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A temple of peace, harmony and brotherly love?

by RW Bro. Philip Durell, Senior Grand Warden

In deciding my topic for this year I was inspired by the paper *Fellowship - The Tie That Binds*, presented last year by my very good friend, RW Bro. Donald Stutt. Good fellowship is predicated on the existence of peace and harmony. Consider this passage from *The Address to the Brethren*:

"A lodge of Freemasons is a temple of peace, harmony and brotherly love; nothing is allowed to enter that has the remotest tendency to disturb the quietude of its pursuit."

This statement imposes on us a very high standard, yet all too often we see private piques and quarrels tear apart a lodge, district and sometimes even a Grand Lodge. Why is this when the teaching in our ritual and ceremonies is intricately interwoven with the necessity for peace and harmony as the strength and support of our institution?

I believe that we take peace and harmony for granted, often

speaking the words with little thought to the individual and collective effort necessary to maintain it. We don't discuss it, we don't teach it and sometimes we let our egos get in the way and don't practice it. We should pay more attention to peace and harmony as I'm certain that for a significant number of brethren it's disruption is a major factor inhibiting a worthwhile and truly valuable masonic experience.

The strength and support of all institutions—more especially this of ours...

There are several elements that make up the strength of peace and harmony, some of which are: trust, tolerance, caring, unity, integrity and honesty

Trust - At our first entrance into a lodge as a candidate for initiation we are asked, "In all times of difficulty and danger, in whom do you put your trust?" "In God," we are expected to reply. Next the



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hoodwinked candidate is directed to arise, follow his guide and fear no danger.

Trust in the wisdom, strength and goodness of the Great Architect of the Universe is an essential expression of faith and without it one cannot be a Freemason. By trusting one's guide we are immediately being told that, even in our present condition devoid of all material possessions, we can trust a brother Freemason. This trust is the true cornerstone of Freemasonry.

Paraphrasing the opening of Stephen M. R. Covey's book, *The Speed of Trust*:

"There is one thing that is common to every individual, relationship, family, organization, nation throughout the world—one thing which, if removed, will destroy the most powerful government, the most successful organization, the most influential leadership, the greatest friendship, the strongest character, the deepest

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A temple
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love. That thing is *trust*.

On the other hand, if developed, that one thing has the potential to create unparalleled success and prosperity in every dimension of life.

Trust is not some abstract quality but a real factor in our lives and our Lodges. All great relationships are built on trust and it is an essential element of successful lodges. The good news is that we can build trust and repair relationships where it has broken down. It takes time and the willingness of brethren to seek resolution but we can effect it. An issue between two brethren may be facilitated by the Master or other brethren skilled in the art of mediation.

It may take outside help, perhaps the DDGM, or a brother appointed by Grand Lodge (our jurisdiction has this year established a Mediation Committee). Our efforts to build trust are critical, not just between brethren in a lodge but also between the lodges of a jurisdiction and its principal officers and Grand Lodge administration. As principal officers it is our duty to build and nurture trust for the success and prosperity of Freemasonry.

Tolerance - Our ritual and ceremonies, and that of concordant bodies, proudly proclaim that Freemasonry teaches and is characterized by universal tolerance. Without tolerance it is impossible to practice universal brotherly love yet frequently our thoughts and actions are intolerant of other races, cultures, religions or simply the words or actions of other brethren.

The trouble with tolerance is that it is not easy because we actually have to disagree with or dislike a word or action otherwise there is no need to be tolerant! It is much easier to be intolerant as that is our natural state instilled at an early age—our culture, our nation,



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our religion, our school, our hockey team is supreme over others—but we can improve and should strive to be tolerant.

It's easy to perpetuate intolerance—how often have you received and perhaps unthinkingly forwarded "humorous" emails which, if you stopped to think, you know would be religiously or racially offensive to others, perhaps even to a brother in your lodge. The delete button is in order here and perhaps a gentle reminder to the sender. Perhaps closer to home is the repetition of negative comments about a brother—never mind their veracity. Even if true, we are bound by the Five Points of Fellowship—"Hand over back I will uphold your good name in your absence as I would in your presence", or more pointedly in the Ancient work, "cheek to cheek or mouth to ear I will ever whisper good counsel in the ear of a brother and in the most tender manner remind him of his faults, and endeavour to aid in his reformation, and will give him due and timely notice that he may ward off all approaching danger."

We must make a stand for tolerance as intolerant people

affect those around them in a negative manner. There is a huge difference between holding an opinion and being opinionated. Tolerating and respecting an opposing opinion is critical to maintaining peace and harmony.

Caring - is the essence of brotherly love. Before the advent of state-sponsored social welfare a brother could freely expect his lodge to assist him and his widow and orphan(s) in time of difficulty. The caring was first hand as financial and other assistance mostly came from brethren within the lodge rather than a benevolent fund. Lodge dues were not remitted as another brother or sponsor paid them. It is also one of the reasons why lodges tended to have around 40 members or less as it is difficult to really get to know 100 members of a lodge and truly care for each individual. Our circumstances may be somewhat different today but we can still make a greater effort to care for our lodge brethren.

It is generally easier to care for brethren with whom we've had a long association and friendship but more difficult to make the effort for newer Freemasons. Sure, we fuss over

our candidates on degree nights but do we really take enough effort between degrees to nurture, perhaps explain the meaning of the degrees, help new brethren feel comfortable in lodge, spend more time with them outside and inside the lodge? Even with a well thought out mentorship programme for candidates it is rare for this to continue past the Master Mason degree. Continued care for new Master Masons, not just new lodge officers, will aid retention and increase enthusiasm for Freemasonry. Mentoring is a lifelong commitment and helping a new Freemason establish his masonic friendships is crucial to retaining him.

Festive boards have been and are an integral part of the lodge experience because they afford the time to get to know one's brethren in a social environment. I believe that a quick social half hour after a lodge meeting to be a bare minimum and all too often it's too easy for brethren to give it a miss. A full meal allows more time to enjoy good fellowship and develop caring relationships.

In previous times it was expected that every brother would attend each meeting

and inform the Master if and why he couldn't attend. Today, brethren simply don't show up and those attending do not find out why a brother didn't attend. Both indicate a lack of caring. If we truly want to retain new members we had better start caring because statistically once a brother misses three meetings in a row he's on his way out.

As RW Bro. Stutt said last year, sincere good fellowship starts with one firm handshake, one big smile and one warm pat on the shoulder, and that it is particular important for us to greet a brother we don't know in this manner.

Unity - one of the most beautiful elements of Freemasonry is that it is a unifying force bringing together men who otherwise might remain at a distance. This is evident even in areas of conflict; the American civil war, Jews and Arabs in an Israeli lodge, Catholic and Protestant in Northern Ireland are all examples. In his Grand Master's address, *Unity with Diversity*, MW Bro. Tuckey pointed out that even within our own jurisdictions we have wide diversity—religion, education, vocation, politics, rural and urban, generational characteristics and different lodge cultures—yet we seek to maintain peace and harmony as an example to the world without, which has only too often been at war over these differences.

An indispensable part of maintaining unity in a lodge is to truly respect each man's opinion on any subject—whether it concerns lodge operations or it is part of an educational discussion. It is surprising how much a new Freemason can offer the lodge when allowed to make a contribution. Allowing a brother to be on the level rather than overweighting his opinion depending on the colour of the apron is a prerequisite for members to feel that they are part of the lodge. Too often I'm

tempted to paraphrase George Orwell's *Animal Farm*: all brethren are equal, but some brethren are more equal than others. Yes we have rank within Freemasonry but as brothers we are equal and on the level. As Grand Lodge officers it is even more important to bear this in mind as others will tend to overweight our opinions for us! As one Grand Master recently said, "My duty is to serve and protect—serve the brethren and protect the *Constitutions*."

Integrity and Honesty - it may seem redundant to mention integrity and honesty at a conference of Freemasons but without it trust cannot exist for long. Without trust there is no peace, no harmony and brotherly love will be hard pressed to survive.

I believe that in today's highly materialistic world where advertisements continually bombard us with messages that we can have it all for little cost or effort to ourselves; where citizens have a sense of entitlement rather than a sense of duty; where politicians and corporate leaders are regularly economical with the truth to gain office or increase profit—or both—that we need a constant reminder to do the right thing even if at a disadvantage to ourselves. Whenever a non-mason asks me why I am a Freemason my short answer is, "for the wonderful friendship of like-minded men and the constant reminder to do the right thing in a very materialistic world." Doing the right thing should be automatic for a Freemason but it doesn't hurt to have an external monitor.

Peace, harmony and brotherly love are absolutely necessary prerequisites for Freemasonry to flourish and be successful. Without peace there is conflict, without harmony there is discord and without brotherly love we simply serve ourselves.

The brethren who wrote our ritual and ceremonies fully

understood this and left us wonderful principles to live by—we do not have to reinvent the wheel. But we can initiate more discussion of the wonderful lessons taught therein. Remembering that, "The utmost extension of fraternal feeling that can subsist between man and man is expected to be displayed among the brethren of our Order in a lodge of Freemasons, and then will be attained the chief point of Freemasonry, namely, to endeavour to be happy ourselves, and to communicate that happiness to others."

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The original paper entitled, A Temple of Peace, Harmony and Brotherly Love? was presented at the Western Canada Conference in October 2012.

The Bulletin's future

Since 1938 this jurisdiction has provided its members with a monthly publication on masonic education and items of masonic interest. In the face of rising costs, the Grand Secretary recently sent a short survey to the 147 lodge secretaries, asking them if they would like to see the print edition of the *Bulletin* discon-



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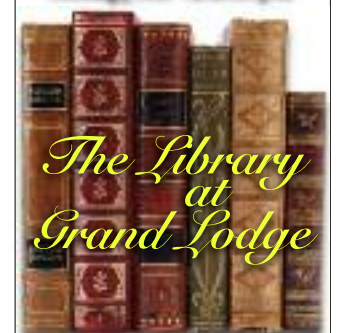


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tinued either immediately or at the end of this masonic year, or continued regardless of cost. Of 43 replies, twenty-five would like to see the print edition discontinued immediately, ten are in favour of a year's extension, and eight feel that it provides a valuable service that should be continued. And what do you think? ■

Grand Masonic Day

The upcoming Grand Masonic Day, on 19 January 2013 will feature presentations by W Bro Adam G. Kendall, Dr. Gordan Djurdjevic, W Bro Wes Regan and W Bro Ken Lane. W Bro. Kendell, who will speak on the *Aesthetic Tradition of Freemasonry*, comes to us from the Henry Wilson Coil Library & Museum of Freemasonry in California. Dr. Djurdjevic, Professor of Humanities at Simon Fraser University will speak on the *Influence of Eastern thought in the Western Esoteric Traditions*. W Bro Regan, past DEO District 13 will present the *Relevance of the Arcane within the Modern* and W Bro Lane, Director of the Masonic Restoration Foundation in Seattle will give an *Introduction to Traditional Observance Lodges and to the work of the Masonic Restoration Foundation*.

Our Junior Grand Warden, RW Bro. Douglas C. Collins will give a luncheon presentation which will be followed by an afternoon panel discussion moderated by VW Bro. Trevor W. McKeown, Grand Historian and curator of the Vancouver Masonic Library and Archives.

Tickets are \$30, advance

and \$35 at the door. Further details will be published in the December *Bulletin*. ■

International Days

For the past 25 years or so Whitehorse Lodge No. 46 and Tanana Lodge No. 3, Fairbanks, Alaska, have been meeting each year for what they call International Days. Although it is not an official event, they have often had Grand Lodge officers from both Alaska and British Columbia and Yukon attend unofficially. In the beginning they used to alternate holding the event at Whitehorse one year and then Fairbanks the next year. They once went to Valdez, Alaska and sometimes the event was held at Harding Lake near Fairbanks, usually on the May long weekend. On some occasions one of the lodges would confer a degree.

Some years ago it was decided to hold this event at Dawson City, and Yukon Lodge No. 45 changed its meeting date to coincide with Labour Day to take advantage of the many visitors at that time.

This year Yukon Lodge No. 45 was in a unique position, as a brother who had taken his Entered Apprentice degree in Mount Lebanon Lodge No. 72, Vancouver, had visited the lodge and expressed a desire to complete his degrees at Dawson City. This presented a challenge, as Yukon Lodge uses the Canadian Work and Mount Lebanon uses the Ancient.

Yukon Lodge was able to assemble an Ancient Work degree team with the assistance of a number of Alaskan affiliates and at their August meeting they conferred



**GRAND MASTER'S ITINERARY
NOVEMBER 2012**

1	Th	Board of General Purposes, Grand Lodge	Vancouver
2	F	District 17 Burrard No. 50	North Vancouver
3	S	Hands Across the Border, Lynden No. 56	Lynden
7	W	GM of Alberta Orion No. 51	Penticton
8	Th	District 9 Miriam No. 20	Vernon
10	S	District 4S Nechako No. 86	Prince George
11	Su	Remembrance Cenotaph	Prince George
16	F	Installation Ymir No. 31	Salmo
23-24	F-S	Fall Ceremonial Shrine	Burnaby
27	T	Blighty Night Comox No. 188	Cumberland
29	Th	Appreciation Dinner Cancer Car Volunteers	Vancouver

the Fellowcraft degree in the Ancient Work. For International Days they then conferred the Master Mason degree, a truly international degree.

W Bro. Joe Trerice, Worshipful Master of Whitehorse Lodge No. 46, arranged for golfing on both Saturday and Sunday. As well, a chili lunch was served at the lodge hall on Saturday.

After the meeting the brethren and their spouses or significant others were hosted at the home of Yukon Lodge's treasurer, Bro. Peter Jenkins and his gracious wife, Karen for a barbeque and a fun evening—although no one tried the swimming pool.

Not much mention was made of Diamond Tooth Gertie's, the local casino, but it appeared that many of the brethren and their wives frequented the establishment.

Sunday was set aside for either a church parade or golfing. The avid golfers went golfing and the rest went to church. The parade to the Anglican Church was assembled under the direction of RW Bro. Joe Bare. On returning to the lodge more chili was served and then everyone watched the annual

Out House Race which started and ended in front of the lodge. Another barbeque was held later in the day which ended the programme—other than Diamond Tooth Gertie's.

This year they were honoured to host a number of Grand Lodge officers from both jurisdictions as well as a goodly number of brethren and spouses, all of whom expressed their satisfaction with the weekend. ■

Grand Treasurer

RW Bro. Del W. Paterson, having been first elected as Grand Treasurer in 2008, will complete his fifth term this masonic year and will not be putting his name forward for election in 2013.

Qualified brethren who are interested in serving in the office of Grand Treasurer are asked to communicate with the Grand Secretary.

Section 26.2 of the *Book of Constitutions and Regulations* requires that the Grand Treasurer be elected without nomination. The duties of the Grand Treasurer are detailed in section R1. ■

Nota bene

Square and compasses

The use of the masonic square and compasses emblem in any commercial offering will be considered a masonic offence to be dealt with under sections 40 and R81 of the *Book of Constitutions*.