisdom literature

by W Bro. Daniel Zrymiak

Certain biblical passages are used throughout masonic ritual and practice: Psalm 23, "Valley of the Shadow of Death"; Ecclesiastes 12, "Remember now thy Creator"; and Job 42, Job's Daughters.

These works are not separate and distinct, but are linked and identified as "wisdom literature".

Wisdom is a very prominent part of Freemasonry, being one of the three great pillars along with Strength and Beauty.



Grand Master's Itinerary JANUARY 2007

5	Fri	Ladies Night Dinner	Grand Lodge Officers	Victoria
6	Sat	Installation	Victoria-Columbia No. 1	Victoria
7	Sun	Church Parade		Victoria
10	Wed	District No. 16	Alliance No. 193	Vancouver
11	Thu	Coffee with the Craft		Vancouver
13	Sat	Shrine Degree Team	Meridian No. 108	Vancouver
15	Mon	Rabbie Burns	Discovery No. 149	Campbell River
16	Tue	Coffee with the Craft		Campbell River
20	Sat	Dinner	International Shrine	Dawson Creek
23	Tue	Rabbie Burns		Kamloops
26	Fri	Annual Session	Shrine	Vancouver
27	Sat	Installation	Shrine	Vancouver

Wisdom is personified by King Solomon and is represented by sunlight. Unlike vocational knowledge, wisdom must be gradually acquired—divulged and imparted over time.

Wisdom Literature refers to a *genre* of writings common in the Ancient Near East that emphasizes wisdom in life and action. Wisdom literature in the *Bible* is canonical in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and other Abraham-based religions. Equivalent forms exist in Indian, Persian, Egyptian, and Asian religions. Since wisdom literature content is available in many forms, it can be considered as an inclusive and convergent element of different religions.

Like wisdom literature, Freemasonry strives to deliver practical understanding and advice for living. Not esoteric or pretentious in nature, wisdom literature uses provocative writing targeted to stimulate emotional reactions.

By originating Freemasonry from Solomon's work, and following the guidelines of Wisdom literature, Freemasonry itself can be considered an essential resource in the growth and proliferation of Wisdom among its members. ■

Spring workshop

All Master Masons are invited to attend the forty-second annual Masonic Spring Workshop, held in Kananaskis, Alberta. At the Masonic Spring Workshop, held 20–22 April 2007, they will present an oral version of the history of Freemasonry. The "Storyteller" will be performed by Bro. Nelson King, editor of the *Philaethes*, the Philaethes Society's journal of masonic research and letters. We will teach you the myths, the legends and, of course, "the truth."

Contact the organizers at workshop@masonicspringworkshop.ab.ca for details.

Thank you

Arlene Oxley and family thank the brethren for their generous donations to the Cancer Clinic, Cancer Car project and Grand Lodge Bursary Fund in memory of RW Bro. "Chuck" Oxley (1940-2006) and, of course, for their many cards and phone calls. See our November issue for notice of his passing. ■