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The Lodge Award Programme

by RW Bro. Aidan C. Gordon

Several years ago MW Bro. Robert D. McSween introduced the *Lodge Award Programme* to this jurisdiction. The programme was modeled on a successful venture developed by the Grand Lodge of Oregon that has encouraged similar programmes within many other grand jurisdictions across North America.

This year the programme has been revised for alignment with the *Five Pillar Plan*, emphasizing participation in activities involving leadership, education, communication, membership and community. The revised programme includes new tasks, clearer task descriptions, and more opportunities to earn points.

The programme is designed to develop successful lodges by ensuring basic administrative tasks are performed, by encouraging increased fellowship both within the lodge and between lodges, and through increased

visibility and interaction in the community.

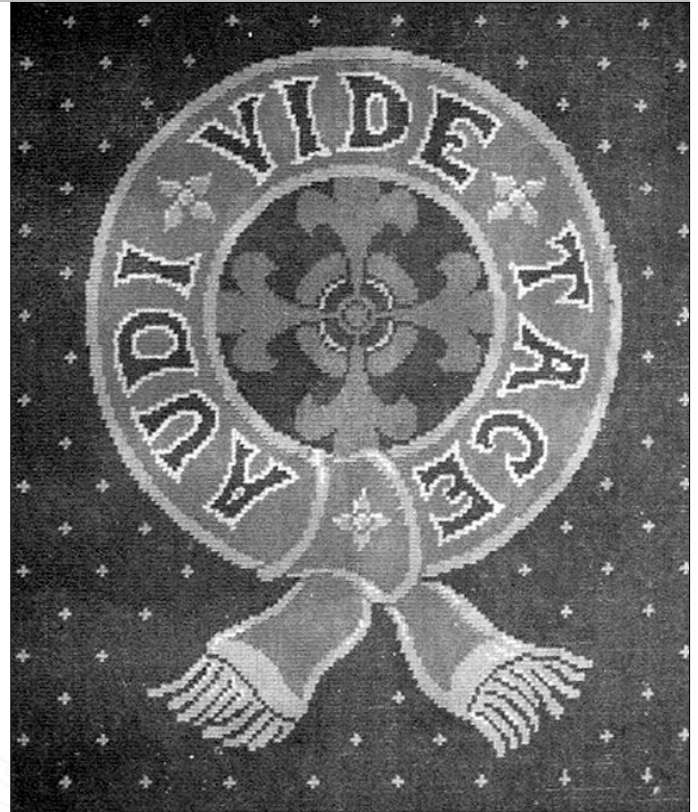
The newly revised programme also comes with a new name; *The Lodge Excellence and Award Program* and the acronym L-E-A-P.

The goal is indeed lodge excellence and the award is a certificate presented to the Worshipful Master at our Grand Lodge Annual Communication.

The acronym brings to mind the image of leaping forward, but in this case it is not with one giant bound, but rather by thirty-eight incremental and regular steps.

Lodges participate in their choice of thirty-eight activities, or tasks, separated into two categories: category "A" tasks are worth two points each, category "B" tasks are worth one point each.

To receive the *Lodge Excellence Award*, lodges must accumulate at least thirty-five points, and to receive the



The carpet in Spallumcheen No. 13's lodge hall in Armstrong—depicting the ancient masonic motto, "Audi, Vide, Tace" or "Hear, See, Be Silent" dates from the early 1920s. Your Grand Historian would love to receive high resolution image files of other unique carpets in this jurisdiction.

Lodge Achievement Award Lodges must accumulate at least twenty-five points.

The District Deputy Grand Master oversees the programme within his district, and reviews each submission for the award before forwarding to the Grand Secretary's office.

To qualify, submissions must be signed by the Worshipful Master and the DDGM, and be received by Grand Lodge on or before 1 June.

It is not intended that this be a one-time award, but rather that lodges will compete

and qualify each masonic year and entrench participation in the programme in their plan for the lodge.

Having overseen the programme for a few years now, it is my experience that successful lodges are already participating in many of the required activities. Lodges that are striving to improve will find L-E-A-P is a useful means to engage the brethren and to point their lodge on a course leading to measurable improvement.

A complete list of tasks can
continued on page 2



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L-E-A-P
from page one

be found in the *Members Section* of the Grand Lodge website. The page freemasonry.bcy.ca/members can be accessed with a password available by email from your lodge secretary.

If you would like your lodge to participate, contact your Worshipful Master. The Master should advise the DDGM that the lodge is participating and then assign a member to oversee the programme within the lodge. It is recommended that L-E-A-P be presented as part of the lodge's masonic education to decide which activities to target. The Worshipful Master should assign responsibilities for each activity and set timelines to improve performance tracking.

Get involved. Get your lodge involved. Take the L-E-A-P to the next level. ■

A mason in deed

Many men are disappointed with Freemasonry and Freemasonry is disappointed with many men. There is nothing surprising about either side of this statement.

Many men are attracted to Freemasonry from purely selfish motives or through a mistaken notion of the benefits to be derived. Freemasonry itself often fails to judge rightly the character of its initiates. The result is always disappointment. The proper frame of mind for the aspirant for masonic membership or masonic honour is the desire to give, rather than to get. Freemasonry offers nothing to any man except the opportunity to make something of himself and this opportunity it presents by way of service to others.

The surest method of attaining greater happiness in this life is to give without getting and the surest way to lose what happiness we have is

to attempt to get without giving. This is not a new philosophy. It has been known and understood by many men in all ages of the world and is making more rapid progress today than ever before in the world's history.

The acceptance of this philosophy is not expressed by an attitude of mind but by its actual practice. It is not a belief but a plan of life, it is not words but action, and when so expressed it marks a real freemason; one who is not disappointed in Freemasonry, nor is Freemasonry disappointed in him. ■

The Masonic Sun, Toronto, 1922.

Lodge notes

The brethren of **Bardley Lodge No. 90**, Port Alberni, mourn the loss of their long-serving secretary, W Bro. Allyn Robert Parker, who tragically died in a bicycling accident on Maui this past January.

Lafayette Lodge No. 241, Seattle, held their annual International Night this past November, honouring ten Grand Masters, including our own MW Bro. William R. Cave.

This past November, brethren from Ontario, Nova Scotia, Alberta, Texas, California, Massachusetts, Japan, and in our own jurisdiction, from Vancouver and Kamloops, participated in the first raisings of two candidates into **Canada Lodge U.D.** in Kandahar, Afghanistan. ■

The habit of kindness

Allied with morality is the art of kindness. It may be described as morality in action.

Since morality is the contribution of self to society, kindness is the key that unlocks the inner door and makes it possible for a person to enter the lives of others.

In all of life's contacts, our activities in the social, business, or fraternal world, there is no commodity of greater value than the simple art of kindness. Our busy, advanced era cannot blot out its importance, nor can it relegate an act of kindness to an insignificant corner.

The brutally frank person is just that.

In our judgment of others, brutality can never be accepted as even a fair substitute for kindness. We want for ourselves the good things of life. They escape us if we do not contribute the same gifts to others in the form of Courtesy and Kindness. .

Kindness may be directly associated with the intellect, but not necessarily with college degrees.

The person who has caught the true spirit of religion, whose religion extends to active participation in the lives of others, will express that spirit though he remains silent as to the details of his church affiliation.

We do not claim that kindness is an exclusive masonic virtue, but among men trained in the study of self in relation to others, there is every reason to expect the highest expression of all good that stems forth from the study and application of the teachings of our fraternity. ■

Do the little things

For many years I have observed the earnest and faithful efforts of the officers of lodges as they held meetings for the purpose of suggesting ways to improve attendance and to maintain interest.

In every instance some outstanding programme has been launched, which if carried to completion, always bears the fruit which is the result of honest planning. However, it is my conclusion that all we hope for, the moulding of masonic principles into a strong

Freemasonry, must be the result of the doing of little things. Everything else, it seems, is subordinate to the idea of keeping fresh masonic teachings through the medium of doing. Again and again we refer to the basics of Freemasonry. Yet we know full well that the principles of Freemasonry are the same today as they were centuries ago. What do we really mean? What is that spirit that we must recapture? Get out the minutes of your lodge and review the history of those old days.

Strike deep into the heart of that history and then report truthfully. What do you find? A masonic funeral was an occasion at which was re-enacted the obligation of the living to the dead. Freemasons left their work and devoted all the time necessary to pay due and proper respect to the departed and to the loved ones. Look at the record of your lodge as it reports visitations to the sick, acts of charity to the unfortunate, comfort to the heartbroken. Review the work of committees, the work of brothers who asked for no titles, no recognition, but only the opportunity to render service.

Look over the names of those freemasons, those working brothers, and see if they were not the same who were leaders in their communities. Also look at the heritage they left. It was not measured in dollars. It was character.

That which we seek is within us. "Old Time Masonry" is not a thing that belongs to the past. It is a spirit that is the result of the doing of great little things. ■

The study of self

Freemasonry, blessed with wisdom of the ages, points to the greatest of all lessons, the study of self. There is a distinction between thinking too

much of self and knowing self.

A great teacher was asked if he could tell all the law in as little a time as a man could stand on one foot. To which he answered: "What is hateful to thyself do not do to others."

The sting of unkindness, the sharp blade of unfairness, the brutality of intolerance, are weapons that have been used against us. Have we used these weapons against others in our individual lives? Freemasonry tells us to consider well this question.

We must study self more and more in order to understand that unkindness is not of a lesser degree when we use it against others than when others use it against us.

Tolerance begets tolerance.; understanding begets understanding.

What comes back to us is in some strange way the very thing that we send out.

Freemasons, students of self and the science of morality, will forever cry out against the enemies of mankind, intolerance, injustice and greed. To become victors over these destroyers of life, we must know that we have looked upon them within our own being, and have removed them from self. ■

Bringing Masonry to lodge

We must ever remember that Freemasonry is the sum of those who are freemasons. The good of an institution must always result from the acts and deeds of the members of such an organization.

The masonic institution is the achievement of freemasons.

Many times the question is asked: "What degree are they going to work tonight?" Perhaps the brother who asks the question is interested in witnessing one particular degree and prefers not to

attend unless that degree is to be conferred. Still, there is a mighty impersonal ring to the word "they." Many other times the question is: "What are they going to do tonight?"

We cannot leave ourselves out of the lodge. Whether or not we attend regularly, we are forever a part of the lodge. We are its success and its failure. We contribute, or we fail to contribute to its welfare.

The degree that is to be conferred, the business meeting that is to be held, or the programme that is to be presented—all are important, but they are secondary to the question: "What will I bring to lodge tonight?" The spirit of brotherly love, the warm and friendly handshake, the smile that reflects the Mystic Tie—all that I am capable of bringing to lodge—are the important factors.

Penalties

Words do not always present a clear meaning even though they are simple ones. We may easily confuse the meaning of the masonic penalties.

Every freemason should have it clearly established in his mind that a penalty is a self-inflicted punishment, or forfeit, to which one subjects himself when he takes a sacred obligation in the name of God and then violates that obligation. Just as supreme laws are made for our guidance, welfare and happiness, so are the penalties suffered for the violation of those laws, ordained for our good. It may be difficult for us to believe the truth of this when we are paying the penalty.

We cannot measure the love, the patience, and the mercy of the deity by our own limitations.

If you will review the penalties in your mind, you will discover some interesting and rather startling facts.

Think for a moment in terms

of man's advancement from the purely material to the spiritual, or to the union of the earthly and heavenly. Just as our advancement in Freemasonry is by degrees, so is our spiritual advancement.

If you follow this line of thought you will soon realize that masonic penalties are the steps by which we earn our right to become spiritual beings.

Freemasonry has always, and wisely, stressed the imperfections of man. You must start out with truth to find a greater truth. If we admit our imperfections we may improve in ways that will bring us toward the paths of perfection.

There is more to be said on this subject. However, a few minutes of calm reflection will give us a new and interesting insight into the meanings of masonic penalties. ■

Genuine charity

There is a tendency today to use charity in a way that robs it of its beauty and leaves only a cold and inanimate word.

Many times an organization will be moved to perform an act of charity only to gain publicity and the material benefits which naturally follow such publicity.

Many organizations "sell" something in order that they may obtain money which in turn they will disburse to various charities. These acts may be commendable but they do not carry the true spirit of charity.

The lesson of charity as taught in the first degree is perhaps the most important in all Freemasonry. If we teach the candidate masonic charity we go a long way toward making a freemason. If you were to look for the secret in man's climb from the mud of ignorance to his place as a spiritual being, you would find



Freemasonry
:
the art and
science of
right living



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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

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

it in the ideal of charity. When man became conscious of his obligations to others and thus found joy in sharing with others, when man learned that he could impart something of value to others in time of joy and in time of sorrow, when man saw in others his own reflected hopes, ambitions and aspirations, he became one with God.

When you consider the deductions from your income tax for the amounts you gave to various organized charities, there is little of self included. You gave because you were expected to share in an impersonal appeal. This, too, may be commendable.

But in giving of self, you follow the lesson of masonic charity. ■

Self-expression

Can there be thought without words? It is difficult for us to think of thought without words. Our Fellowcraft degree teaches in terms of symbolism the value not only of communicating thought, but of adorning thought by means of rhetoric.

But does it refer to speech alone? In every act of life, spoken or not spoken, we communicate ourselves. We are part of all about us. We create favourable or unfavourable response by our manners, or lack of manners. We reveal ourselves by a smile, or handshake, frown, or shrug of the shoulder. Our eyes tell of hate and anger, love and kindness. The glance between husband and wife is a perfect sign of secrecy which the world cannot grasp.

The look of hopelessness on the face of a child, the innocent victim of war, oppression and hunger, can move us to charity as no words can do.

In times of death or sickness the expression of sympathy and understanding on the part of a friend and brother is readily

communicated and understood.

The brother who cannot utter a profound prayer can touch the heart of another by his attitude of reverence.

Speech is a form of communication. But there are many ways of communicating ourselves to others. In our acts there is the beauty of a silent rhetoric. ■

Community

by Rev. Bro. Gary Leazer

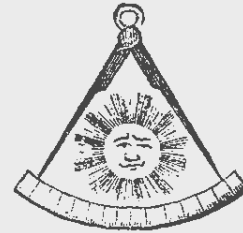
I contend that Freemasonry must move outside our lodge halls and into our communities, to get involved in helping to solve the growing social problems we face. The men out there are the men we would like to see in here. If I could change one thing about the fraternity, I would insist that every lodge have at least one hands-on project in its community every year where the men of the lodge are seen doing something for their community. It might be something as simple as raking leaves in someone's yard, or painting someone's house, or sponsoring a youth ball team. The possibilities are endless, and the rewards are immeasurable. Put on your thinking caps and let's get busy sharing our light in our communities. ■

You're needed

A chance for your help

The *ad hoc* Committee on Organizational Analysis and Evaluation is now in its third year of a four year mandate. In June 2011 the committee reported that an opportunity was missed to connect with brethren through the *Masonic Bulletin*.

In our third year we are reviewing three areas, lodges and districts, best practices, and Grand Lodge Communications. We are seeking your input. If you are unable to attend district meetings sponsored by our



GRAND MASTER'S ITINERARY FEBRUARY 2012

2-3	Th-F	Annual Communication, Alaska	Anchorage
9	Th	Districts 1 & 21 650 Fisgard St.	Victoria
10	F	Grand Lodge Board of General Purposes	Vancouver
10	F	Grand Lodge Principal Officers Meeting	Vancouver
11	S	District 14 & 26 West Eighth Ave.	Vancouver
18-21	S-T	Grand Masters Conference	Atlanta, GA
25	S	District 4N Tweedsmuir Lodge 152	Burns Lake
29	W	District 2 Dormer Lodge 191	Surrey

committee, and your DDGM and Regional Representative, we would still like to hear from you. Please respond, before 4 May 2012, with any thoughts you have on these three topics to alderley@shaw.ca.

Lodges and districts

Districts vary in their sizes. The committee has been asked to see if there is a need in the future to rearrange districts. To do this we are asking for statistical information over the past seven years of the number of officers, of members (not officers) and visitors attending.

We are interviewing members about lodges in their district. The committee would be pleased to read your responses:

1. Do you think that there are too many lodges in your district, or within the area where you live?
2. Do you visit lodges regularly? Participate in Installations?
3. Would fewer lodges make your participation in the Craft a better experience?
4. Have you affiliated with another lodge to assist it?
5. Are you considering affiliating with another lodge in order to assist it?
6. Do you feel that Master Masons in your lodge are

reluctant to become officers because of expectations to attend or visit other lodges?

For responses to these questions we need to know which district you are speaking of.

Best practices

Often one comes away from a lodge meeting saying that the meeting was stimulating and a great night of Freemasonry. What lodge meetings have you attended that you have found most enjoyable and would encourage others to attend? We are seeking to list topics and ideas on our website which will be accessible to all to seek ideas to motivate our Craft. Consider lodge meetings both here and in other jurisdictions.

Grand Lodge

Last year we asked for your input on ten items. This year we are retuning to one in particular—Grand Lodge Communications. Your input last year told your committee that you wish to see a different Annual Communication in our future. You mentioned several ways that you wanted to see changes. We want to develop these ideas further—dig deeper. Specifically, we would like precise ways you wish to see changes taking place in future Annual Communications. ■