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# Grand Lodge Bulletin

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VOL. 45 NO. 2

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

CALGARY, OCTOBER 1979

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## THE AIMS AND OBJECTS OF FREEMASONRY

(The Year Book of the Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of Scotland makes very worthwhile reading. A copy of it is in the Grand Lodge Library. The following is taken from an address to Lodge Aurora at the time of its consecration and delivered by the Provincial Grand Chaplain of Orkney and Zetland, Bro. E. Headly)

It is not for me to teach you the aims and objects of Freemasonry. Just like riding a bicycle one never forgets. A bicycle just has to be produced and the skill is soon recalled. If there is any Mason who cannot immediately recall the aims and objectives of our craft, he must fall into one of two classes. For him the aims and objectives have become so much a part of himself that it requires a studied effort on his part to think just what they are. (It is like asking a skilled craftsman a simple basic question about something that he is doing. To him it is so obvious that for a moment he seems to be puzzled as he searches for the right explanation. He no longer thinks of such fundamentals, they have become so much a part of him). Of the other class are those who have joined the craft for the wrong reason whatever, or, having since become unfit, have failed to grasp or to apply them to their lives.

Let us have a quick look at the aims. As we read in the first verse of Psalm 133, "Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity". This is the chief aim of our craft, brotherhood, which makes the other two aims, virtue and morality, that much easier.

Let no man take the practice of these aims for granted. Even a cursory glance will soon make it clear that they are conspicuous by their absence. Family feuds, local feuds, national and international feuds are commonplace. These are triggered off by such evils as Greed, Jealousy and Suspicion. If Masons the world over were making an impact on the world around them, brotherly love would have prevailed and the Plan of the God Almighty of the World would have been nearer to fruition. "But", someone may well say, "did not brotherly love fail from the very beginning? Did not Cain kill Abel? And have not the Cains of the world continued the slaughter of the Abels, and are they indeed not still doing so in the Middle East and in Northern Ireland?"

We Masons know the answer to that world problem but we cannot make it work in the world at large. What we can do about it, is to ensure that we put our aims to practice in our own lives, each and every one of us, then with the cooperation of the G.A.U. we can look for some measure of success.

Today we are faced with a challenge. The world of our fathers seems to be slipping away from us. Established standards of Love, Virtue and Morality are being jettisoned in the stormy seas of Materialism. Mankind is threatened by the Mammon of Seft and Sensuality. Are we losing vision?

"We serve no God whose work is done,  
Who rests within his firmament.  
Our God His labours but begun  
Toils ever more, with power unspent.

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### VISITING

(M.W. Bro. Wm. N. Love, G.M.)

One of the more remarkable features of modern society is its mobility. Everyone seems to be on the move. A combination of affluence and rapid transportation has offered a whole generation the opportunity to tramp about half the world. With little hesitation entire families move across the town or across the nation. But in the process of compressing time and space, our perspectives have changed and human relations become more impersonal.

For example, we have become conscious of the value of seconds and fractions thereof, but we have lost the consciousness of the changing seasons; of phases

of the moon . . . . things of which our forefathers were acutely aware. Likewise, we all have friends in other cities or countries, yet so many of us in the city don't even know the name of the neighbor just across the street.

But, of course, this has not always been the case. Back in the Middle ages the majority of men did little visiting or travelling except in their own neighborhood. Workers tended to be organized into guilds or fraternities with each confined to its local area. While the modern workman is freed from any restrictions and able to come and go across the nation, a Medieval workman could not; he was tied to his own farm, village or town, and he made his friends there

or nowhere at all. To men five miles away he was a stranger and a foreigner.

The Masonic historian H. L. Haywood states that to this general rule - as in so many other things - the Freemasons were an exception. Any Freemason could, and did, come from any other town and even from abroad. And nearly always they did come from a distance.

While travelling they could visit Freemasons or Lodges anywhere they chanced upon them, and not only could, but were expected to do so, because it was from the travelling Brethren that the news of the Craft was spread throughout the land.

When such a traveller arrived he was welcomed as a guest and treated to hospitality. If he was ill, he was nursed; if in need, he received relief. The only requirement was a familiarity with the modes of recognition - protected by his oath of secrecy - used to identify himself as a member of the Craft.

Haywood notes that "this freedom to travel and this right to visit were so necessary to Freemasons that without them they could not have carried on their work; being thus an essential, visiting became a Landmark, and has continued to be ever since."

Thus we find that the visiting of Freemasons among their Brethren is not a mere neighborliness, a casual sociability, a polite reception of an acquaintance. It is on a far higher plane. It embodies both privileges and responsibilities, and opportunities that would be folly to neglect.

As Haywood says "In the moment of becoming a Mason, the candidate becomes a friend of thousands of men in his own community, and millions of men in the world who already are sworn to be in friendship with him. He has never met them; he is not acquainted with them; he does not know their names; but he has millions of acquaintances whom he has never seen. And whenever he meets a Mason and introduces himself as a Mason, he will find himself in a land of amicable fellowship which was already there before he came - for it to be there, is one of the things that is meant by being a Mason."

So we are reminded today that one of the fringe benefits of being a Mason - as in past centuries - is the privilege and the pleasure derived from visiting. Whether it be across the city, the province, or around the world, one is constantly mindful that the Craft is a universal organization, and that the Masonic fundamentals we share with others know no bounds of race, colour or creed, and that one is unfailingly received with the outstretched hand of welcome.

To visit overseas, of course, can almost be classed as high adventure, and if one can possibly spare the time from a busy itinerary, it is to be highly recommended. I once paid a visit in far away India . . . an experience I shall never forget to my dying day. Until that moment I felt a complete stranger in a land of some seven-hundred million people. But the moment I entered the Lodge I felt completely at home and was taken into the hearts and even the homes of Brothers in the Craft. There is just nothing quite like it! Incidentally, I was reminded of the universality of the Craft when I counted no less than five different

Volumes of the Sacred Law on the altar!

For most of us, visiting Lodges in the city is particularly convenient because of the ample choice of Lodges and meeting nights, and the likely chance of meeting familiar friends in the Craft. On the other hand, the rewards from visiting around the Province combines the best of both worlds . . . both a measure of convenience and the thrill of being made at home in an otherwise unfamiliar community. What a wonderful opportunity to renew old acquaintances and to make new ones!

Of course, there are many Brethren who have not discovered the pleasures of visiting. Many of reserved or bashful disposition are somewhat timid and feel unsure when dropping in to a strange Lodge. They are due for a pleasant surprise. Others - and too many, I fear - hesitate lest they fail to pass an examination at the door. They are a little rusty about certain things, and with the passage of time have become shy about asking friends for guidance.

Basically, it's ever so simple. Don't be embarrassed about brushing up on your knowledge. Everyone else does it. If you look in the pages of Mackey's Encyclopedia under "Examination of Visitors," you will discover that the examiner is not supposed to ask any embarrassing "leading questions," or to prompt your memory in the direction of his own proficiency, but merely to ask you to prove that you are a member by "commencing at the beginning." Thus you need only impart the necessary knowledge you have in a normal order until the examiner is satisfied.

Bear in mind that the examination was never intended to be a test to "prove up" your proficiency or expertise. Nor is it to be an inquisition. The Brother is only trying to make sure that you are, indeed, what you claim to be. Once satisfied, the Brethren will receive you with open hands.

As a matter of fact, you will be doing a good service if you rise in your Lodge some evening and ask the Worshipful Master to instruct his Director of Ceremonies (or some other well-qualified Brother) to prepare and hold periodic mini-practices in open Lodge to illustrate clearly to the newer Brethren what may be required for visiting. You'd be surprised at the number of older Brethren who would welcome such guidance. It can do nothing but help!

And while you're at it, see if you can't make each visit with a car full. It only takes a telephone call or two. Do things together . . . and don't forget to always try to include a candidate or one of the newly-raised Brethren. There is no better opportunity to get to know him and to make him feel wanted in his Lodge. He'll welcome the chance to learn the ropes; it will broaden his experience; expand his knowledge of the Craft; and provide ample proof that your offers of fellowship are not just empty words.

Remember, one of the greatest rewards of visiting is not so much the actual visit, but the fun of travelling together with your Brethren and cementing your friendships. Try it! Make it a habit! You'll never regret it!

As historian Haywood has said, "Visiting is a land-

mark. It is as if each and every Master Mason had a standing invitation from each Lodge in the world to be its guest. He does not need to seek their hospitality; their hospitality is seeking him."

## MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

(M.W. Bro. Wm. N. Love, G.M.)

There seems to be an unjustified pessimism among some of our Brethren today, on the subject of membership and attendance. And it is well that these matters be put in proper perspective.

It is, of course, quite evident that while some towns are healthy, thriving and growing, others are declining and young people seeking better opportunities is reflected in Lodge membership. This oftentimes demands an unfortunate readjustment when a long-time Brother sees his mother Lodge amalgamate or be phased out. Nevertheless the situation should be viewed in its proper perspective and not blown out of proportion.

While fully acknowledging and sympathizing with the difficulties faced by a particular Lodge, we must at the same time clearly distinguish between what is just a local situation and the health of the Craft as a whole . . . and the health of the Craft is very good, indeed.

It is well to remember that those rural adjustments apply to all facets of society, not just the Masonic Lodge. The Little Red Schoolhouse is abandoned . . . the corner grocer has moved away . . . the hospitals tend to locate in larger centers. But it doesn't mean that people have ceased to go to school, to eat, or to receive medical care. Nor does it mean that Craft Masonry is on the wane. Schools, groceries and hospitals consolidate. Likewise, Lodges amalgamate or, alternatively, moving Brethren need only affiliate in new surroundings.

Regrettably, some individuals persist in viewing an amalgamation with an air of despondency; a time for hand-wringing and self-pity. Such confirmed pessimists might just as well take a shovel to the ceremonies to help bury their Lodge, because their negative attitude can do nothing but contribute to its death.

Fortunately, these are in the minority. Most Brethren - after an understandable period of dismay - will view the amalgamation as a great opportunity, and sure grounds for optimism. They see in it a re-birth or a re-vitalization of their Lodge, and a time for celebration and festivities. Whether it is a wake or a wedding depends entirely on the individual.

Now let us examine the bigger picture for unjustified pessimism. There are among us those who are obsessed with the numbers game; people who seem unable to distinguish between quantity and quality. (This, incidentally, includes a few individuals who single-mindedly try to feed the degree-mill and use the Craft as a revolving door to push bodies through for other organizations.) Mostly they are earnest and dedicated Masons who are seriously concerned about what they honestly feel is a membership problem. But their fears are really groundless. At the heart of their anxiety may be an inability to see the forest for the trees. Let us look at the facts.

Despite their constant reminders that our membership is declining, it still far exceeds that of any other fraternal group, approximating the total of them all. In colonial North America when the population was only about 3,000,000, there were believed to be about 3,000 Masons, which resolves to about one Mason in every 250 eligible men. Today we find that one in fourteen eligible North Americans is a Mason. No, Brethren, our membership today is hardly a cause for hand-wringing. The growth is slow but steady.

The Craft is in robust good health in other lands too. The Grand Lodge of England, over a considerable number of years, has chartered an average of sixty or more Lodges a year and is holding or increasing its membership. (It might be noted in passing that some other countries help maintain interest and attendance by keeping their Lodges small: that is, under a hundred members. The Alberta figures for 1978 show that, generally speaking, the percentage attendance at Lodge meetings is inversely-proportional to the number of members.)

In looking at the Alberta figures alone, it is quite true that there has been some decline in membership in recent years, but this decline is even now bottoming out, and there is a very good explanation for the whole pattern.

The immediate post-war period brought with it our greatest increase ever, and the numbers soared. Remember, too that this flood of applicants included many who became members without ever trying to become Masons. And it is not surprising that many of these would tend gradually to leave the Craft.

Obviously then, a corresponding slump is inevitable during the period when these people pass away. After all, a man in his forties at war's end is now in his seventies! With the passing of this membership bubble there is no reason why our initiations should not again approximately equal our death rate.

Actually we have plenty of members. If by some miracle they all turned out at once, rare indeed would be the lodge-room that could accommodate them. They are to be seen in abundance everywhere and are recognized by a Masonic lapel pin, which so many wear only as a status symbol. They are fully aware of the virtues and reputation of the Craft and are quite content to ride on its coat-tails.

Our real concerns, therefore, might more properly be directed - as always - toward the quality of our initiates, not the quantity. This would assure that a higher percentage of applicants would become true Masons rather than just members, and their interest and dedication to the Craft retained. It would go a long way to cut our losses from non-payment of dues and demits. They are the shame of the Order.

Meantime, another negative subject we hear so constantly paraded is that of attendance. We should be aware that there are many members who have lost the habit of attending because too many of the Masonic meetings lack any Masonry. Rather than constantly pointing a finger at these people we might do better to do some careful self-examination. It could reveal that the emptiness of many of our meetings is boring so many

of our Brethren to death and driving them from their Lodges. It is perhaps our own fault, but the remedies are close to hand.

At the same time, there are some further studies that bear examination. Sociologists have determined that in other, similar societies, the average volunteer attendance is about the same as in our Fraternity....that is, in churches, clubs, libraries, cultural groups, etc. In North America such attendance over a long period has been between nine and ten percent of membership.

In spite of T.V., the automobile, thriving movie theaters, football games and the many other distractions which provide ready excuses for non-attendance - demands on our time that didn't exist some years ago - this nine to ten percent figure is still applicable to our Masonry, and even far exceeded in smaller Lodges. So, why all the cause for dismay.

The deaths we can do nothing about but in time will be equalized. Meantime the attraction of our ancient institution can be, and is, as strong as ever among those drawn to the Order by the integrity and character of its members. Masonry need have no fear for the future if men of exemplary character only are admitted, and then properly indoctrinated in its ancient and sublime mysteries.

Things are looking up and Masonry has a bright future in this jurisdiction.

## FROM VOLUME 1, Issue No. 1, The Grand Lodge Bulletin

(In this Anniversary Year the Bulletin will publish from time to time material from the First Year the Bulletin was issued)

At the thirteenth Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Alberta, held in Calgary on June 13, 1935, the Grand Master recommended the publication of a Monthly Grand Lodge Bulletin in an experimental form for distribution to the Lodges. The Committee on the Grand Master's Address concurred in the recommendation and it was ratified by the Grand Lodge in session.

M.W. Bro. A.M. Mitchell has been given the duty of preparing the first copies and this issue comes to your Lodge as an indication of the lines which are to be followed. Naturally with the space limited all material must be in very brief form, but it is hoped that ideas on many Masonic topics collected from widely distant fields may interest the brethren and induce them to follow the subjects farther.

Three copies of the Bulletin will be supplied to each Lodge for the present but it is suggested it will be time well spent were the Bulletin read at the regular meeting of your Lodge, thus giving every attending brother the benefit of a short summary of Masonic News and views elsewhere.

## FROM "FRATERNAL RECORD"

The future of Freemasonry depends largely upon the better education of men. Not every man is adapted to understand or appreciate the Masonic Fraternity. It is a very unusual institution and what a man gets out of it will depend largely upon his mental process. It is

doubtful if there ever again be a great influx of men into the fraternity. The chances are that as soon as the fraternity again becomes stabilized it will select its material with the utmost care.



8th of June, 1979 - Masonic Temple, Honolulu, Hawaii - 50 Year Jewel Comet Efficiency No. 50 - Presented by R.W. Chris Rud to Captain Stanford R. Espedal E.A. 19-11-28, 2636 Ferdinand Avenue Honolulu, Hawaii 96822.

## MASONIC TIDINGS

The essential unity of mankind in origin, purpose and destiny; the need of working together and cultivating a sense of kinship and brotherhood; the reasonableness of the law of service whereby one man gives of himself freely for the development of the common good; the certainty that the plans of the G.A.O.T.U. will be worked out at last to glorious completion and that all the sons of men will come into their heritage of peace and fruition. These are the implications of the Mission of Freemasonry.

It is squarely up to the Worshipful Master and his associate officers to inject a note of Masonic interest, in addition to the degree work, into every meeting. A wealth of material is available. Attendance will be better when the membership understands that there is an intelligent and persistent effort to make the Lodge meeting not merely an incident, but an event. This is a definite and urgent suggestion to every Worshipful Master and its acceptance will be one of the tests of leadership.

Grand Master, Iowa.

Masonry needs leaders. If it is going to succeed, it must have men at the head of various departments who are capable of directing others. If there is a Masonic Organization today that is flourishing it is because a man at the head of it is a hustler, and an investigation of those organizations which are dormant reveals that the man who is in charge of it is an unsuccessful leader. Therefore, be careful in choosing the man at the top.

Illinois Freemason

## LODGE RENFREW

Our newly installed Grand Master, M.W. Bro. William N. Love, made his first official visit to his mother Lodge, Lodge Renfrew No. 134 the week following his installation. There were a goodly number of Grand Lodge Officers present to support the Grand Master and the brethren of his own Lodge received him with enthusiasm.