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Our Grand Master's message

by MW Bro. William Unrau

Almost a year ago I asked the brethren to join me in a journey from the rough to the perfect ashlar, a journey of enlightenment, a journey of discovery. I set out before you the goals that your Grand Lodge had set for my term as your Grand Master.

Throughout my travels in this jurisdiction I have spoken with many of you and have been grateful for your support and the many kindnesses shown myself and my wife, Beverly.

Our goals

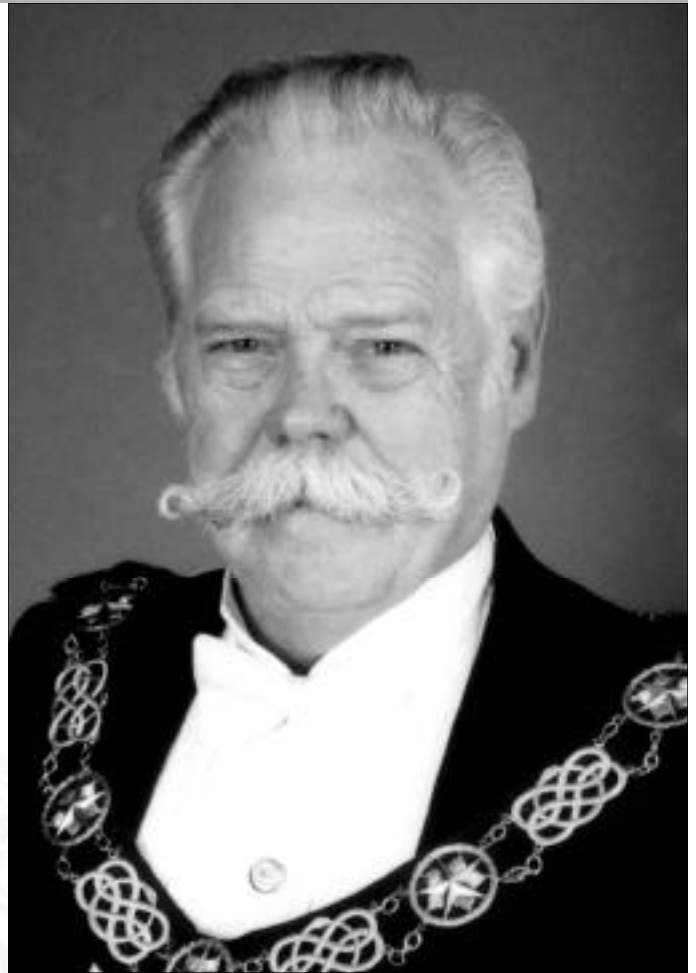
- Take steps to examine and reduce all Grand Lodge expenditures in order to reduce the *per capita*.
- Take steps to encourage freemasons to become involved in volunteering with youth activities. This past year we have

taken steps to advance towards these goals, and I am most pleased to say that in some areas real progress has been made.

Our Finance Committee chairman will submit a budget which significantly reduces expenditures in some areas. This should also reflect a reduction in our *per capita*. We have begun a long term approach to structuring a youth committee that can eventually target the promotion of our members' involvement in community youth activities. In order for this to occur I have also promoted the establishment of a code of conduct to ensure our efforts are in line with current legal requirements.

Unfortunately, in other areas there is still much work to be done:

- Efforts to establish a



MWBro. William Unrau, Grand Master 2004 -2005.

programme whereby we promote the good works of Freemasonry throughout the communities.

- Developing fund raising strategies to enhance the financial capabilities of Grand Lodge and to promote greater public contribution to our charities. These initiatives still require much effort.

There has been much discussion at our Board of General Purposes in these areas

and very diverse opinions on these goals have been expressed.

There were challenges this past year as well. And so that there is no misunderstanding amongst you, let me share some of the facts with you. But before I do, let me say that the underlying thought in my mind, and I am sure in yours, has been that "the cause of good is always worth preserving" and with that in mind as the

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foundation, I began to deal with some of the following challenges.

There have, for many years, been rumours of activities by some renters in the Vancouver Masonic Centre building that, frankly, are of an unacceptable nature. The danger to your Grand Lodge is that there could be a perception that because these activities have gone on for some time, that somehow Grand Lodge condones them. Nothing could be further from the truth. I have taken steps to ensure that no activities of a nature that could bring Freemasonry into disrepute are permitted in any building in which a lodge in this jurisdiction holds its meetings, including Grand Lodge.

There has been a growing concern amongst the brethren that the expenditures of Grand Lodge are expanding whilst the membership in the Craft itself is diminishing. Chief amongst the concerns was the funding of the expenses of the Past Grand Masters whilst attending the Grand Lodge Convocation. Not surprisingly, many of the Past Grand Masters have been unhappy with me for exposing this issue. I say to them that it is time to realize that as an organization, we are responsible to our members. We must have open and transparent accounting and we must be accountable. It is no longer acceptable to simply say to the Craft in general: "look, it is all

your fault that the *per capita* must increase each year. It is your fault because you are not doing enough to attract new membership and that is why we need to continue to increase the *per capita* each year."

I would like to make some general observations about Freemasonry in this jurisdiction. In many areas the enthusiasm for the Craft is very strong amongst the membership. Many lodges are involved in activities in an attempt to make their meetings worthwhile and ensure there are functions which create interest.

Numerous lodges have experienced a very significant increase in the number of applicants with most being in the age bracket of 30 to 50 years.

In conclusion, would like to thank all of my team of elected and appointed officers for their dedication and commitment to strengthening our gentle Craft. ■

From small beginnings

A small golf tournament started as an idea three years ago and forty members signed up to participate in an event intended to encourage social gathering of brethren outside the lodge. The next year it was sixty-eight and on Saturday, 26 March, 109 brethren and friends assembled at Cowichan Golf Club for the third annual District 27 Golf Tournament. Congratulations are extended to W Bros. Michael Bates and James Wilson of **Temple Lodge No. 33** who spearheaded the venture through the three years of its young history. Their enthusiasm and sharing of skills to organize the event is appreciated by the freemasons of District 27 and freemasons from adjacent districts.

There was a second reason for the event: to raise money for a local charity. This year

\$1,500 was donated to the United Way of Cowichan.

Many prizes were donated, some purchased from the "sponsor a hole" programme. The organizers anticipated six to eight sponsors. At the end of the day, fourteen of the eighteen holes had sponsorships from local business, local lodges and concordant bodies.

All players went home with a gift. Top prize of the barbeque gas grill was won by Warren Poulin. Prizes of a cordless drill, lawn mower, and 50/50 draw were won by Sean Reilly, Bill Williams and Verne Slosse respectively.

Congratulations to all the winners, to the golfers, but particularly to W Bros. Michael Bates and James Wilson. Clearly, District 27 is showing the way. ■

Gems

By MW Bro. Rev. Dr. J. S. Henderson

"Democracy assumes not merely intelligence, but that intelligence elevated by honour, purified by sympathy, and stimulated by a sense of duty to the community."

- Viscount Bryce

"Do not be troubled because you have not great virtues. God made a million spears of grass where He made one tree. The earth is fringed and carpeted, not with forests, but with grasses. Only have enough little virtues and common fidelities, and you need not mourn because you are neither a hero nor a saint."

- Henry Ward Bucker

"There is nothing that makes men rich and strong, but that which they carry inside of them. Health is of the heart, not of the hand."

- John Milton.

"Not all men are of equal value. Not many Platos: only one, to whom a thousand lesser minds look up and learn to think. Not many Dantes: one, and only thousand poets tune their harps to his and

repeat his notes. Not many Raphaels: one and no second. But a thousand lesser artists looking up to him are lifted to his level. Not many royal hearts—great magazines of kindness. Happy the town blessed with a few great minds and a few great hearts. One such citizen will civilize an entire community."

- Newell Dwight Hillis. ■

Excerpted from the *Masonic Bulletin*, January, 1939

Chaplain's corner

by VW Bro. Ian Paton, Grand Chaplain

I would like to wind up Chaplain's Corner for the year on a somewhat personal note.

I have been involved in hospital chaplaincy and church outreach over a number of years. Most of my close associates in this work know that I am a freemason. I am sometimes asked the question, how can a man be a committed Christian, Jew, Sikh, Hindu or Muslim and also be a freemason?

Obviously, as a result of some terribly bad information, the questioners have concluded that freemasons are somehow to be viewed with suspicion, and probably best avoided completely.

My reply is always short and to the point. I simply say, "throughout history, all great religious teachers have given their followers only two wonderful rules to live by—love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength; and love thy neighbor as thyself."

These rules form part of the ancient laws found in numerous places in the old Hebrew and other sacred writings and form the basis of Jesus' message to his faithful followers.

I go on to gently explain to my questioners that in almost forty years of lodge



Let the day
be dark or bright
Keep the heart
within you light.

W Bro. Palmer Cox

membership I have been unable to find anything in Freemasonry that is inconsistent with these simple teachings.

Surprisingly, the odd questioner will then ask how they can find out more about the masonic order, its place in society and the work of its members.

What a privilege it is to be part of a system of morality that lets us be strengthened and guided by our individual beliefs without having to explain our personal faith journey to anyone. Every member of the Craft will recall the Master's assurance just before that first great and solemn obligation:

"Nothing in this obligation or in Freemasonry will be inconsistent with your civil, moral or religious duties."

I hope you have enjoyed Chaplain's Corner. I am looking forward to leaving the office with an important final message to the brethren at Grand Lodge in June. See you in Penticton! ■

Lodge notes

Five American brethren led by VV Bro. John C. Wyman, PDDGM of the National Sojourners and secretary of **North Hill Lodge No 210**, Washington, recently traveled from Spokane, Deer Park and Kettle Falls, Washington, to presented an American Flag to **Harmony Lodge No. 37**, Grand Forks, to replace the one stolen during a break-in this February.

The brethren of **Burrard Lodge No. 50** recently celebrated seventy-five years of masonic service by RW Bro. Donat R. McMahon.

During a regular phone call to one of the widows of **St. George's Lodge No. 41**, Kelowna, W Bro. Joe Mandrusiak discovered that Marie Howard, was required to return her wheelchair to the

Red Cross. Brought to the lodge Board of General Purposes, it was decided that W Bro. Bill Roper would attempt to locate a permanent one for her.

With the assistance of Erwin Weiller of **Lodge Southern Gate No 45**, Vancouver, and the Vancouver Masonic Service Bureau, the lodge was able to secure the chair for her.

Another example of the importance of communicating with everyone in our family, and how a few simple phone calls can be of great benefit to someone in need. ■

Uniformity

by W Bro. Henry Sadler

The fact is we never have had exact uniformity, and under our present system I do not see how we can secure it. It must be admitted, however, that we have not done badly on the whole, and I think if some of us were to pay more attention to the spirit and objects of Freemasonry, and less to the letter and external decorations, it might be all the better for us individually as well as for Freemasonry as a society.

Notes on the Ceremony of Installation. London : George Kenning, 1889. p. x.

Alchemy

The Neo-Platonicians introduced at an early period of the Christian era an apparently new science, which they called the *Sacred Science*. In the fifth century arose, as the name of the science, *alchemy*, derived from the Arabic definite article *al* being added to *chemia*, a Greek word used in Diocletian's decree against Egyptian works treating of the transmutation of metals; the word seems simply to mean "the Egyptian Art," or *the land of black earth*, being the Egyptian name for Egypt, and Julius Firmicius, in a work *On the Influence of the Stars upon the Fate of Man*, uses the phrase *scientia alchemiae*.

Up to the end of the seventeenth century it was an important science, studied by some of the most distinguished philosophers, such as Avicenna, Albertus Magnus, Raymond Lulli, Roger Bacon and Elias Ashmole. Alchemy has also been called the *Hermetic Philosophy*, because it is said to have been first taught in Egypt by Hermes Trismegistus.

The word alchemy is evidently from the same root as chemistry and is related to *Khem*, the name of the Egyptian god of curative herbs. The Greeks called Egypt *Chemita* and in the ancient Egyptian, according to Plutarch, the country was called *Khem-t* because of the black color of the soil but the *Standard Dictionary* prefers the first of these explanations. An Egyptian priest, Hermes Trismegistus, the Thrice-greatest Hermes, supposed to have lived about 2000 BCE, was one of the first to practice alchemy. Although our accounts of him are of a purely legendary character, so closely has the name of alchemy been connected with him that it became generally referred to as the *Hermetic Art*. Toward the end of the eighth century we have another famous alchemist, Geber, who wrote many books and treatises in Latin on the transmutation of metals and kindred subjects..

Unfortunately, the mystical terms in which the art was clothed, the great secrecy in which all knowledge was kept and the esoteric quality of the teaching made it a natural prey of charlatans, quacks, necromancers and fortunetellers. Many sincere and learned scientific men came under a ban owing to the disrepute into which the art had fallen and their work had to be done in secret to avoid punishment and death.

The first man of record to put alchemy to medical use was Paracelsus (1493 -1541). He became a great teacher of medicine and has been

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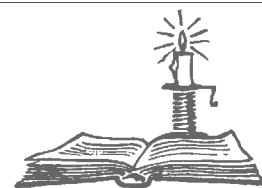
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proclaimed by the *Encyclopædia Britannica* as "the pioneer of modern chemists and the prophet of a revolution in science."

Astrology and the magic arts are usually associated with alchemy but we may fairly look upon it as having had a wider scientific scope. Indeed alchemy was the pioneer of our modern systematic chemistry. The alchemists of old sought by observation and experiment, by research and reflection, to gain the secret of nature's operations. Their early dreams were ambitious but not idle of a discovery of the means to change base metals into gold, and the concoction of an elixir to cure all diseases and overcome death. From these hopes have come less revolutionary results but the gains have nevertheless been wondrously beneficial. Even the language of the ancient alchemists persist with a curious tenacity. They applied moral qualities, virtues and vices, to things of nature and today we still speak of noble and base metals, of gases perfect and imperfect, of good and bad electrical conductors.

We owe a distinct debt to the alchemists. Poor they were, yet rich, for as Alexander Pope says of them and their successors in his *Essay on Man* (ii, line 269): "The starving chemist in his golden views, supremely blest."

Freemasonry and alchemy have sought the same results—the lesson of Divine Truth and the doctrine of immortal life—and they have both sought it by the same method of symbolism. It is not, therefore, strange that in the eighteenth century, and perhaps before, we find an incorporation of much of the science of alchemy into that of Freemasonry. Hermetic rites and hermetic degrees were common, and their relics are still to be found existing in degrees which do not absolutely trace their origin to alchemy, but which show

some of its traces in their rituals. The Twenty-eighth Degree of the Scottish Rite, or the Knight of the Sun, is entirely a hermetic study, and claims its parentage in the title of *Adept of Masonry*, by which it is sometimes known. ■

Excerpted from Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry.

The star

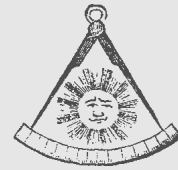
by W Bro. Harry Carr

When we are exhorted, in the Third Degree, to 'lift our eyes to that bright morning star, whose rising brings peace and salvation...' are we referring to a particular star, or is this pure symbolism?

The various aspects of this problem may be best envisaged, perhaps, from the following quotations, beginning with some extracts from *Miscellanea Latomorum*, (Series ii) Vol. 31, pp. 1-4:

It is argued that this reference to 'that bright Morning Star' is an allusion to the Founder of Christianity, and as such should never have been included in, or retained in, the ritual of an association professing entire freedom from denominational creed or dogma, outside of the simple basic belief in the existence of a Supreme Being. This attitude has unfortunately been bolstered up by a frequent misquotation of the wording, the phrase 'whose rising brings peace and tranquillity' being often rendered as 'peace and salvation', which is erroneous and decidedly mischievous. [N.B. *Emulation, Stability and Logic* use the word 'salvation'; *Exeter* says 'tranquillity'.]

As a symbol, the Morning Star is indeed most appropriate to the ceremonial incident just previously enacted; so apt, in fact, that it may be confidently asserted that no other symbol could be found which would so perfectly fit the circumstances of the case. Astronomically the Morning Star is the herald of the dawning of a new day, just



GRAND MASTER'S ITINERARY JUNE, 2005

1	Eastern Star	Grand Sessions	Kamloops
2	Grand Lodge of Oregon	Annual Communication	
3	Grand Lodge of Alberta	Annual Communication	
10	Grand Lodge of Washington	Annual Communication	
16-18	Grand Lodge of Saskatchewan	Annual Communication	
23-25	Grand Lodge of BC & Yukon	Grand Lodge	Penticton

as its opposite, the Evening Star, presages the coming of night. The latter foretells the dying of another day; the approach of the time when man can no longer work; when darkness covers the face of the earth. Darkness has ever been associated with evil, and in its sombre, unknown possibilities is a fitting emblem of death. On the other hand, the rising Morning Star brings joy and gladness with its promise of yet another day, of light once more, in which man may work and renew his association with his fellow-man in business or in pleasure. In short, with the new-born day, man rises to a new life. What more fitting symbol, then, than this of the promise of new life after death—of the immortality of the soul.

The late Dr. E. H. Cartwright, in his *Commentary on the Freemasonic Ritual*, (2nd edn., 1973, p. 186), wrote, with customary forthrightness:

'That bright morning star'. It should, of course be 'that bright and morning star', the phrase being a quotation from The Revelation, xxii, 16. The reference is definitely to Christ and is a relic of the time when the Craft was purely Christian. The allusion apparently escaped the notice of the revisers at the Union [of 1813], when Christian references generally were excised. Some hold that, as we are not now exclusively Christian, but admit Jews,

Moslems and others who, though monotheists, are not Christians, this reference should be deleted, as others of a like nature have been. If the phrase be objected to, the *Revised Ritual* provides an appropriate alternative rendering, namely, 'and lift our eyes to Him in whose hands are the issues of life and death, and to whose mercy we trust for the fulfillment of His gracious promises of Peace and Salvation to the faithful etc.'

My own view is that the reference to the 'Bright Morning Star' would be quite inexplicable if we read it in an astronomical sense, to imply that a particular star can bring peace, or tranquillity, or salvation, to mankind. As a Christian reference, moreover, this passage must cause embarrassment to brethren who are not of that faith and in two of my lodges (of mainly Jewish brethren) where this point arose, we now use:

'... and lift our eyes to Him whose Divine Word brings Peace and Salvation to the faithful, etc.'

This form of wording has two great advantages:

1. It provides a definite meaning to the passage instead of an ambiguous one.

2. It is in full accord with masonic teaching and respects the religious beliefs of all the participants. ■

Excerpted from The Freemason at Work, London, 1977.