



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Vol. 61, No. 10

Editor: MWBro Robert E. Juthner

December 1996

The Season's Greetings

When I was asked to write a Christmas message to the Craft, some thoughts to ponder came to mind. Do we live on the basis of appreciation — not comparison? Do we search for the unique elements that each person or group brings to life, and then live to encourage them, to give our best? Do we seek to understand those who think differently from ourselves and speak the truth to those who think the same? Do we do all this only at this spiritual time of sharing and caring for our fellow man, or do we do this throughout the year?

As the peaceful white blanket is upon us and the warm home fires burn, this is the season when good cheer abounds — when the bright Christmas lights go up and cheerful responds of good health and prosperous New Year are heard. As this peaceful and harmonious feeling descends upon mankind, oh, that brief joyful time of Christmas is here!

We live in a land composed mostly of the descendants of immigrants, where we share and embrace beliefs and multicultural diversity. Participation on the part of individual citizens is essential for growth and human aspiration, as a concept, is broad and comprehensive. We meet the basic needs of life to face the human distress of loneliness with the merits of companionship and the concern to enjoy life with the certainty of mortality. As this century comes to a close, we turn to meet the numerous challenges of tomorrow. Let us, in the Craft, keep ourselves in balance as we develop our intellect, in order to be an example to all mankind. May we view other men and communities as important and as worthy as ourselves. A person's esteem is not measured by his material possessions. We, in the Craft, are proud of our reputation for upholding the faith and sharing with others in a non-judgmental way. Therefore, be at peace within your soul and with your God.

As we embark upon a new year, may I extend my best wishes for the holidays and for health and happiness throughout the year. We can come to understand that there are some things we do for self-fulfilment, things whose enduring value is that they enable us better to understand. They become steps. One step leads to another and, one day, we look back and are astounded at just how far we have travelled.

VWBro A.N. "Gus" Odinsky
Grand Chaplain

Hanukkah

The story of "Hanukkah" commemorates the restoration and rededication of the temple in Jerusalem by the Maccabees. The temple was destroyed by the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the 2nd century BC. As part of this rededication, it was necessary to rekindle the temple lamp (Menorah),

which was always kept burning in the Holy Place. Only one small flask of sacramental oil could be found. This was usually sufficient to keep the lamp burning for one day only. Miraculously, the lamp burned for 8 days. Hence, the holiday lasts for 8 days and is called "The Festival of Lights."

After the Greeks conquered Israel, they endeavoured to "hellenize" the country. This aroused the resentment of the religious elements of the Jewish population. They refused to surrender to the Greek practices of paganism and the acceptance of Hellenic deities. The Jews, led by Mattathias and his five sons and a few hundred followers, revolted. Eventually, the Jews, led by Judah the Maccabee, son of Mattathias, routed the enemy and re-entered the Holy City.

Hanukkah is celebrated, in accordance with the lunar calendar, starting on the 25th day of Kislev — the day the Maccabees entered the Holy Temple. This falls on a different day each year, but usually in the month of December.

In the spirit of the festival, small presents are given to the children, homes are decorated with Hanukkah motifs and dairy foods are generally eaten. The most widespread food eaten, during the holiday, are potato "latkes" (pancakes). Prayers are said both in the home and in the synagogue and the candles are lit on the menorah. One candle is lit each successive night until the last night, when all eight candles are lit.

Considering the historical background of Hanukkah, it is most remarkable that Jewish tradition hardly mentions the military exploits of the Maccabean warriors. A successful revolution was immortalized as a religious triumph.

David Dworkin
Zetland Lodge No. 83, GRA
(Reprinted from *GLB*, Vol. 51, No. 14, 1987)

Season's Greetings from the Grand Lodge Office

The festive season is fast approaching and we are, once again, looking forward to hosting an "Open House" in our Grand Lodge Office. We are pleased to invite you, your ladies and friends to join us on Thursday, December 19th, 1996 between the hours of 9:00 am and 4:00 pm. Judy, Valerie and I look forward to meeting with you and having the opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas in person. To the members we will be unable to meet at this time, please accept our wish to you all for a wonderful Christmas and a new year of good health and happiness.

Gerry Webber
Grand Secretary

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Editorial

Is Mass Recruitment the Answer?

We heard about it in Grand Lodge last June, and now we have it in writing — a memorandum to all Grand Secretaries of the United States and Canada, coming from “The Masonic Service Association of the United States” (“MSA”), dated September 3, 1996. It reports on the results of a “Grand Master’s One Day Class” survey where 14 (US) Grand Lodges have held mass initiations/passings/raisings during the years 1992 to 1996 with class sizes varying from a low of 33 (Alaska) to a high of 820 (Florida) at a time. Nine other Grand Lodges (with that of New Brunswick being the only Canadian) were reported to “consider” a class. There are, however, 37 other North-American Grand Lodges (including all the Canadian ones with the above exception) who are reported as “not considering” this scheme, giving as a reason either that this “would require a constitutional change” or that they are “opposed to the concept.”

Imagine renting the Calgary Saddledome or the Edmonton Coliseum for a “Grand Master’s One Day Class” that’s really worthwhile? “Worthwhile” is the term used in the report, where it says that “all 14 Grand Lodges felt the classes were “worthwhile”. How do they know, at this early stage? Yes, of course, it is in the sense that numbers have swelled overnight, but — and this is a significant BUT — where will these new members be five, ten, twenty or more years from now? Is this not reminiscent of the great influx of membership in our own Jurisdiction during the first two decades following World War II, when it was not uncommon for a Lodge to initiate two dozen men a year? How many of them have absorbed the teachings of Freemasonry and made them the rule for their lives, and where are they now? We are here not talking about natural attrition but about those who never received kindly and effective instruction from their elders and those who found out, belatedly, that this was not really their cup of tea?

For quite some time now, we have heard tales of woe about dwindling membership and have been prone to panic with results such as these “One Day Classes” and other means of propagating the Order for the sake of numbers. Quantity, not quality, appears to be the answer to the survival of Freemasonry on this continent. Why don’t we look to other jurisdic-

tions throughout the world and, particularly, to those whose total membership numbers seem to be the least impressive? In many of these cases, we may find close-knit brotherhoods, more interested in the profound than in the mundane and exerting a beneficial influence on their respective societies. This new technique of mass recruitment might to them be the shock of their lives. Now, how about us? Are we not shocked?

Letter to the Editor

(Grand Lodge Bulletin, September 1996, editorial “No One Meritorious?”)

Not to worry if there are no legitimate nominees for 1996 or 1997. Keep the Masonic Medal of Merit truly unique and special. I see no problem with there being years in which no names are put forth or, if names are put forth, that they not be “legitimate”.

Do not permit this medal to become “watered down”, such as has happened with the 50-year jewel. I feel that it is very unfortunate that an observer is unable to distinguish between two Brothers wearing such a jewel, i.e., between the Brother who has laboured a full fifty years in the quarries and the Brother who has rarely darkened the door of his Lodge between receiving the MM degree and his 50-year jewel.

Keith A. Roberts, PDDGM
 Chinookarch District

Who is Checking the Checker?

By the late MWBro K.W. Aldridge
 PGM and PGS of the Grand Lodge of Quebec

There is no question that, organizationally, we have not lowered our standards. The same may not be said for standards adopted by certain jurisdictions at the Grand Lodge level. How can we not expect some unsuitable material to find its way into our structure, when we have situations where 400 or more candidates are initiated at the same time, as happened recently, and on instructions from a Grand Lodge? Who but the Almighty could possibly determine the quality in such a large quantity of rude material? Why would we even want to consider dumping unselected material into our structure — unless we are preoccupied with the moment and not the future? The reasons and there are doubtless many reasons offered — must be due to an over-reaction to diminishing membership. The fact is that 400 petitioners do not, ipso facto, enhance Lodge membership. In fact petitioning any Grand Lodge does not of itself make a petitioner a member. The right of membership must be by the suffrage of a Lodge. It is the Lodge — and the Lodge alone which will decide who will or will not be a member. There must never be external constraint on a Lodge to accept or reject individuals to Lodge membership. Anything less removes Freemasonry from a fraternity to simply another organization, dictated and directed by an autocratic hierarchy. No Grand Lodge officer, of any rank, has the right to dictate to a Lodge who shall or shall not be a member of that Lodge, except in the case of a member currently under suspension from a regular Lodge. In such a case, Grand Lodge has a right and a responsibility to ensure that the suspended member is not accepted into another Lodge, until such time as the offending member is restored by the will of the Lodge from which he was suspended.

From *As I see it from Here*

(To be continued January 1997)

Where the Bison Roam

The first bison to arrive at Buffalo National Park, in east central Alberta, were shipped by rail in June 1909 from a herd purchased in Montana by the Canadian government. The herd increased in size to over several thousand before the park was closed in 1939. Many of the bison were shipped to numerous zoos around the world and to Elk Island and Wood Buffalo National Parks. In 1940, the territory of the former Buffalo National Park was transferred to the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces Base at Wainwright was established.

Buffalo Park Lodge No. 44, named after the Buffalo National Park which had been established in 1908, was instituted on April 27, 1909. The Lodge has continued to grow with a strong Masonic presence, actively involved in the life of the community of Wainwright and with solid ties to the erstwhile Buffalo National Park and to the Canadian Forces base. Many of the buffalo riders, park employees and military personnel are included among the Brethren of Buffalo Park Lodge.

Based on a contribution by WBro Allen Ford, Buffalo Park Lodge No. 44.

Supporting the Bursary Fund

Individual contributions from our members have been, and will continue to be, the lifeblood of the Masonic Higher Education Bursary Fund. Yet, several Lodges have thought of additional ways to raise funds for this worthy cause, although their contributors cannot expect receipts for income tax purposes. Some Lodges thought of bingos, casinos, fun and silent auctions. One Brother produced woven wall hangings with a Masonic motif, and so it goes.

More recently, Brother Bruce Downton, JW of Grande Prairie Lodge No. 105, made a curio cabinet, which was raffled off, yielding a donation of \$630 to the fund. His initiative, as well as the good will of the Brethren who purchased the raffle tickets, are gratefully acknowledged.

Who, and whose novel idea, will be next?

COMELY, A Home Improvement Program

The COMELY PROGRAM (Calling On Masons of Each Lodge Yearly) is an important tool to assist Lodges in maintaining contact with "Absent Brethren" on a systematic and regular basis. A Lodge's COMELY co-ordinator and committee, as Project Managers, form an integral part in setting the program on a firm foundation. To quote from the program's mission statement, "The COMELY Program was designed to assist Lodges to keep in contact with their members on a systematic and regular basis throughout the year".

There are three basic precepts to the program;

FIRSTLY: To respond to requests from Grand Lodge seeking information about a Brother, on behalf of another jurisdiction.

SECONDLY: To request information, through our Grand Lodge, regarding a Lodge member who has moved to another jurisdiction.

THIRD: The most important aspect of the program is to encourage a Lodge to contact, visit and support its own

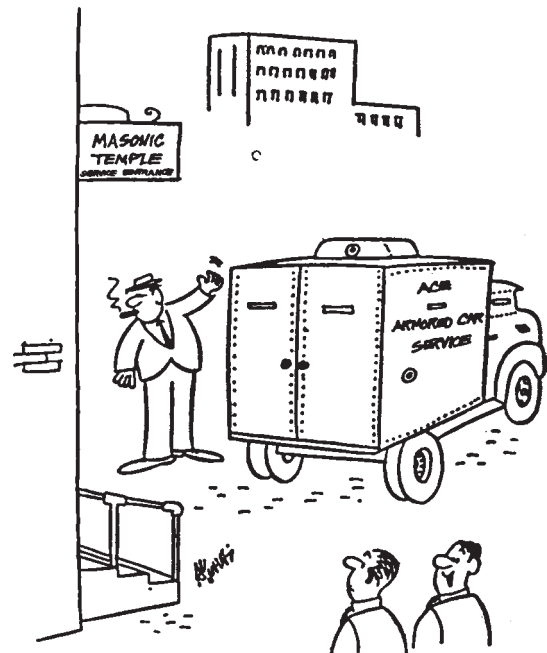
"Absent Brethren". From the notices, the Masters' messages often voice concern regarding dwindling Lodge attendance. It is quite evident WHAT is happening in some Lodges — the COMELY program was developed to assist Lodges and Grand Lodge to find out WHY. Have the Brethren flown south for the winter? Are they confined at home due to infirmity, themselves or of their loved ones, and don't want to worry busy active Brethren for assistance? Family commitments? Are they working away or on the road and need encouragement to take their aprons with them? Have they been away from Lodge for so long that they've forgotten the work? While inter-Lodge visiting is to be encouraged, let us not exclude visiting our own Lodge members in this laudable enterprise.

It is the aim of the COMELY program to rebuild the bridge between a Lodge and its absent Brethren before it has to take the retrograde step to SNPD.

The COMELY program (Form 183.1) sets out a procedure for implementing this important communication tool and recording the findings. In conjunction with Form 183.1, the Lodge's computer wiz can easily keep track of attendance on a spread sheet, using the Lodge register as the reference.

The 183.1 report also forms part of a Lodge's records and will be reviewed by the DDGM on his official visit.

The COMELY Program takes another step forward by encouraging its use as a means of keeping in contact with widows. COMELY is a guide and a tool to assist Lodges in plastering up the cracks between a Lodge and its members and thereby providing a firmer foundation for its activities and, maybe, its survival.



"When Harry makes a contribution, he doesn't fool around!"

S.L.M. Pollard

Tied to Masonic Apron Strings
Macy Publishing

Our DDGMs

Yellowhead District

RWBro Joe Davis was born in Glenarm, Northern Ireland, on March 2, 1946. He makes his home on an acreage near Spruce Grove and is active in the work force as a Millwright. Joe and his wife Judy have two daughters and one son who is a member of Meridian Lodge. He received the degrees of Masonry in Redwood Lodge No. 193 in 1974 and served that Lodge as WM in 1984. He has since affiliated with Meridian Lodge No. 129 and was their WM in 1990. In Grand Lodge, he has served one term on the Board of Benevolence. Joe has twice been Worthy Patron of Stony Plain Chapter No. 119, OES, is a member of the Scottish Rite bodies of Edmonton and contributes to the happiness of our youth as a member of the Clown Unit of Al Shamal Temple, AAONMS.



Three Rivers District

RWBro Stewart Christie was born in Kelvinside, Glasgow, Scotland on April 30, 1928. He resides in Lethbridge, where he has worked as a Hospital Administrator and a Financial Planner. He is married to Louise and the couple have a son and a daughter and five granddaughters. Stewart joined Cairo Lodge No. 32 in Claresholm, in 1974 and served there as WM in 1978 and 1980. He is a member of the Scottish Rite in the Valley of Lethbridge and of Al Azhar Temple, AAONMS, and was President of the Lethbridge Shrine Club in 1991.



Mighty Peace District

RWBro Don Robert Chilcote was born in Bakersfield, California, on July 12, 1942 and immigrated to Canada in 1978. He had served over ten years in the US Marines, last as a Staff Sergeant, and had seen a 13 month tour of duty in Viet Nam. He is presently employed by Ram Motors in Fairview, selling Chrysler vehicles. His hobbies include Ham Radio, the Internet, Jeeping and Hunting. Our Brother is married to Irene (nee Allen, from Worsley, AB). They have two sons who reside in California, and one granddaughter, so far. He received the degrees of Masonry in Northland Lodge No. 147 in 1982 and served as WM of that Lodge in 1985/86, 1988/89 and again in 1994/95/96.



Phoenix District

RWBro Allan K. Sinclair was born in Medicine Hat, AB, on July 30, 1926. He is a Chartered Accountant, residing in Calgary. Allan is married to Earlene. He was initiated, passed and raised in Crescent Lodge No. 87 in 1965, was their WM in 1987 and is a Charter Member of Loyalty Lodge No. 197.



Beaverhills District

RWBro Howard G. Canning was born in Halifax, NS, on December 28, 1938. He is now a resident of Sherwood Park, AB and has worked as an Electronics Technician for AGT since 1979. Prior to that, he had served for over 22 years in the Royal Canadian Air Force, retiring as Sergeant. He and his wife of 37 years, Sue, are the parents of one son and grandparents of "one each". Howie was initiated in September, 1978, passed in January and raised in April, 1979, in Spruce Falls Lodge No. 648 GRC, in Kapuskasing, ON. He affiliated with Sherwood Lodge No. 183 GRA in 1985 and held the office of WM in 1992 and 1993. He is a member of the A&ASR of Edmonton, Al Shamal Temple AAONMS (Oriental Band) and is the Worthy Patron of Edmonton Chapter No. 19, OES.



Grand Master's Itinerary

December

- 2 Strathmore Lodge, Strathmore
- 3 Star of the West Lodge, Leduc
- 4 Bow River Lodge, Calgary
- 5 Foothills Lodge, Calgary
- 6 A&ASR, Edmonton
- 9 Sherwood Lodge, Edmonton
- 10 Victoria Lodge, Fort Saskatchewan
- 11 Tawatinaw Lodge, Athabasca
- 12 Camrose Lodge, Camrose
- 13 Strathcona Lodge, Edmonton
- 14 Commercial Lodge, Edmonton
- 15 Edmonton Preceptory
- 16 Griesbach Lodge, Edmonton
- 19 Wetaskiwin Lodge, Wetaskiwin

January

- 1 New Year's Levee — Saskatchewan Lodge No. 92
- * The Grand Master will also pay surprise visits to Lodges.

Beauty Aid

The Unity of Masons does not come from dull conformity, but rather from the creative talents of each mason, expressed in various ways, and applied to the task of adding beauty to the Temple of Masonry.

(Masonic Messenger)