

Freemasonry is Better than Fiction

By Raymond S.J. Daniels

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Welcome to <http://www.grandlodge.on.ca> the web site of the Grand Lodge Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Canada in the Province of Ontario. It is maintained by the Communications Committee, V.W. Bro. Robert Kliaman, Chairman, Member of the Board of General Purposes, and the web master is R.W. Bro. James Kirk-White. In the Grand Jurisdiction, which covers 412,582 square miles in the Province of Ontario, there are approximately 50,000 Masons in 570 Lodges administered in 44 Districts. The meeting places for the lodges are found in cities, towns, and villages across the Province. The Grand Lodge of Canada was formed in 1855 at a convention in Hamilton. Our Ritual closely follows English Emulation Ritual, which was adopted in 1855, with very slight modifications introduced in the years since. The offices of the Grand Master and the Grand Secretary are located in the Grand Lodge Memorial Building on King Street West in Hamilton.

There is still a lingering misapprehension that Freemasonry is a ‘secret’ society, a notion fuelled by writers of popular fiction (Dan Brown) and screenplays (National Treasure). As the reading public eagerly awaits Brown’s sequel to The Da Vinci Code reported to reveal secrets concerning President George Washington and the Freemasons, we must bear in mind that Dan Brown is not a Freemason and that he is a writer of fiction, albeit a very clever and successful one. Our meeting places are identified by signage with the Square and Compasses, the well-known symbol of Freemasonry, and they are listed in the telephone directory. Members identify themselves by wearing rings, lapel pins, and placing emblems on their vehicles – hardly hiding our membership.

One of the long established traditions in Freemasonry; no one is ever asked or persuaded to join the fraternity. That is a decision that is strictly personal. If a man is interested in becoming a member, he must first ask a Mason about membership in one of our lodges. The common slogan is To Be One Ask One! Serious inquiries may be directed to this web site by posting a note in the Guest Book giving full contact information. This section is regularly monitored and your inquiry will be responded to.

Lodges throughout the province often hold ‘open houses’ in our Friend-to-Friend Program when the public is invited to visit a lodge when explanations of our purposes and practises are given by the officers and brethren of the lodge.

I invite you to explore the vast amount of information posted here by the several Committees of Grand Lodge – as the slogan for tourism in Ontario puts it: “Yours to Discover!” I hope that members and visitors may find it interesting, informative and useful to increase your knowledge and enhance your understanding of Freemasonry. We welcome your comments. Please sign our Guest Book. It is always a pleasure to receive fraternal greetings from Brethren around the world. The best way to learn more about Freemasonry, ask a Mason!

On September 2nd the featured column ‘Social Studies’ by Michael Kesterton in the Globe and Mail, began with this statement: “September has arrived at last, and people are back to doing what they do best: being themselves.” It is the season when many of our lodges in Ontario resume regular meetings following the summer recess, ‘doing what Masons do best’ – studying, learning, and practising their Craft and enjoying the social virtues in an atmosphere of fraternal affection. Yes, in one sense it is true that we are indeed trying to ‘change the world’ by making our small corner of the universe a better place. John F. Kennedy (1917-1963), 35th President of the United States, wrote: “One person can make a difference and every person must try.” Labouring in the quarries as true and faithful craftsmen, may the Great Architect prosper our work in the cause of good and crown our efforts to serve humanity with success and satisfaction.

Raymond S. J. Daniels, Grand Master

Labour Day, 7 September 2009