



A message from the Grand Chaplain VWBro Ron Kuban

The Lights That Bind Us

Within the Northern Hemisphere, fall typically brings a daily reduction in both natural light and outdoor temperatures. The day that separates fall and winter, often referred to as the winter solstice, is the day each year with the shortest amount of daylight. Prior to it, daylight grows progressively shorter while afterwards daylight grows progressively longer until the summer solstice, which separates spring and summer; and then, the cycle reverses itself. The period around the winter solstice has great significance for human beings.

It is noteworthy that nearly all religions and cultures celebrate a holiday around the winter solstice. The diverse celebrations at this time of the year have their origin thousands of years ago, well before the establishment of the current primary religions. For example, early Pagans celebrated the return of their Sun God with feasts, bonfires and offerings of food. Clearly, humans have always craved light and have worshiped its primary agent - the sun, as a source of light, warmth and life, enabling humankind through the ages. Since then, many cultures and religions have developed their own unique holiday interpretations and symbols to celebrate and bring light to this period of darkness. Yet, despite their diverse practices, all of these holiday celebrations involve key common themes: a focus on physical illumination, the reaching-out to others, and the offering of gifts such as food, hospitality, and best wishes.

The most notable among the many holidays that are held around the winter solstice are Christmas, Hanukah, St. Lucia Day, St. Nicholas Day, and Kwanzaa. All of them include the lighting of candles, or the more-current practice of switching-on bright lights. Such practices are not accidental. They reflect a cerebral human reaction to the season's gloominess due to the diminished natural light. That instinctive reaction is designed to enhance our sense of optimism and cheerfulness by celebrating the promise of increased daylight.

We may be tempted to keep our celebrations private and enjoy them in the privacy of our home, family, or clan. But we do not. Instead, we commonly make them communal celebrations - a public affair or display, to the point of decorating our home with lights that shine brightly for all who pass by or visit our home. In that way we strive to share our blessings

and goodwill, even with strangers. Traditionally, we exchange greetings - verbal or written, and strive to cheer others, like no other time of the year.

Interestingly, the short days (and long nights) of that period are also the time when human beings are most likely to display care or compassion for others, and the spirit of humanity often shines its brightest. Consider, for example, the compassion, energy and resources that are mustered at this time of the year to provide warm clothing, food, shelter and cheer to those who are less fortunate among us. This generosity is often extended more broadly to overcome poverty, ill health, abuse and strife in other parts of the world where people - often total strangers, are suffering.

This outpouring of goodwill in the weeks surrounding the winter solstice is heartwarming and particularly amazing. During what may appear to be (or leading into) the least-hospitable period of the year, humans find the energy, compassion, goodwill, and resources to reach out and 'touch' others so as to wish them well, or to provide them with some comfort. This effort starts with and centers upon the celebration of light - a much-cherished physical illumination.

In fact, illumination has another and more-significant meaning for human beings than its physical context. It refers to intellectual and spiritual enlightenment.

From our early days as wanderers and cave dwellers, we humans have sought enlightenment over our environment, universe and destiny. Step by step, one discovery after another, we sought to shed light upon our universe and its mysteries - scientific and spiritual alike. Our quest is far from complete, despite the fact that we continue to lift the darkened veil of ignorance at an increasing pace. Our effort must persist.

So, as we celebrate our respective holiday during this season, let us recognize humanity's common craving for light and enlightenment. Let us resolve to act as bearers of light and not of darkness. Let us also remember our community's holiday spirit during this period and imagine what it would be like if our 'celebration of light' existed year long. Imagine, the collective benefits of compassion and enlightenment, and then act to demonstrate their spirit. Do what you can, but do something. Even a small step, taken daily, may ripple through a community and may ultimately reap huge rewards.

May your holiday grace you with its bright lights and opportunity for compassion.

From Around the World

In Praise of Conductors

By Bro. Erik Marks

The first things I used to think of with the mention of the word, "conductor" were: music, electricity, and trains. These are still fine examples of the word. The direction and coordination of a large group of musicians, when done well, the conductor is the heart of the music, co-creating it with the people holding and operating instruments. In wiring, electricity travels on the outside of the conductor, something known as the skin effect. It is also what protects you from lightning inside a car or faraday cage. The better the conductor, the easier the flow of electrons to their destination. A superconductor is a material or a material treated in a particular manner. They are cooled to close to absolute zero (less than 1K or around -260 C) wherein all resistance vanishes. Facilitating travel, the train conductor collects tickets, aids in operations, and has the unfortunate task of ejecting the unruly.

Socrates was said to be the midwife of the soul. A conductor of sorts whose philosophic technique still moves me to other places and frames of mind that I find pleasingly challenging. I sometimes feel my soul moving. My mother, using her body, conducted me from concept to creation, my first home in this world. I am grateful to her for using her-self to bring me to life. Parents, relatives, teachers, friends, conducted me through early years to adaptations, ideas and knowledge I appreciate, and some I'm still working to renovate. Literature is filled with all sorts of guides, gurus, and other forms of conductors.

At the start of my Masonic journey, several men brought me to, or to me, conversations about my intentions, qualifications, and expectations. Some of them met with my family to discuss these same questions and offered



counsel if there were concerns about my voluntary choice to join. Most of these men were present during my degrees. Three (LaJoie, Gianoukos, and Crooks) endured over breakfast, a lengthy interrogation by me, Corinna, and our sons, as to why women were excluded from what we do (which is when I learned first about GES, Amaranth, & Rainbow Girls).

Now, my experience of the word, "conductor", has significantly changed; my personal experience with the idea, broadened. I was led to the door, the West Gate, to the threshold of my conscious mind and instructed in our way to ask for greater understanding of myself, through our unique process. I was caringly and thoughtfully guided and prompted through the steps, stages, and lessons in darkness and light. Brothers Grenier, Snyder, LaJoie, and Goetz and will always remain presences and voices in my mind of those who tended to my preparation and conducted me through ritual with dignity and grace. Between degrees, Brothers Crooks, Bodley, and Ehrlich helped me perfect the words I needed to perform to progress. Worshipful Marks will always be the face I visualize in the east when I recite the ritual to myself or practice with a new, "younger," brother.

More recently, as mentors and friends, a host of new and previous Brothers guide and conduct my progress. Worshipful Snyder recently performed from memory a lengthy introduction of me at my first presentation to a Lodge of Instruction (though following the amazing conversation brought by the Brethren who attended at Mt. Hollis Lodge in Holliston, MA, I

Provided to Freemasons of Alberta and the Northwest Territories west of the 4th Meridian who are members of

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Published each month except July and August by

The Grand Lodge of Alberta, A.F. & A.M.

Editor: RWBro Steve Kennard

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The Alberta Freemason

Editor: RWBro Steve Kennard

Design & Production:

Submissions and photos for publication from all Brethren are welcome.

Deadline for copy is the 15th day of the month prior to the month of issue.

The Editor reserves the right to accept, reject and re-write material submitted for publication.

Republication rights are granted to other Masonic Jurisdictions, but acknowledgement is requested.

now think of it as “Lodge of Inspiration”). As I’ve had good fortune to travel, Brothers Jackson, Jarzabek, and Johnson help me through what I write; they help me edit, and encourage me to persist when I feel like giving up.

So, I write in praise of those who have conducted me this far and to those who continue. As a group, you are my superconductors! (Though “cool” people, these superconductors operate at room temperature and also, decidedly, not in a vacuum. Room temperature superconductors are mostly theoretical, where the above-mentioned human conductors are verifiably, real). With gratitude I hold dear those mentioned by name and the many more not named here. We repeat it because it is true: I would never have met these amazing people if it had not been for Freemasonry. The diversity in their thoughts, backgrounds, and ways of living challenge me to rethink what I know, and how I came to know. They present me with their full selves so that I may be present fully as I am, and we figure it out. Through repeated contact, we grow in trust and capacity to be and act harmoniously in the face of criticism, challenge, disagreement (also in fun and faux pas): we help and instruct one another to do this work, together. As in a super-conductive state, our resistance to ourselves and others diminishes, maybe vanishes, in the presence of others who wish only to aid in our growth and learning; to help with the transmission of knowledge, experience, and self-understanding.

I encourage you to consider those still standing among us who have conducted you through life to reading this post. Let them know the ways they have shaped your experience in, and more importantly, outside, lodge. For those whom have been your conductor though no longer with us, consider sharing a story about them with another brother, in writing, maybe...here.

~EAM

Brother Erik Marks is a clinical social worker whose usual vocation has been in the field of human services in a wide range of settings since 1990. He was raised in 2017 by his biologically younger Brother and then Worshipful Master in Alpha Lodge in Framingham, MA. You may contact brother Marks by email: erik@StrongGrip.org

Ed. This article was first posted by the Midnight Freemasons on November 15th, 2019 and is published here with the kind permission of the Midnight Freemasons.

Alberta Education

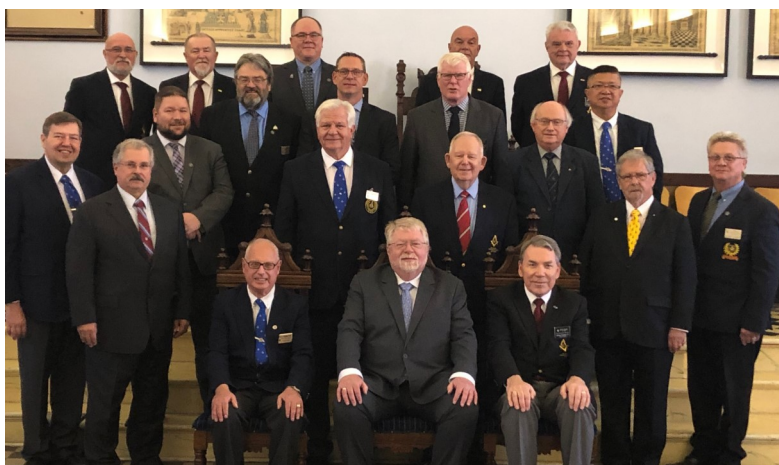
79th Annual Inter-Provincial Conference of the Four Western Masonic Jurisdictions

RWBro Chris Uchman, Junior Grand Warden, Grand Lodge of Alberta

The 79th Annual Western Canada Conference was once again held in Banff, AB. The Grand Lodge of Alberta was represented by our Grand Master, MWBro Ken Cheel; The Deputy Grand Master, RWBro Reg Karbonik; The Senior Grand Warden, RWBro Terry Murray and the Junior Grand Warden, RWBro Chris Uchman and their wives. The Grand Secretary, RWBro Bill Kostenuk and the Grand Treasurer, MW Bro John Hart rounded off our Grand Lodge representation.

The conference began after the 4:00pm check-in on Wednesday afternoon with the Grand Lodge of Alberta officers hosting Meet and Greet sessions with their various counterparts. This gave the Junior Grand Wardens from the Grand Lodges of Alberta, British Columbia & Yukon, Manitoba and Saskatchewan an opportunity to meet, in some instances for the first time, and share their individual hopes, aspirations and visions which they have for the ensuing four years.

After the Meet and Greet, we were joined by our ladies, had a Greek dinner at the Balkan Restaurant and an evening of lively discussion and great camaraderie.



Thursday morning, the delegates from the four Western Canadian Jurisdictions convened in the Cascade Masonic Hall and the Western Canada Conference was officially opened by MWBro Norm Lyons, the Grand Master of The Grand Lodge of Manitoba and this year’s Conference President. After the opening and convocation, the new Junior Grand Wardens were introduced by their respective Grand Masters.

Four excellent and thought-provoking papers were given by the respective Senior Grand Wardens from the four provinces. After each paper was delivered, it was discussed in break-out sessions moderated by the Junior Grand Wardens. After each

break out session concluded the Junior Grand Warden gave a five-minute summary of his groups discussion.

The first paper, presented by RWBro Dean Elliot, the Grand Senior Warden of the Grand Lodge of Saskatchewan was entitled "Does attendance matter?" The paper was designed to stimulate discussion amongst those in attendance. It was focused more about posing questions related to the particular question that was the title of the paper than about arguing a thesis.

The second paper, presented by RWBro Jun Manalang, the Senior Grand Warden from the Grand Lodge of Manitoba was entitled "Protocol and Procedures - Back to Basics". This well delivered paper fostered a lively discussion related to decorum within the lodges and how we have become too informal over time in a misguided perception of survival.

Our Senior Grand Warden, RWBro Terry Murray, gave us a choice between two papers based on different subject matters. Without divulging the titles of the papers, he offered a choice between "Bold and Controversial" and "Inspirational and Uplifting". The consensus was to hear the Inspirational and Uplifting paper. This exceptionally presented paper, was entitled "Harmony though Grace the Embodiment of Masonic Virtues". and explored the various meanings of Grace and how it corresponds to Harmony.

The final paper, presented by RWBro Ken Overy, the Senior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia & Yukon was titled "The Relevancy of Freemasonry". It delved deeply into the relevancy of freemasonry historically as well as in today's society. It created a lively discussion around the modern "society of individuality" and how society has lost the ability for civil discussions. These conversations led us to believe that Masonry is needed more than ever to uplift our society.

The conference business was concluded Friday morning with discussions on future location, ensuring the Conference is held within an affordable budget, and gives true value to the various jurisdictions. The Conference concluded with the installation of next year's President, RWBro Dan Olmsted (SK) and the Vice-President, RWBro Terry Murray (AB). Following a farewell lunch, the delegates departed for their respective jurisdictions.

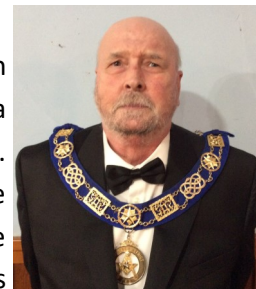


In conclusion, The Western Canada Conference far exceeded my expectations and is a valuable tool for development of our own Grand Lodge through the shared experiences and insight presented by all the jurisdictions.

Your DDGMs 2019–2020

DDGM Dinosaur District

RWBro Al Gingell was born Sept 6, 1949 in Prince George B.C. He moved to Alberta with his family 1960 relocating to Calgary. As a teen he worked on a fish scow on the B.C. coast, then served a term with the Canadian Armed Forces until finding his chosen field. He spent 36 years in his chosen field, apprenticing in Alberta before becoming an interprovincial licenced motor mechanic. A shoulder injury forced him to retire from mechanics, but being too full of energy to retire, he pursued a second career as a Semi Transport driver.



Al Married his wife Sandra, a nurse in 2000 they moved to Strathmore in 2007, where he became a driver and driver trainer with the Strathmore Handi-Bus Society. On Christmas Day 2018, he was hit with a severe virus that forced him into total retirement.

RWBro Gingell joined his Mother Lodge Strathmore #53, being Initiated on the 7th of March 2011, Passed May and Raised in 03 Oct. he affiliated with Irricana Lodge #137 in 2014, becoming the WM for the 2016 Masonic Year and elected DDGM of Dinosaur District for the 2019 / 20 term

RWBro AL is an Honorary Life Member of both Gleichen Lodge #36 and Hanna Lodge #78. He is a strong believer in Visitation to Lodges and participation in Degree Work and Lodge participation in the District.

Mighty Peace District

RWBro Carl Ball was born in Fredericton NB in 1974, and the family moved to Red Deer in 1976. Carl lived, worked, and was schooled in Red Deer and Edmonton until he found his calling to become a motorcycle mechanic, and trained at Fairview College. His career took him to Calgary, where he met his wife Shannon. Carl entered Freemasonry in Calgary in 2008, where he was Initiated, Passed and Raised at St. Mark's #118.



Carl and Shannon moved to Fairview in 2009 for Carl to become a Harley-Davidson® technical instructor, and Carl joined

Northlands Lodge #147, proceeded through the chairs, and served as the WM from 2015-2017.

Carl is well known throughout the district due to his affiliation with other masonic bodies, Royal Arch Wapiti Chapter #34, Grande Prairie, Allied Masonic Degrees Peace Council #224 in Dawson Creek, BC, and Thirteenth Pillar chapter of Widows' Sons. Carl has recently received the degree of Royal Master in the Cryptic rite in Enoch Council UD in Dawson Creek, and became a Knight Templar in Preceptory #46 Edmonton in September 2019.

DDGM Lakeland District

R.W. Bro. Blair Mitchell joined Free Masonry in Fort McMurray AB, at Fort McMurray Lodge No. 195 in 1998,

Initiated on March 17 / 1998, passed to Fellowcraft on May 19, 1998 Raised to a Master Mason on October 20, 1998

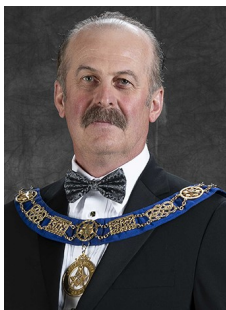
Joined the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in Edmonton 1999, Grand Elect Perfect and Sublime Mason 14^o of Edmonton Lodge of Perfection, Nov 6, 1999 Knight Rose Croix 18^o of Mizpah Chapter of Rose Croix, Nov 6, 1999, Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret 32^o in Edmonton Consistory, Oct 28, 2000. Installed Worshipful Master of Fort McMurray Lodge No. 195, 2006. Joined the Order of The Eastern Star, in Fort McMurray Chapter No.137, Feb 13, 2007. Affiliated with Ye Olde Craft Lodge #196 in Edmonton, Apr 11, 2009. Appointed to the office of Grand Steward for MWBro John Slade, Jun 14, 2014.

Blair moved to Fort McMurray, AB from Saint John New Brunswick in 1979 as Journeyman welder, joined Ironworkers Union Local 720 in 1980, worked maintenance and construction at Syncrude and Suncor plants.

He met his wife Lise in 1985 they started their family in 1987 with daughter Lindsay and son Joshua. In 2007 they moved to Stony Plain to pursue his career in Quality Control as a Level 2 welding inspector for KBR. Started a small business as a Contract Welding Inspector in Aug 2011 and at present do shutdowns and project work.

DDGM Northern Lights District

RWBro David George Wright was born in Edmonton on November 25, 1966. David grew up in Edmonton and has always



been part of the Masonic family. Following his brother Robert, he joined Edmonton Chapter, Order of DeMolay in 1981, and was Master Councilor in 1985, he was nominated for the degree of Chevalier and received the Representative DeMolay award. David was an Active member of the Canadian Supreme Council of DeMolay - serving until 2001. David received the Cross of Honour for his extensive support and service to DeMolay.

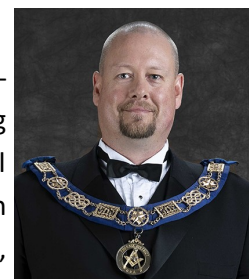
His father Alan was a 25 year member of Dominion Lodge #117. David was initiated, passed, and raised in Ivanhoe Lodge #142 in 2001. He is an active member within the lodge and was placed in the chair of King Solomon in 2009 and then as Secretary 2011-14. David was the Northern Lights District secretary 2014-15 and was elected Northern Lights District Deputy Grand Master at the October 2019 District meeting. David was exalted as a Royal Arch Mason in Capital City #13 in 2016.

David received an honours diploma as a Telecommunications engineering technologist, along with a P.A.C.E. certificate from N.A.I.T. in 1987. He has worked for Novatel Communications. Then worked in oilfield machine shops starting with Argus Machine 1988-2001, and has been working for United Tool Supply Ltd. since 2013. During the year ahead David wants to give his support to the district by always being there to lend a hand, to listen to issues and to ask the question "How can I help?" – to be a loyal friend and brother as an expression of his commitment to the craft.

DDGM Phoenix District

RWBro Kevin Johnson was born in Sherwood Park, Alberta in 1973. After moving to Calgary in 1986, he finished High School and enrolled in the University of Calgary. In 2001 he was granted two science degrees, specifically in Zoology and Geology. His career has taken a slightly different path than his academic beginnings, as he has now been working in Calgary's homeless serving sector for more than twenty years.

In 2003 he was initiated into Freemasonry, in Concord Lodge #124. He was passed and raised the following year. He served as Worshipful Master in 2010 and again in 2015. Having joined Al Azhar Shriners in 2007, Kevin remains an active member of the Tin Lizzie Corps.



DDGM Palliser District

RWBro Roger Cowan was born in June 1959 and raised in Medicine Hat. After attending the University of Lethbridge he moved to Brooks in September 1982 to begin teaching high school Chemistry and Biology at Duchess School. In 1999 he transferred to Brooks Composite High School. He obtained his Master's Degree in Educational Leadership in 2012 from the University of Lethbridge and retired from teaching after 35 years in June 2017. He is married to Cathy Fox and together they enjoy camping, golfing and travelling.



This year marks his 35th year in craft masonry. He was initiated, passed and raised in Medicine Hat Lodge #2 in 1984 and affiliated with Brooks Lodge #73 in 1985. He has served as Worshipful Master in Brooks Lodge five times (1989, 1990, 2004, 2013, and 2014). He was appointed Grand Steward in 2006-2007. He is also a member of the Royal Arch and served as first principle of Harmony Chapter in 1994 and District Steward in Grand Chapter. Two of his proudest memories are being raised by his father Brother Ralph Wellington Cowan and witnessing his father-in-law WBro Herb Fox installed as Worshipful Master of Mizpah Lodge in 2019 after 66 years in freemasonry.

DDGM Yellowhead District

RWBro. Chris Woods was born in 1982 in Rocky Mountain House Alberta. He lived in such communities as Galahad, Forestburg, Wetaskiwin, Spruce Grove, Stony Plain and Entwistle... Chris now calls Spruce Grove home.



RWBro. Woods was Initiated, Passed and Raised in Base-line Lodge #198 in Spruce Grove, he also served as Worshipful Master there in 2012-2013.

RWBro. Woods is married to a wonderful woman named Natalie and they have two sons, Maddox, age 6 and Gabriel, age 3.

RWBro. Woods believes that if you have to be anyone other than yourself, be Batman!

Letters to the Editor

VWBro Stan Clayton's 90th Birthday Celebration

On Saturday, November 23, 2019 over seventy-five friends, relatives and members of the Masonic community gathered at Spruce Cliff Community Centre in Calgary to celebrate VWBro Stan Clayton's 90th Birthday. Friendly conversation, a mouth-watering spread of delicious food for snacking, and the wonderful singing voice of Nancy Thompson, Stan and Peg's daughter, all contributed to a most enjoyable afternoon.

For countless years Stan has been a pillar in the Masonic community within the Grand Jurisdiction of Alberta and beyond. It was heart-warming to see his many contributions to the Fraternity acknowledged by the attendance of so many of his Masonic brethren.

VWBro Irwin Vines

Ed. At the time of going to print no picture was available. Congratulations VWBro Stan for your service to your family, community and Freemasonry

Good morning Brother!

Empire Lodge No. 63 in Edmonton holds a yearly event known affectionately as the "Grog and Gruel".

This event is open to all Brothers and other "Well Known Gentlemen" (friends and seekers)

It features a catered dinner (Real Man Food) and "Top Shelf Liqueurs" as well as a Texas Holdem poker tournament.

A fun night for all and a great way to spend time with Brothers and meet potential candidates.

The 2019 tournament winners are shown in the attached photo and are:

(Left to right)

Brad Stannard - third place

Bro Sam Brownfield - first place

Bro Paul Bartosek - second place

F&S,

W Bro Bruce Wilson



Seasons Greetings

From the Staff of the Grand Lodge of Alberta

One of the great pleasures of the Holiday Season is the opportunity to exchange cordial greetings and to say thank you to all those who have worked closely with us over the year. We thank you for the time you have so willingly given and your tireless efforts with our transition to our new premises. We also want to extend Seasons Greetings to your families, for without their support and understanding, we would not have the dedication and commitment of so many of you.

We wish you all a wonderful Christmas and may the happiness and good cheer of the Holiday Season be yours throughout the New Year.

We hope to see you all in 2020.

Nicole McCoy and Bill Kostenuk

Grand Masters December itinerary

Visit the following link to see the Grand Masters Schedule

<https://freemasons.ab.ca/index.php/grand-masters-schedule/>

Whenever a new invitation has been accepted by the Grand Master it will automatically be updated.

Ed. My sincere thanks to all the readers of the Alberta Freemason for their attention, submission of articles letters (keep them coming) and to the lodges and organisations who have sent in notices of their special occasions. It is with our continued effort and involvement that we keep Freemasonry alive in the Province of Alberta and our Alberta Freemason remains a beacon to show the brethren near and far of that fact.

However you and your family celebrate this time of year, I send you wishes of health and happiness from my family to yours

