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Ceremonies of initiation

by Edwin S. Hays, Jr.

Too many men pass through the ceremonies of initiation and never really learn the underlying truths which these ceremonies represent. Indeed, I have heard men complain that many of the ceremonies are “too time consuming” and, therefore, should be omitted.

Fortunately, ritual corrections cannot be made quickly, or without deep thought and study, or else Freemasonry might lose some of its priceless attributes. For truly, no ceremony in Freemasonry is superfluous; each teaches a lesson. Unfortunately, sometimes our perception is not sufficient to discern the truth illustrated—or we do not take the time to reason it out—for masonic ritual provides only a plausible explanation and leaves to the discernment of each individual the interpretation that best suits him.

A ceremony that receives only passing attention is the Rite of Investiture or clothing

the candidate.

Anyone, even a man who is not a Freemason, may buy a ring or pin, but next to his obligation, the one thing that stamps a man a Freemason is the fact that he is “accepted.” The acceptance of the candidate actually takes place when he is clad with the lambskin with appropriate lecture and ceremony. Here is his visible proof that he has met the scrutiny of the investigating committee, that he has passed the ballot, that he has been permitted to worship before our altar and that his vows have been heard and approved by his brethren. The lambskin is the only badge of a Freemason, and a man cannot receive, at any other hands than the Master of his lodge, a lambskin apron with any meaning attached. As another example, there is the Rite of Destitution by which our candidates are taught charity.

It is easy to translate charity



The home of Yukon Lodge 45 in Dawson City recently enjoyed a facelift.

into “alms,” but if charity began and ended with a small donation to a beggar, it could not then, conceivably, “extend beyond the grave through the boundless realms of eternity.” A man facing any real trouble, regardless of his wealth, is “destitute” indeed. For masonic charity of which this rite speaks is more than alms; it is charity of thought, it is brotherly love, it is help for the helpless. Masonic charity comes first from the heart, then from the

pocketbook. To understand differently is to miss the point of this beautiful ceremony so simply yet so eloquently taught. These examples could, of course, be amplified by every act of our ritual, by almost every symbol of the Craft. Men look but see not; men listen but hear not. “Every bush is a burning bush, all ground is holy ground, but only he who sees takes off his shoes.”

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VOLUME 76 / NUMBER 5

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

Ceremonies from page one

It is the purpose of masonic research and education to help make our members aware of the nuances of the ritual, to thereby promote interest, in obtaining for all still 'further light' in Freemasonry, and to heighten the enjoyment of our brethren which can only come from real understanding of our ceremonies. ■

Research Notes p. 10 June 1959, Grand Lodge of California.

Lodge notes

On 10 November 2012, **Manoah Lodge No. 141** lodge hall was filled with visitors as it celebrated the Official Visit of RW Bro. Ken Slawson, DDGM for District 5, at Tofino, combined with an International visit from members of **San Juan Lodge No. 25**, and members of **Goldstream Lodge No. 161**. Forty-five brethren and their wives enjoyed a luncheon at Long Beach Lodge Resort for a warm and happy occasion in the best traditions of Freemasonry.

Rather than simply discussing the first in this year's 'Classic Papers' series, **Vancouver Lodge No. 68** invited the author of *The Chamber of Reflection*, W Bro. Helios L. Da Costa, to present his paper and lead the discussion. Truly a masonic education highlight.

A recent article in *The Okanagon*, reported on an open house hosted by **Penticton Lodge No. 147**, noting the completion of the Penticton Masonic Centre and the active presence of the masonic family throughout the Okanagon. ■

Investment

by William E. S. Jarrett

Every Freemason has an investment in Freemasonry. The

degree of the investment has a wide variation but each has a specific amount of cash, time and effort which he has spent. Several questions can then be propounded. Has he made a wise investment? Is it of any benefit to him? Does he receive a fair return on it? The answers to these questions are as widely varied as the investment itself.

Some brothers find it to be a tremendously satisfactory expenditure which produces not only a good return but also a handsome profit as well. On the other hand some receive absolutely nothing in return. While most of us lie somewhere between these two extremes it is unfortunate that the latter greatly outnumber the former.

If you invest in a business undertaking you will take some personal interest in it and take whatever steps you can to protect your capital. make the business a success and derive a profit. Yet many men will spend hard-earned money to purchase a membership in our Craft, add to it a great deal of time and effort to accomplish the required work and then, after becoming Master Masons, wholly abandon the entire expenditure. The discouraging aspect is not the abandoned investment but the neglected opportunity to serve both themselves and mankind.

One of the most often heard statements is that 'a man gets out of Freemasonry what he puts into it.' This is wrong on two counts. First, every man who is made a Master Mason puts quite a bit into it to reach that status. If he is one of those who never again appears in the lodge, nor takes any part in any activity, then he does not recover what he puts into it. Put correctly, the statement should be that a man gets out of Freemasonry what he puts into it after he is made a Master Mason.

Secondly, the amount of the return is not in direct proportion to the investment. As



W Bro Adam Kendall, Collection Manager, Henry W. Coil Library & Museum of Freemasonry, and one of the presenters at this year's Grand Masonic Day.

GRAND MASONIC DAY, the premier masonic education event in this jurisdiction since 1982 has stepped into the twenty-first century with online registration and live streaming of the presentations. Plan to attend by registering at gmd2013.eventbrite.ca/ or visit the website, <http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/grandmasonicday.html>

expenditures in the form of time and energy increase, the rewards build up even faster, resulting in an accelerated profit as time passes. This 'profit' takes such forms as an ever-widening circle of true friends, the approbation and esteem of the brethren, the realization that one is maintaining the heritage of Freemasonry passed down through generations, the knowledge that one is assisting in preserving the traditions and promoting the tenets of the Craft, the satisfaction of being of service to mankind.

Contrast, if you will, two Freemasons, one a District Deputy Grand Master, devoting many hours a week to the Craft, the other a man who has not been inside a lodge for twenty years. Is there any doubt as to which is receiving compensation for his efforts and benefit from his investment? As one active Freemason has so aptly put it: 'I like this

job because the pay is so good. Every year I get a raise.' ■

Research notes p. 18 June 1959, Grand Lodge of California.

Grand Treasurer

Qualified brethren who are interested in serving in the office of Grand Treasurer are asked to communicate with the Grand Secretary.

Section 26.2 of the *Book of Constitutions and Regulations* requires that the Grand Treasurer be elected without nomination. The duties of the Grand Treasurer are detailed in section R1. ■

Plain Language

By RW Bro. Bill Headen, Chairman ad hoc Committee on Constitutional Review

The *ad hoc* Committee on Constitutional Review was formed to review the current *Book of Constitutions and Regulations* (BoC&R). The purpose of the review is to:

- Identify and correct any errors or omissions;
- Propose how the BoC&R can be made more easily readable, understood and accessible to the brethren (including complete indexing of the document);
- Identify sections which might be more appropriately moved from the *Constitutions* into the *Regulations* or from any part of the BoC&R to another section or to a "Grand Lodge Policies, Procedures and Guidelines Manual" ultimately to be maintained by the Grand Secretary.

All of this must be done without changing the overall principles, practices, purpose or intent of any of its provisions. This is very important!

The committee has fifteen members and includes the Grand Secretary, the chairmen

of the Committees on Jurisprudence and Constitution and three Regional Representatives.

To address the central part of our mission — “to make the BoC&R more easily readable, understood and accessible to the brethren” two key elements are needed: a clear and comprehensive table of contents, and a complete rewrite in plain language of the BoC&R by the brethren.

In researching the topic of Plain Language, there is a common theme:

- Know your audience
- Write so that it is understandable on the first reading
- Organize the material logically
- No surplus words

If we involve our brethren directly in the task of writing in Plain Language, we can determine their needs and receive their help in wording sections so they are clear to them.

Why use Plain Language? If we can rewrite all sections in Plain Language using shorter sentences and fewer words, it should result in a better understanding, and we will all benefit.

Each of the committee members has been assigned responsibility to lead the rewriting in Plain Language of a number of sections by involving brethren in their own lodge or throughout their district. This task is targeted for completion by 31 January 2013.

Correction

The cover article for our December 2012 issue, ‘Is your house in order?’, was mistakenly credited to VV Bro Larry R. Pasch. The author, and editor of the St. Lawrence District newsletter, Square and Compasses, is VV Bro. Matt Flikweert. *Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea máxima culpa.*

The committee will then prepare a document showing side-by-side the current sections and the suggested Plain Language sections — in other words, a ‘before and after’ view. This draft document together with a table of contents will be circulated to the brethren in all lodges before our Annual Communication in June 2013. The purpose of this is to receive feedback over the summer and autumn, make necessary revisions and to produce a document in time for submitting a proposal for constitutional changes by 31 December 2013. This proposal would be voted on by Grand Lodge in June 2014.

An important test of our work will be the widest possible acceptance of the re-written *Constitution and Regulations*. They must be clear and concise and in language that increases the understanding, and accessibility, of them by our members.

Brethren who have an interest in either rewriting in Plain Language or reviewing the committee’s work may contact the committee either through the Grand Secretary’s office or email me directly at bill_headen@telus.net.

Movember 2012

By RW Bro Philip Durell, Senior Grand Warden

Congratulations, brethren of B.C. & Yukon - the (mo)ustache growing efforts of 54 brethren, one three-year old grandson of a prostate cancer survivor and the cat whiskers of our solitary Sista has so far raised just under \$20,000 for men’s health awareness and prostate cancer research.

And we are likely to reach around \$22,000+ as cheques sent in to Movember Canada have not yet been credited to the total—including \$2,000 from discretionary Grand Lodge charity funds distributed on our

behalf by our Grand Master, MW Bro. G. Murray Webster.

And, brethren, it isn’t too late to make a contribution if you are so inclined - you can donate here:

ca.movember.com/team/468597 or to any one of the teams in the network link below.

This year the Freemasons of B.C. & Yukon network had nine teams around the jurisdiction and on their behalf I would like to thank all the donors—brethren, their families and friends—for their generosity.

Next year we are hoping to have a few more teams from around the jurisdiction as not all areas were represented this year (notably no team in Victoria). We also hope to challenge jurisdictions across Canada to raise men’s health awareness and to see if they can match our total!

Finally, brethren I implore you—please get your annual health check up!

Masonic art

W Bro. Adam Kendall will speak this year at Grand Masonic Day on the initiatic process of the masonic degrees and how their profound influence upon Freemasonry’s adherents has inspired the creation of highly decorative and beautiful works of art. These items—often ignored today by the majority of contemporary Freemasons and art historians alike—are true examples of folk art, and are thus a symbolic and parallel narrative of national, state, and local histories.

Presenting photographs of masonic artifacts from every discipline such as metalwork, textiles, wood, etc., W Bro. Kendall will reveal their eternal past and describe how these items not only reflected masonic attitudes, but also the local culture from which they

continued on page 4

Grand Masonic Day

19 JANUARY 2013

The Aesthetic Tradition of Freemasonry, the Influence of Eastern thought in the Western Esoteric Tradition, Relevance of the Arcane within the Modern, and an Introduction to Traditional Observance Lodges.

Tickets \$30 advance, \$35 at the door.

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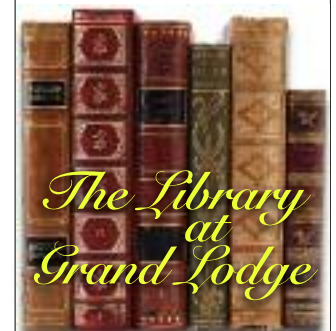


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The Library at Grand Lodge

Masonic art
from page three

were created.

Concluding his overview on interpreting the fascinating world of masonic material culture, W Bro. Kendall will also engage the audience in a discussion about how best to discover, interpret and display their lodge's history. W Bro. Kendall's early and active participation in Observant Masonry (Traditional Observance, if you will), features prominently in this presentation. He proposes a return to viewing these treasures not as items of a by-gone era or light-hearted nostalgia, but as living symbols where the past and present are combined in order to reveal and inform the future. ■

Insurance

The home insurance provider, Johnson Inc., in Langley, has agreed to offer the Freemasons of British Columbia and Yukon a number of special discounts on their home, medical and travel insurance. Contact Ms. Christine Silva at csilva@johnson.ca or 604-881-8847 and tell her that you're a Freemason to learn more about how you can save on your insurance. ■

The mason's creed

by W Bro. Albert Pike

No man truly obeys the masonic law who merely tolerates those whose religious opinions are opposed to his own. Every man's opinions are his own private property, and

the rights of all men to maintain each his own are perfectly equal.

Merely to tolerate, to bear with an opposing opinion, is to assume it to be heretical; and assert the right to persecute, if we would; and claim our toleration of it as a merit. The Freemason's creed goes farther than that. No man, it holds, has any right in any way to interfere with the religious belief of another. It holds that each man is absolutely sovereign as to his own belief, and that belief is a matter absolutely foreign to all who do not entertain the same belief; and that, if there were any right of persecution at all, it would in all cases be a mutual right; because one party has the same right as the other to sit as judge in his own case; and God is the only magistrate that can rightfully decide between them.

To that great judge, Freemasonry refers the matter; and opening wide its portals, it invites to enter there and live in peace and harmony every man who will lead a truly virtuous and moral life, love his brethren, minister to the sick and distressed, and believe in the *one*, All-Powerful, All-Wise, everywhere-Present *God*, Architect, Creator, and Preserver of all things, by whose universal law of Harmony ever rolls on this universe, the great, vast, infinite circle of successive Death and Life:—to whose *ineffable name* let all true Freemasons pay profoundest homage! for whose thousand blessings poured upon us, let us feel the sincerest gratitude, now, henceforth, and forever!

From the political point of



GRAND MASTER'S ITINERARY JANUARY 2013

5	S	Installation	Victoria Columbia Lodge No. 1	Victoria
10	Th	District 2	Westminster Lodge No. 174	Langley
12	S	District 18	Pacific Lodge No. 16	Abbotsford
14	M	District 13	Maple Leaf Park No. 63	Vancouver
18	F	Official Visit	Vancouver Lodge of Education	Vancouver
19	S	Grand Masonic Day	Educational seminars	Vancouver
21	M	Burns Night	Discovery Lodge No. 149	Campbell River
26	S	Burns Night	Mount Garibaldi Lodge No. 127	Squamish
31	Th	District 26	Excelsior Lodge No. 195	Vancouver

view there is but a single principle,— the sovereignty of man over himself. This sovereignty of one's self over one's self is called *liberty*. Where two or several of these sovereignties associate, the State begins. But in this association there is no abdication.

Each sovereignty parts with a certain portion of itself to form the common right. That portion is the same for all. There is equal contribution by all to the joint sovereignty. This identity of concession which each makes to all, is *equality*. The common right is nothing more or less than the protection of all, pouring its rays on each. This protection of each by all, is *fraternity*.

Liberty is the summit, Equality the base. Equality is not all vegetation on a level, a society of big spears of grass and stunted oaks, a neighborhood of jealousies, emasculating each other. It is, civilly, all aptitudes having equal opportunity; politically, all votes having equal weight; religiously, all consciences having equal rights.

Equality has an organ — gratuitous and obligatory

instruction. We must begin with the right to the alphabet. The primary school obligatory upon all; the higher school offered to all. Such is the law. From the same school for all springs equal society. Instruction ! Light! All comes from Light, and all returns to it.

Excerpted from Morals and Dogma.

The Tyler's sword

In modern times the implement used by the Tyler is a sword of the ordinary form. This is incorrect. Formerly, and indeed up to a comparatively recent period, the Tyler's sword was wavy in shape, and so made in allusion to the "flaming sword which was placed at the east of the garden of Eden, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." It was, of course, without a scabbard, because the Tyler's sword should ever be drawn and ready for the defense of his post.

Freemasons Magazine and Masonic Mirror, August 20, 1863.

Nota bene

Book of Constitutions, section R61
Right to Instruct.

The majority of the members of a constituent lodge when convened shall have the right to give instructions to the Worshipful Master and Wardens, or proxies, before the Communication of Grand Lodge. ■