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Strength through unity

by MW Bro. Robert D. McSween

It seems as though the year has just started and now we approach the end where it is time to turn the reins over to others. I must say that the year has been one that I will never forget and also one where I can definitely say that there is a lifetime of pleasant memories to look back upon. Let me also assure you that those who are about to take the reins will do you proud and that the future does indeed look bright.

We have accomplished many things this year. The theme for the year has been "Strength through Unity" and this has been our strongest point of achievement. Not only has your Grand Lodge been successful in this area but more particularly the lodges and districts have done a tremendous job in showing "Strength through Unity". We have seen a growth in attendance at

lodge meetings and district meetings. We have seen a complete turnaround in the interest towards Freemasonry. We have seen tremendous support for both the Job's Daughters and DeMolay in our lodges as well as our concordant bodies. It has been a year of learning more about ourselves and the concordant bodies, and through this we have become stronger because we are working—more now than ever—as a team. Individually we have been successful, but as a team we have become powerful. We have a much better understanding of each other and are better able to assist one another. We are able to do this because we now know more of each other and are better able to speak intelligently of one another.

We have had invitations sent



MW Bro. Robert D. McSween, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon for 2005 - 2006.

to us from concordant and appendant bodies where we were able to attend their meetings. The first one of such was the Vancouver Van Zor Grotto. This is believed to be the first time that a Grand Lodge had been invited to a Grotto meeting in all of North America and was a very special meeting for all who attended. The second such meeting was with the Order of the Eastern Star. The Worthy Grand Matron

invited Grand Lodge to attend one of her official meetings in Vancouver. This is believed to be the first time that this has ever happened in Canada. Again this was a very special meeting and the room was packed. We also had a meeting with all of the concordant and appendant bodies in February and again this proved to be not only successful but rewarding in the fact that they were able

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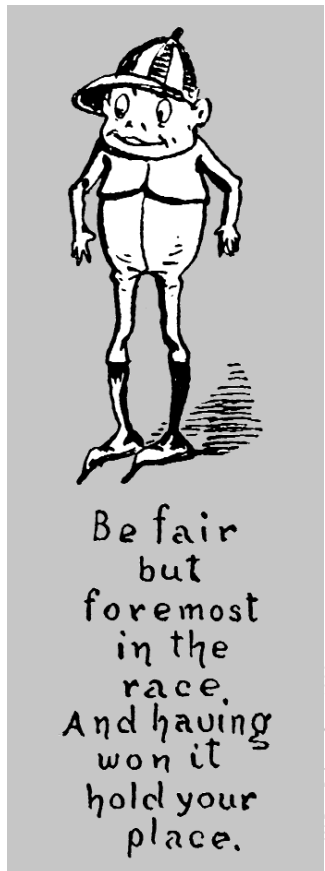
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*Our Grand Master
from page one*

to explain to us what they are doing for the good of humanity and to promote their personal goals. All of this only goes to prove that we are working better as a team, yet we are not making any changes in the way we do things. We are just doing things together, where we are permitted.

I cannot forget the District Deputy Grand Masters and other Grand Lodge officers who have done an outstanding job. They have been a definite asset to Grand Lodge and the districts through their support to the lodges and Grand Lodge. I do not think that the year would have been as successful without their efforts. One of the things that I told them at the start of the year was to make the very best effort to do all that they could because they would never again be given another opportunity to have the duties they hold this year; and it is better to say at the end of the year, "I'm glad I did," rather than "I wish I had."



W Bro. Palmer Cox, 1893

They must have taken this to heart because that is exactly what they did. It is easily said for all Grand Lodge officers and indeed can also be said for all Lodge officers. We must never stop trying to do our best.

One other thing that has been somewhat different this year is the "Surprise Visits" that not only I have been making but also that some of the lodges and districts have adopted. This has really been the highlight of my year as I am certain it has been a highlight for some of the lodges, and it is something that I am very happy to have done. I have seen the lodges as they really are and what I have seen, I have enjoyed. Even though the Masters of the lodges were somewhat nervous it was fun for everyone else. Of all the things that I will miss from this year it must be these surprise visits. Although I did not make it to all of the lodges, the rumours were out there that there might be a visit and this added even more to the enjoyment of attending the lodges on these types of visits.

What I have said so far is about the Grand Lodge Officers and the lodges but what I have not said much about until now are the brethren of the lodges. The brethren of the lodges have been the backbone of Grand Lodge and the lodges. Without their efforts and continued support there would be no Grand Lodge nor any lodges for that matter. They are the unsung heroes that we seldom mention. They are the ones to whom all Grand Lodge officers and lodge officers owe everything. The brethren have made this year a year that I will never forget. Their untiring efforts and support have been unwavering and in all their work they have never asked for credit in our success. I cannot express my thanks in simple words or begin to thank them enough for what they have done. They are the ones who can make a year a success or a

failure and I am so grateful that this year has been successful.

When I was elected Junior Grand Warden in Victoria I realized that my masonic life would never be the same. Having experienced what I have gone through in the last four years I know that without the support of the brethren we are simply doomed to failure, and I can easily say to all of you, that I am so very proud to know you, the brethren of this masonic jurisdiction, and I am proud to say that I am a freemason. Thank you for a great year. ■

Masons online

W. Bro. Norm Ryder has established the top-level domain name, workingtools.ca, for brethren who would like to promote Freemasonry with their email address. Information on how this works, and how it can also benefit our Grand Lodge, can be found at workingtools.ca/email.htm, or email W Bro. Ryder at norm@workingtools.ca.

A forwarded account would allow you to change your account host without changing your email address, or for brethren who do not have their own email account, a hosted account option might be of interest. ■

Chaplain's Corner

by VW Bro. Doug. Sowden
Grand Chaplain

There is three errors in this sentence. Find them.

Most people quickly spot the two spelling and grammatical mistakes, and then pause to find the third error. Try to determine the third error, before you read the last paragraph of the column for the answer.

Sometimes in life I try to comprehend what is

happening, and cannot. Events overwhelm my understanding, and I cannot figure out the puzzle of life... or even the Sudoku puzzle in the morning paper.

At these times I recognize that my powers are limited. There are parts of this wonderful universe that are beyond me, and my limited mind.

When I think of the Cosmos, and the distances involved between heavenly bodies, my brain becomes boggled (googled?) by the numbers involved. Can you picture the distance to the nearest star, even knowing that light travelling at 300,000 kilometres per second takes eight minutes to reach it? How does your mind deal with the fact that the next nearest star is 4.3 light years away? Then stretch your brain to visualize 200 billion light years....

The limits of our thinking abilities can be stretched. We can, and should, reach out to the unknown. Try these "mind stretchers", and see what the following phrases bring to your mind. Take a moment or two to ponder each of these concepts: larger than an infinite sum; when time shall be no more; the smell of blue; world without end—or the physical reality of a Klein bottle, the inside of which is also the outside.

Scientists delight in delimiting the many intricate interactions that take place in our world. Biochemists are learning more each day of how atoms and molecules interact to produce DNA, to digest food, to conquer diseases. The more explanations and theories they develop, it seems the more their fields of study expand. From bodies to organs to tissues to cells to molecules to atoms to quarks—the deeper we delve, the more complex the subject and the harder the questions become. Who created the quark? What is light?

Only when we conceive of a truly unlimited power, with abilities far beyond ours, do we come closer to the universal truths. All knowing, all powerful, eternal—and we are in awe.

The first puzzle is a conundrum. There are only two errors; but the sentence says there are three. Therefore, the third one is an error "in fact". Or is it?

May God go with you and bless you. ■

Lodge notes

The brethren of **Kamloops Lodge No. 10** not only presented a seventy-year service pin to W Bro. Eric Bowers recently, but also used the occasion to secure notices in both the *Kamloops Daily News* and the *Senior Connector*, also in Kamloops.

RW Bro. Laurie Norman, treasurer of **Vancouver Lodge No. 68** will be Parade Marshall for Burnaby Heights *Hats Off Day* parade this June. ■

We Can Help

by RW Bro. Donald Christie, DDGM, District 17

This year *We Can Help*—an entry level first-aid programme offered by St. John Ambulance and sponsored by the Grand Lodge of BC & Yukon—was provided to schools in District 17.

The programme offered Grade 4 students an opportunity to acquire the basic skills of emergency first-aid, including CPR, bleeding, breaks and scrapes, fainting, cleaning and bandaging wounds, poisons and seeking help.

On the North Shore, School District 44 provided the course in 13 schools. The course was co-ordinated through **Burrard Lodge No. 50** with Bro. Chas Chamberlain and Bro. Bill Irwin,

Lynn Valley Lodge No. 122 with Bro. Brian Hegedus, and **Duke of Connaught Lodge No. 64** with W Bro. Rudy Singh.

In Squamish, School District No. 48 provided the course in three schools. These courses were co-ordinated by **Mount Garibaldi Lodge No. 127** with Bro. Nick Pascuzzi.

Province wide, St. John Ambulance reports that 25,000 students annually receive this training with a positive response from both teachers and students. ■

For life

Many of our members are unaware that if they have been in good standing as a dues-paying member for five consecutive years, they are eligible to be enrolled as a *Life Member*.

The fee to be paid for a Life Membership varies from twenty year's dues for a younger member to ten year's dues for a member over age sixty-six. The formula for the Life Membership fee, and the rules as to how the Life Membership Fund is administered, are laid out in detail in our *Book of Constitutions*. For further information on this programme, talk to your lodge secretary. ■

Real masons?

by Stanley W. McDowell

All freemasons are not members of a lodge, nor are all lodge members real freemasons. A real freemason never talks about what the world owes him, the happiness he deserves, the chances he ought to have. All that he claims is the right to live and play like a man.

A real freemason is dependable. His simple word is as good as his Bible Oath and he does a little more than he promises. He is just as honest in

the dark in his own room as he is in public.

A real freemason does not want pull, tips, favours; he wants work and honest wages. He treats his fellow men as he would have them treat him.

A real freemason is loyal to friends and guards their reputation as his own. A real freemason honours a woman, any woman. He will not hurt a woman, physically or morally.

A real freemason minds his own business. He does not judge other people or speak unkindly to them. He always has excuses for others, never for himself. He is patient and charitable to them. To himself he is strict.

A real freemason is glad to live and not afraid to die. He is a real man, the finest, best, noblest, most refreshing thing on all the green earth. ■

Reprinted from *St. George's Banner*, Kevan F. van Herd, ed. April-May 2006.

Letters

Bro. Christo Pandelidis of **Camosun Lodge No. 60**, Victoria, writes in response to the article on the angle of the masonic compasses (April 2006), pointing out that, although the image trademarked for use in Canada is set at 45°, the compasses depicted in our Grand Lodge seal is set at slightly over 53°. To Bro. Pandelidis, "It is apparent that the square and compasses are inscribed in the square." Your editor suggests that the angle was probably derived at by placing the points of the compasses directly below the ends of the set square, which presents a pleasing design, but no deeper significance.

RW Bro. E. Martin Dick, of **Pythagoras Lodge No. 194**, Vancouver, writes in response to the article on masonic weddings (April 2006), describing his experience as a Marriage Commissioner in British Columbia. He has

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married couples on the ski slopes, on horseback, underwater, in full highland dress and, of course, in tuxedo. Many couples, with his assistance, have written their own ceremonies.

He now has a copy of the masonic ceremony of marriage and/or re-affirmation and notes that it can easily conform to the requirements of the Government of British Columbia.

Although he points out that the Grand Secretary's office should be consulted before using a masonic lodge hall, he believes "that many brethren, who hold their masonic beliefs dear, would be interested in having a masonic wedding ceremony, and so show their prospective partners in some small way, their love of the Craft, and at the same time encourage their spouse's support."

Toleration

by: *W Bro. George Moore*
Education Officer, District 23


One of the greatest things that I have admired about masonic lectures is their ability to focus on particular single words and present them to the brethren in a new or expanded context. Words such as "improvement", when coupled with "intellectual", "moral", "spiritual" or perhaps "social order". "Harmony", when used to describe how it enables us to do everything together, for without harmony there would be discord and ultimate failure.

Other words such as "Obedience", "Zeal", "Fidelity", "Justice" and "Enlightenment", all have their own stories to tell. A more accurate description is probably that they present a deeper meaning than one would normally observe. Many of these words are presented through the ritual, thereby encouraging the participant to think repeatedly about their meaning, so that it can be

presented to the brethren in the proper context. It also creates a huge void between those who have performed the ritual and absorbed the meanings and those who have merely listened to the lecture and perhaps forgotten most of it, even if they understood it in the first place. This is one of the many differences between the involved and the uninvolved, between those who "get the message" and those who do not.

Toleration is one of those great words that assist to present many thoughtful lessons about life, how we should try to live it and how we should treat others as they go about living their lives. In Freemasonry, we are taught to war incessantly against intolerance and one would think that the best way to conduct this war would be to practice tolerance, leading by example so to speak. There are many within our Craft who do this and I have been fortunate enough to know and to be able to spend quality time with several of them. However, several is not enough, and we still hear the ugly voice of intolerance whether it be the young among us who are critical of the old ways, the aged who are reluctant to change, or the brethren who are critical of every movement and word if it is not performed to meet their ideas of how it should be done. Freemasonry takes us a step further, it teaches us to be tolerant even of intolerance. We have all been young, we will all—God willing—be old, and we have all made many errors. We expose our ignorance repeatedly as we strive towards moral and spiritual excellence. This is not a bad thing, but an acceptable and necessary part of our lives. It reminds me of the old axiom "it is better to have tried and failed than not to have tried at all" because it is through failure that we learn.

True toleration holds that



Grand Master's Itinerary JUNE, 2006

1-3	Thu	Annual Communication	GL Manitoba	Winnipeg
8-10	Thu	Annual Communication	GL Washington	Tacoma
8-10	Thu	Annual Communication	GL Alberta	Calgary
12	Mon	Outdoor Meeting - Prince Charles No. 153		Kelowna
15-17	Thu	Annual Communication	GL Sask.	Prince Albert
22-24	Thu	Annual Communication	GL B.C. & Y	Chilliwack

every man has the same right to his opinion and faith that we have to ours. We appear to be very good at the "faith" part of this lesson; for I can truly say that during my masonic career I have never heard any brother voice an adverse comment about another brother's faith. This statement is particularly *apropos* to the history being created today, as we are bombarded constantly by the media with opinion and reports of violence amongst warring factions, often related to creed. Our tolerance over opinion doesn't seem to fare so well.

I am sure that this, to some degree, is inherent in us and many of us feel very strongly sometimes that ours is the one true way. This may well be so, and Freemasonry clearly teaches us that everyone has the right to expression. But we must not forget that others have the same right, and what another person—who is equally honest and sincere—firmly and conscientiously believes, is the truth to him.

We are taught to guard the reputations, respect the opinions and be perfectly tolerant of the errors of each other. So let's give each other a break and offer the helping hand of tolerance that we might improve and grow together in harmony. Let us remember that all actions have consequences, and we must be just, if judging others.

How fortunate we are as freemasons to have the benefit of the lessons of toleration and all of the other great lessons that Freemasonry presents to us with such simplicity and passion, leaving no room for error or misunderstanding. How fortunate we are to belong to a fraternity that offers a common ground upon which to grow, the tools to guide us along the way, and the option to set our own pace. How fortunate we are, not only to be part of such an elite organization, but to have the ability and opportunity to introduce this privilege, observing proper protocol of course, to all men who are searching for improvement, belonging, knowledge and the host of other good things that Freemasonry offers.

Now is the time, and now will always be the time, to practice true toleration. We should inform each new petitioner that we are indeed a tolerant society and upon entering our gates one of the things that will be expected from him is the practice true toleration.

Palmer Cox

The Brownie illustrations that have graced our pages for the last seven years were the work of Canadian author, W Bro. Palmer Cox (1840-1924). Further information and illustrations can be found online at freemasonry.bcy.ca/brownies