

District 'C'hronicle

January 2009

Hamilton Masonic District C

Edition No.5

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FROM OUR DISTRICT DEPUTY GRAND MASTER

Brethren, the busy Christmas season is behind us and the start of the New Year is upon us. Bev and I hope each and every one of you had a wonderful holiday season with your families and a happy New Year. Our oldest daughter, her husband, and our two grandsons were here from Chicago and spent the two weeks with us; hence, our house was full with the excitement and the hustle and bustle that young children bring. That is all past now and the New Year is here and with that comes all of our resolutions for the year.

As our Deputy Grand Master said, January is the 'doorway of the year', and we reflect on the accomplishments of the past year and make sincere resolutions to plan for, work at, and complete those projects, enterprises, and commitments that are our responsibility. Projects and commitments like the Blood Donor Campaign and the District Charity are both high on my list of projects that I want to bring to successful completion.

To date we have received financial contributions from 5 lodges for the Canadian Blood Services and the Charity Project has raised approximately \$3000 from donations from 5 lodges and numerous private donations from members and

widows. This is fantastic and I thank all the lodges and other contributors.

Let's keep up the good work. The month of January also signifies the approximate half way point of my term as your DDGM and what an enjoyable time I have had up to now and I look forward to the balance of the year. So brethren, let us refocus on what we need to do in our District to make it exciting going forward as it has been in the past.

FROM THE GRAND MASTER

Grand Lodge had an interesting experience on November 26, 2008, when we were asked to perform a cornerstone laying ceremony in downtown Toronto, at Yonge and Davenport. The CTV owned building at 888 Yonge St., was the home of Masonry in Toronto from 1917 until 1994. The Deputy Grand Master, Grand Secretary, Grand Senior and Junior Wardens, Grand Chaplain and other Grand Lodge Officers were in attendance. Some of you may have seen the ceremony on CTV news and CP24 outlets this week. News media were on hand and the Grand Master was interviewed by three different news groups; it was a uniquely historical occasion.

The President of CTV, and his Executive V.P., Corporate Affairs, explained their wish to preserve the Masonic heritage of the building. They have gone to great lengths to do that by inviting the Grand Master to symbolically lay the cornerstone with Masonic Ceremony. CTV have preserved the Mosaic Pavement in one of the business offices on the second floor and the complete red room on the fifth floor, which housed the Scottish Rite bodies at one time. Other Masonic symbolism still exists throughout the building as we discovered on a tour following the ceremony.

If one asks why the building changed hands, I would say it was because of a shifting membership base. Membership moved closer to Lodges on the perimeter of Toronto as the costs of maintenance spiralled with dwindling support. Does this sound familiar? It should cause each Temple Board and Lodge to look seriously at their finances and plan for the future. I notice in some summonses that several Lodges are facing rising costs head-on by increasing their Membership dues. The burden really does fall on each of us to take ownership and support our Lodge. Compare the cost of your

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dues to other activities in which you engage and you will find that membership in our fraternity is a bargain.

FROM THE DEPUTY GRAND MASTER

At a time when we are informed on all sides that the world is experiencing a period of economic recession, a fact brought close to home by plant closures and employee lay-offs in many communities in Ontario, we need to be vigilant and sensitive to the needs of our Brethren and their families who may require our assistance to bridge the gap. In the days ahead, it may be necessary for the Benevolent Fund of the Lodge to come to their aid and assist “*where need is*.”

The Grand Lodge Committee on Benevolence, R.W. Bro. J. David Bell, Chairman, provides a well-defined process whereby the Lodge may be assisted in their support of a Brother in distressed circumstances. Funds are available. (Contact J. David Bell, #402 – 1630 Paris Street, Sudbury, ON. P3E 3C1 Telephone No. (705) 523-1760, e-mail jdbell”at”personainternet.com). The Committee may also be contacted through the Grand Lodge office in Hamilton.

Be certain that every Lodge Secretary has a copy of the pamphlet ***Guide to Masonic Benevolence*** (2006). Copies are available no charge in quantity from the Grand Secretary’s Office on request. The Charge to the Worshipful Master given at Installation states that a Mason’s “*heart is expanded by benevolence*.” We would do well to adopt the slogan used by the Salvation Army: “*Open your eyes and heart. And give.*” The text of an old Latin antiphon puts it: “*Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est*” – „Where charity and love are, there is God. If we as Masons truly understand that “*Charity comprehends the whole*” it is more than making a monetary donation. It means giving a little of yourself. Kindness is the gift that gives the most. A short visit or a cheerful telephone call to a Brother confined by age or infirmity will “*make a real difference*.” And do not forget the widows, many Lodges remember the widows of those long serving Brethren that have now gone from our midst – a tradition to be encouraged and commended.

In the foreword to the pamphlet mentioned above, these lines are quoted: “*I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow-being, let me do it now; let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.*”

A recently published booklet, ***Further Light: Helpful Information for New Master Masons*** written by Dr. James Tresner and published by The Masonic Service Association of North America, is highly recommended. It is in stock and available from the Grand Secretary’s Office (\$5.00 + postage). It would make a superb presentation gift for each newly raised Master Mason.

FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND SECRETARY

‘Section 300, Constitution of Grand Lodge’

A friendly reminder to those Lodges that have held their Installation recently, please forward the “*Return of Officer*“ form for documentation to the Grand Lodge files. Your prompt attention is appreciated.

GRAND LODGE APPOINTMENTS



On the left is Very Worshipful Brother Jamie Bennett from Electric Lodge No. 495 and on the right is Very Worshipful Brother Brad Carr from Corinthian Lodge No. 513 who was our District Secretary for the last Masonic year.

THE CONDITION OF FREEMASONRY IN HAMILTON DISTRICT C

In 1997, M. W. Bro. William Anderson, Grand Master, commissioned 4 areas of the Jurisdiction to investigate and report in regard to the current condition of Freemasonry. The selected regions were Toronto, Hamilton, London and Ottawa. We in the Hamilton Districts struck a working Committee of significant, active and experienced Masons of that time.

The Hamilton Committee worked diligently in developing objective criteria that could be applied in a standardized pattern to obtain a fair and equitable measurement of each lodge. While using this measurement ‘report card’ with each lodge, additional concerns surfaced. In summary, the conclusions were somewhat congruent with what has been happening with lodges in our Districts since that date and the

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findings were shared with the lodges to use as they determined.

After the first survey, a second report card was sent to each District lodge, allowing them to evaluate themselves, and return their findings. Applying remedies to the areas that they deemed needy, was a shot of fresh air for some ailing lodges, which took heed and made adjustments accordingly. What did your lodge do with these findings?

Since that day, some Grand Lodge Committees have picked up on the 'Report Card' principle and applied it to their tool kit. More recently, some districts have set up an evaluation study, to identify areas a strength as well as weakness. Probably the most notable is the one conducted by the Toronto East District, which gained such import, that an abbreviated summary was presented at Grand Lodge last July. Since then, other Districts are developing their own, unique measuring device.

Recently in the Hamilton area, a group called Young Masons of Hamilton have organized themselves to coordinate new initiatives for the younger Masons. A younger Mason was defined as one who is either new to the Craft or younger in age, and those who gravitated to this group tend to be younger in age. In the fall of 2008, close to 100 younger Masons were asked a series of questions pertaining to their membership, experience and desires. About 28% responded with some interesting replies. Bro. Damon Allen, S.W. of Wardrobe Lodge No.555 was the author of this survey, and has shared his findings with the editor of the Chronicle, which are too lengthy to be published in the Chronicle. If you wish for a copy of those findings, contact Damon at damonallan@cogeco.ca.

In summary, Damon's suggests," *If you are a Lodge and you are looking to improve your operations for the betterment of your new and young Masons or your whole membership, well, the answers are there, but you have to pick up the book. The book you may ask? Well, if you haven't figured out the answers to many of the questions that may be perplexing you and your lodge in its many aspects, then you need look no further than to take an active look at the Brother-to-Brother program. It is all encompassing....*

We are the future and we have a lot to say and contribute. Give us an opportunity to be engaged. We each have our own reasons for joining Freemasonry. The challenge is how we can cater to all members by offering the best possible Masonic experience while inside and outside the Lodges. Successful lodges have found the answers but it has not been without a great deal of effort."

Is it time for our District to develop an evaluation measurement process, (survey) to assist lodges in their quest of becoming a more effective lodge as we enter the 21st century? Should this be an agenda item at the District Mid-term Meeting in February.

PLANNING A MASONIC VISIT



KONA LODGE F. & A.M.

Kailua-Kona, Hawaii

Bro. Les Jarrett, Ancient Landmarks/Doric Lodge No. 654, W.Bro. Lee Sutherland, Union Lodge No. 7, Grimsby, wearing their Ontario aprons and poppies, with their Hawaiian Brethren

Visitation to another Lodge is one of the greatest privileges of a Mason. Any Mason in good standing may visit any recognized lodge in his jurisdiction, his country or abroad, subject to the terms and to the regulations of his own and the visited jurisdiction. To the Masonic traveller the world over has access to the facilities of Lodges, the assistance, companionship, and hospitality of its members, all when he presents himself at the Lodge portals. The strange community and the unfamiliar manner of its citizens disappear upon his acceptance with the friendly and fraternal handshake.

This privilege of visitation, however, is of necessity accomplished by certain responsibilities of the visitor. One must prove to the S.W. of the Lodge that you are indeed a Mason.

This proof can be accomplished in the following ways:

- 1) Have another Mason vouch for you. This brother must have sat in open Lodge with you and is known by the host Lodge.
- 2) Carry a current paid-up dues card to show that you are a member in good standing with your own Lodge.
- 3) Possibly carry a recent Lodge summons with you, especially if it happens to mention your name.
- 4) If you have time, carry other documentation such as
 - a letter signed and sealed by your Lodge Secretary indicating your good standing

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- have a letter sent to the visiting lodge announcing your planned visit
 - if the visiting Lodge is in a foreign country, have your Lodge secretary request the office of the Grand Secretary write a letter to the Grand Lodge of that jurisdiction you wish to visit
 - Note: Check the list found in the front of your Lodge Register to ascertain if the Grand Lodge you are visiting is recognized by the GLOCITPOO.
 - have a valid Canadian passport to attest to your personal identity.
 - prepare a small card containing your personal and Masonic background to assist in your examination and introduction.
- 5) Beside carrying several pieces of personal and Masonic documentation you might be examined by members of the Lodge you will be visiting to satisfy themselves that you are a Mason. This could involve a Board of Trial. You may be asked to take what is called the Tyler's Oath. This oath, Form 3, is found on page 171 of the Grand Lodge Constitution (2007). The oath attests that you are a Master Mason, that you belong to a just and legally constituted Lodge, that you are not suspended or expelled from your Lodge, and that you know of no reason why you should not hold Masonic communications with the Lodge you are planning to visit.
- The Examining Committee conducting the Board of Trial may also request a response to various questions depending upon Masonic experiences and knowledge of the visitor. V.W.Bro. Gordon Crutcher, GLOCITPOO, in his instructional paper on this topic has provided several illustrative questions, which could be used during this Trial.
- a) the signs, grips and passwords in each degree
 - b) the position of the Great Lights in each degree
 - c) the way to approach the altar in each degree
 - d) relate the events during the Third Degree
 - e) whom did he represent in the Third Degree
 - f) how was he raised
 - g) name, in order, the FPOF
 - h) sections from the Book of the Work
- (Ex. B.P., Ex. B.R. and Ex. A.R.)

Visitation is, then, a true privilege. It is a privilege, however, in a greater sense as it enables a Mason to widen his scope of experience, his acquaintances, his fund of knowledge, and his understanding of the complexities of human nature. We shall sometimes find a spiritual life and a renewal of our confidence in mankind's basic honesty and compassion. When we observe men who were complete strangers a short hour before, greet us with a warm and fraternal handshake, we realize that the fraternity is, after all, a collection of Grand Lodges, which in turn are collections of constituent lodges. Again, these lodges are made up of the individual man scattered over the face of the earth, but with a common

meeting point of the mind and heart. Here, are the "grass-roots" of the Craft, and with these qualities the newly raised brother may well plan his Masonic travels.

by Wor.Bro. Wm. MacPherson

Burn brightly but do not burn out!

GOBBLE DY GOOK

(literature that is pompous or wordy)

It is always a delight when we witness the recitation of a piece of Masonic work that is thoughtfully delivered. It is to be hoped that the recipient of such a feat is equally impressed. Although the lecture is performed for the benefit of the candidate, the question arises, "What does he really understand? Has it been meaningful to him or has it been just plain "gobble dy gook"?"

The new candidate no doubt is apprehensive, uneasy and anxious, perhaps even fearful. With this in mind, how much has he truly taken in? He may guess the meaning of some unfamiliar words simply by hearing them in the context of the lecture itself. But this is just an assumption. Only future repetitions and practice will bring real understanding.

Most of us learn a lecture by "rote" (by memory alone, memorizing through repetition). How delighted we are when we reach the point where we can finally recite a portion of work without the aid of a prompt. In presenting a flawless delivery in front of our brethren, we are rewarded with joy, pride and self-satisfaction.

So many of us repeat words and idiomatic expressions (that which is characteristic of our Masonic language such as "within the length of our cable tow") without the comprehension of their true meanings. Early in our Masonic career, it is understandable that we repeat without fully knowing what we are saying. We are told and therefore we do it. ("Repeat after me") But as we progress to greater heights, it is truly unbecoming of a student of Masonry to repeat anything without a full understanding of what we are saying.

Let us look at some of the words that may require some attention:

Speculative	not practising but adhering to the ideas (opposite - operative)
Ineffable	too sacred to be spoken
Notwithstanding	nevertheless, in spite of the few
Indite	to put in writing
Delineate	to mark out or to sketch
Equivocation	being deliberately ambiguous
Heling	hiding – as opposed to "hailing"
Paradox	something that seems to be contradictory
Specie	in kind, accepted coinage of the time
Scruple	what is right, proper and ethical
Diffidants	lack of confidence

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It is incumbent upon us all to research the meanings of unknown words. Our understanding of these words will assist us in learning our work more efficiently. Then, our memorization methods will become increasingly more important to our learning processes and we will be in a better position to share our techniques with less-experienced brethren. It is our responsibility as mentors and leaders of the Craft, to teach our candidates how to learn and how to research unknown words and ideas so that we will not be repeating just "gobble dy gook".

*respectfully submitted by: W. Bro. Tom Fiddes,
District Chaplain*

MASONIC LABOUR

Our Fraternity throughout the ages has revered labour and charges its members to labour to build spiritual Temples throughout their Masonic lives. Labour is a central focus for all our degrees and activities. It is easy to define labour as the act of performing specific duties or the exertion of physical or mental effort. Time, and time again, our Fraternity explains that the operative Mason laboured to erect a building physically or materially, while the speculative Mason labours to build a Temple mentally or spiritually. The ancient Masons physically worked while the more recent Masons mentally worked, so what is to be learned?

Firstly, we should understand that when a Lodge is between its opening and closing, it is "at labour" or "at refreshment". The time when the Lodge is "at work" is when it is engaged in the initiation of candidates into its various degrees, for these initiations constitute Masonic "labour" and it is through these that men become Masons.

Secondly, labour involves more than merely exertion or effort. It expects the exertion to involve difficulty, challenge, or compulsory activities. For the ancient apprentices, there were compulsory tasks, which tested them, both physically and mentally. Moving great stones, breaking off the rough portions to obtain smooth blocks, and having the patience to earn the right to higher wages were placed before all apprentices to determine those who earned the right to advance. Not all were expected to travel this rough road, only those willing to labour with patience and fortitude, and prove they were worthy to advance.

Today's candidate faces similar expectations in memory and proficiency, without the physical aspects. There are challenges in the proof of proficiency and some time constraints, but years have been replaced by months, and polished stone by words. Herein lies an interesting contrast between the operative Mason and the speculative Mason. The operative Mason produces a visible creation, open to judgment. A building is built and the wages paid. His labour is clear and he knows it is done.

On the other hand, what of the speculative Mason and his labour? How does he, or we, know the building is complete, or even being built? The answer to this question must lie in the

eyes of the brethren and within the brother's own conscience. The brother must understand and appreciate his labour for the Craft, and know that his labour is well done. The brother must appreciate the importance of the internal aspect of his Temple and how important his conformity to the moral law is to the Fraternity. Spreading the cement of brotherly love, affection, and happiness must be a constant goal of his labour, as it is for the Fraternity.

When faced with a moral choice or a choice of conscience, the true Mason must choose well, regardless of the temptations of short-term gain. Integrity, honesty, and honour are not idle words within the Fraternity. We work in our Lodges to make ourselves as pure as the lambskin we wear and as deserving of the acceptance of the Great Architect as we may possibly be. Let us never forget that Masonic labour alone will yield the plaudit, "Well done".

Masonic Education Committee, Texas

52nd ADAM ZIMMERMAN MEMORIAL BONSPIEL



Members of the winning rink from left to right: Barry Roberts, Bro. Devin Tuinstra, J.D. Landmarks/Doric No. 654, W. Bro. Ed Mallard, P.M. Landmarks/Doric No. 654, Bro. Alan Fraser, Hillcrest Lodge, No. 594. Hosted by the Lodge of the Ancient Landmarks/Doric No. 654, now in its 52nd year, this Bonspiel is open to all Masons and their curling friends. Each year it is oversubscribed, so get your name in early for next year.

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Doing what they do best! W. Bro. Gord Satchell and S.W. Bro. Stan Satchell of Seymour Lodge No. 272, and Worshipful Master Ian MacLean of Lodge of the Ancient Landmarks/Doric No. 654.

CLOSING OF MY LODGE

The hour is come and the shadows lie
On the circle of just and upright men,

The organ is low and passions cry,
Like the singing of a deep amen.

I see the lights at the altar gleam
Through the mists of a thousand years.
A feeling of peace then fills my dream
Of a land beyond the vale of tears.

My voice shall rise in a closing hymn,
Goodness and mercy in me abiding,
Greatness in the cadence of the hymn
The power and glory inspiring.

When this passing solemn hour is done,
Then, O Lord, I entreat Thy blessing.
My way is merged into the setting sun,
With courage, faith, and hope professing.

Blessed be the brotherhood that binds
The hearts of men to guard the right.
Blessed be the strength of kindred minds,
That turns doubt and darkness into light.

So mote it be.

by V. Wor .Bro. Adam C. Zimmerman Q.C., 1991

FREEMASONRY AND PRAYER

Prayer is an important part of the ritual in the Craft. The opening and closing of the degrees and ceremonies invoke prayer and guidance from God, the "Great Architect of the Universe. Beginning with an examination of the earliest Manuscripts of "Old Charges", the Regis Poem Manuscript of 1390 A.D., shows that all lodge activities were begun with prayer to God.

Prayer is considered by Masons as being an important and integral part of the Order. The Universality of Prayer in Freemasonry can best be expressed in its acceptance of a principle as that "in which all good men agree." The initiate is required to profess a belief in a Supreme Being who is the Creator, Maker and Sovereign over us all. Masons are taught from the very beginning not to start any enterprise without first invoking the guidance of the Deity.

On entering the Lodge the initiate is asked, "In whom do you put your Trust?" The reply forms the foundation of belief in the one True God. The affirmation of that belief inspires within the Mason the spontaneous praise, thanksgiving and honour for the maker and giver of life. The need for prayer is further affirmed for the E.A. when he is presented with the Working Tools of the degree. He is taught the moral interpretation of the 24-inch gauge and that he should apportion a part of each day Prayer, Labour, Refreshment and Sleep. Thus he is encouraged to bring balance to his life and honour to his God by opening the day with prayer. It is significant to observe the order in which the explanation of the 24-inch gauge is given; prayer is stressed as the first requirement.

What is Prayer? It has been described as a petition or solemn or humble request to God for His blessing or thanksgiving. It is a communication between man and God and is a means by which man can coordinate his mind with the will of God. Prayer is universal because it speaks to some basic human need. As Thomas Merton put it, "Prayer is an expression of who we are... We are living incompleteness. We are a gap, an emptiness that calls for fulfillment." Merton's thoughts on prayer fit into the Masonic Philosophy of making good men better.

Prayer in Lodge raises the sights above the petty circumstances of life and affords a glimpse of that lofty perspective. Prayer is a declaration of dependence on God. It brings together the mind of man and the divine Spirit giving confidence to the suppliant that his petition for Divine Guidance will be granted. It creates reason and logical thinking within the petitioner. The Ancient Hebrews exercised a "dialogue" with Jehovah whose "ineffable name" could be pronounced only by letters or syllables. It is the Mason's duty to continue that "dialogue" as a response to the moral imperative set forth by the 24-inch gauge. The main purpose of prayer in the Lodge is not to make life easier, nor gain

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magic powers, but to get to know God “in whom we put our trust”.

The early Masonic Fathers were sincere men of faith and dedicated the Fraternity to the moral and spiritual improvement of mankind. The ceremonies that they developed contained moral lessons that were intended to enhance the spiritual improvement of candidates and the brethren. The ceremonies contained in the modern rituals of our Grand Lodge are intended to foster that spiritual improvement. Freemasonry is not a religion, nor is it a substitute for religion. We are joined together in pursuit of universal brotherhood—recognizing the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. All Masons acknowledge the Supreme Being that imposes order on the Universe. The use of Scripture illustrates the fact that God-fearing men practice our gentle craft. Our ritual clearly demonstrates the extent to which Freemasonry places its dependence on God and the efficacy of prayer.

Freemasons, as builders of character, work on the inner man to polish and refine the raw material. The lodge is a quiet place conducive to reflection and introspection. The lectures, charges and prayers of the several degrees are intended to assist a man to contemplate the deeper meaning of life and to ponder his place and purpose in it. To think seriously about the eternal Why am I here? Where did I come from? What am I doing here? And where do I go from here? When a man puts the timeless precepts and time honoured principles of Freemasonry into practice the world will indeed be a better place. His prayers will have been answered.

Freemasonry’s attitude toward things spiritual is an important part of our belief in the Supreme Being and in the future life. Masons believe that at the time of death the soul returns to God who gave it. Freemasons are bound by the “eternal truths” contained in the Volume of the Sacred Law and those sacred truths are given to us to govern the rules of life and conduct. References, therefore, in the rituals of the Masonic Degrees to the omnipotence of God impresses upon the candidates and the brethren the power of prayer in Masonic Work.

God is not the Great I Was, but the Great I am. In Him we live move and have our being. He speaks to us in nature, in the moral law, and in our own hearts, if we have ears to hear. He speaks most clearly in the V.O.S.L. which lies open on our Altar.

Every prayer in the ritual has a purpose and has an appeal to the Deity for direction and guidance. It is necessary not just to learn the prayers by rote but also to reflect on them and think about their meaning for the life a Mason. The place of prayer in Masonry is not perfunctory. It is not a mere matter of form and note. It is vital and profound. It is truly a great prayer when we join in and place ourselves in the very hands of God, as all must do in the end, trusting His Will and way, where there is no path into the soft and fascinating darkness which men call death. The response of the Lodge to that prayer, as to all others offered at its Altar, is the old challenging phrase “So Mote It Be.”

Resources: The V.O.S.L.; Book of the Work, 2007, GLCPO; Research Lodge of Oregon No. 198, A.F. & A.M., The Importance of Prayer in Freemasonry; Short Talk Bulletin, Vol. V June 1927; Brochure- Welcome to the World of Freemasonry, Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario.

*by R.W. Bro. Garnet E. Schenk
for The Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education*

Its choice not chance that determines your destiny

A SUCCESSFUL MASONIC MEMBERSHIP

A true friend is someone who reaches for your hand and touches your heart.

A Mason is a member of the world’s largest fraternal organization. He enjoys the friendship and brotherhood of other Masons, not only in the community, but is welcomed as a brother by Masons anywhere in the world. A Mason is a man who professes faith in God. A Mason binds himself in likeminded men in a brotherhood that transcends all religions, ethic, social, cultural and educational differences.

A Mason is dedicated; he recognizes his responsibility for justice, truth and charity. Don’t expect perfection in a man because he is a Freemason. If you do, you will be disappointed. Masonry makes a man better, but no human agency can make him perfect. If he is a Mason, you have a right to presume he is a good man, but do not condemn Masonry even if a few Masons turn out bad. Even the Great Teacher Himself had a Judas. The aim and purpose of Masonry is to receive none but good men, keep them good and make them better. Judge the institution not by a few failures, but by the average of its successes. That average is high and it consequently gives standing to its members, but it cannot be an infallible guide.

Remember – YOU are someone’s impression of Freemasonry

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What is the symbolism of the Altar in a Masonic Lodge?

A: The Altar is the most important article of furniture in the lodge room. On it rests the three great lights in Masonry, and there the prayers are offered and candidates obligated. It is therefore, surprising to find that the Altar did not appear in Masonic lodges until the middle of the eighteenth century, and then as the individual choice of the lodge. It finally became a

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fixture in lodges during the closing years of the 18th and early years of the 19th century.

The Altar is of religious origin. In ancient days altars were of two kinds, for incense burning and for sacrifices. In ancient Israel the Altar of incense was within the Temple walls while the Altars of burnt offerings were in the open air, in front of the Temple. The Altar was always invested with peculiar sanctity, so that covenants made and oaths taken before the Altar were considered especially binding. Altars were also places of refuge, and a slave or refugee from justice who fled to an Altar and grasped the "Horns of the Altar", came under the protection of the deity to whom the Altar was dedicated, and no violence could be done to him.

In Masonry, the symbolism of the Altar is that it is an Altar of sacrifice on which the candidate offers up and divests himself of his passions, prejudices and vices, and an Altar of incense on which the candidate offers himself and pledges himself to a life of service to God and to his fellowmen. Furthermore, its presence in the Lodge room endows the ceremonies with solemn reverence, and exemplifies that Masonry is religious.

From the book 'Dear Brother Herman'

Q. What is the origin and significance of the broken column?

A: In biblical times the column was used metaphorically to signify prince or nobles, as if they were pillars of the state. The "Broken" Column is a universal emblem of mourning, adopted by the Masonic Fraternity as an emblem of the fall of one of the chief supporters of the Lodge. It has become an emblem of remembrance and benevolence. (Reprinted for the *Widow's Brooch* brochure).

Q. Why do we square the lodge?

A: The historical background is explained by Bro. Harry Carr in *The Freemason at Work* p.35. I like his final comment: *The practice of squaring the lodge is wholly admirable, because it adds much to the dignity of the ceremonies, so long as it is not carried to extremes*". To answer the question, we square the lodge as required in the ritual, and, if we are doing work, we should make every effort to locate at or near the place at which we are required to do it.

THE LATEST NEWS

IN MEMORIAM -- W. Bro. CHESTER HYMAN

WAXMAN: Initiated into the Electric Lodge No.495 on the 1st April 1952, Served as the Worshipful Master in 1960. Was Chairman of the second Committee responsible for building a replacement Masonic Hall after the James Street fire of September 20th, 1968. One of the highlights of his Masonic life was the Initiation of his three sons in October 1977. Passed to the Grand Lodge Above, 13th December 2008. We Mourn his Passing and Cherish his Memory.

MASONIC CHARITY - Urgent Appeal

Brethren, there is a small group of people that works without fanfare in helping destitute teenage single mothers and abandoned teens. Their need for certain items is never-ending, as is the number of unfortunate teens falling in these conditions by the day. They need our help.

Your contribution will not be made public, no one will know this help is coming from the ranks and files of Masonry, your name will not be mentioned. Your good deed will remain nameless. **Urgently Needed:**

- 2 cribs
- 2 play pens
- Some warm winter coats, size "petite"

If you can help, please call Vince Lombardo 1-905-731-0504 or contact him at vince.lombardo.to@gmail.com

NEXT DISTRICT 'C' BLOOD DONORS CLINIC: will be at Paramount Church, in Upper Stoney Creek, on Friday January 16th, 2009, sponsored by Electric Lodge No.495. Volunteers welcomed.

DDGM OFFICIAL VISIT: to Corinthian Lodge No. 513, Thursday January 22.

Dinner 6:00 pm Lodge 7:00 pm

MASTERS' and WARDENS' ASSOCIATION: Thursday January 29, 7:30 pm, hosted by the Lodge of Strict Observance No. 27, Stoney Creek Temple, topic 'Officer Progression'.

DISTRICT 'C' MID TERM MEETING, will be held on Saturday, February 7, 2009 at the Ancaster Masonic Temple, 419 Wilson Street, Ancaster starting at 10:00 a.m. All District Masons are welcomed, especially the Worshipful Master, Officers and the Secretary of your lodge.

The **DISTRICT CHRONICLE** is published monthly and will be available for download on the district website at

<http://www.hamiltondistrictmasons.org>. Please forward submissions to this newsletter through the contact details on our website.

Please note: The opinions and views expressed in any article in the District 'C'chronicle are those of the writers and therefore do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Grand Lodge. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions.