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# Grand Lodge Bulletin

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Editor, M.W. Bro. W.J. COLLETT

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## GIVE THANKS WILD ROSE COUNTRY

It matters not how far I roam,  
My thoughts go back to my country home.  
In the land of the rockies and the rose,  
With all the beauty of nature's clothes.

I'm happy when I'm in the west,  
Because its where I feel the best.  
There's summer rains and winter snows,  
And through an arch the chinook blows.

From my home upon a hill,  
When the night is dark, and the air is still,  
I look up into the sky,  
To the home of Him on high.

A coyote yodels to a northern light,  
And a great owl talks sometimes at night.  
When a crocus comes, I know its spring,  
And the birds that can, begin to sing.

Warmed by the sun and kissed by the rain,  
The wild rose grows on our western plain.  
There's nothing pleases my eyes and nose,  
As much as does our Prairie Rose.

On the morning air rings a stallion's call,  
And colts and calves run around 'till fall.  
When on my horse or in my car,  
I keep on course by the great North Star.

After a summer of sun and rain,  
My fields are covered with grass and grain,  
When I start to harvest I never stop,  
I stack my hay and store my crop.

I came with two hands from my Mother,  
One for myself and one for another.  
I use them both when I am able,  
And help with food for every table.

I know not when the call may come,  
To answer for the things I've done.  
But when my work is ended and I'm laid beneath the sod,  
I hope to go where my friends have gone, to be with them  
and God.

L. F. Snyder

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Last spring, W. Bro. G.A. Hamilton, Worshipful Master of Concord Lodge No. 124 asked a group of newly raised Masons in Concord Lodge to put on paper their reactions, impressions and ideas as they progressed through Freemasonry. The group met and composed the paper that was given to the Lodge by Bro. J.L. Clark. The Lodge was moved by the very serious and sincere manner of the participants and thought it would be very worthwhile to share the paper with other Lodges.

**By Bro. J. L. Clark  
Concord Lodge No. 124**

The assignment given to our group tonight was the following — preparation of a short talk on “First Impressions with regard to Freemasonry and Concord Lodge.”

By “our group” I am talking about Ian Bagwell, Noel Bower, Mike Friedlander, Brian Green, John McHugh and, of course, myself, all of whom were initiated into Freemasonry, passed to the second degree, and raised to M.M. status in 1982.

The idea behind the assignment, we believe, was to derive our first impressions on various aspects of Masonry, while subjects and ideas were still relatively fresh in our minds, thus being able to look at the topic reasonably objectively before a lot of what goes on becomes “old hat” or routine to us.

The scope of the talk has been a difficult one to define, but we have looked at Freemasonry, not just from idealistic or ritualistic points of view, but have tried to take a broader outlook, and question what is wrong with the system, why members do not attend, offer suggestions on how improvements could be made, and such like.

These then are our first impressions:

When we all arrived at Concord Lodge for the first time last year, there were probably varied reasons for all of us being here wishing to become a Mason. For some of us it was because family were members, others due to admired friends being members, along with a desire for knowledge, and even plain curiosity. Where we were all alike, however, was in our total ignorance of what lay ahead of us.

In retrospect, on commencing with our first degree, we were in agreement that one of the first things that made an impression on us that night, was upon taking the E.A. obligation, and hearing the traditional penalty for the first time. This certainly began to bring home to us that this was a serious organization we were attempting to enter, and the commitment should not be taken lightly.

Making perhaps an even greater impression, however, was when we were restored to light. This is when we all got our first look at the inside of the lodge, its furniture, and symbols, all of which are very impressive to a newcomer.

What we did not immediately realize, was that not only were we being restored to light in a physical sense, but that we were opening the door to masonic light, or

knowledge, and this was actually our starting off point into an area of enlightenment that we all hope will continue to expand through our masonic years.

In starting to pass some of that knowledge on to us, the teachings of the N.E. angle lecture in particular were a comforting start, through its inference that all Masons are created equal.

Other lectures and charges were delivered that first night, all very meaningful, but with the speed and diversity of new experiences hurled at candidates, so much went over the top of our heads.

This was probably most true of the J.W.’s lecture, which, while imparting a fund of knowledge, to a candidate whose head is already reeling with new ideas, much of its content is lost. This is something we will offer further comment on later.

Our second and third degrees came along quickly thereafter, continuing where the first left off, and this is something else we will touch on later, that they came and went almost too quickly.

But nonetheless, we were now M.M.’s, had attended a few lodge meetings, most of us had visited other lodges, and were now in a better position to make observations.

One of the most fundamental observations which can’t help but make an impact on a new Mason (of any degree), is the genuine and unpretentious feeling of brotherhood and goodwill which is immediately obvious upon entering the lodge. The feeling that you are not only among fellow members of an organization, but amongst friends and brothers, that you can completely relax and enjoy the company in a mood of complete harmony, is remarkable, and in our experience in Calgary, rather unique.

Upon visiting other lodges in the City, it has become apparent that this is consistent in other lodges here, and based on a recent visit I made to a lodge in Scotland, seems worldwide.

This situation has certainly created an impression of warmth in us all, and given us a pride of belonging, to Freemasonry in general, and Concord Lodge in particular.

What makes this phenomenon all the more remarkable to us, is that our membership is drawn from people of many varied and diverse backgrounds in all aspects, e.g. national, economic, social standing, all getting together with a common goal, that being the betterment of themselves and humanity in general. Going on the premise that Freemasonry offers guidelines, which, if followed, will help make good men better men, then Concord members must be following these guidelines well, judging by the quality of people we have met here during our time in Masonry.

One impression we have had, which could perhaps be regarded as a concern, is the fact that although we apparently have in the region of two hundred plus members of Concord Lodge, only about twenty percent of that number will turn out to attend lodge meetings.

One potential reason for this, particularly among the more newly raised Masons, could well be embarrassment caused by a lack of knowledge.

If a newly raised brother misses a few meetings, or does not immediately get involved with lodge work, then by not being sure of exactly what he is supposed to know, the easy route to avoid imagined awkwardness is non attendance. This in turn is a vicious circle by which the longer someone stays away, then the harder it becomes to come back.

The answer to this problem lies in the education field, an area whose importance, in our opinion, cannot be over-emphasized.

It was the general consensus of our group that the current system of candidates going through three degrees in as many months, in the process having to memorize standard questions and answers and obligations, while ensuring a minimum standard of learning, by no means gives a candidate an acceptable level of understanding of the degree work.

For example, we were agreed that it was only in later days, while learning specific lectures for participation in degree work, that the knowledge contained within them finally filtered through to us.

This is a problem from the point of view that you can become a Master Mason without being a "master" in the accepted meaning of the term, that is without either remembering or understanding a significant amount of the content of the degrees.

This leaves a feeling in new members of being almost an incomplete Mason, a situation we feel could be alleviated by a more complete education program, as surely with a broader depth of knowledge and understanding amongst our new members, it could only make for a higher voluntary membership and a stronger lodge.

As we see education as such an important issue, a key issue in fact, and as we have isolated it as a problem area, it is only fair that we should make suggestions as to what could be done to alleviate the situation.

We would like to see some short explanatory lectures given in lodge by experienced and knowledgeable brethren (perhaps after each degree) where an informal and concise explanation of various aspects of the degree could be given, explaining allegoric content and its application to the construction of the moral temple.

These could be regular short talks, not just based on degree work, but in fact on any topic that would help expand our knowledge and answer queries prevalent among new Masons; e.g. what is secret and what is not?; what are the differences between York and Canadian rites?; an explanation of concordant bodies; etc.; all information that may be well known to older members, but which has some of us confused.

As we have stated before, we tend to think the degrees come just too quickly on each others heels to allow time for a proper understanding of each to be developed. This is very obvious in the First Degree, where-by in one month the obligation and various questions can be mem-

orized, but at what expense? How many second degree candidates remember or understand more than two or three excerpts from the J.W.'s lecture in the previous degree, a masonic goldmine of information.

The only remedy for this we feel, is to take longer between degrees. This may be construed as an "I'm all right Jack" attitude on our part, "We're in, now lets make it hard for everybody else", but this is not the case.

By taking a bit longer, for instance two months, providing explanatory talks at lodge meetings, and possibly additional information discussion nights where specific aspects of the degree work could be discussed (not necessarily just for candidates but for anyone interested) then we feel that Concord lodge would reap the benefits. Firstly, by ensuring that our membership were coming into Masonry as well educated as they wished to be, secondly non-attendance due to ignorance would be reduced, and thirdly it would help ensure a continued high standard of ritual work, another must as far as we are concerned.

We would like to make it clear that we would foresee the aforementioned recommendations as being supplementary to the current mentor plan, which we all found to be well run by informed brethren, and of great help to us.

There is a danger with a paper such as this that, by necessity, perhaps an unfair proportion of time is given over to negative thoughts.

On the whole though, our unanimous overwhelming first impression with regard to Freemasonry and Concord Lodge has undoubtedly been on the positive side. We have enjoyed immensely our short spells in masonry to date, both from a social standpoint, (really enjoying our visits to lodge) and also from the point of view that we hope its teachings have made us slightly better human beings. If not, then the fault is ours, and not the Craft's.

Having taken more than our allotted time, we would now like to finish off. We have enjoyed the opportunity of interchanging thoughts amongst ourselves, and would like to thank our W.M. for the opportunity of experiencing some of those thoughts tonight. Thanks must also go to W.B. Neil MacDonald for his guidance and continued interest in the paper. And finally, thank you to you all for your attention.

**MASONIC SPRING WORKSHOP  
APRIL 13th, 14th & 15th, 1984  
THE BANFF CENTRE**

Please mark your calendar for the above mentioned weekend.

The Theme is "Responsibility to Your Obligation"

The Theme Speaker is M.W. Bro. M. Norman MacIver, Past Grand Master.

Plan now to be in attendance and watch your February Bulletin for more information.

## GENUINE SERVICE

R.W. Bro. Rupert Cann will have been Secretary Treasurer of Quarry Lodge No. 70 for Fifty Years when the year 1983 comes to a close. After much thought he has decided that he will retire from office at that time. This is indeed a record of devoted service that is very seldom equalled. Quarry Lodge appreciates the years of service and would like to know if the record has ever been equalled.

## YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

This issue of the Grand Lodge Bulletin is really a home made product. We have a paper from Concord Lodge, a poem written by an Alberta Mason and an article submitted by Star of the West Lodge. In addition we are able to pay tribute to one of the great Alberta Masons, R.W. Bro. Rupert Cann, who has served his own Lodge and Grand Lodge for so many years. In the opinion of your editor this is how the issues of the Bulletin should be made up. Alberta is quite able to produce its own research and writing and certainly it should be able to come up with plenty of news about "Masonry at Work".

We know that the material for the issues is "out there" somewhere. The problem is to get it from "out there" to "in here". Really, all you need to do is to put the material in an envelope and mail it to the Bulletin care of the Grand Lodge Office. You must remember that the publishing deadline is six weeks ahead of the actual publication. That is in order for something to make the December Issue of the Bulletin we must have it by October 15.

At the Grand Lodge Communication the editor had opportunity to speak to a number of the brethren about material for the Bulletin. One frequent comment was that the person had something but he didn't think it was good enough. That is not so. Anything produced in Alberta is good enough. Albertans do not have a reputation for having a feeling of inferiority.

So put your papers, your pictures, your news item in an envelope and mail them to us.

## MASONIC LODGE TOASTS 75 YEARS

(from The Leduc Representative)

Members of the Masonic Fraternity of Leduc Saturday celebrated the 75th anniversary of the formation of their lodge's charter.

The anniversary was marked with a special banquet meeting Saturday afternoon at the Masonic Lodge Hall and a banquet and program in the evening.

An Emergent Meeting to mark the anniversary was held in the lodge hall at 3:30 p.m. The Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Alberta was present, as were a number of Past Grand Masters and District Deputy Grand Masters.

The Grand Master paid tribute to the dedication of members who continue to exemplify the teachings of Masonry, and outlined the history of the lodge. He mentioned the lodge hall is now made available to community groups such as Al Anon, Alcoholics Anonymous, the Cancer Society and other non-profit organizations.

Grand Master Harbin was accompanied to the lodge meeting by a number of past and present Grand Lodge officers. Nineteen different lodges were represented at the meeting.

The service of Thanksgiving in the hall was delivered by the Worshipful Master of the Lodge Peter Hudson, assisted by officers of the lodge. Hudson, a resident of Beaumont and a lay minister of his church, performed his duties in the absence of Rev. Edmund J. Thompson, a former minister of St. David's United Church of Leduc, and a member of Star of the West Lodge and a Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Alberta.

A banquet was held in the evening at the Leduc Inn. The annual Masons ladies' night was held in conjunction with the anniversary banquet program.

Morley Merner, a Past Grand Master, was the guest speaker.

A number of toasts were proposed and responded to and the gathering heard several solos preformed by Terrance Atkinson, a well-known local singer.

To recognize the occasion, the lodge had a commemorative plate made as well as a special 75th anniversary medallion, both available through lodge members. They cost \$6.50 and \$5.00. Write P.O. Box 1427, Leduc T4E 2Y8.

Star of the West Lodge was organized by a group of newcomers to the town of Leduc in 1907. All were members of Masonic lodges in other parts of the world, mostly in Ontario and the northwest United States.

Prior to the formation of the province of Alberta in 1905, 18 Masonic lodges had been chartered by the Grand Lodge of Manitoba.

With the formation of the Grand Lodge of Alberta in 1905, these 18 lodges became the first numbered in Alberta.

Many communities had men interested in the formation of a Mason's lodge and Leduc was one of these. The death of a prominent village merchant who was a Mason, prompted the Masons to get together and apply for a charter.

In 1907, the Grand Lodge of Alberta agreed to forming a Leduc lodge. Like all others, it was put under dispensation for one year. The charter was finally awarded May 30, 1908.

Other than the town of Leduc and the local school authority, it is believed the Mason's lodge is the oldest organization in the town to hold continuous meetings and prepare an annual report of its activities.

In its 75 years of activity Star of the West has experienced many changes.

During the 75 years, over 300 men have joined this lodge. Many are now deceased, many more have taken their demits and affiliated with lodges elsewhere. Others dropped their membership in the depression years when they could not pay their dues. The lodge's annual historical records show some farmer members paid annual dues by supplying cream, chickens and so on for the annual ladies night.

One of the members who was prominent in local, municipal and provincial affairs was Robert Telford, the former member of the North West Mounted Police established a "stopping house" on the Calgary-Edmonton Trail where the town of Leduc is now located.

Another was George Liggins, who was the first CPR agent at Leduc. Like Robert Telford, he bought 160 adjoining acres from the CPR.

Liggins donated two building lots to the lodge where the first house was built in 1909, on the southwest corner of what is now 50 Ave. and 50 St.

Historical records show the 32nd member to be accepted into the fraternity was Stanley G. Tobin, who later became involved in provincial and federal politics.

Another pioneer Leduc businessman was Roland F. Aicher, the 40th member of Star of the West No. 34. He came from Iowa City before World War I and operated the Waldorf Hotel.

W. J. "Bill" Craigen was another charter member of the lodge. He was worshipful Master of the lodge in 1909 and 1949 — believed to be an unsurpassed record.

In later years, John Rolston of Thorsby was active in the lodge and elected to a provincial office in 1962. The late Jim Horne and Cliff Johnson of the Clearwater district northeast of town were active members.

Other early members were merchants John Edwin Brown and Edgar Noel Bullock and teacher Harvey Chittick.

The historical records show the founding members of the lodge were businessmen and farmers from the immediate area. As country to the west opened up, men from these areas joined the lodge. This was particularly true of men from Calmar and Devon.

Many of the present members now live in south Edmonton. Of 95 members, 65 are considered "local". The others live in British Columbia and other parts of the world.

Two esteemed brethren of the lodge are Freeman MacDonald of Calmar who was Worshipful Master of the lodge in 1932 and Harvey Theriault of Leduc who held the same office in 1934. Both of these members will be recognized by the Grand Lodge with a jewel of the office for being masters of this lodge over 50 years ago.

