



The lodge almoner1
We get letters2
Annual support for food banks2
Cancer car appreciation.....3
The Scottish Degree Team.....3
The Eleusian Mystery School3
Admonition and advice.....4
Grand Master's itinerary4

The lodge almoner

The almoner is an office rarely found in North American lodges except in those using the Emulation Work.

Albert Mackey tells us that his duty is to take charge of the contents of the alms-box, to carry into effect the charitable resolutions of the lodge, and to visit sick and needy brethren.

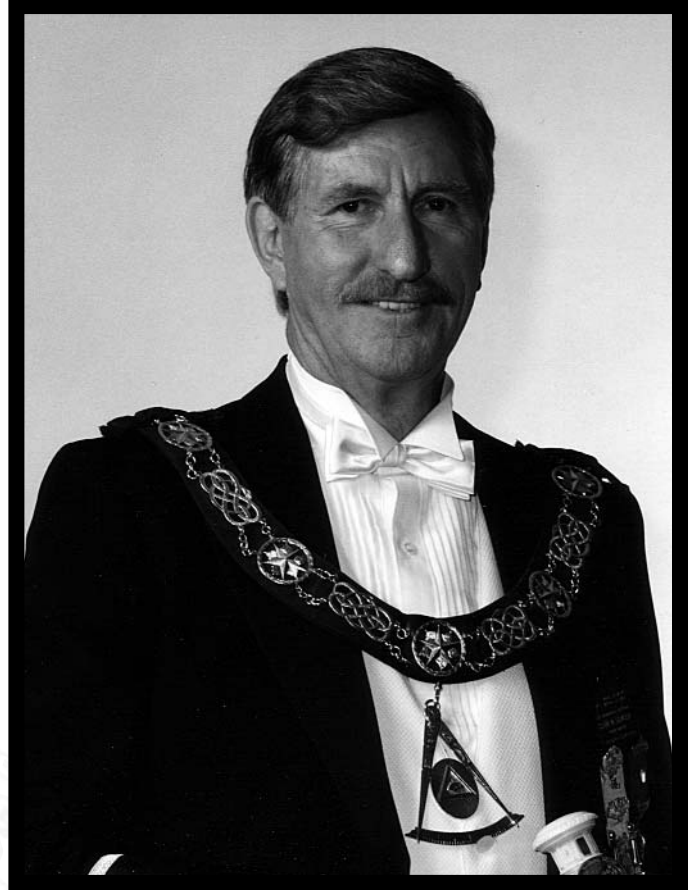
On unknown authority, Mackey also writes that a physician is usually selected in preference to any other member for this office. An almoner may also be appointed among the officers of an English lodge. In the United States the officer does not exist, his duties being performed by a committee of charity. However, it is an important office in all bodies of the Scottish Rite.

Associated with the almoner is the alms-box which, toward the close of the lodge, is handed around by an appropriate officer for the reception of such donations for general objects of charity as the

brethren may feel disposed to bestow. This laudable custom is very generally practiced in the lodges of England, Scotland, and Ireland and universally in those of the Continent. The newly initiated candidate is expected to contribute.

The title dates from the thirteenth century and has been applied to varied non-masonic offices. In England at one time it was the title of a hospital official who determined the amount due for a patient's treatment.

Monasteries, bishops and kings would keep their own almoners. Charles VIII of France had a Grand Almoner, while in the United Kingdom, the Marquess of Exeter also holds the title of hereditary Grand Almoner. The Anglican Lord High Almoner is responsible for organising the Queen's annual distribution of Maundy money on Maundy Thursday. Interestingly, the Pope's official almoner continues in office



MW Bro. Clark Murray Gilmour

31 July 1927 – 21 December 2010

Grand Master of British Columbia and Yukon for 1995-1996, MW Bro. Clark M. Gilmour believed in building bridges, leading our jurisdiction to mutual recognition with the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Prince Hall Freemasons of Washington State. Born in Vancouver, British Columbia, and raised in New Zealand, he built a career in the industrial relations field, retiring in 1987 as Director of Mediation for the British Columbia provincial government. Initiated into Grandview Lodge No. 96 on 20 March 1952, he served in 1971-1972 as Worshipful Master and as secretary from 1989 to 1995 and again from 2002 to 2004. He affiliated with Cariboo Lodge No. 4 in 1994 and with Joppa Lodge No. 112 in 1996, and was elected an honorary member of North Star Lodge No. 167 in 2006. He served this jurisdiction as Deputy District Grand Master for 1990-1991, chairman of the Cancer Car Project from 1991 to 1995, chairman of the public relations committee for 1993-1994 and was a member of the Finance committee for 1991-1994.

after the Pope dies, carrying out works of charity "in accordance with the criteria employed during the Pope's

lifetime."

The almoner remains an active and important office in

continued on page 2



VOLUME 74 / NUMBER 6

EDITED by Trevor W. McKeown for the Grand Secretary's Office and published by the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of British Columbia and Yukon. The VIEWS AND OPINIONS expressed in the *Masonic Bulletin* are those of the individual authors and writers, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of this Grand Lodge. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions. CORRESPONDENCE: 1495 West Eighth Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia V6H 1C9 Canada. WEB: <http://freemasonry.bc.ca> TELEPHONE: +1-604-736-8941. FACSIMILE: +1-604-736-5097. EMAIL: editor@freemasonry.bc.ca

The lodge almoner

from page one

lodges in England, Scotland, Ireland and Europe. There has been a recent interest in introducing the practice in this jurisdiction.

Letters

Firstly, I enjoy the *Bulletin*; it forms an important part of the knowledge base of Freemasonry in British Columbia and Yukon. I enjoy both the current and historical themes presented.

That said, I also recognize that many, particularly younger, brethren often receive news in a very different fashion than their forefathers.

As such, I wonder if the *Bulletin* should evolve along the lines of an online blog-type format, allowing discussion on topics, with a digest formulated into the paper edition for those wishing to receive it in that form. While it is sometimes considered heresy to suggest change, I see an opportunity to create something crafted for this jurisdiction which would complement many of the other resources available.

Creston Lodge No. 54 is wrestling with this conundrum as we move to ever more electronic distribution of information. We are in the middle of setting up a group collaboration site in parallel with our lodge website to provide a secure area for the exchange of lodge business, and to assist communication between brethren on a variety of topics and projects.

W Bro. David F. Butt
Creston No. 54

* * *

I for one quite like receiving the *Masonic Bulletin* with my monthly lodge notice, and read each one. For one like me who is not the most diligent attendee of evening lodge meetings, it keeps me informed and interested in what is going in the greater masonic world

out there, and keeps me feeling part of it.

I don't begrudge the \$44 *per capita*, but the *Bulletin* provides something tangible in return. I know the internet and all the masonic publications you mention are out there, but I doubt I would access or read the *Bulletin* if I had to retrieve it online. Having it arrive printed makes me think I should read it. Some other lodges I have affiliated with have gone to email for monthly notices. It certainly saves postage, but I regret to say that I hardly read them.

Bro. Anthony J. Dowell
Ashlar Lodge No. 3

* * *

In the December issue of the *Mason Bulletin* you solicited comments from your readers on their opinions of the relevancy of this publication.

I find it oddly coincidental that this request should appear in the issue that contains the most meaningful and relevant article that I have read in my near six years as a freemason. And the very day that I read it I met the author at the Grand Master's visit to District 17, where I was able to express my sincere appreciation for him having written something that speaks so clearly to the real value of Freemasonry.

I eagerly anticipate the arrival of each issue where I know I will learn something more of the wondrous history of our Craft that will serve to enhance my understanding of the reasons behind the symbols, allegory, lectures and ritual work that I see in lodge. I would dearly miss it if it were to cease.

Bro. William B. Irwin
Burrard No. 50

* * *

Thank you for a job well done.

In response to your request for suggestions, I would humbly suggest that the *Bulletin* remain in its present printed form, most especially

"For the mind does not require filling like a bottle, but rather, like wood, it only requires kindling to create in it an impulse to think independently and an ardent desire for the truth."

Plutarch, "On Listening to Lectures," *Moralia*.

for the older members and those who have not become comfortable with internet communication.

For my personal enjoyment, I would suggest more snippets taken from the history of our Grand Lodge and more news of the activities of our lodges. Finally, I would suggest the inclusion of the names and lodges of brethren receiving their Master Mason certificates.

W Bro. John I. Janzen,
Star of the West No. 61

* * *

Should the bulletin continue? I have only recently been accepted to be a freemason and I have been well supplied with literature from my mentors and through my own curiosity. However, I have found your articles to be directed-learning, more related to our current pursuits in betterment and understanding, even though many are texts about or from the past.

A few suggestions:

I read the *Bulletin* on my computer screen because I am weaning myself from a reliance on printed paper. It would be nice to have an icon to click that would display the full print format into a screen display.

Other lodges must be

sharing my lodge's concern over making ourselves and our activities more attractive to younger members. The graphics could be a first consideration.

Consider a "Definition of the Month" for such topics as: tyle, tyler and being properly tyled; origins and duties of an Almoner; and topics which are mentioned but not fully explained in lodge rituals.

Introduce any changes occasionally and one at a time so as not to upset the conservatives and traditionalist who have served as mentors and builders of our temples.

Finally, I believe the *Masonic Bulletin* serves a valuable educational service which should be continued.

Bro. Gerry T. McRae
Kamloops No. 10

* * *

The proceeding correspondence was received in reply to a note in the December edition requesting suggestions on the direction the *Bulletin* should be taking.

This Xmas

For some years the lodges of District 9 have participated in a Food Bank Drive during November and December. This year the brethren donated approximately seven hundred and fifty pounds of non-perishable food, which was conservatively estimated to have a value of \$2,500, plus \$1,844 in cash donations.

The money was raised through a variety of lodge festive board fund-raising activities, as well as through personal contributions directly to the Food Bank. The proceeds of food and money are generally distributed in the community represented by the DDGM.

On 20 December 2010, on behalf of the brethren of District 9, it was very gratifying to RW Bro. Terry R. Ferguson to present the Revelstoke Food Bank with the seven hundred

and fifty pounds of food and a cheque for \$634 and The Revelstoke Women's Shelter Society with a cheque for \$1,210.

These are both well-established organizations, providing services that are vital to the community. The brethren in District 9 should be justifiably proud to have supported these groups, thus enabling them to continue assisting those in need. ■

Grand Masonic Day

The Grand Masonic Day has returned to Vancouver and the schedule of speakers for Saturday, 6 March has now been confirmed.

Speakers, including RW Bro. Alan Webster (*Working Tools of AF & AM*); Bro. Goran Ivankovic (*Anti-masonic Serbian stamps*); RW Bro. Phillip Durell (*Ritual*); Bro. Wes Regan, and others, will make presentations in the Ditmars Room at the Vancouver Masonic Centre in the Lower Mainland.

Tickets are available at the door only, payable by cash or cheque. Although it is not necessary to preregister, an indication of attendance would be appreciated for catering purposes. Doors open at 8:30 am with registration, tea, coffee, refreshments in the foyer on the third floor, with the official opening at 9:45 am. The \$30 registration fee includes refreshments, luncheon and a copy of the proceedings of the day.

Please contact
VW Bro. John Keirstead at
keirsteadjohn@netscape.net or
by phone at 604-524-1661. ■

Thanks

Diagnosed six years ago with cancer in his left neck lymph nodes, Mr. Timothy E. Sewell underwent over fifty

radiation treatments, chemotherapy, surgery and forty hyperbaric treatments. With no friends or family in the Vancouver Lower Mainland area, he called on the Cancer Car Program for assistance.

Now five years later, he writes to say, "It is such a blessing that the programme is there at a time of real need. Many people are simply overwhelmed by the physical, financial and emotionally exhausting difficulties of having cancer.

"I had the same drivers on several occasions, they were extremely considerate and understanding.

"I cannot express enough how grateful I am to you and your brotherhood of volunteer drivers who were there for me...."

The freemasons of this jurisdiction can be justifiably proud that their lodge membership supports this programme. ■

Teamwork

The "Jack Turnbull Scottish Degree Team" was welcomed into Goldstream Lodge No. 161 this past November, complete with the skirl of the pipes and the swirl of the kilts.

They were there to confer the Entered Apprentice degree on two candidates, using the ritual of Lodge Easterhouse No. 1591, Scotland. The degree team has been granted the Grand Master's dispensation to use this work in our jurisdiction.

At evening's end the Master for the degree on this occasion, RW Bro. Bob Park was rewarded for the team's work when RW Bro. Fred Packford presented a travelling trowel, with the wish that it should accompany the team on their travels.

For information on the team, and the ritual worked, contact the Degree Team Chairman, W Bro Jim White at jwhite@deltasd.bc.ca. ■

Eleusis

by RW Bro. Michael D. Yule

Freemasonry is intended to be, among other things, an intellectual journey. The first steps into Freemasonry are filled with both anticipation and apprehension, largely because there is a feeling that somehow things will be different after the initiation but that how it will be different is unknown, and how this will be achieved is also unknown. It is this sense of the unknown, this *mystery* that is one of the keys to the experience.

Freemasonry is a philosophical descendant of the Mystery traditions such as those of Eleusis, Dionysus, and Orpheus. There are many, both within the Craft and without, that would discount any attempt to link Freemasonry with these ancient roots. And no doubt they are right insofar as their arguments typically revolve around the formation of lodges and direct linkages of ritual wording, symbology, movement within the lodge, lodge hierarchy, etc. But these critics are missing the point entirely.

Since the Eleusinian Mysteries have been extinct as an organized event for tens of centuries, it may not be immediately clear how the statement can be made that there is any connection between the conferral of a masonic degree and the rites performed in Greece at Eleusis so long ago. The answer is partly in the work that we do and what we know about the work that they did, but more importantly it is in the results that each strived for.

Eleusis is (or rather was) a town about 20 km from Athens above the bay of Eleusis, and was founded about 2000 BCE. The rites of the religion of Demeter were carried out there until the temples were destroyed by the Goths around 400 CE. The fundamental background to the rites of

Secrets of Freemasonry revealed!

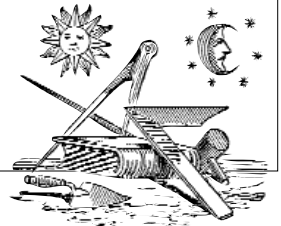
Plan now to attend the Grand Masonic Day in Vancouver on Saturday, 5 March 2011.

Contact :

VW Bro. John Keirstead

t: 604-524-1661

e: keirsteadjohn@netscape.net

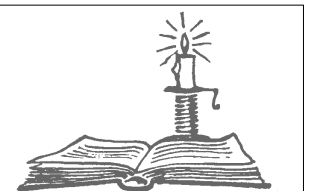


Volunteer to drive a Cancer Car

+1-604-872-2034

+1-800-663-7892

+1-250-712-1101



Turn over a new leaf

Books, tapes and videos; Masonic education at its best. Open for your convenience second and fourth Friday evenings; 5:00 'til 10:00 pm.

*The Library
at
Grand Lodge*

Eleusis revolve around the story of Demeter and Persephone. Demeter, also called Ceres, was the goddess responsible for agriculture; the life and death cycle played out each year when the seed sown in the ground at the end of the year rises again in the spring with new life.

The death of an old life, and the rebirth into a new one through a ritual drama is a fundamental part of most major religious systems today. It may not be immediately apparent to the new Entered Apprentice how this relates to the initiatory experience that he underwent, however the parallels are there for the contemplative.

Other parts of other dramas will doubtless occur to the more senior brethren as being parallel in intent. For the Entered Apprentice who experienced the Ancient Work, I would suggest reviewing the challenges given by the Junior Warden, the Senior Warden, and the Worshipful Master after the first perambulation around the lodge and the answers given by the Senior Deacon, while the candidate is still hoodwinked, for some evidence.

While we don't know the exact rituals that were practiced at Eleusis we can certainly do some evocative imagining.

Pindar wrote: "Blessed is he who has seen these things before he goeth beneath the hollow earth; for he understandeth the end of mortal life, and the beginning (of a new life) given of G-d." Cicero, Sophocles, and Aristotle likewise extolled the Mysteries in their plays and other writings. Greek and Roman political figures such as Pericles, Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius, and Julian considered their experiences there moving and joyful.

Eleusis has puzzled scholars for centuries. Much has been discovered about the preparatory and public celebrations, the preliminary processions and

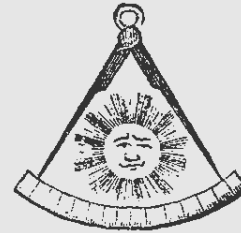
purifications, the Demeter-Kore myth cycle, and the nature of certain processions and lesser rites. Many psychologists such as Carl Jung and other scholars have created a large storehouse of intuitions and speculations. Many would now agree that a profound religious experience must have occurred, repeated year after year, a psychic reality that succeeded again and again.

At one level, I think, all Mystery traditions involve processes of growth and regeneration, confrontations with birth, death, the source of life, and the relationship of human beings to the cosmos. It can be considered that rituals are really the re-enactment of a spiritual drama allowing the participant to enter into the drama of life itself, of joining with his god or goddess in an achievement of unity so that growth, the true purpose of ritual, is achieved.

Above and beyond the murky area of historical and geographical connections of Freemasonry and Mystery traditions such as those of Demeter and Persephone, the philosophical connections are real. What little we know of the Mysteries seems to indicate that these rites emphasized (as the Craft, at its best, does today) experience as opposed to dogma, and metaphor and myth as opposed to doctrine.

Both the Mysteries and Freemasonry emphasize initiatory processes that lead to a widening of perceptions. Neither emphasizes theology, belief, or the written word. In both, participants expect to lead normal lives in the world as well as attain spiritual enrichment. It is the process, and the experience, not the secrets, that are the mystery of the Mysteries.

And so it is with the mysteries in Freemasonry. A mystery can't be told or even easily shown someone, while a secret can be told to just about anyone and they can tell it to



GRAND MASTER'S ITINERARY FEBRUARY 2011

1-4	M-F	Annual Communication	Alaska	Anchorage
9	W	District 16	Alliance 193	Vancouver
11	Fr	Installation, Lodges of Perfection		Nanaimo
12	S	District 27	Chemainus 114	Ladysmith
14	M	Vancouver No. 2, Order of Eastern Star		Vancouver
15	T	Table Lodge, Blue Mountain 182		Port Coquitlam
20-22	Su-Tu	Conference of Grand Masters		Denver, Colorado
26	S	District 5	Ashlar 3	Nanaimo
27	Su	Church Parade	District 5	Nanaimo
28	M	District 26	Excelsior 195	Vancouver

somebody else. And it will be the same secret. And yet there are an amazing number of people, even freemasons, who seem to believe that the two terms are synonymous. The frustrating thing about the Mysteries for new freemasons, and those that think about it at all after they are more experienced, is that they cannot be taught, they must be experienced.

In fact, telling most people the surface-seeming substance or "secrets" can blind them to the depth of the real Mysteries. The mysteries of Freemasonry, as in Eleusis, are a process, and each step is intended to prepare the candidate for the one to follow.

It is clear to me that Freemasonry is a vastly older tradition than most recognize. The issue of whether there is a written pedigree with lodge minutes is irrelevant. What matters is what we do in the lodge, and what we do is ritual. Ritual that is intended in its initiatory aspects to allow a freemason to come closer to his divinity, and to be able to feel, if not to intellectualize, that process. With no doctrine and no dogma, the rituals of Freemasonry come closer to those of the initiatory traditions

of the Eleusinians and others than to any other set of rituals, and it is this simple fact, this acknowledgement of the divine with many faces that allows those who are ready, to truly experience the masonic tenets of brotherly love, relief, and truth.

Excerpted from Grand Masonic Day Proceedings No. 23 (2005). The full article is available on the Grand Lodge website.

Counsel

The suggestion has been made that a regular feature of the *Bulletin* should be a few short words of admonition and advice—reminders to those of us who should know better, and injunctions to those who are learning their way.

Nobody speaks, nobody moves!

When anyone is addressing the *Volume of Sacred Law*, regardless of the circumstances—whether it is during the opening and closing ceremonies or while a candidate is kneeling—there should be no talking, whispered asides, or rustling of candy wrappers. It is inappropriate and rude.

Part one in a continuing series. Your contributions are encouraged.