

District 'C' Chronicle

February 2009

Hamilton Masonic District C

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IN THIS ISSUE

From our District Deputy Grand Master.....	Pg. 1
The 250 th Anniversary of Burns.....	Pg. 1
Masonry is a Philosophy of Life.....	Pg. 3
What Kind of Mason are You?.....	Pg. 3
The Holy Bible and the Sacred Law.....	Pg. 3
Well Informed Brethren.....	Pg. 3
I Wish You All Enough.....	Pg. 4
Mosaic Pavement.....	Pg. 5
Wooden Mosaic Pavement.....	Pg. 5
Greening The Temple.....	Pg. 6
Guard Well the West Gate.....	Pg. 7
Newly Invented Words.....	Pg. 8
Masonic Rituals Live On.....	Pg. 8
A Toast to The Building of the White House.....	Pg. 9
Questions and Answers.....	Pg. 10
The Latest News.....	Pg. 11

and being fully knowledgeable regarding their respective duties.

2. Supportive lodge members with all members fully active, participating, and cooperating.
3. Establish a good working finance committee.
4. Active, socially and community oriented.
5. Harmony, minimizing personal objectives.
6. Maintaining the standard of the work as set out by Grand Lodge.
7. Functional and knowledgeable investigating committee.
8. Diversity of meeting content; i.e., not just degree work.
9. Good fellowship during banquets and meetings.
10. Quality and proper maintenance of lodge building.

To the brethren of District 'C', keep up the good work in all facets of Masonry.

HONOURING THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF BRO. ROBERT BURNS

FROM OUR DISTRICT DEPUTY GRAND MASTER

Brethren, it seems like it was just yesterday that we were talking about the holiday season and the start of a new year. Well how time flies. As I write this note, January is just about past and I'm looking forward to the longer days as a sign that warmer temperatures and spring is within sight. In January, I along with the other DDGMs from across the province attended the interim meeting with the Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Grand Secretary, and the Custodian of the Work in Scarborough. I am happy to report that the Grand Master was particularly pleased with our District Charity Project. He has a strong focus towards youth initiatives and any programs involving children and our project to support student nutrition programs in Hamilton works in nicely with his preferences. Also at the meeting, a group of 10 DDGMs came up with a list of 10 ideas that constitutes a successful lodge and I share them with you:

1. Good Secretary, Treasurer, and Master possessing good leadership, communications, and organizational skills



The Electric Lodge No. 495 celebrated the 250th Anniversary of the birth of the Legendary Mason and Scottish Poet, Robert Burns, on Wednesday January 21, 2009 at the Hamilton Masonic Centre. The evening began with a "Mini"

- 1 -

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.

Tattoo by the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders of Canada Pipes & Drums led by W. Bro. John Terence. It was followed by the piping in of the traditional Haggis with W. Bro Geoffrey S. Allan giving the time honored “*Address to a Haggis*”, dinner was served and the 170+ attendees were then entertained with Highland Dancing by the Sandra Bald-Jones Highland Dancers. The Electric Lodge has used this evening as a fundraising event. The Benefactor is, and has been, “*Martha House – Woman’s Shelter*”. The funds are raised through a “*Surprise Auction*”, R.W. Bro. Peter Mouriopoulos was the “*auctioneer*”. On this evening the event raised and donated \$5000.00, matching last year’s effort. Over the years, the lodge has raised in excess of \$17000.00 which has been donated to Martha House.



Few outside the Craft are aware that many of Burns’ poems were based on, or revolved around Freemasonry. Born on 25 January 1759, Burns died at the early age of just 37 in 1796 of rheumatic heart disease. On July 4, 1781, at the age of 22, Robert Burns was initiated into Lodge St. David, Tarbolton No.174, with an initiation fee of 12s 6d (approx. \$1.09 Cdn today)

In the museum in the Grand Lodge of Scotland hangs a very large painting by Brother Stewart Watson, which depicts Brother Robert Burns being inaugurated as Poet Laureate of Lodge Canongate Kilwinning No. 2 in Edinburgh on March 1, 1787. Burns was exalted a companion in the Holy Royal Arch Degree in May 1787.

Conviviality was, for Burns, one of the most important virtues. For him, Auld Lang Syne is a strong expression of his love of mankind and his ideal of International Brotherhood.

Auld Lang Syne

The Masonic routine is to form a circle in which everyone is equidistant from the centre, demonstrating they are all equal. In this regard, the practice adopted in some lodges by placing the master or other distinguished brethren in the centre defeats the purpose of the ceremony associated with the song.

At the beginning of the song the brethren stand with hands

by their sides, symbolising they are relative strangers. The early verses should be sung (or hummed) very softly as brethren reflect both on cherished memories of earlier times together and on those brethren who have since passed to the Grand Lodge Above.

When they come to the last verse, “And there’s a hand, my trusty friend.” each brother then extends his right hand of fellowship to the brother on his left, then the left hand to the brother on his right.

This symbolises two things: firstly, that they are crossing their hearts; secondly, that they automatically form a smaller and more intimate circle of friendship. Now they have an unbroken chain of brethren who are close friends.

“*The Farewell to the Brethren of St. James’s Lodge, Tarbolton,*” written prior to his intended departure for Jamaica, contains many Masonic references.

ADIEU! a heart-warm fond adieu;
Dear brothers of the *mystic tie!*
Ye favourèd, *enlighten’d* few,
Companions of my social joy;
Tho’ I to foreign lands must hie,
Pursuing Fortune’s slidd’ry ba’;
With melting heart, and brimful eye,
I’ll mind you still, tho’ far awa.

Oft have I met your social band,
And spent the cheerful, festive night;
Oft, honour’d with supreme command,
Presided o’er the *sons of light:*
And by that *hieroglyphic* bright,
Which none but *Craftsmen* ever saw
Strong Mem’ry on my heart shall write
Those happy scenes, when far awa.

May Freedom, Harmony, and Love,
Unite you in the *grand Design,*
Beneath th’ Omniscient Eye above,
The glorious *Architect* Divine,
That you may keep th’ *unerring line,*
Still rising by the *plummet’s* law,
Till *Order* bright completely shine,
Shall be my pray’r when far awa.

And *you*, farewell! whose merits claim
Justly that *highest badge* to wear:
Heav’n bless your honour’d noble name,
To *Masonry* and *Scotia* dear!
A last request permit me here,—
When yearly ye assemble a’,
One round, I ask it with a tear,
To him, the Bard that’s far awa.

edited from the Ashlar, a Scottish Masonic Magazine

We know that several local lodges each year hold a Burns’ Night to pay honour to the birth of “Robbie Burns”. We know

that at times various politicians have been invited to be the guest speaker, like John Tory at St. Andrew's Lodge this year, and Matt Diamond in 1986 as well as Tommy Douglas at the 50th Anniversary of Wardrope Lodge in 1969. In most cases they closed with the Burns' poem,

'A man's a man for a' that'Men the world o'er shall brothers be for a' that'.

MASONRY IS A PHILOSOPHY FOR LIFE

In simple terms, Masonry is primarily an educational institution teaching a moral way of life and ethical code of behaviour based upon the Golden Rule: 'always do to others what you would have them do to you'.

Through a disciplined and systematic course of self-improvement a Mason endeavours to become 'a better man', using self-exploration, self-discovery, self-analysis, self-fulfillment.

Masonry caters to the intellectual and spiritual needs of the individual by pointing a man in the right direction, then guiding his way in his quest for greater knowledge, deeper insight and fuller understanding.

WHAT KIND OF MASON ARE YOU?

A lot of masons are like wheelbarrows – no good unless pushed.

Some are like trailers – they have to be pulled.

Some are like kites – if you don't keep a string on them they fly away.

Some are like balloons – full of wind and ready to blow up.

Some are like footballs – you can't tell which way they will bounce.

And then, some are like a good watch – open face, pure gold, quietly busy, and full of good works.

Only spend cash you have

THE HOLY BIBLE and THE VOLUME OF THE SACRED LAW

The Bible itself has a multiplicity of uses and meanings; it is the Bible and at the same time it is the Volume of The Sacred Law; it is the Book of the Old and New Testaments and at the same time represents each of the world Bibles, and may be replaced by the Koran, the Zen Avesta, the Vedas etc.; it lies on the Altar and yet does not have possession of it because the square and the compasses lie on the Altar with it; it is the text-book of the Christian and Jewish religions yet the Lodge does not use it as a text-book because the Lodge is not a church and has no theology – the Lodge uses it as the literature of religion; and yet though it is a book of religion it is at the same time for Masonry a legal book also, because it gives

sanction to the obligations; a good half of the rites and symbols of the Work refer to it, yet almost nothing in the Work is directly taken from it; Masons did not write it and yet they use it as though they had because they employ it for purposes of their own and apply to it definitions peculiar to themselves; as it lies on the Altar it is many things at once, is inwardly multiordinal, is filled with mysteries, and owns many meanings, therefore the Craft has no dogmas about it, does not use it as a theological test, and leaves each Mason to read and interpret it according to such light as he has, which is symbolized by the fact that as it lies on the Altar it lies open.

*by H.L. Haywood, 'Freemasonry and the Bible'
submitted by W. Bro. Tom Fiddes, Chaplain, District "C"*

WELL INFORMED BRETHREN

In the Charge to the Entered Apprentice we hear the phrase "to consider yourself called upon to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge." Taking this seriously, a candidate requested information about the following, "What is a cable tow, and how long is it? What is the difference between a cowan and an eavesdropper? What is the difference between ample form and due form, and what is a parallelepipedon?"

Here are the answers to fifteen common questions. Perhaps they will be of use to others than newly made masons.

Allegory. "Freemasonry is a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." Allegory is a discourse in which there are two or more meanings, a plain or simple meaning and a figurative or hidden meaning, the former hinting or indicating the latter, and the communication of the latter usually being the real objective of the author. The words "veiled in allegory" imply that some of the truths of Masonry are concealed from the uninitiated, but that they can be discovered by one who has the privilege to join. It takes practice to learn how to recognize and appreciate symbol and allegory.

Ample form; due form. *Ample form* refers to when a Grand Master opens a lodge or the Grand Lodge. *Due form*, means proper, or correct form in accordance with the ritual.

Artificer. A skilled worker; a craftsperson; somebody whose work requires manual skill; differs from mechanic, workman, craftsman, in that the artificer uses skill and art combined; the sculptor is an artificer, the bricklayer an artisan. Tubal Cain, worker in brass and iron, was an artisan; Hiram was an artificer.

Ashlar. A building stone. They are "rough" and "perfect" in a Masonic Lodge, the "rough" stone being but partially cut, while the "perfect ashlar" is truly squared.

Cable Tow. Originally the term was 'cable rope', a heavy rope or hawser by which a mass, especially a ship may be hauled, pulled or towed. A cable's length has been given many values

from a marine league to 3 miles. In Masonry it is purely symbolic and means "the scope of a brother's reasonable ability." Half a mile might be beyond the length of a cable tow for a lame man and a hundred miles within its length for one with a car and a good road.

Calendar. Masonic Calendars differ from civil calendars. Four thousand years are added to civil dates to get Masonic dates; thus, this is the Masonic year 6009 A.L. standing for *Anno Lucis*. (After Light). Each Rite of Freemasonry, Royal Arch, Royal and Select Masters, Knights Templar, Scottish Rite, has its own calendar.

Chapter. Chapter is the capital of a pillar, often confused with Chapter, a division, usually of a book. In Freemasonry, the Chapter is a body of Masons, usually of the Royal Arch or the Scottish Rite obedience.

Circumambulation. Walking around a central object, as an Altar. The Rite of Circumambulation was practiced by the most ancient sun worshipers. Masonic circumambulation is from East to West by way of the South, an imitation of the apparent course of the sun in this hemisphere.

Clandestine. That Mason who is not recognized, without authority. Often used carelessly as a synonym for irregular. A clandestine Mason is one made in a clandestine Lodge; one not holden under a regular Grand Lodge. The only way a clandestine Mason can become a real Mason is by application, investigation, ballot and initiation, passing and raising in a regular Lodge.

Confer. Used advisedly for the giving of degrees. The dictionary definition is "to grant a gift or bestow powers or honours." A degree is a gift, a benefit, a power, an honour. Degrees cannot be bought. Initiation fees help pay for the candidate's costs, which are necessary Masonic expenses. A man receives the degrees as a bestowal; he does not purchase or receive them as a right.

Congregate. Primarily, to congregate is to bring together in a crowd, to assemble. Secondly, to congregate is to focus, to concentrate. Brethren waiting for Lodge to open in the primary sense are actually congregated. In the Masonic sense the Master "congregates the Lodge" when he raps brethren to attention, when the officers are clothed and seated, the door closed and the ceremony of opening begins.

Cowan. From operative times, a cowan was one who was not qualified as a Mason, who attempts to do the work of a Mason. The Tyler is charged to keep off all cowans and intruders, that is those unqualified to enter. Is not synonymous with eavesdropper (see below.)

Demit. A paper which gives permission to leave the lodge as a member and seek a new Masonic home; writ certifying that all dues and assessments are paid, no charges preferred or about to be preferred, that the holder is in good standing. The

demit is a Masonic right of any Mason in good standing who complies with the laws of his Grand Lodge.

Due examination. The word "due" here refers to the manner, not the matter of the examination. The necessary preliminaries, proper caution, the regulations of the Grand Lodge being properly observed, may include signs, grips, and tokens as well as words.

Edict. A proclamation of authority. Between meetings of Grand Lodge, the Grand Master has all the authority of that body. A Grand Master's edict has the force of the law until Grand Lodge passes upon it at its next Annual Communication.

Eavesdropper. Not to be confused with cowan, although the two are usually mentioned together. The eavesdropper tries to hear what is private; he is the man who listens at keyholes or conceals himself in a room where Masonic work is being done. The word comes from a time in England when the eaves of thatched roofs were raised above the walls for ventilation. Climbing up the wall to listen through the opening, the spy in privacy received the droppings from the eaves-hence "eavesdropper". In modern times the Masonic eavesdropper is the imposter, the profane who attempts to pass himself off as a Mason when he is not.

..to be continued in the March Chronicle

I WISH YOU ALL ENOUGH

I wish you enough sun to keep your attitude bright no matter how grey the day may appear,
I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun even more.
I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive and everlasting.
I wish you enough pain so that even the smallest of joys in life may appear bigger.
I wish you enough gain to satisfy your wanting.
I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess.
I wish you enough hellos to get you through the final good-bye.

The greater the difficulty, the more glory in surmounting it.

MOSAIC PAVEMENT

Mosaic work consists properly of many little stones of different colours united together in patterns to imitate a painting. It was much practiced among the Romans, who called it museum, whence the Italians get their *musaico*, the French their *mosaique*, and we our mosaics. The idea that the work is derived from the fact that Moses used a pavement of coloured stones in the tabernacle has been long since exploded by etymologists. The Masonic tradition is that the floor of the Temple of Solomon was decorated with a mosaic pavement of black and white stones. There is no historical evidence to substantiate this statement. Samuel Lee, however, in his diagram of the Temple, represents not only the floors of the

building, but of all the outer courts, as covered with such a pavement. The Masonic idea was perhaps first suggested by this passage in the Gospel of Saint John XIX, 13, "When Pilate, therefore, heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha." The word here translated Pavement is in the original Lithostroton, the very word used by Pliny to denote a mosaic pavement.

The Greek word, as well as its Latin equivalent is used to denote a pavement formed of ornamental stones of various colours, precisely what is meant by a Mosaic Pavement. There was, therefore, a part of the Temple which was decorated with a mosaic pavement. The Talmud informs us that there was such a pavement in the Conclave where the Grand Sanhedrin held its sessions. By a little torsion of historical accuracy, the Freemasons have asserted that the ground floor of the Temple was a mosaic pavement, and hence as the Lodge is a representation of the Temple, that the floor of the Lodge should also be of the same pattern. The mosaic pavement is an old symbol of the Order. It is met with in the earliest Rituals of the eighteenth century. It is classed among the ornaments of the Lodge in combination with the indented tassel and the blazing star. Its parti-coloured stones of black and white have been readily and appropriately interpreted as symbols of the evil and good of human life.

Source: Mackey's Encyclopedia

WOODEN MOSAIC PAVEMENT

Hand Crafted mosaic pavements, produced in wood by the Masters of 1980, a group of Past Masters in Hamilton District 'A' under the direction of R.W. Bro. Herb Schroeder, now grace over 22 lodge rooms in our Grand Jurisdiction. Many of these pavements were donated to the lodges at no charge and



This wooden mosaic pavement is at Hugh Murray Lodge No. 602. From left to right, Wor. Bro. Brian Pirie, Secretary; W. Bro. Edward Patterson, Worshipful Master; Bro. Jordan Young, F.C. candidate for the evening; Bro. James Cakebread, Organist; and Bro. Bill Lewis who was celebrating his 85th birthday that evening.

others for the cost of the wood. There is one of these mosaic pavements in each of the lodges in Hamilton District 'A'. Only one of these floors is in Hamilton District 'C', that being at the Masonic Centre Hamilton where 15 Lodges meet. The group says that they have several on order but only produce 2 per year. Priority has always gone to a lodge with a special lodge anniversary. Such wonderful works of art donated by the 1980 District 'A' Worshipful Masters for our Craft simply for the cost of the wood. Such a lasting Masonic Legacy.

The mosaic pavement is a landmark with a special significance to masons because it has been a part of their journey from initiation to Master. Each and every mason crossed a mosaic pavement to take their obligations. As Deacons they conducted candidates across it, as Junior Warden they gave a lecture on the significance of the ornament. As Senior Warden they directed the Deacons to conduct the candidate across it by the proper steps. The mosaic pavement has been the bridge to Masonic advancement



From left to right, Wor. Bro. Jim Hunter, 1980 W.M. of St. Clair Lodge No.135; R.W. Bro. Herb Schroeder, DDGM, Hamilton A, 1979-1980; Wor. Bro. Bill Denison, 1980 W.M. of Claude M Kent Lodge No.681.



In future issues of the Chronicle, be prepared to follow the 1980 Masters in their production of the latest wooden mosaic pavement, that will be installed in a lodge in May or June. For further information, please contact the Secretary of the 1980 Masters, Bill Denison at denison@worldchat.com.

GREENING OF THE TEMPLE (RENEWING THE SACRED BALANCE)

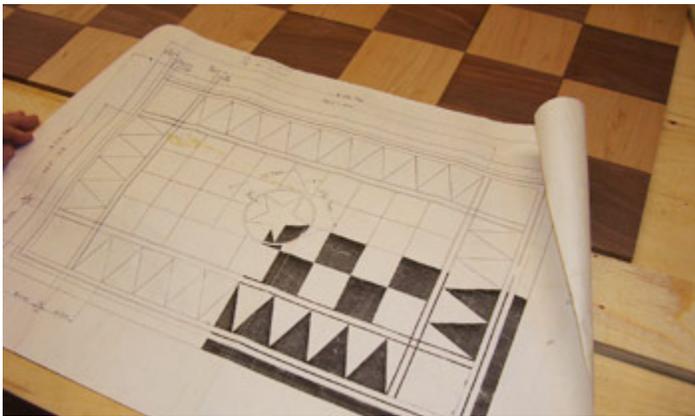
Climatic change and the greening of our planet has been before our eyes for many years, becoming more pronounced in the recent elections both in Canada and United States. Terms like a planet in peril, climatic change and global warming are evidenced nearly daily either through the press, radio, TV or telecommunications.

What does this entire greening term mean? Consumers who never considered going green are suddenly conserving energy and sorting trash. But on the other hand, green messages are everywhere and there is only so much that consumers are willing to do. Up to this point, the green movement has been driving consumer change through a mixture of tactics focused on creating the negative emotions of guilt and fear. "Conserve and recycle to save the planet. Eat organic to save yourself."

At some point it becomes too much, and people start to regress. We do not want this to happen. People like to feel good about their actions and good about their directions for a better life and a better planet for their children. We are leaving the years old disposable society for a feel-good society and that leaves us with lots of behaviours to change, as we work toward a more eco-friendly environment.

A recession may be a good time to advance this *Greening Action*. It is rather surprising how suddenly green everyone is now that their pocketbook is at stake. Better late than never. Go Earth Go! Green has become a popular lifestyle choice. But *green washing* could end up more detrimental than good if the consumer is not truly aware of his/her personal lifestyle in making efforts to reduce his harmful ways to the environment.

One programme in place to assist in efforts to renew the balance of making communities more harmonious with the natural world is called Greening Sacred Spaces. Faith and the Common Good, an interfaith network of religious communities who understand the Earth as a sacred gift, are focused on healing our beloved Earth. It has developed this



"A good builder lays lines to form his design, and the building begins".



"The end of the first day".

programme in Toronto, info@faith-commongood.net. It has created a complete resource kit with guidebooks, workshops, posters, and videos, to help faith groups creatively engage in reducing greenhouse gases, and improve the health and well being of all. It encourages, advises and supports faith communities to green their places of worship and their homes through activities such as environmental audits and retrofits, as well as educational and motivational presentations and public events. It also points one to sources of government funds which are available.

All the world's major religions share *the Green Rules* in much the same way as they share *the Golden Rule*. Each has a long-standing tradition of ecological stewardship. As well, they acknowledge the natural world as an essential phenomenon through which we may better come to know the divine and our oneness with it. This is our design of the Great Architect of the Universe. Is this greening of our Universe just an extension of what we all learn in the Craft lodge?

World-renowned anthropologist Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." This recalls a quote by our Past Grand Master Richard "Rick" Richards, when he talked about the *Pull Power of Freemasonry*, with its strength of purpose and the action by Craft lodges and their members working in tandem for the betterment of mankind, especially here in the Province of Ontario.

Climate change may be the greatest threat to the well being of our planet today, and as such represents a challenge to each and every person on planet Earth. The United Nations Panel on Climate Change predicts that by 2100, Earth's average temperature will climb between 1.5 and 6 degrees Celsius, rising twice as fast in the Arctic. These consequences threaten the health and well being of all living beings, and over this past summer there has been documented evidence that it is happening faster than predicted.

You ask why? Scientists have concluded that most of the warming observed in the past fifty years is attributable to "human activities", in particular burning fossil fuels. Basically this release of greenhouse gases along with smog pollutants into the global atmosphere is happening at a rate faster than planet Earth can absorb them. A very sad reality! Are we prepared to work at reducing our carbon footprint?

One sacred body, Melrose United Church of Hamilton has already started this process to lower energy costs. The stained glass windows have brought light to worshippers for decades. They also bring something else in – the cold. Fixing those windows is part of a plan to save money by conserving energy. An environmental auditing company scoured the old stone building to find features that are driving up heat and hydro bills.

Saving cash is not the only reason behind this push to cut energy use." Reducing your personal footprint on the Earth is very much in line with religion and spirituality", says one member. The Church is also offering advice to members about cutting energy costs in their homes. Last month about fifty people learned over breakfast how to fix a drafty house and cut their heating bill in half. The project manager for

Environment Hamilton put on this workshop, and is talking to sixty other faith groups about setting up similar programmes.

What can we do? Ghandi said, "We must be the change we want to see in the world." Do we as Masons have something to offer in curbing global warming? The new and younger Mason is asking, "Can we do something to improve the quality of life for our family and our neighbour? We are a brother's keeper are we not?"

All journeys start with the first step. What will be the first step by your lodge and its members? Many all ready are recycling products via the Blue Box programs and sorting compostable materials into the green boxes. Some have retrofitted energy efficient light bulbs. Some have had environmental or energy audits provided by Governments, and utilities, and many retailers are providing incentives and rebates and sometimes giveaways to encourage a faster transition to energy efficiency. The immediate benefit is to reduce greenhouse emissions and lower operating costs for consumers. If you are planning changes to your lodge building check these out.

How can you make your lodge building greener? Better insulation, less disposable garbage, fewer paper plates, lawns and gardens that require less water and cutting, more trees and shrubs, and the list goes on from more car pooling, to more energy efficient cars.

It is our vision that lodges will act to implement a *Greening Programme* now, that will Green our Sacred Spaces, especially when our members are so well aware of this stewardship need, and there is government funding to assist.

the G15

GUARD WELL THE WEST GATE

"Guard well the portals of your Lodge. Look well to your ballot..."

Said so frequently, that the phrase, whenever it may be said in your Lodge, becomes background noise and we don't really hear it.

There is so much power in the practice of that phrase, in fact its complete power.

Who comes in at the door today is more important than who goes in at the top.

It is kind of like telling someone, "You are responsible for what you eat".

If we keep shoving cheap junk food down our throats, we may become fat and

unhealthy. However, if in moderation we allow only good, clean, nutritious food into our system, we will grow to be happy, healthy, wealthy and wise. Well, maybe not so wise. For some of us, there is no hope.

If we can't understand that three fast food meals each day will hurt us, how can we possibly understand the simple, all-powerful West Gate?

It is the only place where we, as individual lodge members, have full say as to what our Lodge will become. Our lodge's future!

excerpted from "Hiram's Lighthouse", the Newsletter of the Toronto East District.

NEWLY INVENTED WORDS

FEIGNGLORIUS: faking appreciation for a gift that you really don't need or want.

SADVERTISING: the persistent and ineffective attempt by companies to sell us expensive products in an economic downturn.

CASHTRATION: the act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period.

PARADIGMS: 20 cents, no matter how you spell it.

MASONIC RITUALS LIVE ON

This is an adapted article written by Julia Duin of the Washington Times on January 8, 2009, and with permission of the Washington Times it is being used in the Chronicle. Unfortunately, by the time you receive this issue of the Chronicle, the inauguration will be over, but the memories will linger on.

President-elect Barack Obama's swearing-in Tuesday January 20th, will incorporate several elements out of America's Masonic past.

One-third of the signers of the Constitution, many of the Bill of Rights signers and America's first few presidents (except for Thomas Jefferson) were Freemasons, a fraternal organization that became public in early 18th-century England.

Although it became fabulously popular in America, at one time encompassing 10 percent of the population, Pope Clement XII condemned Freemasonry in 1738 as heretical. The latest pronouncement was issued in 1983 by then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger - now Pope Benedict XVI - who called Masonic practices "irreconcilable" with Catholic doctrine.

Still, as the first president, George Washington had to come up with appropriate rituals for the new country. He borrowed many of them from Masonic rites he knew as Worshipful Master of his lodge in Alexandria, Virginia. His Masonic gavel is on display at the Capitol Visitor Center. Until this inauguration, Washington's Masonic Bible - on which he swore his obligations as a Freemason - was used for the presidential oath of office. President-elect Barack Obama will use Abraham Lincoln's Bible.

I learned all this from Garrison Courtney, a 30-something government worker who gives Masonic tours of the District in his spare time. He is Worshipful Master of his Cincinnatus

Lodge No.76 in the Georgetown area of Washington D.C. Contrary to public perceptions of Masons being older white guys, current local membership is a racially and religiously mixed group of Gen-X men, he says. "If people have questions, we will answer them. We're pretty open as an organization."

The late President Gerald R. Ford was the last presidential Mason.

The inaugural parade, he tells me, began as a Masonic procession [a parade of Masonic notables] from the still-unfinished White House to Capitol Hill, where Washington travelled on Sept. 18, 1793, to lay the cornerstone for the Capitol. Lafayette Park was the site of a makeshift Masonic lodge, in which the Scottish stonemasons - then working on the executive mansion - lived. Washington also ensured the boundaries of the District - each 10 miles along - formed a perfect square, which symbolizes ultimate virtue in Masonry.

"The whole idea behind the building of Washington was to convey the message about the new experiment, a new way of thinking the Founding Fathers had in mind," said Akram Elias, Past Grand Master of the District of Columbia. Whole books have been written about the Masonic imagery on buildings around the District. Many of their cornerstones were laid with Masonic ceremonies involving oil, wine and corn. "All five statues in front of the White House are Freemasons," Mr. Courtney said. "Every single one of the statues on Virginia Avenue are as well. Masonry is ingrained in the city and in the American culture."

As I am writing this article, I am waiting for the swearing in of the Vice-President, using the following.

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter: So help me God."

Do you feel there has been some borrowing from the ritual of Freemasons?

A 1998 TOAST TO THE LODGE OF JOURNEYMEN MASONS NO. 8, EDINBURGH, constituted 1707, and THE BUILDING OF THE WHITE HOUSE

As I have said before, and will continue to say, a lodge is not a place. A lodge is merely a gathering of like-minded men who come together to practice the tenets of Freemasonry. The history of any lodge, can only be told by the activities of its members. Tonight I have the pleasure to propose the toast to the Lodge of Journeymen Masons, No. 8 and want to tell you a little about this lodge's connection with North America, in particular the United States of America and specifically Washington D.C.

Washington, the Capital City of the United States of America is named after its first president: George Washington.

On 4th November 1752 George Washington was initiated in Fredericksburg Lodge. It is known that a Simon Fraser was a visitor to that lodge during that year and this shows that Washington had some contact with Scottish Freemasonry from the beginning of his Masonic career. That lodge was what is known as a 'self starter'; a lodge formed by Freemasons without a Charter from a Grand Lodge. It should be remembered that almost 250 years ago communication was much slower. In retrospect it is commendable that Freemasons decided to form a lodge even though it would, today, be considered illegal and clandestine, yet had they not done so, the First American President might never have become a Freemason.

Washington continued to be an active Freemason for the rest of his life and is recorded as attending various lodges, even during the American War of Independence (1775-1783).

As was mentioned earlier Washington was initiated into a lodge that would be considered irregular. As later events would prove he desired to act in a legal manner and hence his involvement in the writing of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. This desire to at all times act legally extended also to his mother lodge. The Lodge at Fredericksburg which applied for a charter (thereby becoming 'regular') from the Grand Lodge of Scotland. That petition was granted on 21st July 1758. The lodge later joined with the Grand Lodge of Virginia in 1787. It must be speculation as to why, Washington's mother lodge, decided to seek a charter from the grand lodge of Scotland.

Exactly what has all this to do with The Lodge of Journeymen Masons, No 8, I hear you ask, so I shall endeavour to explain. Following the American Revolution, which is a Masonic story worthy of further research, Brother Washington settled down to establish the institutions necessary to run a new country. At that time governments were fairly rudimentary. The new country of the United States examined all existing governments, Dictatorship, Parliamentary Monarchy, Tribal systems etc. None met their aspirations and it is now thought that the Founding Fathers examined Freemasonry and its Democratic methods and found that it provided a model for their new country.

In the earliest days of the United States of America buildings were almost entirely constructed from the most readily available material, wood. Imposing and long lasting buildings cannot be built and maintained easily from wood. Brother Washington realised that the new country, of which he had been the midwife, required all the trappings of a Nation-State.

Before 1790 Washington's thoughts turned to building a house fit for a president, The President's House, or as it is now known, The White House, in the city named after him. In 1791 he personally selected the site of the new building and James

Hoban, an architect from Ireland, was appointed to draw up the working plans. The Corner Stone was laid in a Masonic ceremony in 1792. (Washington was not present but he personally laid the Foundation Stone of the Capitol building on 18th September 1793 in another Masonic ceremony.) Such an edifice could not be constructed from wood, as there were few stonemasons available to build it in stone. That fact must have occupied the minds of those in charge even before any decision as to the design or place had been decided. It can be no co-incidence that one James Traquair, a member of No. 8, was in America by 1790. Traquair is recorded as being a member of the Lodge of Journeymen Masons, No.8 as early as 1783. The Lodge records show that in 1784 he paid sixpence every quarter, as was required by all members. From 1785 to 1788 his name is recorded on the roll of members but no payments recorded. This is unusual for other members who failed to pay their quarterly dues were removed from the Lodge Roll after two years. The entry for the year 1790 shows James Traquair still on the roll but on this occasion, beside his name, is noted 'America'. This continues until 1795 (with the word 'abroad' from 1794) until 1795 when his name (and 'abroad') is written but scored out.

It is clear that those planning and arranging to build the White House and indeed, the city of Washington, recognised the shortage of skilled stonemasons available. It seems that Brother George Washington ordered that stonemasons be invited, from Europe, to undertake his Grand Design. He was even more specific. Stonemasons from Scotland were to be asked to undertake the work. His association with Scottish masons throughout his life meant that he knew of Scottish practice and probably that the operative tradition was still strong there. Exactly how he knew who to approach is not known for certain but it is highly likely that he, or his advisors, had met James Traquair, a member of this lodge who had immigrated to the USA about 1785. It was he who arranged for members of this lodge to go to America. It is known that in 1791, or soon after, at least six members of the Lodge emigrated to build the White House. Their names are, together with their year of initiation: Alexander Crawford (1747, Master 1782), George Walker (1783), George Thomson (1788), James White (1788), Alexander Scott (1770) and James McIntosh (1788). This shows that they would know each other well and it shows also that a Past Master of this Lodge worked on the White House! It is likely that some of these men were present at the Foundation Stone laying ceremony in 1782.

The building took some years to complete for the six masons of No.8 found it difficult to find anyone of sufficient skill to assist them in their work. There was plenty of unskilled labour available and they chose the best to train as stonemasons. It is recorded that they were instructed to train slaves but that they refused. I hardly need to tell you why. In fact they went on strike rather than train slaves. Eventually it was agreed that they could choose whom to train. The Foundation Stones were duly marked, and numbered, before they were laid. Sadly, war broke out between Britain and the

United States and British forces advanced into Washington in 1814 and burnt the White House to the ground. Another building was constructed on the foundations of the original building and that building is the White House of today.

Although the original White House no longer exists, the fact that the foundations of the building were good enough to support the present one is a testimony to the skill of the brethren of No.8 who laid those foundations. That those Brethren were ardent Freemasons cannot be doubted for this is attested to by the fact that they affiliated with Federal Lodge, No.1 District of Columbia. Their admission to that Lodge is preserved in the records of that Lodge.

The story is not yet complete. The White House historian, Professor William Searle, has discovered that the foundation stones of the first White House have mason's marks thereon. Once these have been photographed it is hoped that they will be matched with those in the lodge's Mark Book to finally confirm who the stone masons from No.8 were.

Brethren of the Lodge of Journeymen Masons; you must be pleased and proud of your heritage. No other lodge in the world can claim to have built such an enduring structure.

Please be upstanding and drink a toast to —“*The lodge that built the White House.*”

thanks to Peter Mouriopoulos for sharing this article

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Why does the Communications Committee not print monthly enough Chronicles for each lodge in the District?

A. The District does not have sufficient funds. It is anticipated that each lodge will encourage its members who have computer skills to access the District Website www.hamiltondistrictmasons.com and print their own, and one for a brother. Each lodge will appoint some computer savvy member with the responsibility of printing enough copies for lodge members who do not have access to a computer.

Q. When does a Lodge do its most important work?

A. Is it on Lodge night when we clothe ourselves in tuxes, suits, regalia and show off our polished work to members and visitors? Those formal Lodge meetings are important, but I would pick the Tuesday before Lodge as the time when Corona's real WORK gets done. That is our traditional rehearsal night and the night that our Committee of General Purposes meets. Operative Masons toiled in the dust and muck of their building projects. Their tools and hands were marked with dirt and scratches. Sure, they dressed up on the odd feast day to celebrate but for their real work they wore everyday clothes because their labours were dirty, difficult and long. Our aprons are a reminder of that fact. Hard work took both an emotional and physical toll on our ancient Brethren.

Why then, would we think that the REAL WORK of speculative Freemasons ... that of “*Making Good Men Better*” ... should be any easier or different? It is not. Our REAL WORK is done in the crucible of those Tuesday rehearsals and Committee of General Purposes meetings. Differences of opinion test our tempers, our humility and our brotherhood. Each man must come face-to-face with his own imperfections of memory, pride and temperament and then surmount them. If we learn from our errors they will form a solid foundation for our triumphs. Masonry is not a one-man job. There is only so much a man can accomplish alone, reciting in the car or pacing before a bedroom mirror. One man never built a cathedral or any other worthy edifice alone. GOOD WORK is not the result of any one man's perfection. It demands that we put trust in each other; combine our individual strengths; praise, support and encourage our Brethren. Those Tuesday nights produce their full measure of fun and laughter, too. Our humanity shows through. We learn to do our best; to take our lumps and our lessons; and to move on to the next challenge. Don't miss the very best our Fraternity has to offer. Build your knowledge and confidence; cement relationships with your Brethren. Take a new bit of work, or just lend us your body to represent a Candidate, distinguished guest or the like. See you at rehearsal.

by W. Bro. Bob van der Wijst, Worshipful Master, Corona Lodge No. 454

Muskoka- Parry Sound District, October 2008 Lodge Summons.

Q. What is Heritage Lodge?

A. Instituted in 1977, Heritage Lodge differs in many respects from other lodges in our jurisdiction because it relates primarily to the historical rather than the speculative aspects of Masonry. It is intended to provide an intellectual environment for the pursuit of Masonic knowledge, and also to provide a means of receiving and recording historical artifacts to ensure the preservation of our Masonic Heritage without encroachment on the normal functions of Constituent Lodges, whose province it is to initiate candidates, confer degrees and provide light and instruction for the brethren in Masonry. Check its website at <http://heritagelodge730.ca> . Learn about the beginning History of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario.

Q. What do I do now that Lee's Hamilton Jewellery and Manufacturing has closed?

A. Try Julie a former employee of Lees Hamilton. She is prepared to help you. She told Cliff Tootell that any Past Master's Jewel can be duplicated by her new employer, Zygmunt Fine Jewellery at 703A Barton St. E. Hamilton, 905 312-4653. Roy Binns continues to operate R & J Regalia at 263 Queen St. S. 905 522-5557, where there is a complete supply of Masonic paraphernalia to address your Masonic needs.

LATEST NEWS

IN MEMORIAM: BRO. GREGG CURRAN was initiated into Union Lodge No. 7 on November 14, 1996, passed February 19, 1997 and raised April 16, 1997. Memorial Service in Windsor, Jan. 9th, 2009. Many of you will have never met Greg as by November of 1997, he had moved from the area in search of work . Only recently was I made aware of Greg's struggle with cancer. It is amazing the impact that our Craft can have on a brother and how much a friendly word and the support of our fraternity can mean. Never underestimate the power of living our Masonic principles can have on both Masons and Non-Masons alike. I know that it made a great difference in the life of our brother Greg.

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.

PAST MASTERS ASSOCIATION MEETING: on Saturday February 28th. Join us for a great breakfast at The Rite at 9:15 a.m. Our guest speaker Rt. Wor. Bro. David Dainard " at 9:45 a.m. His topic "Are We Pulling Together?" Let Tom Young know if you are planning to join for breakfast. 905 318-0182, tyoung@mountaincable.net

DDGM's OFFICIAL VISITS:

To Valley Lodge No.100, Monday February 9, Dinner 6:30 pm in the newly reclaimed and renovated Banquet Hall after almost 23 years, not at the Town Hall; Lodge 7:30 pm, 2nd degree.

To Meridian Lodge No. 687, Wednesday February 11, Lodge 7:30 pm, 2nd degree.

Ancient Landmarks Official visit moved to March 24th.