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Positive thinking

by MW Bro. James C. Gordon

If you cannot say anything positive about Freemasonry or a freemason, best leave it unsaid.

Harmony is the essence of Freemasonry and anything that threatens that harmony must be regarded as divisive and undesirable. We are the oldest and finest organisation in the world and we must strive to keep it so. Membership decline continues to be a concern and certain sectors continue to advocate a lowering of Freemasonry’s antiquated standards to meet those of present day society. This I urge against. Rather be it that we work by example to raise the standards of society to meet those of Freemasonry, that our ranks may swell with men of quality.

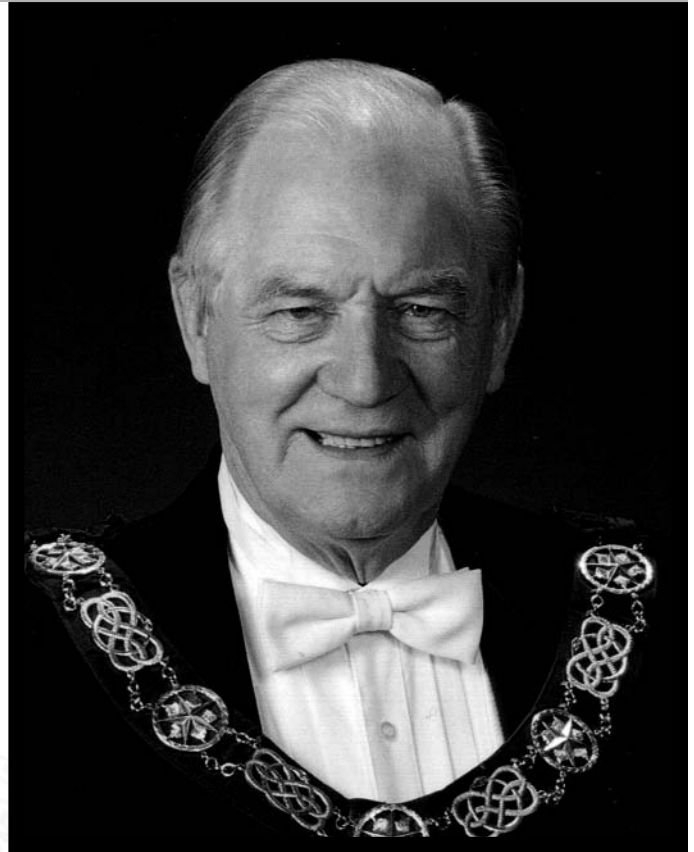
We live in a very negative world, where only the dark side of life is considered newsworthy. Let us not allow Freemasonry to fall into this trap; let us talk about the successes in Freemasonry and

help rather than criticize those freemasons or lodges that are less fortunate.

In describing Freemasonry, Freemasonry has been perceived by some to be the oldest, richest, most powerful private force in the world! Just for the moment let us think about that statement. Oldest? Well, I do see a fair number of grey or thinning heads of hair around. Richest? Again there is quite a bit of gold adorning the shoulders of our Past Grand Masters. Powerful? I suppose if we consider that out of a world population of six billion one in fifteen hundred is a freemason, that seems to be a fairly powerful force working for the common good.

Whilst we are knowledgeable and mature enough to withstand the good natured fun often targeted at Freemasonry, most of us realise that Freemasonry as such, does little other than set and

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M. W. BRO. JAMES CHALMERS GORDON

23 August 1928 - 20 March 2009

MW Bro. James Chalmers Gordon, born in Newcastle Upon Tyne, England, was initiated into Northern Counties Lodge No. 406 (EC) in February 1954. Affiliating with Meridian Lodge No. 108 in 1975, he served as Worshipful Master in 1982, an office he also held in Zion Lodge No. 77 in 1994 and 1995 and in the Vancouver Lodge of Education and Research in 1991. He was DDGM for District 20 in 1986, and following his year as Grand Master, in 2002 he was appointed Grand Secretary, an office he held until his death.

A Chartered Engineer, a Fellow of The Institution of Mechanical Engineers, and a Fellow of the Engineering Institute of Canada, in 1983 MW Bro. Gordon founded Gordon Crane & Hoist in Vancouver.

Past Commander in Chief, BC Consistory; Honorary Grand Inspector General 33° Scottish Rite; Past Provincial Grand Sword Bearer, Royal Order of Scotland; Past Grand Sovereign, Red Cross of Constantine, Canada; and Grand Superintendent, Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests, MW Bro. Gordon was also a recipient of the Order of the Purple Cross, York Rite College, and the Knight York Grand Cross of Honour (KYCH). He was also a member of the Shrine, Grotto, Order of Secret Monitor, Societas Rosicruciana in Canada and Allied Masonic Degrees.

MW Bro. Gordon is survived by his wife, Sheila née Walton; their daughter, Julia; son, VW Bro. Aidan Gordon, and three grandchildren.



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Positive thinking

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maintain the rules. It is the individual freemason that makes the difference.

I ask of you three things: let us work so that we may establish society's opinion of Freemasonry, rather than letting our critics do it for us; let us work to improve the quality of our attitude towards one another as freemasons; let us encourage a leadership based on knowledge and skill. ■

Change?

by MW Bro. Richard E. Fletcher,
Masonic Service Association

Our fraternity, where we once thoroughly enjoyed each other's company, met around festive boards, engaged in huge public events, opened never before seen homes for the aged and orphans, built magnificent masonic buildings with stages the quality of professional theatres has then turned itself into a fraternity looking inward, far less conspicuous in the community, and far more apt to isolate itself in the lodges because we became afraid of criticism.

This has resulted in making us a fraternity almost totally unwilling to listen to new ideas, thoughts, or approaches to masonic issues.

Now we are hearing many of our members saying it's time to "Put fun back into the fraternity." But let's be very careful how we define fun. Fun and frivolous are oftentimes intertwined as having the same meaning, when in fact they have very different meanings. In the masonic sense fun means enjoyable.

Do we enjoy our fraternity? Do we like being an officer in lodge? Do we like working on committees? Do we like doing ritual? Do we like working on community projects? These are enjoyable activities. They are part of our commitment to the fraternity.

So when we ask ourselves:



The Grand Master, MW Bro. R. Glenn Allen flanked by DDGM of District 10, RW Bro. Orville Robson and, on his left, the Worshipful Master of Summerland Lodge No 56, W. Bro. Arthur Bowes and Grand Director of Ceremonies, RW Bro. Kevin Davies

"Do I find my work in Freemasonry satisfying, rewarding, fulfilling?"—we are really asking if the work we do is enjoyable.

As we define masonic change in the twenty-first century it's obvious that there are only two major aspects in Freemasonry that truly need to be changed.

Simply put, we need to change our attitude and strengthen our commitment to the fraternity. In fact the real change the fraternity needs is a return to the dedication and commitment that made us such an integral part of the community in the past. ■

Excerpted from the March 2009 issue of Emessay Notes.

Youth service

On 18 March, W Bro. Mark Forster with his wife Pauline and their parents, attended a special ceremony at Government House to watch their two sons, Christopher and Riley receive their Queen's Venturers certificates and badges from the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, the Honourable Steven L. Point OBC. This was the 54th Queen's Venturer Award Ceremony to

be held and the largest class of 65 young men and women, were acknowledged for their achievements. Congratulations are extended to W. Bro. Mark who was one of several Venturer Advisors in attendance to observe the completion of four years of work.

To be eligible for the Queen's Venturer Award, among other qualifications, one must be a currently registered member of Scouts Canada, and hold a current St. John Ambulance or Canadian Red Cross Society Standard First Aid Certificate, the World Conservation Award, an award for service skill; complete a minimum of fifty hours of service, and demonstrate leadership in a peer environment. ■

Lodge notes

Summerland Museum held a Centennial Recognition Ceremony on 21 February, to celebrate a century of community service provided by **Summerland Lodge No. 56**, the Summerland Agricultural Society, the Summerland Boy Scouts, the Summerland Hospital Auxiliary and the Summerland Women's Institute.

Summerland Mayor, Janice Perrino expressed her heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the community for Summerland Lodge's strong contribution to Summerland during the past one hundred years. ■

True charity

Bro. Will Alexander, Rocky Mountain Conference 2008

All institutions change over time. Knowing this, our founders felt that the original aim of Freemasonry was so important that they established, over time, what came to be called Landmarks, which were never to be infringed upon in the hope that the fraternity would always be recognizable. Though charity was probably always an important part of the fraternity with regards to fellows, widows and orphans the true charity was for us to develop a charitable attitude towards all mankind by learning and eventually living a virtuous life as instructed by all of our works. For some this is old fashioned Freemasonry, the Freemasonry which no one is interested in.

As we pursue the new Freemasonry our lodge rolls will become inflated with those



Summerland Mayor Janice Perrino and MW Bro R. Glenn Allen, during Summerland Museum's Centennial Recognition Ceremony held this past February.

who place alms to the poor and less fortunate above the challenge of self improvement. When this occurs we will become commonplace, just a bunch of nice guys that have a nice charity within the community, and, without hard work, that could be the only one of our principles which our members exemplify. ■

March 2009 issue of Emessay Notes.

Education

The Vancouver Lodge of Education and Research, meeting on the third Fridays of the month at the Marpole Masonic Hall in Vancouver, presents speakers on a wide range of topics. While not, strictly speaking, a masonic topic, this past March RW Bro George Jolly Jr. spoke on the benefits of mediation and, if there is conflict within a lodge, the use of an outsider to act as mediator.

He stressed the importance of discussion outside the lodge as an alternative to the divisive and often destructive process of masonic trials.

In February, W Bro. Robert Prince presented the results of a survey he had recently conducted. While a response of 33 to a questionnaire emailed

to some 200 freemasons may not be statistically valid, it did provide a fascinating indication of how our members view their masonic obligations.

The question was posed, would you hire a freemason over a non-mason? Variations were introduced: levels of qualification, whether the candidate was known to be a freemason or if he introduced himself as such.

The conclusions were that, all things being equal, a freemason would be hired, but not if he was less qualified and certainly not if the candidate promoted himself as being a freemason. There was a small percentage that would hire a freemason regardless of qualifications, presumably with the belief that his assumed honesty and integrity were valued attributes but that training could be supplied, while a similar percentage would not hire the freemason regardless of qualifications, presumably to avoid accusations of favoritism, but again this was not specified.

All in all, these two presentations were educational and interesting.

Brethren are encouraged to support both the Vancouver and Victoria Lodges of Education and Research. ■

Centenaries

Orion Lodge No. 51, Penticton, will celebrate its Centenary on 11-12 July 2009.

Beginning with registration on Saturday, 11 July, at 10:00 am and followed by a Meet and Greet at St. Saviour's Anglican Church Hall, 150 Orchard Ave., across the street from the lodge hall, the brethren and invited public will open a time capsule placed in the lodge hall front yard at Orion's seventy-fifth anniversary. Various archival exhibits will be presented for viewing in the lodge and at the Church Hall.

Dedication of a monument near Penticton City Hall, with an appropriate masonic inscription, is also planned.

A formal dinner at the Penticton Seniors Drop-In Centre, preceded by a social hour at 5:00 pm will follow. Entertainment will be provided at and following the banquet.

Sunday will begin with a hearty breakfast at W Bro. Kerr's place, 645 Victoria Dr., Penticton, followed by a devotional service and an open lunch and relaxation period after.

For information, contact W Bro. Pat Beaven at 250-492-4579 or email pbeaven@shaw.ca; or register online at: www.orion100.ca

Nicola Lodge No. 53 is holding its celebration on 14-16 August 2009, with all events at Bro. Don McLeod's Scottish Castle, 5076 Highway 5A, ten kilometres north from Merritt.

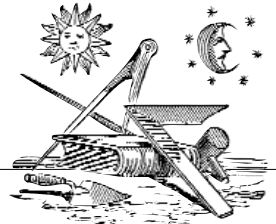
With a wine and cheese Greet and Meet on the Friday evening, followed by a full breakfast on the Saturday morning, there is then a ladies event from 10:30 -12:00 noon.

As well, the ladies will be having an event at the historic Quilchena Lodge from approx 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm. The lodge meeting will tyle at 2:00 pm, with dinner at 6:00 pm, with a dance to follow. There will be a

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Expressions of interest are invited from qualified persons for the position of Grand Secretary, to be received by close of business on 30 April 2009.

Please forward under confidential cover to the MW Bro. R. Glenn Allen 6600 Chelmsford St. Richmond BC V7C 4H9



Volunteer to drive a Cancer Car

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**Grand Lodge of BC & Yukon
138th Annual
Communication**

**June 18-20, 2009
Prince George**

Online registration
freemasonry.bcy.ca/gl2009

Centenaries

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continental breakfast on the Sunday morning, followed by a service at the Murray Church, only two kilometres away. Tickets are limited and cost \$50 each. For information and tickets contact RW Bro. David Kerridge at 250-315-1414. ■

Being masons

Bro. David Coffing of **Washington Lodge No. 4**, Vancouver, WA, recently wrote to give a public thank-you to Bro. John Reid of Capilano Lodge No. 164.

It appears that Bro. Coffing's youngest daughter, Sarah found herself stranded at Vancouver International Airport, mid-trip between New Zealand and Portland, when it has closed by a snowstorm one late evening in early January. Unaccompanied and unprepared, she phoned her father who called Bro. Reid who, without hesitating, arranged for her to be delivered to his home, fed her, put her up in the guest suite, and in the morning drove her to the airport where he made sure she had assistance from the airline.

Bro. Coffing would like everyone to know that he is very proud to be able to call a man like Bro Reid a brother and a friend. ■

Costs

In 1875, shortly after the creation of this jurisdiction, the annual *per capita* was \$1.50, an amount that would be the equivalent of \$37 today. The cost to the lodge to take a candidate through the three degrees was \$5, or the current equivalent of \$125. Today the *per capita* is \$28 and the cost to the lodge for a candidate is \$80.

Both are roughly three-quarters the fees levied in 1875. Just saying. ■

OUR MASONIC WORLD

Prince Edward Island

Our brothers in the "Garden of the Gulf" gathered in a one-day Annual Communication in Cornwall, PEI on 14 June 2008, with MW Bro. Heber Ross, Grand Master, attired in a top hat, presiding. There was a church service the previous evening.

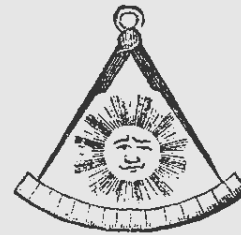
The session began with the usual formalities, including a motion to allow Master Masons to attend. However, two ladies of the Eastern Star were allowed to enter without such a requirement and apparently stayed put for the whole meeting.

Among the Grand Master's activities during the year were attendances at several wakes, a Masonic Curling Bonspiel, and a "Fun Night." The latter event is used as a fund raiser for Grand Lodge and features a dinner, a 50/50 draw and a cake auction.

Unlike our Grand Lodge, the Committee on the Constitution does not merely see if proposed changes are in proper and legal form. It states emphatically whether Grand Lodge should vote against them. This year's Committee report was read, adopted without any debate, and that was that. Defeated was a proposal to allow Master Masons to become members of Grand Lodge, because the Committee claimed that would take away the ambition to become a Past Master.

There were only nine raisings in the entire jurisdiction in 2007. Membership fell by 40 to 821 by year's end. Only 656 pay dues. There are 15 Lodges; the newest lodge, a daylight lodge, closed. So much for the idea that meeting during the day is a guarantee of survival.

PEI's membership includes a



GRAND MASTER'S ITINERARY MAY 2009

1	Fri	Board of General Purposes		Vancouver
2	Sat	Spring Meet	Royal Order of Scotland	Vancouver
14	Thu	Crab Night	Joppa No. 112	White Rock
16-18	S-M	Sesquicentenary	Victoria Columbia No. 1	Victoria
23	Sat	Hyack Parade	District 2	New Westminster
23-24	S-S	Spring Ceremonial	Shrine	Penticton
30	Sat	Centennial	Summerland No. 56	Summerland

brother, age 98, who joined on 1 January 1933. He is the oldest and longest-serving freemason on the Island and received a 75-year certificate. We wonder how many lodges today would meet on New Year's Day.

Recognition was granted to the Grand Lodges of San Marino, Ukraine and Cyprus, and "re-affirmed" for two others. It was denied to Grand Lodges in Russia, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic due to internal strife.

The per capita was raised \$3 to \$23.

The most interesting part of the Grand Lodge *Proceedings* is the report on the Grand Master's Education Day. Forty-two freemasons attended and the guest speaker was the Grand Master of Nova Scotia. Suggestions from two seminars are listed. One dealt with the age-old problem of making meetings interesting, and came up with age-old solutions. However, Victoria Lodge No. 2 revealed it has dinner before the lodge opens, followed by an educational session, and members are allowed to leave for the boring business part, presumable to chat amongst themselves in the refreshment room. Another seminar dealt with how to make the repetitious Grand Master's Official

Visits more interesting. The Grand Master visits every lodge in PEI in the fall and it's such a big deal, whole historical charts are devoted in the *Proceedings* on who attends these and how many. It was suggested to curtail long stories about sick widows, end introductions of perfect attendees, and cut down on the Worshipful Master's reports on their lodge; apparently the same stories, introductions and reports happen at every visit. A fine suggestion was to have the Grand Master stay in lodge to witness the closing ceremony. No short-cuts, we hope.

There was also a suggestion to make the Grand Lodge mentorship programme mandatory. An opinion was expressed that "Grand Lodge is reluctant to force lodges to do things because lodges resent it," proving once again that some things are universal in Freemasonry. ■

Thank you

Mrs. Sheila Gordon and her family would like to thank the brethren and the masonic family for their support and outpouring of sympathy during MW Bro. James C. Gordon's illness and passing to the great majority. ■