



The Beacon

April 2008

Central District Masonic Newsletter

Editor: News has been kind of slow this Spring concerning happenings around the District. I know things are going on, but, no one has sent me any pictures or reports. Not sure if everyone is too busy or if you are like me just sitting around waiting for the snow to disappear for good and golfing weather to arrive. Talked with Bro. Hughes last night at Lodge and he would like everyone to send your snow and rain over to Elnora - they are in need of it. The Flames are out of the Stanley Cup play-offs - so there's no reason to watch hockey sooo its back to working on the newsletter. If anyone has pictures of Masonic Events, now is the time to figure out how to send me those email attachments. How about some from the Spring Workshop, Scottish Rite 14th Degree, the OES or even the Shrine. We have to promote ourselves within the Masonic Family before we can promote ourselves to the public.

Editor's Comments: The Red Deer Library recently hosted a month long Masonic Display of artifacts and information in conjunction with the local Lodges donating several Masonic books to the Library. The Display and Information handouts and books were very well received, as was the "Information Night" presentation at the end of the exhibit. The Information Night had approx 50 people in attendance, where three papers were presented. 1) Why I AM A Freemason, 2) The History of Freemasonry in Red Deer. 3) Secrecy In Masonry.

This month we will start off with the 1st paper presented by Bro. Jeb Carroll of Kenilworth #29 and Red Deer #12 titled "Why I AM A Freemason; and the 3rd paper presented by W Bro. Blaine Newton, Red Deer #12 titled Secrecy In Masonry.

Why I am A Freemason

Hi Everyone, Thank you for coming here tonight. I didn't know how many were going to show up and I am glad to see so many did. My name is Jeb Carroll and I am a Freemason. I have been for the past two years now and I am very proud of it.

Before I was a mason I knew no one who was one, no one in my family was a Mason and none of my friends family were Masons. I don't remember exactly what got me interested in Freemasonry, I remember watching tv shows like Simpson's who made jokes about it and reading things in history books but I was never formally introduced to it or heard anything specific that would make me know much about it. I attended college here in Red Deer and wanted to get involved in a club or organization that would allow me to meet others and give back to the community. While I was shopping around that's when I started to research the Freemasons

Happenings Around The District

more and more until I decided to find a Masons number on a website and phone him. I got a hold of someone and as per traditions we went out for coffee later that week to talk about it.

The man I met explained to me that Freemasons believe that at age 20 you have not experienced enough about life or yourself to make such a life altering change as joining Freemasonry and that at age 19 I was not ready to make such a giant leap. Joining Freemasonry is for life. After you join you can travel the world and never shake hands or speak to another Masons again but you are always a Mason as you carry the secrets of one with you.

So I learned that in Alberta the minimum age is 21 years old and I had to wait 2 years. Which was good because I needed the time to think. Maybe I was getting involved with something I shouldn't. So for those 2 years I did a lot of research and a lot of studying.

Through my research on the web I got a lot of positive things from Mason web sites and a lot of really weird stuff from anti-mason web pages. Some of these anti-mason webpage's said that Freemasons worship the devil and are bent on controlling the world. I went back to the mason who I spoke to before and asked him about these things. To solve the problem I was brought to a Masonic dinner and met many local Freemasons. After this I knew these conspiracy theories weren't true. These were good men, teachers, police officers, ministers. None of them Satan worshipers and none controlling the world. The only way that Freemasons control the world is that there are so many good men who are freemasons who want to make the world a better place out there doing it, it would appear on the surface that there was a conspiracy but the truth is it is a voluntary contribution to the prosperity of the world.

To be a Mason a man must confess a belief in a supreme being. What religion that is, is up to the individual himself. Men from every religion are Masons and although this has posed no

issue for them many religious bodies have an issue with Freemasonry. Freemasonry is not a religion nor a substitute for religion. Freemasonry teaches its members to be faithful to their religion but also to be tolerant of other religions. Because of this tolerance towards other religions many churches have proclaimed that Freemasons are evil and that we are ungodly as we meet and are friends with others who do not share the same god as others. Personally I refuse to associate myself with any organization so close minded.

The reason that freemasonry was created is that 3 to 400 years ago all European countries were ruled by two organizations. The Monarchy and the Church. Both ruled with an iron fist and prevented the masses from obtaining rights such as elected representation, freedom of conscience, education and liberty. Any organizations advocating these rights were strictly forbidden and leaders were oppressed and killed. Freemasonry was developed as a secret organization whose beliefs in liberty and democracy were hidden from plain view. Freemasonry is a system of morality veiled allegory and illustrated by symbols.



This is a very old tracing board we use. We call these tracing boards as this is how we learn things. The three pillars are wisdom strength and beauty. These three principles are the pillars of society and we are reminded that in all of our projects and undertakings they are to be built on the principles of Wisdom strength and beauty. Everything in this picture means something which teaches us to be better men. As you can see these are pictures and symbols which can be understood by men who are illiterate in a day of age when education could only be obtained by the wealthy this method of teaching was very beneficial as majority of the working class were illiterate.

Freemasonry is an organization which teaches, but it teaches in a way that no one here has probably ever done. Knowledge is derived from degrees and degrees are dramatic re-

enactments of stories or rights of passage which impress on your mind the importance of things such as brotherly love, relief and truth. But more importantly Freemasonry does not teach by giving you lectures but rather it is a private journey of self discovery through realizing natural truths in these rituals.

In Red Deer there are three lodges of Freemasons. Each lodge has different members and meets on different nights. Lodges are our name for clubs or chapters and some cities have many meetings in the same building. Each lodge meets once a month except for July and August for the purposes of doing degrees on new candidates and educating ourselves in lodge affairs. We have several sports events a year such as gold tournaments and curling bonspiels. There are bi-weekly coffee get together, formal dinner affairs and private poker tournaments. We also have a conference once a year in Kananaskis where we have excellent speakers come. This year we have Christopher Hodaap which is the author of Freemasonry for Dummies as the key note speaker.

To be a Mason you must be a Man, Freeborn, of mature age, sound judgment and strict morals.

We only allow men as this is a custom from the past. We keep this tradition as we believe the most important thing is our ritual and our teachings and relationships could muddle those teachings. We allow homosexuals to join freemasonry but do not allow both partners to join as to prevent the relationship issue. There is a Masonic organization for women called the Order of the Eastern Star and Jobs Daughters. There is also the Order of DeMolay which is an organization for young men.

The freeborn requirement requires candidates to be financially stable. Freemasonry is not free, there are initiation fees and annual dues which need to be paid and we do not want these fees to be hard for you or your family.

We also require candidates to be of sound mind and strict morals. This means exactly how it

sounds. You don't have to be a priest but you do have to be an upstanding citizen.

Freemasonry is such a life altering event, such a huge step in a mans life we believe that it must be a voluntary one. We do not set up booths in the mall trying to get men to join because you should join masonry of your own free will and accord. No one should be asking you to join, its your decision and we wait for you to make it. The motto we carry is that to be one you must ask one. In other words if you want to join you need to ask.

The United Grand Lodge of England library has over 1 mile of books on its shelves. None of these accurately describe freemasonry and I doubt I have in this short speech, if you have any questions after tonight I do suggest you try to get a hold of a freemason and ask them as there is a lot of incorrect information out there. If you do not know a freemason feel free to email askafreemason@telus.net and someone will get back to you.

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Secrecy in Masonry

I am going to tell you something tonight about the secrets of Freemasonry and you will live to tell the tale. Now the ideas I'm going to present have been cobbled together from the writings of other Masons, skewed with my own ideas and observations. I am not representing Freemasonry or my lodge; I am representing myself. And believe it or not, this will be one of the points of my presentation, because each Mason in this room, if you were to get him to reveal the secrets of Freemasonry as he sees them, would give you a different answer.

I have, on occasion, been approached by people who confront me with the accusation that masonry is a secret society.

“How do you know I'm a mason,” I'll ask.

“Well, you're wearing a Masonic ring.”

“And how do you know it's a Masonic ring?”

“It has the square and compasses on it.”

“And do you know where our lodge building is?”

“Sure. Just across from the dry cleaners. It has the sign on the outside.”

“Gee, we're not very good at keeping secrets, are we?”

My point is that we are not secret, we are private. Our organization is known. Our lodge buildings stand in all cities. Upstairs you will see a display of our regalia and our history – even an open ritual book.

Our members are proud to be known as masons. We will answer any question respectfully put about who we are and what we do. But as with any business or with any person, there will be a point where the issues go beyond what is appropriate – it isn't knowledge but nosiness.

Think about your business or your family. As I ask deeper and deeper questions, at some point you'll say to me, “well, that's really none of your business.” And you'd be correct. There are secrets within your family, your business, your organization. We are, like many others, a private society that has secrets.

But to some, the privacy of others is a threat. To what, I've never been sure.

So why are we considered a secret society – one who's very meaning and purpose is hidden – who guards itself against outside scrutiny – whose passwords and rituals are a doorway to mysteries and truths of the universe?

Because in the beginning, we were.

Mediaeval society was dominated by king and nobles, the Catholic Church, and the guilds. The guilds united a trade in a single organisation, hierarchically ordered and governed by ritual, "mysteries" (the skills and secrets of their particular business), and a royal monopoly to stop others practising their craft. They regulated trade, restricted entry to their guild, and ensured that the passage from the bottom of the ladder ("apprentice") to the top ("master") was a long and difficult process.

It was how you protected your trade; it was how you ensured you would have work and be able to feed your family in very uncertain times. It allowed to you travel and work in foreign lands.

One of the oldest and most renowned of these guilds was the stonemasons (or, as they became known from about 1490, the freemasons). They built the bridges and castles and palaces of the nobility, and their supreme achievement was the great mediaeval gothic cathedrals. They were the custodians of the art of mathematics, particularly geometry, necessary to build those marvellous structures.

We could consider these masons as the leading experts in the technology of those times and their secrets could be considered equivalent to patents or copyrights.

The early guilds of masons possessed an advanced knowledge of mathematics, especially geometry, which came from Arab sources – the Arabs being much in advance of Europe in these disciplines during the Middle Ages – but being Arab it was therefore suspect in the eyes of the Church. The Church, however, needed the masons to build their great cathedrals. The masons protected their knowledge by rituals of secrecy and binding obligations, thus preventing the spread of that knowledge, which would have incurred the wrath of the Church and the loss of their prestige and protection. The Masons also required adherence to an ethical code to ensure the workers could be trusted with the good name of the craft.

So our initial purpose in maintaining secrecy was the protection of our livelihood and to ensure that the technology necessary to construct the great buildings was learned and utilized correctly. Our original lodge buildings were usually wooden structures built next to the work site.

At some point in the 16th century, the Scottish masons' guild (likely more organised and established than the English guild at that time), began accepting as members gentlemen who did not practice the arts of stone-cutting and architecture, but who wished to gain access to the "mysteries of the craft" - the mathematical and scientific knowledge that was the special preserve of the masons. These gentlemen masons were known as "speculative" or "accepted" masons, in distinction to the working "operative" masons.

Many distinguished Scotsmen (even, according to some authorities, the King of Scots himself, James VI who later became James I of England) were speculative masons. What the speculative masons sought in the Freemasons' Guild was a strict ethical code, a pattern for living and self-improvement, and, above all, a knowledge of the hidden mysteries of nature and science.

With the inclusion of speculative masons, the need for secrecy should have diminished, but in a world where religion would not countenance any discussion of unsanctioned issues, a guild or group where men could ask questions, form ideas and contemplate the workings of the world without the fetterings of dogma was highly valued by some, and deemed dangerous by others.

That is also why to this day we forbid discussion of politics and religion in our lodge rooms, as these subjects divide men rather than unite them in the pursuit of knowledge.

With this shift in Freemasonry from the protection of knowledge to the pursuit of greater knowledge, it should come as no surprise that early speculative members of the Craft included people such as Sir Christopher Wren, the great architect, Sir Isaac Newton, the great scientist, the philosopher and theorist of liberalism, John Locke, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Boyle who, with Robert Hooke, explored the properties of a vacuum, and John Desaguliers, the first man to demonstrate the existence of the atom.

In the pre-scientific age, ruled as it was by absolutist kings and dogmatic religion, gentlemen with a curiosity about nature and science could find protection as accepted or speculative members of the masons' guild. There they could discuss ideas freely, and overcome the barriers and prejudices that made such talk dangerous outside the walls of the lodge.

Through the 17th century, the monopolies and privileges of the guilds were slowly eroded by the State. The building of castles and cathedrals diminished. From mid-century on, speculative members gradually replaced the operatives, so that by the end of the century the lodges were dominated by the speculatives. The craft guild had evolved into a society which retained something of the old while incorporating the interests and values of the higher classes who rapidly came to dominate.

This new culture, with Freemasonry as its vanguard, is known today as the Enlightenment, a key passage in European development. It argued that people's habits of thinking were based on irrationality, polluted by religious dogma, and over-conformed to historical precedent and irrelevant tradition. The way to escape was to seek true knowledge in every sphere of life, to study the liberal arts and sciences, to establish the truth and build upon it. Its premises were pro-science, and anti-superstition, and that the State and not the church was the proper vehicle for the improvement of the human condition.

The essence of Enlightenment philosophy was reason. Logic had been borrowed from the Greeks as early as the time of Thomas Aquinas, but Descartes and other 17th century philosophers understood that logic alone could be used to defend all manner of absurd notions, and insisted on combining it with this new principle, which embodied common sense and observation, as well as incorporating their own inclinations towards scepticism and freedom.

Freemasonry encouraged its members to explore the hidden mysteries of nature and science, and to follow the paths of virtue and science.

So, is all this relevant now, because, quite frankly, I haven't built a great cathedral in weeks? And the only group hunting me down for the purpose of persecution is Revenue Canada, and the Masons offer little protection from that.

Perhaps Masonry's task has been done: as a child of the Enlightenment, its once-secret values have become universalised, so much so that we tend to take them for granted in the modern world. In the civil sphere, they included religious tolerance, democracy, secularism, constitutionalism and parliamentary process. In the scientific sphere, at a time when superstition and magic governed reason, and the Church claimed a monopoly on "true" knowledge, they called for the use of logic and experimentation to establish the facts of nature.

Even our Masonic terms have entered common usage: to be "on the level", to be square with someone – even to give someone the third degree.

And as far as our secrets, you have only to access the internet for a few minutes to discover all the secrets of Masonry and Masonic rituals. There you can find all of our secret handshakes, the passwords, the entire scripts for our lodge work.

In fact, I find the anti-masonic sites to be the best places to go to for research because, whereas we will not publish details of our lodge work, these sites are only too glad to provide every syllable and comma. Once you get past the hostile rhetoric, they're very useful. I sometimes wonder if they realize what a tremendous service they're offering to Masons.

Here is the question though: given that the original purposes of secrecy – self-protection and self-enlightenment – the protection of technology and the freedom of intellectual pursuit – given that these are no longer relevant, and that our ritual "secrets" are published all over the internet, libraries and bookstores, why do we continue to keep them secret?

The first reason is that we promised to do so. This seems simple, but in a world where every person who

wants to know the “secrets” can find them at the click of a mouse, we still keep the modes of recognition secret because we have always kept them secret.

In a word, tradition.

The second reason is that we share a bond with our brother masons, to keep a brother’s secrets as our own, murder and treason excepted. If a brother cannot keep his word in so simple a manner as keeping the “secrets”, how can the brother be trusted with trusts that are more important? If a brother cannot be trusted to keep his word in all times and in all things, how can he be trusted to be there for a brother in a time of need?

A third reason for keeping the secrets is what has been termed temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice. A mature man holds his tongue where there is nothing of value to be spoken or communicated. That is a definition of prudence.

A mature man tempers his speech, to reflect consideration, for himself, for others. Much of speech is space filler, filling the vacuum of silence and offering little of value to the mind or spirit. It takes fortitude and strength of character to consider carefully how your words will be received, to weigh the usefulness of communicating them against the value and impression they will leave with others.

Of course, this fortitude, prudence and temperance should be weighed with justice. Are the words being communicated just and upright before man and God. A Mason should strive to communicate only what is good, valuable, and just, lest he, by his intemperate, imprudent words injure himself, his friends, neighbours or Freemasonry.

Keeping the secrets is not just an exercise in not speaking that which is often well known, it is an exercise in learning to be temperate in our speech, prudent in our choices, and just in our actions, words and deeds. Keeping the secrets is an exercise in making us better men by making us more contemplative and aware of our actions before we speak.

A Greek philosopher, when asked what he regarded as the most valuable quality to win and the most difficult to keep, replied, “To be secret and silent.”

If secrecy was difficult then, it is supremely difficult now. We live in a world where privacy is almost unknown. And when secrecy becomes more and more rare, it becomes a priceless virtue. To paraphrase one mason: “If the ancients worshiped a god of silence, the world seems intent on erecting an altar to the god of gossip.”

People clammer that they have a “right to know”, ignoring the rights of others to their peace and solitude. And they ignore that rights involve responsibilities – responsibilities to others.

Secrecy is a priceless but rare virtue, but little effort is made to teach and practice it. It has been said that if Masonry did nothing more than train men to preserve sacredly the secrets others confided to them as such – except where a higher duty demanded disclosure – it would be doing a great duty.

In our work, we teach new members to trust their guides. And secrecy is interwoven with trust. Secrecy allows someone to feel more connected to their organization. It defines, to some degree, the group to which you belong.

We are not alarmed about the books or internet sites written to expose Masonry. The information is harmless, although the approach of disrespect and vitriol may not be. Because the real secret is . . . we don't have any secret truth, unknown to the best wisdom of the ages. Concerns over the esoteric nature of Masonry miss the mark. The wisdom of masonry is hidden not because it is subtle, but because it is simple. Its secret is profound, not obscure – so rare in its utter simplicity that to many it might as well be buried in the depths of the earth.

The real secrets cannot be learned by prying eyes or the idle curious. We protect the privacy of the lodge, but the secrets of Masonry can only ever really be known to those open and contemplative enough to seek them.

It is the fashion of some to say that our ceremonies, signs and tokens are of little value. They form a tie uniting us to men of the Craft everywhere. They form a network of fellowship, friendship and fraternity around the world. But as it has been said, it is the spirit alone that gives life; the letter alone is empty.

I could recite for you now all of the passwords of our degrees and it would mean nothing. It would be as disappointing as discovering a conjurer's trick. The words are in the dictionary or the Bible, and have been used by non-Masons for years. The words themselves have no meaning. They're only sounds. The only meaning or power a word has is what we assign to it.

For that reason, we are annoyed but not alarmed about the various attempts to expose the secrets of masonry. Others will never know it, though they be adepts in all the signs and tokens of every rite and rank of the craft. The letter alone is empty.

The true secrets of Masonry cannot be uttered. They depend upon the individual and their journey. There are many within the craft itself who will never know them, even though there are, in fact, an open secret.

Like all the things most worth knowing, no one can know it for another and no one can know it in isolation from another.

In fact, rather than hiding its secret, Masonry is all the time trying to give it to the world, through the quality of the character and labours of its members through their individual self-discovery and self-development. A summary of Masonic principles, as suggested by the Masons of California, covers it quite well, including:

Act with honour and integrity in everything you do.

Believe in a Supreme Being and keep faith in the centre of your life.

Be tolerant and considerate of different religious, social and political views.

Strive to leave the world a better place than when you entered it.

Practice mutual help.

Uphold and maintain the principles of good government; oppose divisive and degrading influences, and be a good citizen.

Value self-improvement over financial success.

Remain good at heart.

Strive to live a brotherly life.

If masonry has evolved from the original need of secrecy for its survival, to its current illusion of secrecy now – an irony, since those particularly opposed to Masonry are often opposed to the concept of evolution as well -- it is because we know that it is the very nature of man to seek what is hidden and to desire what is forbidden. Our members who look at Masonry this way will find that their Masonic life is a great adventure of perpetual discovery. The man who finds its degrees tedious and rituals a rigmarole only betrays the measure of his own mind.

And I would suggest that those who are most vehemently opposed to Freemasonry are not unlike those of old who would have the world defined by their standards and their rules – and by their single-minded opposition they reveal their own secret – the limited measure of their own minds. And, like Masonry itself, that is not really a secret at all.

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Some thoughts on the origin of the Jr. Warden's toast.

- The first is from song written by Peter Richards found in "The Masonic Vocal Manual 1852
- The 2nd & 3rd come from W Bro. John Noble's book Masonic Etiquettes and are addressed by MW Bro. Juthner and Bro. MecKehnie Fiat Lux Lodge of Research Oct 1991

Now you get to make up your own mind as to the origin, wording and method of presentation.

1

**THE FINAL TOAST
(The Tyler's Toast)
Peter Richards
The Masonic Vocal Manual 1852**

**Are your glasses charged in the West and South, the Worshipful Master cries;
They're charged in the West, they're charged in the South, are the Wardens' prompt replies:
Then to our final Toast tonight your glasses fairly drain
Happy to meet - sorry to part - happy to meet again, again, Oh! happy to meet again.**

**CHORUS: Happy to meet - sorry to part - happy to meet again, again,
Oh! happy to meet again.**

**The Mason's social Brotherhood around the Festive Board,
Reveal a wealth more precious far than selfish miser's hoard.
They freely share the priceless stores that generous hearts contain
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again!**

**We work like Masons free and true, and when our Task is done,
A merry song and cheering glass are not unduly won:
And only at our Farewell Pledge is pleasure touched with pain
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again!**

**Amidst our mirth we drink "To all poor Masons o'er the World"
On every shore our Flag of Love is gloriously unfurled,
We prize each Brother, fair or dark, who bears no moral stain -
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again!**

**The Mason feels the true truth the Scottish peasant told
That Rank is but the guinea stamp, the man himself's the gold.
With us the rich and poor unite and equal Rights maintain
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again!**

**Dear Brethren of the Mystic Tie, the night is waning fast
Our Duty's done, our feast is o'er, this song must be our last: -
Good Night, Good Night- once more, once more repeat the farewell strain
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again!**

2

Junior Warden's Toast: (a) The Junior Warden should be allowed to propose the toast "solo" [says **M.W. Bro. Juthner**], after which the Brethren repeat the words in unison. Brethren do not join in until the Junior Warden has proposed and given the toast.

3

[**Bro. John McKechnie [Fiat Lux Research paper, October 5, 1991]** says that most Lodges do not properly give the Junior Warden's Toast, and that this Toast should be handled as follows:

Junior Warden:

**HAPPY HAVE WE MET!
HAPPY HAVE WE BEEN!
HAPPY MAY WE PART,
HAPPY TO MEET AGAIN.**

And the spontaneous response by the Brethren will be:

**HAPPY TO MEET!
SORRY TO PART!
HAPPY TO MEET AGAIN !**

Bro. McKechnie concludes his paper thusly:

"I think I am safe in saying that the Junior Warden is toasting each and every brother present and in responding, each brother drinks to the health of the Junior Warden and each other - a very appropriate way to conclude a Masonic gathering."

Masonic Etiquettes

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Other topics address in this publication:

1. Etiquettes (or Protocols) In The Lodge Room
2. Balloting Protocols
3. Rules Of Order
4. Etiquettes for Officers
5. Admission of Visitors
6. Titles In Masonry
7. Behavior of a Mason in a Lodge
8. Canvassing for Office
9. Conduct and Etiquette OF Lodge Visitors
10. Festive Board Etiquettes
11. Plus much more

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More titles to become available in the near future

Masonry Past

Masonic Spring Workshop 1990 Part One I

Bro. Jack Collett, PGM

In Shakespeare's play *As You Like It*, there is a well known speech by Jacques wherein he tries to explain to his distressed father the Duke, the ways of the world. He says:

All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances: And one man in his time plays many parts, His Acts being seven ages.

Jacques goes on to outline those seven stages starting with the infant and ending with old age:

Last scene of all, That ends this strange eventful history, Is second childishness and mere oblivion; Sans teeth sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

Human life does not progress through these various stages as smoothly as Shakespeare would have us think. People get stuck at a certain stage and never progress. There are individuals that never get out of their adolescence no matter how old they are. Some don't even get out of the whining schoolboy age.

Organizations are very much like the human being. They start with a newness and an excess of energy and, normally should progress to maturity and wise old age. So often organizations get stuck at one point of development and go no further.

The Masonic Order does not differ from human beings or from other organizations in this regard. There is always the possibility of getting stranded at one stage of development and remaining there while the rest of society forges ahead to new concepts and exciting challenges.

Masonry came into Alberta when on January 13, 1882, the Grand Lodge of Manitoba granted a dispensation for Saskatchewan Lodge No. 17, G.R.M. to be established. This Lodge was instituted on February 13 of the same year and consecrated on April 21, 1882, with 13 members. Despite the Shakespearean model of development, Saskatchewan Lodge did not develop beyond infancy and the charter was surrendered on February 13, 1889. Another start was made two years later when the Grand Lodge of Manitoba issued a dispensation to erect Bow River Lodge No. 28, G.R.M. on January 1, 1884.

In its infancy in Alberta, the Masonic Order grew very well. There were no great problems. With the influx of settlers more Lodges were organized. Many of them met monthly at the time of the full moon so that the members could have some light for their treks to the meetings and for their way home if their meetings did not last until the first light of the dawn. It was a time when the Lodges met quietly and when fellowship was most essential to these pioneering folk who had little enough contact with other people.

Time moved on and the district of Alberta attracted more and more settlers. The North West Mounted Police brought law and order to the western lands. The Canadian Pacific Railway bound the country together with its bands of steel. By the summer of 1905 there were eighteen Masonic Lodges operating in the district of Alberta. The result was that the Grand Lodge of Alberta was established on October 12, 1905, just about one month after the Province of Alberta had come into existence.

Masonry in Alberta, following the Shakespearean model, moved into its adolescent period. It was one of great growth and of deep interest in the development of the Grand Lodge Constitution and the consecration of various Lodges. Even the First World War, 1914 - 1918, did not stop the expansion of the Masonic Order in Al-

berta. Settlers poured in to northern areas and into many other parts of the Province. At the conclusion of the Great War, the Grand Lodge of Alberta had 110 Lodges under its jurisdiction.

Masonry in Alberta continued to flourish in spite of the great depression of the thirties and World War Two which ended in Europe on May 7, 1945, and in the Far East on August 29, 1945. Optimism was in the Alberta air because of economic prosperity, especially when the oil boom hit Alberta. Despite the fact that there was a spirit of optimism in the province there were indications that instead of following Shakespeare and going immediately from adolescence into maturity, the Masonic order was in for a period non-development. One Grand Master asserted that the Masonic Lodge "should be a factor in the life of the community." Another Grand Master asserted that it was time for Freemasonry to set its house in order and he said this could not be done by "the weary occupation of how we can beat up a new enthusiasm," but that it could be done by clarifying the goals for which the order stood. Another Grand Master felt that Masonry should move out of its tendency to shield itself from community life and proposed that the Grand Lodge organize a Boys' Farm to reclaim delinquent adolescents. Loss in membership caused some concern. The Grand Lodge communication in 1966 heard of a decrease of 170 and the next year it was 180. At the same time there were cries that the quality of applicants was decreasing.

When I was a newly ordained minister I was sent in 1938 to the small town of St. Paul in north eastern Alberta. It was a largely Roman Catholic, French speaking area. Most of the Protestants in town were transient, Bank employees, C.N.R. employees, R.C.M.P. and so forth. A number of them were Masons. Although most of them were faithful church members, to this day I do not know where the Masonic Hall was located. I visited St. Alban's Lodge 145 when I was Grand Master and no one could understand why I had not applied for membership while I was there. St. Alban's did not survive. It was constituted on July 29, 1926, and on July 7, 1973, it amalgamated with St. George's Lodge No. 169 of Elk Point.

My next appointment was at Taber. The Church Board there was made up almost completely of Masons. The Secretary was an Anglican. Each summer, he would come over to our house with flowers and vegetables for my wife. At the same time he would enter into a very pleasant conversation with me. Never once did the subject of Masonry come up. When I visited there when I was Grand Master, they told me they could never understand why I did not apply for membership. Doric Lodge constituted on July 10, 1908, but on May 4, 1979, Doric Lodge No. 31 amalgamated with Lucerne Lodge No. 159 and the Lodge meetings were moved from Taber to Vauxhall.

Then I moved to Claresholm. Tuesday nights in Claresholm were Lodge night and no other meetings were ever scheduled for Tuesdays. One day I became exasperated with this inflexible situation and I said to the Clerk of Session, "What in the world is so important about these Lodges that we all have to plan around what they claim is their special night." He calmly asked me if I really wanted to know and I said, "You bet I do." You see where that rather rash and hasty statement landed me.

In Claresholm, the barber was Bill McKenzie. He was my coach. As most of you know, I never boast about my ability as a ritualist. In fact there was one time when I was raising a candidate in the Third Degree I wandered off the track, but being accustomed to adlibbing, I continued on until the candidate was finally raised. After the Lodge was closed a brother, very skilled, came over to me and said, "I want to compliment you on your work tonight. It was done very well. Would you mind telling me what rite you were working in?" Bill was an excellent coach. I would go down to the barbershop and he could immediately, in the middle of the morning, pull down all the blinds and lock the door. Then we would go at it with no book visible at all. The members of the Lodge would go by the barbershop and say, "Well Bill's at it with Collett again I wonder if he'll ever make it." We did make it, but it is a source of constant regret that Cairo Lodge today struggles for its very existence.

One day, when I was Grand Master, I was in the Grand Lodge Office and the Grand Secretary, the late Ned Rivers, asked me if I would like to make a surprise visit to Picture Butte that night and I said yes. So Ned got on the phone. We rounded up two carloads from Calgary. He telephoned Del McQueen, a Past Grand Master who lived in Vulcan, who arranged for another two carloads and the District Deputy of Lethbridge who arranged for several cars. We arrived in Picture Butte after nightfall and had supper in a small cafe. To my surprise, Ned was not sure where the Lodge Room was located. We asked the waitress and she had never heard of the Masons, she knew about the Lions, the Knights of Columbus but not the Masons. An R.C.M.P. constable was having a cup of coffee. He couldn't help. We went outside and then saw a dim light a block away and decided that was the Lodge Room. I have a distinct recollection of the Junior Warden on the telephone trying to persuade his wife to make more sandwiches. He said, "They're coming by the carload from all directions. We've got to do something." The Master of the lodge survived the shock and received the party well. The Lodge Room had never seen such a crowd and what a great evening it was. The sorry part was that the Masonic Lodge was making no impact on the community as far as being a public presence was concerned.

The Masonic Spring Workshop started in my term as Grand Master when we decided to have a study session the Tuesday evening before the Grand Lodge sessions commenced. Those were the days when the brethren came into the city the night before Grand Lodge opened and were at loose ends for something to do in the evening. The idea was prompted first of all by the conviction of many that we needed to talk informally about Masonry and also by a popular book that had been written by M.W.Bro. Dwight L. Smith, then Grand secretary of the Grand Lodge of Indiana, titled *Whither Are We Traveling* and an article, *Why All the Confusion in the Temple*. These works were attempts to study the wide-spread malaise that was beginning to affect Freemasonry. Alberta was reporting a decline in membership, an alarming decrease in attendance and increasing talk about amalgamation or surrendering Charters.

That first evening at Mount Royal College was overwhelmingly successful. We had such a large attendance that we were pressed to find rooms for the small groups to meet in for discussions. This led to the proposal that Masons throughout Alberta should be given an opportunity to get together to discuss Masonry in an informal and unstructured way, not hampered by the formalities of Lodge meetings. We were fortunate to have Mel Dunford in the Grand Lodge Office as Assistant to the Grand Secretary. He had a background of experience with the United Church Men's Conference that was held in Banff annually. After some discussion it was decided that we would attempt a Masonic Spring Workshop organized along the lines of the United Church effort. It would be a tragedy if we did not pause here to pay a tribute to Mel Dunford who bore the brunt of the organization of the Workshop and acted as its secretary some fifteen years.

I can well remember the First Workshop. The Banff School of Fine Arts was not organized to handle the large number of Masons who wanted to attend. There were no large residence buildings. When the Committee arrived two days early to set up the Workshop Mel was handed all the keys and told to assign rooms. Somehow he had everything ready when the influx came. I suspect he went without sleep for at least one night. Not only did we have a profitable time in discussions but we had a memorable social time as well. Jim Woods proved to be an efficient Parade Marshall, visiting rooms with the aid of a Piper to unheard of morning hours. Of course, there were difficulties in the early years, but they were not sufficiently serious to mar the real purpose of the gathering.

The problem that Masonry was facing, if we follow our Shakespearean model was that Masonry had stalled in its growth and remained in its late adolescent years. The craft was so bent on secrecy and self-examination that it was failing to make a meaningful impact on the community. It was not visible amongst the multitude of organizations in the community. The general public did not know what Masonry was and what it did. There were many amazing stories around about Masonic practices. Even the members of the Masonic Order were not at all certain of their purpose. Indeed it was a typical mixed up adolescent age. The basic problem is one common to all organizations which have a long history.

The organization has a purpose and a philosophy with which it starts. It also exists within a society. The organization takes on some of the characteristics of the society in which it lives. Thus you have a combination of the basic principles of the organization combined with the peculiarities of the society, which makes up the way in which the organization operates. The difficulty comes when the human society changes and in the last eighty years our society has changed very rapidly. When an organization refuses to move with the changes in society, then that organization ceases to be effective. Freemasonry started with a number of basic principles. It lived in a pre-modern society and took unto itself many characteristics of the society. It became static and wanted to carry with it not only the basis principles but also a multitude of outworn customs. Because of this it has found itself in the backwaters of modern life. So the Masonic order is in difficulty with the church, the younger generation and society in general. Masonry must look at itself, decide what basic principles are fundamental and must cast aside those prejudices and practices that are not essential. It was fine fifty years ago for a Lodge to meet quietly for the sake of fellowship and not to talk about its purposes and objectives. Society accepted that for the age of communication had not arrived. When the new age did come, Masonry was not prepared and was passed by.

The time has come now for the Masonic Order to examine itself and ask two questions:

1. What are those things that are basic to the order?
2. What are those elements that are not essential and can be put aside as accretions in order that the order will fit into the world of the twenty-first century?

Tonight we are looking at the past. In the next couple of days other speakers will analyze Masonry as it is today and as it must be tomorrow.

Let us look at the past. What elements do we bring from the past that must be maintained today and tomorrow?

1. When we take away all the trappings with which Masonry has surrounded itself during its long history we find that the fraternity exists for one purpose and that is to preserve, to transmit to posterity the worthwhile parts of civilization that our forefathers passed on to us.
2. Masonry is an organization of human effort to preserve and promote civilization but it does not do this in terms of caste or creed or within political, territorial or religious limits. In other words it is universal. Because of this the Masonic Order will run into trouble with some organizations, secular and religious, that would like to confine themselves to one section of society or one religious outlook. This Masonry must constantly refuse to do. It is universal in its outlook.
3. If Masonry is to pass on the best of our modern civilization if it is to embrace all religions, races and cultures then it has to rid itself of some of its static and unproductive ideas and get into the stream of present day life. The ideal of the eighteenth century was knowledge; the ideal of the nineteenth century was the projection of morality into the new knowledge; the ideal of the twentieth century is the development of communication so that knowledge, ideals, morality can be a part of a universal culture. Wherever in this world there is a Lodge of Masons, that Lodge should be in the forefront of communicating by modern means the ideals of knowledge, morality and universality.

When the Entered Apprentice stands before the Master of the Lodge some working tools are placed in his hands. He is told what they are to be used for. He must use them and then return them to the Master. They never become his own. The Grand Master of this Universe has entrusted to the Masonic Order working tools

by which the life of this suffering world may be molded. We do not own those working tools; they are just for us to use and then to return them to the Eternal. When we return those tools, we pray that they may have been used in the Craft of humanity so that the great Lodge of this world will have pleasure and profit.

For after all:

All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players;

They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts....

Editor's Comments; While I did not have the privilege of attending the Masonic Spring Workshop the year, I do understand that one of the main papers delivered or discussed was:

Laudable Pursuit
A 21st Century Response to Dwight Smith
By The Knights of the North

The Keynote Speaker Bro. Christopher L. Hodapp, being the Editor of this paper. You will note in the above paper, delivered by MW Bro. Collett at the Masonic Spring Workshop in 1990, also made reference to the papers of Dwight Smith being the focus of the 1st Masonic Spring Workshop held at the Banff School of Fine Arts in 1964. Forty-four years later and the same topics - interesting. If you would like to review these papers follow the links below. If you would rather listen than read - Laudable Pursuit is available as a video for those with high speed connections.

Laudable Pursuit: Knights of the North

<http://www.masonicdictionary.com/laudablepursuit.html>

Whither Are We Traveling: Dwight Smith, PGM:

<http://www.vitruvian.org/papers/WhitherAreWeTraveling.pdf>

Why The Confusion At The Gate: Dwight Smith, PGM:

<http://www.vitruvian.org/papers/WhitherAreWeTraveling.pdf>

Links to Masonic Education Programs

Old Tyler Talks

<http://www.calodges.org/no442/Old%20Tiler%20Talks/OldTilerTalksMenu.htm>



**Remember to Register for the
District Golf Tournament**

See add on page 24

London: Women Masons – an UGLE exhibition

The Times London

26 March 2008

Sarah Jane Checkland

Time was when the only way that women could become freemasons was for them to eavesdrop on the doings of this all-male preserve. But as Lady Elizabeth St Leger of Co Cork found out when she got caught in the act in 1732, this could be a high-risk strategy. As the rulebook of 1717 firmly states: “No Bondmen [ie, slaves], no Women, no immoral or scandalous Men” can ever join the brethren.



For two days, the story goes, Lodge 44 held Lady Elizabeth under lock and key while they debated what to do with her. Eventually they offered her a stark choice: death or full initiation. For generations Lady Elizabeth remained the only recorded female mason. But who knows how many ladies never lived to tell their tale?

Times have changed. Exactly 100 years ago a group of suffragettes led by Annie Besant and Lady Lutyens, wife of the architect Sir Edwin, burst into this all-male preserve by setting up the first lodge for both men and women. This didn't last long because of objections from the all-male lodges. But the women persevered, setting up their own lodges.

Now not only are there an estimated 20,000 women freemasons in Britain alone, but their male counterparts in the United Grand Lodge of England have decided to give the ladies a pat on the back by celebrating their centenary year with a special exhibition at their headquarters in Covent Garden, starting on June 4. It will be the first British exhibition on women and their involvement with freemasonry.

But don't believe for a moment that freemasonry is turning unisex. Women's lodges remain separate from men's lodges, apart from the occasional social evening or lecture.

And don't expect the exhibition to reveal any arcane secrets. As Dr Iris Monica Oktabsova, past deputy grand master of one of the oldest branches, Lodge Equity 16, says: “Although we are not a secret society, we are a society with secrets.” No tips on secret handshakes, then. No clues as to what the “craft” actually entails.

Instead, the show will mainly include examples of their regalia, as well as paper records, such as that first rule book; as well as images of early women “brethren” as they refer to themselves, and theosophical tracts which inspired their early members. By the time they leave, visitors will also be fully apprised of the three main cornerstones of freemasonry. They are the grand principles of brotherly love (the requirement to behave “with kindness and understanding towards all”); relief (to undertake charitable works) and truth (to show integrity both private and public). Last but not least they must have a fundamental belief in a supreme being or God. The Order of Women Freemasons itself will celebrate its own centenary on June 7 with a grand gathering of 5,000 members and guests at the Royal Albert Hall during which there will be processions, hymn singing and dance.

Women and Freemasonry: The Centenary exhibition runs from 4 June until 19 December

2008, weekdays only; entrance free. The Library and Museum of Freemasonry, Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, London WC2B 5AZ. www.freemasonry.london.museum , 0207-395 9257.

For information on the Order of Women Freemasons, contact www.owf.org.uk or write to the Secretariat (inquiries), 27 Pembridge Gardens, London W2 4EF

Editor's note: This article on Women & Freemasonry was taken from the "Rural Lodge Newsletter", which is published weekly (on Friday) from Quincy Massachusetts. It's Editor is Bro. Graeme Marsden, District Ambassador for the 8th Masonic District of Massachusetts. He is also their web master. This is an excellent Newsletter which he states is being read by 2530 Masons every week. and I would encourage every Mason in Central District to check it out. While parts of it refer to happenings in his District and Lodge, it also lists many interesting articles from around the world and ideas from other Lodges. Bro. Marsden was one of those who encouraged me to start "The Beacon" to bring together events and happenings in Central District. Don't forget to check out some of the back issues. Best of all the price is right - Free.

The link is posted every Friday at

<http://www.rurallodge.org/>



<http://www.masonicfdn.ab.ca/>

Editor's Comments:

- This newsletter is not an official Masonic publication and does not express the policies or opinions of any specific Masonic Lodge, District or Grand Lodge.

So go ahead and enjoy it as my gift to you. If you have any ideas or suggestions to improve it let me know - I will always listen, I may not do anything about it, but I will listen. I would love to publish some of the stories from around the District or even Alberta. Stories about individuals, Lodge happenings or histories of Lodges.

This newsletter will not be published in paper format, but feel free to print it out and pass on to a brother.

The subscription list for this newsletter came from the CDMEL (Central District Masonic Email List). If you would rather not receive this Newsletter, let me know and I will remove your name - Your name will not be removed from the CDMEL unless you specifically request it.

W. Bro. Clark Johnston
Beacon #190
cjohnst@telusplanet.net

**A Beacon never goes anywhere
It's just helps points the way**

Are you your brother's keeper? Several Masons in the District do not have access to computers &/or the Internet. If you know of such a Bro. And you think this newsletter is worth while, why not print off a copy to pass on. Another idea—if you would like a copy, but do not have a computer, ask your son or grandson to print it for you—he may get an idea of what it is you do at that secret Lodge!



Kenilworth Lodge #29 A.F & A.M.
Centennial Celebrations

Saturday May 3rd 2008

Re-Consecration of the lodge will be at Freemason Hall, 4811 52 Street, Red Deer, Alberta commencing at 2.30 pm. All Masons are cordially invited to attend.

The centennial Dinner will be at the Black Knight Inn, Gaetz Avenue, Red Deer, Alberta. All Masons and non Masons and their ladies are cordially invited to join us in celebrating this auspicious event. Social hour from 5.30 pm to 6.30 pm., a table service dinner to commence at 6.30 pm. Keynote address by Mr Michael Dawe. Entertainment will be supplied by the pipes and drums of the Red Deer College and Jim Dandy Comedy Productions.

Tickets for the event are available from Bill Douglas, 43, Opal Avenue, Red Deer, Alberta, T4P 1S9 Telephone 403 343 6068, cell 318 8047 e-mail - alazar2@telus.net and Douglas Tubb, 93, Nash Street, Red Deer, Alberta, T4P 1P1 telephone 403 342 5351 e-mail - dwtubb@telus.net, at a cost of \$40.00 (forty dollars) per person. A cheque to the correct amount must accompany the order for tickets. As the meals will be ordered according to the number of tickets sold, only ticket holders will be admitted to the dining room, therefore paying at the door cannot be permitted. There will be a block of rooms reserved at the Black Knight Inn at a cost of \$120.00 per night for a double room. Attendees who intend to stay over night are strongly advised to book their rooms early.

Should you require further information, please call or e - mail any of the two brethren named above. We look forward to welcoming you and your ladies at our centennial celebrations.

Yours Fraternaly

W.B. Bill Douglas
Worshipful Master



Apollo Lodge #27 1908 - 2008

May 31, 2008

Rededication Ceremony - 2:00 p.m.

Deputy Grand Master/Grand Master Elect – R. W. Bro. John Hart will be doing the Ceremony of Rededication accompanied by Grand Lodge Representatives including DDGM R. W. Bro. John Alexander.

Ladies Program - 2:00 p.m.

Your events will include an introduction to Spring Fashions, local artists, and a Spring Tea

(Please meet at Stettler Community Center)

(The Community Hall has a dressing room for the use of the ladies prior to the banquet)



Cocktails - 5:00 p.m.

Banquet - 6:00 p.m.

Tickets \$40.00 per person

Tickets available from Apollo Lodge Members or by contacting the Secretary of Apollo Lodge #27 – W. Bro. Andy Jones - ajones@telusplanet.net (403-742-2201) or W. Bro. Hal Neis (403-788-2126)

Please plan on joining the members of Apollo Lodge #27 as they celebrate this very special occasion.

Upcoming District Events



Red Deer #12 to host Saturday Coffee Drop-in

May 10th & 24th - 9 am to 11 am

Freemason Hall, 4811 - 52 Street, Red Deer

- *an informal opportunity for fellowship and solve the world's problems*
- *Friends and members of Concordant Bodies welcome*

Cost - Free

Scheduled to be a bi-weekly event - Confirm dates via contacts
Jeb Carroll (Sec) Mitch Thompson (WM) 403-357-8915



Apollo #13

100th Anniversary Celebration

May 31, 2008

For details and tickets see
letter of invitation on page 18



Central District Annual Golf Tournament

Saturday June 21st - Rimbey Golf Course

Tee Time 10:00 AM

\$55.00 per player, which includes; 18 holes of golf, cart & lunch

Format will be best ball - Registration deadline June 17th

Note: there are only 12 carts available—so register early

Registration at: Rimbey Golf Course 403-843-2724

Or

Bro. Allan Tarleton 403-843-4515 email artaton@telus.net



Apollo #27 Coffee Club

1st 2nd & 3rd Saturdays in May - 10 am to 12 noon

Masonic Hall, 5001—52nd Street, Stettler, Alberta

*Why not drop in for a coffee and some friendly conversation
All are Welcome*

Visit Apollo #27 on the web:

www.mastermason.com/apollolodge27/

District Lodge Meetings

May 2008

1st Monday - May 5th	Mountain View #16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 pm Happy Hour • 6:30 pm Dinner • 8 pm Lodge Tyles 	Stated Meeting:
1st Tuesday - May 6th	Kenilworth 29, Red Deer	Regular Meeting: District Challenge Presentation by Lochearn #151
1st Wednesday - May 7th	Britannia 18, Ponoka	Stated Meeting:
2nd Tuesday - May 13th	Red Deer #12, Red Deer	Stated Meeting: District Challenge Presentation by Lochearn #151 "Australia???"
2nd Tuesday - May 13th	Kitchener #95, Rimbey	Stated Meeting:
2nd Thursday - May 8th	Lochearn #151, Rocky Mountain House	Stated Meeting:
3rd Thursday - May 15th	Innisfail #8	Stated Meeting:
3rd Thursday - May 15th	Apollo #27	Stated Meeting:
4th Monday - May 26th	Beacon #190, Red Deer	Regular Meeting: District Challenge Presentation by Red Deer #12 "The Gordon Towers Project" - 2nd Degree
4th Tuesday - May 27th	Eureka #10, Lacombe	Stated Meeting:

June 2008

1st Monday - June 2nd	Mountain View #16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 pm Dinner • 8 pm Lodge 	Stated Meeting:
1st Tuesday - June 3rd	Kenilworth 29, Red Deer	Regular Meeting:
1st Wednesday - June 4th	Britannia 18, Ponoka	Stated Meeting: Installation Night "Contributing One's Stone"
2nd Tuesday - June 10th	Red Deer #12, Red Deer	Stated Meeting:
2nd Tuesday - June 10th	Kitchener #95, Rimbey	Stated Meeting:
2nd Thursday - June 12th	Lochearn #151, Rocky Mountain House	Stated Meeting:
3rd Thursday - June 19th	Innisfail #8	Stated Meeting:
3rd Thursday - June 19th	Apollo #27	Stated Meeting:
Saturday June 21st	Rimbey	District Golf Tournament
4th Monday - June 23rd	Beacon #190, Red Deer	Regular Meeting: Installation Of Officers
4th Tuesday - June 24th	Eureka #10, Lacombe	Stated Meeting:

July 2008

Monday July 28th	Sylvan Lake	Beacon #190 Zoo Cruise
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