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# Fellowship—the tie that binds

RW Bro. Donald E. Stutt, Senior Grand Warden

I’m sure most of us fondly remember *Cheers*, the television comedy from a few years ago. Remember the lyrics of its theme song written by Gary Portnoy and Judy Hart Angelo?

*“Wouldn’t you like to get away? Sometimes you want to go, where everybody knows your name, and they’re always glad you came.”*

A warm smile, a glad greeting, a “happy to see you again,” a “welcome friend!” Isn’t that what we’re all looking for; that place where everyone knows our name and calls us friend?

For when we meet, it’s hand to hand with a greeting, a smile and a pat on the back. Think about how that makes us feel.

Last year, at the Leadership Conference, some of us came as strangers for the first time, but after, we left as friends and surely remembered the fellowship we enjoyed.

Think about it! The warmth,

the comfort, the safety within our group; knowing that all are there to help and support each other. Where all you have to do is ask, just ask. It’s almost tribal! Imagine that feeling not being there! How would you feel?

Remember when, as a child, you saw your grandparents or a favourite relative, whom you had not seen in a long time and you ran to them and got a big, warm, loving hug and wished it would never end. There isn’t one of us who doesn’t wish for that... one... more... time!

What ties us together? Meetings, memory work, practices, boards of general purposes or festive boards... or is there something else, more than all of the above; something not written, listed or recorded? Something, that brings us back again and again. Something that is not seen, only felt. Why do we attend lodge? The tie that binds us



The popular year-end figure of Father Time is derived from Chronos, the god of time in Greek mythology. But his modern personification as an aged figure with forelock, wings, scythe and hourglass, may have originated with this illustration in the 1820 edition of *The True Masonic Chart* by Jeremy Cross.

together, and holds us tight in thoughts and memories. It’s a simple thing called fellowship.

Why, in our fraternity, do men come together from different social strata, to join this “thing” called Freemasonry?

For we join the Craft, often not really knowing much about it other than what others have told us. We decide to become a freemason. We submit our petition, three come to visit, and the necessary fee is given. They depart, saying “someone will be contacting you in due

course.” A letter arrives with a request you attend the lodge hall, at a specific time and date, dressed accordingly and, oh yes, bring another fee. If you’re fortunate, someone comes to pick you up! From there, it’s often a blur, until you become a Master Mason and can then fully sit down in peace and harmony.

What has happened? Now, you reflect on the past events, maybe realizing that everyone who assisted you on your journey was also there once

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## **The tie that binds** from page one

upon a time. They know the trials and tribulations you have been through and are going through. They have given you what others gave them: friendship and fellowship!

What a gift to give another human being with nothing requested in return. Just learn the lesson and pass it onto others; just pay it forward, so others may enjoy what you have received and that all may meet upon the level.

In researching the topic of fellowship, I found a very few chapters in some books, papers and poems. There should have been countless others, but, there were not. However, many talk about it and extol the virtues of fellowship and how deeply it's cherished. You don't know what you have lost until it's gone.

In the Craft, we have that fellowship, that bond. It doesn't just happen. It starts out slowly when we let a man petition our fraternity and he sees how we interact with each other and socialize and he wishes to be part of that fellowship.

How does fellowship happen? It's not recorded anywhere, no process is laid out or defined.

In today's fast-paced civilized world of hurry, hurry, hurry, there are very few quiet places to relax and reflect. It's in our lodges, where men from all walks of life have found that place to relax and reflect. It's why they return, to reflect and to meet *new* brethren—brethren from varied backgrounds, brethren that we would otherwise not have met on the level.

I think it is the best secret we have and that few really see. It is that secret that we, a band of brothers, share the joys of fellowship, a friendship divine, brothers one and all.

A better world it could be... starting with us.

We have all gone through

the ritual together and, yet separately. We all have those grand memories as the degrees were conferred and the festive board enjoyed, This is the same foundation shared by one and all, around the world.

The Rev. J.S.M. Ward had something to say about this:

### **The Social Ideal**

The dominating ideal in Anglo-Saxon masonry is social ideal, and this phrase denotes and includes a great variety of aims, some of which are far nobler than others. Let us try to define some of these subdivisions of the social side and consider them in detail.

The outstanding ones are:

1. good fellowship, including conviviality at the lodge dinners.
2. companionship, the formation of friendship, and an opportunity for social intercourse among men who otherwise find themselves isolated units in a huge machine we called modern civilization.
3. in some places notably in the States, other social functions are encouraged; for example, summer outings are organized, and there are even masonic cemeteries.
4. the charities, these are a particularly strong creature of English Freemasonry and perhaps its greatest glory. They include all manner of activities, but the chief organized charities are:
  - a. the benevolent fund, which is a fund from which homes are maintained for old freemasons or their dependents who have fallen on evil days, and also special grants of help may be made in deserving cases;
  - b. the boys' school;
  - c. the girls' school.

Let us now turn to consider these four main aspects of the social ideal:

There is nothing intrinsically wrong in a man forming a club solely for the purpose of having

a good dinner and a jolly evening, at regular intervals. The old boys' clubs are excellent institutions, and no man of the world would wish to discourage them. Moreover, without the dinner it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to create the spirit of comradeship which is an essential characteristic in the prosperity and well being of a lodge.

But for the dinner, men would never get to know each other, never form friendships, and opportunities for intellectual discussion would seldom arise. In lodge talking is rightly forbidden. It is impossible for men to get to know each other there, and any attempt to do so would destroy the dignity and beauty of the ceremonies. The experience of non-dining lodges in London, at any rate, shows that the brethren do not get to know each other as they should, and these lodges are sadly lacking in the true *esprit de corps*, which dominates the dining lodges.

Let us turn to the ideal of companionship. The desire for companionship, as I have pointed out, is probably one of the most dominating reasons why there has been such an influx recently into Freemasonry. The very success of Freemasonry contains within it a danger. Lodges are growing in size till some are so huge that it is next to impossible for a comparative stranger who joins them to become friends with the bulk of the members, or even hope for office in the lodge for many years to come.

In the old days lodges were comparatively small, a good membership roll would be about thirty-five. Initiations were few and far between, and the older members had plenty of time to get acquainted with the newcomer and make them feel at home. Moreover, very often he already knew a number of the members before he entered the lodge; they were near neighbors of his or business acquaintances. ...

In London a man is proposed by two business acquaintances. They may have known him for years, yet probably they have never even been to his house. But even if they have, they're only two out of the lodge of 150 to 200 or even more.

The initiate is admitted. For one glorious evening he sits near to the Master at dinner, is toasted by everyone, and is the centre of interest. At the next meeting he is nobody. He finds a seat anywhere, probably not near his proposer or seconder, who may be Past Masters, and usually have their own cronies. So he finds himself on the other side next to a complete stranger or an empty seat.

He gets into desultory conversation with his neighbour, but at the next meeting the same man has not attended, and again he is next to a stranger. In any case he only meets these brothers five or six times a year, and never really gets to know them.

Now, however, we will take leave of the social ideal, acknowledging that it is a fine idea and that, though there are dangers in it, as there are in any noble idea, yet these dangers can be averted without in any way destroying the idea itself. On the contrary every social activity can be retained and improved, provided the same defects, which exist, are rectified.

Let us therefore close this chapter by saying that Freemasonry is dominated by three great ideals — brotherly love (good fellowship), relief (charity) and truth (the search after truth) and without the assistance of the other two thirds the true word cannot be uttered by the third.

—J.S.M. Ward, *Freemasonry: its aim and ideals* (1923).

After reading the above, I think back to when I was not a freemason. Why, then? I think back to that *Cheers* theme song... to be intoxicated with

fellowship with no external influences other than good friendship.

For when we meet: a hand extended, a smile, a pat on the back and a sincere question when asking, "How are things with you, my brother?"

In closing I wish to leave you with three things: thoughts, homework, and questions.

### **Thoughts (for life)**

- have you ever gone somewhere and felt left out?
- have you wished to be part of this or that group?
- have you ever arrived home at night thinking that was a waste of time?

Then you have felt a lack of fellowship ...

### **Homework (for life)**

- To a brother you do not know or know well, give your hand before he gives you his, then engage him and others in social intercourse;
- Invite a brother you do not know to sit with you in the lodge room or at the festive board;
- invite and included others into the group you normally see at lodge — share the wealth.

### **Questions (for life)**

- do you enjoy the fellowship of your brothers?
- how are you going to improve fellowship within your lodge(s), district, jurisdiction?
- will it begin with you?

Sincere good fellowship starts with - one firm handshake, one big smile and one warm pat on the shoulder or back. ■

## **Cellphones**

The Grand Master for Massachusetts recently issued an edict on cellphones that may be of interest in this jurisdiction.

In Massachusetts, all cell phones must either be turned off or silenced prior to entering the lodgeroom. The Master must announce prior to opening that all cellphones and

other electronic devices are to be shut off or silenced. If an emergency call is received while the lodge is in session the brother must not answer the call within the lodgeroom. He must exit according to proper masonic protocol and respond to the call outside of the lodgeroom area.

If a cellphone rings within a tyled lodge, the Master will instruct the Director of Ceremonies to escort the brother from the room. Re-admittance will be at the discretion of the Master.

Use of cellphones or other devices for texting, audio recording, video recording, or photography within a tyled lodge is strictly forbidden. Any reported infraction in Massachusetts is subject to reprimand, suspension, or expulsion from Freemasonry.

And what about in this jurisdiction? Our Grand Master has refrained from issuing an edict, relying upon the good sense of the brethren. Use of these devices while in lodge and when sharing fellowship with other brethren is like speaking when someone else has the floor or is talking to you... it is rude and inconsiderate, and to be discouraged.

When we enter a lodge we are entering what for many brethren is a sanctuary or refuge from the rush and bustle of everyday activities; we should respect that, for "a lodge of freemasons is the temple of peace, harmony and brotherly love; nothing is allowed to enter which has the remotest tendency to disturb the quietude of its pursuit."

Common sense and common courtesy. Entering an event into your smartphone calendar when an announcement is made in lodge is one thing. Texting a friend outside—or just as bad, inside—the lodge is another thing entirely.

Perhaps we might follow the lead of the Junior Warden who, when asked what was

the first care of every freemason, replied, "To see that all cellphones are turned off, Worshipful Master, and to ensure the lodge is properly tyled." ■

## **Cancelled**

by RW Bro. James G. Bennie

As the secretary of one lodge, and a member of several others, I get notices of meetings from quite a few lodges. And the most disheartened thing I read is when an urgent email comes through and says something like "The candidate can't come tonight so the meeting is cancelled."

I have a question. Why? Why is the meeting cancelled? At every emergent communication where degree work is the only thing on the Order of Business, there's always more to a meeting than that.

Every meeting has a report on ill and distressed brethren. Since the assembled members now have time on their hands when they would have done degree work, why not use that time to put the lodge at refreshment, have each member pick up his cellphone (since almost everyone has one), call a senior or sick brother, then have the lodge called on a half hour later and everyone report their findings?

Every meeting has a portion where members can offer something for "the good of Freemasonry." That's a huge open chasm that can be filled with almost anything. It can be used for an educational presentation. It can be used for a discussion, formal or otherwise, about almost anything to do with Freemasonry, including lodge affairs.

Certainly "the good of Freemasonry" can be, and should be, more than the Junior Warden standing up and inviting people to have a sandwich, or the Worshipful Master to thank people for showing up (or apologising for a low turnout).



Freemasonry  
:  
the art and  
science of  
right living



## **Volunteer to drive a Cancer Car**

+1-604-872-2034  
+1-800-663-7892  
+1-250-712-1101

## **Be a builder**

Here is an opportunity to gather with like-minded leaders of our organization (young, old, past, present and future) together in an environment conducive to working, learning, sharing knowledge and experience, and forming relationships that will be beneficial to you and your lodge now and in the future.

Download the registration form at [freemasonry.bcy.ca/mlc2012.html](http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/mlc2012.html)

**Masonic Leadership and Ladies Conference** ♦  
13 - 15 April 2012  
Penticton Lakeside Resort

Members, especially new ones, lament there's so much to learn about our Craft. Why take away an evening's opportunity when they can do just that?

Freemasons in our jurisdiction should be familiar with the *Address to the Brethren* where we're reminded that one of the objects of meeting in a lodge is social intercourse. If a planned degree cannot take place, why can't the brethren use the time instead for the all-important fellowship that the fraternity prides itself on?

If the brethren of the lodge don't want to hang out together, swap stories, and toast our absent brethren (or whoever else), it may mean a bond has not developed amongst the members and there's a serious social dynamic problem.

It's perfectly understandable if a snowstorm or power failure results in a meeting cancellation; or a lack of a quorum of seven for whatever reason. But cancelling a meeting merely because a degree has to be put off? Remember your 24-inch gauge and its lesson of using time wisely. The time which would have been spent in degree work can be beneficially employed in so many other ways. Packing up the gauge with the rest of the tools and going home shouldn't be one of them.

## Correction

In our last issue it was noted that the architect for the street-plans of Washington, DC, Pierre Charles l'Enfant, was not a freemason. Recent research has shown that he was initiated into Hudson Lodge No. 8 in New York, although he neither progressed further nor expressed any other interest in Freemasonry. This recent discovery in no way substantiated the outlandish claims of such authors as David Ovason or David Icke.

Also in our last issue there

was a squib on the appropriate use of the phrase, "Worshipful Sir." It is not always easy to distinguish the etiquette of the four different Works authorized in this jurisdiction. It is only in the Ancient Work lodges that the phrase "Worshipful Sir" should be heard. ■

## Online

A recent addition to our website has been calendars for each of the districts as well as for our masonic family.

Ask your lodge secretary for the URL. If you don't already have them, also ask him for the username and password to access the members section of our website. Here you can find many interesting and useful documents. ■

## Love

by *Gerry T. McRae*

At our initiation we were instructed that a tenet or principle of Freemasonry is brotherly love.

It is unfortunate the English language names the many forms of feeling and affection with one word, love, unlike the Greek language which employs distinctive words such as *agape* for love of God, *aphilia* for brotherly love and *aeros* for love of a sexual nature. Our more limited expressions in English may, indeed, be restricting our thoughts of love.

Especially, we could be limiting our expressions of brotherly love.

What is brotherly love as practiced by freemasons?

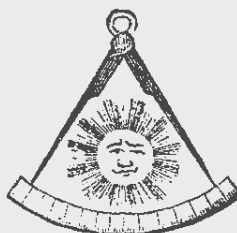
Recently, a brother extended to me an extraordinary act of assistance when I was in a stressful situation.

Naïvely, I asked why he did such a thing for me, a mere recent acquaintance.

He shocked me with, "You are a brother, that's what brothers do."

What a clear lesson in brotherly love!

This experience has not only



### GRAND MASTER'S ITINERARY DECEMBER 2011

2	F	Board of General Purposes	Vancouver
2	F	Principal Officers Meeting	Vancouver
3	S	150th Celebration, Union Solomon 9	New Westminster
17	S	Centenary, Mizpah Court No. 2, Order of Amaranth	Victoria

filled me with a new joy of being a freemason but, it started me thinking of what further lessons we all could share should this *Bulletin* publish a series of instances submitted by brethren exemplifying thoughts and acts of brotherly love.

How do we express our brotherly love in thought and deed? Write your editor! ■

## Twitter

Our Grand Lodge officers now have accounts with Twitter. Brethren can follow them at:-

Grand Master: gm\_bcy  
Grand Treasurer: gt\_bcy  
Grand Secretary: gs\_bcy  
Deputy Grand Master: dgm\_bcy  
Senior Grand Warden: sgw\_bcy  
Junior Grand Warden: jgw\_bcy

You can follow our officers by visiting the website [twitter.com](http://twitter.com) and creating your own account. ■

## Education

January marks the start of a new year and time for one of this jurisdiction's premiere education events, the Thirtieth Annual Grand Masonic Day on 21 January.

It's a great event where you will learn a lot, meet some very knowledgeable brethren, hear a talk from our Junior Grand Warden and enjoy good fellow-

ship. Also the Grand Master will be in attendance. If you have attended in the past then you already know how valuable and enjoyable this event is.

We have a full line-up of speakers who will be presenting papers on a Brief Summary of the Contents of the Urantia Book; the Ancient Order of Free Gardeners; the Attributions of the Tree of Life in a Masonic Temple; Investing in Our Communities: Putting the Charity and Goodwill of Freemasonry to Work in Vancouver; Freemasonry: Answering Why?; the History Behind the Church of St. John "Church of The Skulls" and the Connection with Rosslyn Chapel; and Mount Moriah (King Solomon's Temple).

Join your brethren on 21 January, 2012, at the Vancouver Masonic Centre, 1495 West 8th Avenue. Tickets are available at the door. Dress code is informal—no regalia.

Registration opens at 8:30 am with the first session starting at 9:45 am.

As well as the lectures, the \$30 price of admission includes refreshments, lunch, the opportunity to meet the new Junior Grand Warden and a copy of the proceedings.

If planning to attend please contact W Bro. Wes Regan at [wes.regan@shaw.ca](mailto:wes.regan@shaw.ca) or call 604-805-3591. ■