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Make your voice heard

This issue of your *Masonic Bulletin* contains a two page survey that you are urged to complete and forward to our Grand Secretary's office. The following articles address the balance of issues not covered in the December *Bulletin*. Letters to the Editor are encouraged. ■

The Board of General Purposes

The Masonic Commission has been asked to review the proposal to have an elected Grand Lodge Board of General Purposes.

A resolution that would permit this activity might read:

"Be it resolved that Article 75 1(d) be added reading 'and one Worshipful Brother to be elected by mail ballot by and from each district each year for a three-year term'" and "Be it resolved that in Article 75 (2) the maximum be deleted and the quorum be changed to fifteen (15)"

The Review of Board of General Purposes Committee has examined boards in other jurisdictions. This committee has recommended that our Board of General Purpose should be constituted and operate like those in other jurisdictions. It also recommends our Board should be comprised of the elected Grand Lodge Officers, the immediate Past Grand Master, a member from each of the Grand Lodge committees, and an elected representation from the geographic regions or districts of our jurisdiction (having three year, staggered terms).

The committee observed that such boards in other jurisdictions generally have the following characteristics:

- They fill a managerial rather than advisory rôle.
- They are more inclusive and foster more participation.
- There is more accountability for performance.
- They have regular meetings.
- There is more continuity.

At the beginning of each Masonic year Brethren look to the new slate of Officers with differing expectations. Some are satisfied with the rank and standing they have and hope that the *status quo* is preserved. Others see previous perceived injustices and look for that recognition they feel denied them in the past. While most others, regardless of personal loss or gain, hope for that glimmer of light that will give direction out of that dark tunnel of declining membership and indifferent attitudes. As we progress through the Masonic year it is rather like the new development one passes on the way to work each day.

From our Grand Master



MW Bro. James C. Gordon

We see the site being cleared and prepared with noise and rumblings day after day then weeks and months and still the same. Then suddenly one morning framing suddenly appears, things start to take form, but is it the right form? Surely this is not the right shape or place for such a structure. The framing is covered, the roof is in place, the finishing progresses, the display

ASSIST IN THE DESIGN

suite prepared, the Grand Opening is near—will it sell or will it fail? The Symbolic Building of the leadership year of many dedicated Brethren seldom gets past the Most Worshipful Grand Opening.

This year I am asking you, the best brains in the business, to assist in the design of our Symbolic Building. Please take the opportunity to get involved and take part in the survey included in this *Bulletin*. Place your completed form in the addressed envelope provided, place a postage stamp on it and place it in the mail.

It's your Craft! Do not forsake it.

MW Bro. James C. Gordon
Grand Master

- They are involved in long-term planning. ■

'Weak' Lodges

The Masonic Commission has been asked to canvass the

Brethren of the jurisdiction to determine suggestions on ways in which the Grand Lodge should assist 'weak' or 'struggling' Lodges. On the one hand, some argue that Grand Lodge should not become involved with a Lodge that is

continued on page 2



JANUARY, 2002 / VOLUME 65 / 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.bcy.ca> TELEPHONE: +1-604-736-8941. FACSIMILE: +1-604-736-5097. EMAIL: editor@freemasonry.bcy.ca

Masonic Commission from page one

having difficulties. Others argue that the well-being of every Lodge is in the interest of all Freemasons of our jurisdiction and Grand Lodge should be involved in assisting to improve the situation. At present the Warranted Lodges Under Dispensation Committee is assessing the well being of Lodges in the Lower Mainland. If it is determined that a Lodge is not meeting certain criteria, that Lodge is being asked to review its status and plans with the Grand Secretary and the Grand Master. Is this an acceptable process to understand the well-being of Lodges and holding that Lodge accountable for its program and plans? What sort of assistance should the Grand Lodge be providing if it is asked to help? Should Grand Lodge wait to be asked to provide assistance or should Grand Lodge be pro-active with providing this assistance? ■

Cancer Car project

Since the contract with the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) for our Grand Lodge to operate the 'Cancer Car Project' will expire in two years, the Masonic Commission has been asked to facilitate discussion regarding our continuation with this project. Things to consider in this deliberation are:

- Our Cancer Car Project



Small deeds may turn
the scale at last
And count for more than
treasures vast.

W Bro. Palmer Cox

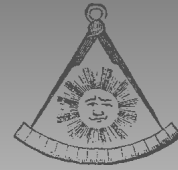
augments the CCS driver program by providing rides etc. in areas that are not provided by the CCS program. Our Lower Mainland project serves the areas of Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby, New Westminster and Port Moody. The CCS driver program serves the other areas.

- The assessment that the Freemasons of our jurisdiction pay is only one-half of the actual operating cost of the program. The remainder of the funding is provided by outside donations, which, fortunately, have been received year after year. Without these donations and without increasing the size or quality of the program the annual assessment could be greater than \$15 per Freemason.
- The percentage of volunteer drivers who are not Freemasons continues to increase.
- Participating in the Cancer Car Project provides pride and satisfaction to the Freemasons in our jurisdiction. Do we continue to support the Cancer Car Project and find ways to address the issues noted above or, is it time to move on to something else and let another organization support this program? ■

Fund raising activities

The Masonic Commission has been asked to facilitate discussions regarding the feasibility of our Grand Lodge undertaking fund raising activities. Fund raising possibilities are:

- Membership activities such as Masonic credit cards, production of Masonic calendars or return-address labels, or an alliance with a



GRAND MASTER'S ITINERARY JANUARY, 2002

| | | | |
|----|-----|----------------------------|--|
| 4 | Fri | Principal Officers Meeting | Vancouver |
| 5 | Sat | Installation | Victoria-Columbia Lodge No. 1 Victoria |
| 7 | Mon | District No. 13 | Maple Leaf Lodge No. 74 Vancouver |
| 10 | Thu | District No. 28 | Tuscan Lodge No. 138 Port Coquitlam |
| 15 | Tue | District No. 25 | Centennial-King George 138 Richmond |
| 21 | Mon | Burns Night | Discovery Lodge No. 149 Campbell River |
| 22 | Tue | District No. 26 | Commonwealth Lodge No. 156 Vancouver |

long-distance telephone provider.

- Promotion of 'gifting' options to our Masonic Charities (providing charitable donation receipts) such as annual donation-envelopes, special assessments, planned giving programs, life insurance programs, or gifting of securities.

Proponents of this proposal suggest that funds raised from these activities would be used to offset the increasing *per capita* assessment and to increase the capital in existing or new Grand Lodge Funds. Without finding other sources of income to fund the Grand Lodge operating fund (General Fund) the annual *per capita* will increase rapidly (without increasing spending) because of the declining membership base. Similarly without new sources of revenue new funds cannot be started and existing funds (e.g. Bursary Fund, Benevolent Fund) cannot increase to serve the needs of those requiring them. ■

Lodge business

The Masonic Commission has been asked to review the proposal of permitting Lodges to conduct their business in the Entered Apprentice or Fellowcraft Degrees.

A resolution that would

permit this activity might read:

"Be it resolved that every Constituent Lodge shall have the option of transacting its business either in the Entered Apprentice or in the Fellowcraft Degree or in the Master Mason Degree providing a Brother of a lower Degree is not present."

Proponents of this item believe that permitting an Entered Apprentice or a Fellowcraft to be present during the transaction of business will enhance the inclusion of this Brother with the Lodge during his formative months in his Masonic career. With an increased emphasis upon more education (i.e. Mentorship), and potentially a longer period between Degrees, these proponents note that Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft should be permitted to attend the business meetings of the Lodge so as to sustain, if not enhance, his connection with the Lodge during this period. These proponents also point out a candidate is referred to as a Brother as a result him receiving his Entered Apprentice degree. They also note that his membership in the Craft starts on the date of his Entered Apprentice Degree.

There is also an argument that suggests that the requirement to conduct business in the Master Mason degree when incorporated was constitutionally incorrect and, technically, should not exist. ■

Notes by VW Bro. Murray Webster.

Masonic Commission Survey

All Freemasons are asked to participate

1. You, the Freemason

First, we need some information about you.

Please check. ✓

a. In which age group do you fall?

Under 40 40 to 60 61 to 80 Over 80

b. How many years have you been a Mason?

Under 10 10 to 20 21 to 30 Over 30

c. In what type of community do you reside?

Urban area Suburban area Rural area

2. Your participation

a. How often do you attend your Craft Lodge meetings?

Please check one. ✓

Never Rarely At least one every year Several per year

Most meetings

b. How often do you attend meetings of other bodies of the Masonic family?

Never Rarely At least one every year Several per year

Most

c. Which factors prevent you from participating more than you do?

Please check as they may apply to you. ✓

Lack of time Cost Physical condition Health

Family Work Lack of interest Lack of family support

Distance Conflicting commitments

Other

3. What are your thoughts on these issues?

For more information, please read the background in the current and previous issues of the *Masonic Bulletin*. They are placed here in no particular order of preference or priority.

Please indicate your thoughts by **circling** a number on the scale below each issue.

a. Do you favour the conducting of business in the Entered Apprentice or Fellowcraft degrees?

Strongly opposed 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly in favour

b. Do you favour increasing the interval between degrees to three months?

Strongly opposed 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly in favour

c. Do you favour permitting the *Address to the Brethren* at public functions?

Strongly opposed 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly in favour

d. Do you favour having an elected Grand Lodge Board of General Purposes?

Strongly opposed 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly in favour

e. Do you favour having a different process for understanding the capabilities of candidates for the position of Junior Grand Warden?

Strongly opposed 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly in favour

f. Do you favour permitting Grand Lodge to conduct fund raising activities?

Strongly opposed 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly in favour

g. Do you favour continuing the Cancer Car Project?

Strongly opposed 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly in favour

h. What are your thoughts on ways Grand Lodge should assist the "weak" or "struggling" Lodges?

.....

Please turn over and also complete the back page.

Brethren, for any organization to be successful, it is said that there are only two things to do. First, find out what the members want, and then do your very best to give it to them. I have therefore asked the Masonic Commission to prepare this survey to find out what you want. Please take a few minutes to complete this form and let us have your views. I have great faith in the collective wisdom of the 14,000 Freemasons in BC. Our future depends on all of us!

Many thanks.

MW Bro. James C. Gordon
Grand Master

Please complete the survey and mail it in the return envelope provided, by **February 15, 2002.**

ALL RESPONSES TO BE ANONYMOUS

Thank you for your help.

4. Communications

What are your thoughts on the *Masonic Bulletin*?
Please check as applicable. ✓

- a. Do you read it?
Yes No Sometimes Never
- b. How often do you receive it?
Monthly Bi-monthly Occasionally Seldom
- c. Do you like the present format?
Yes No
- d. Do you have any suggestion for its improvement?

.....
.....

5. Masonic Commission

- a. How well informed are you regarding the activities of the Masonic Commission?
No knowledge Some knowledge Well informed
- b. Do you support and encourage this type of activity being undertaken?
Strongly opposed 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly in favour
- c. Which of these topics would you like given further review in the near future?
- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| i Giving Master Masons a vote at Grand Lodge. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii Permitting open installations | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii Permitting District installations of officers. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv Adding "symbolic" to the penalties. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| v Having a 2-year term of office for the Deputy Grand Master and Grand Master. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| vi Having a different process for selecting and appointing DDGMs. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| vii Improving email and internet communications | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

6. Your suggestions

- a. Do you have any suggestions that will result, in your opinion, in your Craft Lodge being more successful or more fulfilling to you?
▶ Please use a separate sheet if more space is needed.

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- b. Do you have any suggestions that will result, in your opinion, in our Grand Lodge better meeting your expectations?

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Please return the completed survey in the envelope provided by February 15, 2002.
All responses received up to March 31, 2002 will also be considered.
Thank you.

Please complete the survey and mail it in the return envelope provided, by **February 15, 2002.**

ALL RESPONSES TO BE ANONYMOUS

Thank you for your help.