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Enhance your lodge performance

Lodge officers and ladies conference

Inspire, Inform, Enable,

As announced by our Grand Master MW Bro. Brian Tuckey during his inaugural address at Grand Lodge in June, due to the success of our first Masonic Leadership Development Conference, the second Lodge Officers' and Ladies' Conference will be held at the Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort in Parksville on 16-18 April 2010.

This conference will provide opportunities for present and prospective lodge officers to hear informative and thought provoking plenary speakers, participate in facilitated table lodges and network with

brethren from throughout our jurisdiction.

The program will include a concurrent conference for our ladies with a range of interesting topics and lots of free time to enjoy the spa and surrounding beauty and sights of the mid-Island area.

For more information visit our webpage in the "Member Services" section of the Grand Lodge website where you can access a questionnaire which we are asking all freemasons to complete.

This will assist us in ensuring that we provide the most beneficial experience for everyone attending the conference. It will also enable us to keep in touch with you as updates regarding the conference become available.

Visit the conference website—complete the questionnaire—plan to be there! Updates and information are available at freemasonry.bcy.ca/mlc2010.html



Originally envisioned in August 2004, the five pillars approach to a strategic management plan continues to focus the ongoing work of your Grand Lodge officers.

Right living

by Delmar D. Darrah

No organization of equally high importance is so little understood as is Freemasonry. It is not an "order" in the sense that term is applied to the mushroom secret societies of the period, but rather a society, fraternity, brotherhood, or institution. It is not a club for it does not amuse. It is not a

system of signs and grips for convenient use in traveling about. It is not an insurance society for it offers nothing in the way of sick and death benefits. In the ceremonies through which you have passed many definitions have been given you of Freemasonry. Some of them, perhaps have been more or less understood. You were told that it is a system of ancient hieroglyphic moral instruction taught by types, emblems and allegorical

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I want to hear from you!

In the very near future, you will be invited to participate in a survey. Yes, yet another survey!

This survey is critical for Grand Lodge and indeed every lodge in our jurisdiction, to assist in charting our course for the future. Of special importance is that every recently raised Master Mason join in completing the survey in a confidential and forthright manner.

I want to hear from you!

I want to know about your perceptions and experiences since joining the Craft: the good, the bad and the ugly!

In order for our fraternity to continue to be strong and healthy, we must examine what has been done well in the past, where we are in the present and how best to move forward in the future.

I ask all brethren to be engaged in this opportunity to share with our newer brethren in the Craft. You have my personal assurance that every reply will be handled with the strictest confidentiality.

So, once you have received the survey, either directly or through your lodge secretary, step up and join in! Together, we can continue to make Freemasonry stronger and meaningful for today and tomorrow.

MW Bro. Brian Tuckey

Right living from page one

figures, the early and primitive way of teaching men. To reduce this to simpler language would be to say that Freemasonry is a system of morality veiled in allegory. But to define Freemasonry in the simplest language possible would be to say that it is the science and art of right living.

As a science it is concerned in discovering and classifying those principles which go to make upright moral conduct; the art is living those principles before the world. There is every evidence that the men who formulated Freemasonry had in mind the idea of a fraternity whose morality would satisfy their conception of a religious life and which could be best exemplified in their daily relations with the world and each other. In Freemasonry will be found a blending of the best philosophies of all the world. This does not mean that those old philosophers who gave utterance to these truths were freemasons but it does mean that the men who formulated Freemasonry have collected the best utterances of the wise and good men of the past and have cemented them into a beautiful mosaic and called it Freemasonry. ■

The ABC of Freemasonry. 1915.

Our masonic world

In the State of Georgia this past summer, the brethren of Gate City Lodge No. 2 found themselves criticized by two other lodges of the jurisdiction when it was noted that they had initiated a man whose ancestors were not of European descent.

While their Grand Master ruled that that African-American Army reservist, Bro. Victor Marshall, was a regular

brother, he also allowed the complaints to proceed to a masonic trial. The lodge filed a preemptive lawsuit in state court seeking an injunction to prevent its warrant from being revoked. The publicity resulted in the original complaints being withdrawn but the lawsuit stands.

Elsewhere, on Denerau island, Fiji recently, fourteen freemasons from Australia and New Zealand had to spend a night in jail after local villagers complained that they were practising sorcery. Police seized wands, compasses and a skull from the lodge. They were released the next morning on the orders of the prime minister's office. ■

Lodge notes

When a massive forest fire threatened the community of Lillooet on the BC Day weekend and the entire community was evacuated to the Emergency Centre in Kamloops, Lillooet Mayor W Bro. Dennis Bontron of **Cayoosh Lodge No. 173** stayed behind. The current Worshipful Master of the lodge, W Bro Wayne Cook also stayed behind to help provide meals for the large number of support staff fighting the fire.

A quick canvassing of the brethren of **Kamloops Lodge No. 10**, and **Mount St. Paul Lodge No. 109**, organized by RW Bro Rick Money, DDGM for District 3, resulted in a number of offers of emergency accommodation, but fortunately the need did not arise

Salmon Arm lodge No. 52 celebrated their centennial with a full weekend this past July. A lodge meeting, plenty of opportunity to socialize, a cornerstone laying by MW Bro. Brian Tuckey, a capacity crowd dinner and dance, and a Sunday morning parade from city hall to the United Church—complete with piper—made for

an excellent celebration

The presentation of a cheque for \$7182 to Mr. Eugene Casavant, chairman of the funding committee for the Shuswap Hospital Foundation, also added to the occasion. ■

Food for thought

Have you contributed to nice, clean, safe charities and felt slightly smug and warmly charitable, while crossing the street to avoid a bag lady or saying that the police ought to make the homeless move on to somewhere else?

Have you paid significantly less for something than you knew it was worth because the person selling it needed the money and you could get a deal which was too much in your favour to be truly ethical?

Have you felt a secret satisfaction when a politician or famous athlete or rock star or some other famous person was caught doing something wrong and the world turned on them?

Have you passed on gossip without checking to make absolutely sure it was true and without considering whether you might do more harm than good in repeating it?

When you have done something wrong to someone, have you put off trying to make amends until it just didn't seem important to you anymore? ■

With thanks to Jim Tresner.

Reading freemasons

By Albert G. Mackey

And freemasons who do not read

I suppose there are more freemasons who are ignorant of all the principles of freemasonry than there are men of any other class who are chargeable with the like ignorance of their own profession. There is not a watchmaker who does not know something about the

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elements of horology, nor is there a blacksmith who is altogether unacquainted with the properties of red-hot iron.

We would be much astonished to meet with a lawyer who was ignorant of the elements of jurisprudence, or a physician who had never read a treatise on pathology. Nevertheless, nothing is more common than to encounter freemasons who are in utter darkness as to everything that relates to Freemasonry. They are ignorant of its history—they know not whether it is a mushroom production of today, or whether it goes back to remote ages for its origin. They have no comprehension of the esoteric meaning of its symbols or its ceremonies, and are hardly at home in its modes of recognition.

And yet nothing is more common than to find such in the possession of high degrees and sometimes honoured with elevated affairs in the Order, present at the meetings of lodges and chapters, intermeddling with the proceedings, taking an active part in all discussions and pertinaciously maintaining heterodox opinions in opposition to the judgment of brethren of far greater knowledge.

Why, it may well be asked, should such things be? Why, in Freemasonry alone, should there be so much ignorance and so much presumption?

The great body of freemasons may be divided into three classes. The first consists of those who made their application for initiation not from a desire for knowledge, but from some accidental motive, not always honourable. Such men have been led to seek reception either because it was likely, in their opinion, to facilitate their business operations, or to advance their political prospects, or in some other way to personally benefit them. Their object having been attained, or having failed to attain it, these men become

indifferent and, in time, fall into the rank of the non-affiliates. Of such freemasons there is no hope. They are dead trees having no promise of fruit. Let them pass as utterly worthless, and incapable of improvement.

There is a second class consisting of men who are the moral and masonic antipodes of the first. These make their application for admission, being prompted, as the ritual requires, "by a favorable opinion preconceived of the Institution, and a desire for knowledge." As soon as they are initiated, they see in the ceremonies through which they have passed a philosophical meaning worthy of the trouble of inquiry. They devote themselves to this inquiry. They obtain masonic books, they read masonic periodicals, and they converse with well-informed brethren. They make themselves acquainted with the history of the Craft. They investigate its origin and its ultimate design. They explore the hidden sense of its symbols and they acquire the interpretation. Such freemasons are always useful and honourable members of the Order, and very frequently they become its shining lights. Their lamp burns for the enlightenment of others, and to them the Institution is indebted for whatever of an elevated position it has attained. For them, this article is not written.

But between these two classes, just described, there is an intermediate one; not as bad as the first, but far below the second, which, unfortunately, comprises the body of the fraternity.

This third class consists of freemasons who joined the society with unobjectionable motives, and with, perhaps the best intentions. But they have failed to carry these intentions into effect.

They have made a grievous mistake. They have supposed that initiation was all that was requisite to make them freemasons, and that any further study

was entirely unnecessary. Hence, they never read a masonic book. Bring to their notice the productions of the most celebrated masonic authors, and their remark is that they have no time to read—the claims of business are overwhelming. Show them a masonic journal of recognized reputation, and ask them to subscribe. Their answer is that they cannot afford it, the times are hard and money is scarce.

And yet, there is no want of masonic ambition in many of these men. But their ambition is not in the right direction. They have no thirst for knowledge, but they have a very great thirst for office or for degrees. They cannot afford money or time for the purchase or perusal of masonic books, but they have enough of both to expend on the acquisition of masonic degrees. It is astonishing with what avidity some freemasons who do not understand the simplest rudiments of their art, and who have utterly failed to comprehend the scope and meaning of primary, symbolic Freemasonry, grasp at the empty honours of the high degrees.

Such freemasons are distinguished not by the amount of knowledge that they possess, but by the number of the jewels that they wear.

These men do great injury to Freemasonry. They set a bad example to the younger freemasons—they discourage the growth of masonic literature—they drive intellectual men, who would be willing to cultivate masonic science, into other fields of labour—they depress the energies of our writers—and they debase the character of Speculative Masonry as a branch of mental and moral philosophy.

When outsiders see men holding high rank and office in the Order who are almost as ignorant as themselves of the principles of Freemasonry, and who, if asked, would say they looked upon it only as a social

Have you researched a masonic topic?

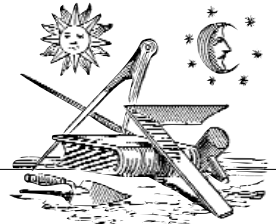
Speakers are required for the Grand Masonic Day in Langley on Saturday, 6 March 2010.

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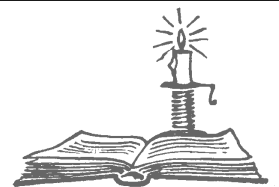


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at
Grand Lodge*

institution, these outsiders very naturally conclude that there cannot be anything of great value in a system whose highest positions are held by men who profess to have no knowledge of its higher development.

It must not be supposed that every freemason is expected to be a learned freemason, or that every man who is initiated is required to devote himself to the study of masonic science and literature. Such an expectation would be foolish and unreasonable. All men are not equally competent to grasp and retain the same amount of knowledge. "Order," says Pope, "Order is heaven's first law and this confess, some are, and must be, greater than the rest, richer, wiser."

All that I contend for is that when a candidate enters the fold of Freemasonry he should feel that there is something in it better than its mere grips and signs, and that he should endeavor with all his ability to attain some knowledge of that better thing. He should not seek advancement to higher degrees until he knew something of the lower, nor grasp at office, unless he had previously fulfilled with some reputation for masonic knowledge, the duties of a private station.

How many freemasons are readers? One-half—or even one-tenth? If only one-fourth of the men who are in the Order would read a little about it, and not depend for all they know of it on their visits to their lodges, they would entertain more elevated notions of its character. Through their sympathy scholars would be encouraged to discuss its principles and to give to the public the results of their thoughts, and good masonic magazines would enjoy a prosperous existence.

Now, because there are so few freemasons that read, masonic books hardly do more

than pay the publishers the expense of printing, while the authors get nothing; and masonic journals are being year after year carried off into the literary academia, where the corpses of defunct periodicals are deposited; and, worst of all, Freemasonry endures depressing blows.

The freemason who reads, however little, be it only the pages of the monthly magazine to which he subscribes, will entertain higher views of the institution and enjoy new delights in the possession of these views.

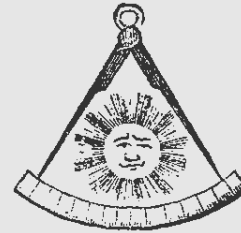
The freemasons who do not read will know nothing of the interior beauties of Speculative Freemasonry, but will be content to suppose it to be something like Odd Fellowship, or the Order of the Knights of Pythias—only, perhaps, a little older. Such a freemason must be an indifferent one. He has laid no foundation for zeal.

If this indifference, instead of being checked, becomes more widely spread, the result is too apparent. Freemasonry must step down from the elevated position which she has been struggling, through the efforts of her scholars, to maintain, and our lodges, instead of becoming resorts for speculative and philosophical thought, will deteriorate into social clubs or mere benefit societies. With so many rivals in that field, her struggle for a prosperous life will be a hard one. The ultimate success of Freemasonry depends on the intelligence of her disciples. ■

Excerpted from an article first published in 1875.

Masonic 'fire'

Masonic 'fire' is an old custom which may be derived from that of firing after toasts. The original practice was modified by our masonic ancestors to suit their needs. The custom of gun-fire salutes



GRAND MASTER'S ITINERARY OCTOBER 2009

1	Railway Night	Acacia Lodge 22	Vancouver
3	District 4S	Mt. Begbie Lodge 183	100 Mile House
7	Installation	United Service Lodge 24	Saanichton
8	District 26	Dunbar Lodge 118	Vancouver
13	Principal Officers	Masonic Centre	Kamloops
13	Long Service Awards presentation		Kamloops
14-16	Western Canada Conference		Canmore
16-18	Centennial Celebration	Selkirk Lodge 55	Kimberley
23	Hands Across the Border	Lynden Lodge 56	Ferndale
29	Cancer Car Drivers Appreciation Dinner		Vancouver
30	Cancer Car Drivers Appreciation Dinner		Kamloops

after toasts already existed in the seventeenth century.

It is unknown exactly when masonic 'fire' started. Anderson recorded in his *New Book of Constitutions* (1738) that Desaguliers, the newly installed Grand Master, 'reviv'd the old regular and peculiar Toasts or Healths of the Free Masons' on 24 June 1719.

We do not know what those 'old regular and peculiar Toasts' were like and whether or not the 'firing' was practised then.

Masonic 'fire' with brethren crashing down thick-based drinking glasses on the table was once a common practice. The use of such firing glasses is now much less common, however, and the 'fire' is more usually accompanied by the brethren clapping their hands instead. There is no official form of giving 'fire'. Basically, it is a variation of 'point-left-right' (PLR) followed by the 'three times three' hand clapping—a typical 'fire' procedure being PLR, PLR, PLR, one (point to the left), two (point to the right), one clap, short pause and three short claps followed by another set of three short claps.

Various theories have been suggested about the origin of

the PLR. Listing several different theories, e.g., the Sign of the Cross made by a clergyman in benediction over food or drink, the 'Hammer of Thor' sign used in Scandinavia in olden times to appease the great God, the motions made by a bricklayer when lifting cement with his trowel and a royal salute of 21 guns, Masonic author Harry Carr concluded none of them can be considered its origin and that such movements rather originate from one of the early modes of recognition. Some doubt there is any significance or symbolical meaning in masonic 'fire' itself and believe it is a survival of a convivial custom originally carried out as a cheerful, boisterous routine.

There are many variations of masonic 'fire'. It cannot be said that a certain way of 'firing' is the only correct way and that any other way is incorrect. It is a matter of local custom and the particular lodge.

The table lodge as a festive board or ladies night entertainment, and its accompanying firing toasts, is growing in popularity in this jurisdiction. ■

*Excerpted in part from a paper by Bro. Yoshio Washizu published in **Ars Quatuor Coronatorum**, 1998.*