

THE ALBERTA Freemason



Editor: MWBro
Robert E. Juthner
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Freemasonry's Symbols and Rituals

By Mark A. Tabbert

Mark Tabbert, who had been keynote speaker at the 2006 Masonic Spring Workshop, was raised in Malta Lodge No. 318, Burlington, Iowa and served as Master of Mystic Valley Lodge, Arlington, Massachusetts. He is the Director of Collections at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial in Alexandria, Virginia.

Tools and implements of architecture, symbols most impressive, have been selected by the Fraternity to imprint on the memory wise and serious truths; and thus through a succession of ages, are transmitted, unimpaired, the most excellent tenets of our institution.

William Preston, 1775

Freemasonry cannot be understood apart from its rituals and symbols and the way in which its members have interpreted and employed them. The nature of its rituals — their complexity, beauty and symbolism — distinguishes Freemasonry from all other voluntary associations. The initiation rituals attempt to foster brotherly love between the members of the Fraternity, impress upon the mind of new Masons the necessity of relief, and encourage the new Mason to be a seeker and lover of Truth.

The origins of Freemasonry and its rituals are obscure. While individual Lodges are known to have existed in Scotland and England in the 1600s, it was not until 1717 that four London Lodges publicly organized a "Grand" Lodge to supervise and coordinate the work of individual Lodges. The year 1717 is thus referred to as the origin of organized Freemasonry. Yet neither researchers nor speculators have been able to conclusively determine when, where and how Freemasonry was born. Some Masonic writers have been eager to argue that its rituals are divinely inspired and ancient, as some proclaim. Many scholars contend that the Fraternity simply has cleverly written literature that employs architectural metaphors. Regardless of its obscure origins, Freemasonry now operates throughout the world in tens of thousands of Lodges and counts nearly three million men as fraternal Brothers.

Freemasonry and other voluntary associations have easily thrived in free and open societies. Unlike other human institutions, however, the Fraternity has persisted through the modern world's cruellest, oppressive and prejudiced communities. In the 20th century, religious fanaticism, communism, fascism, racism, and hedonism have all sought to dismiss, discredit or destroy it. Nonetheless, Freemasonry still survives. Its rituals are its strength and the keystone that has united its members for nearly 300 years.

The act of instructing and receiving instruction through the initiation rituals constitutes the basic operation of the Lodge. Freemasonry is deeply rooted in an oral tradition. In some Grand Lodges the rituals are never written out, while in many others they are reduced to writings that employ codes. By passing the rituals from mouth to ear and from one generation to the next, Freemasonry has been sustained. The emphasis on preservation and continuation of knowledge reflects the worldly concerns of Freemasonry's founders.

The lessons taught in the rituals are interwoven with themes central to the European *Enlightenment* of the 17th and 18th centuries. It is no coincidence that the exponents of *Enlightenment* thought found much in Freemasonry resonated with their way of thinking. *Enlightenment* philosophers, mathematicians, and scientists believed that human beings and their society could be improved by a search for knowledge, rational study and systematic applications.

In the spirit of the *Enlightenment*, William Preston sought to improve himself in Masonry. More than 50 years after the formation of the first Grand Lodge in London, Preston, a Scotsman, visited London Masonic Lodges to gather their



WBro Mark Tabbert

oral rituals and lectures. His 1772 book, *Freemasonry Illustrated*, contains the Fraternity's first organized, rational and literary published rituals, much of which today still constitutes Masonic ceremonies throughout America. Preston was motivated to codify the rituals and teachings so that the Fraternity's message could be preserved against "the lapse of time, the ruthless hand of ignorance and the devastation of war."

Freemasonry, as understood and portrayed by Preston, professes to be a universal charitable institution that teaches a system of morality to all men of good will who believe in a Divine Being. Freemasonry maintains its universality, because its tenets transcend time and culture. The Fraternity thus uses tools and implements of architecture as the basis for its universal language. Like all languages, Masonic symbolism is taught incrementally to make complex lessons of life easier to understand and master. The stages of initiation and knowledge in Freemasonry are called "degrees." Rather than the titles of academic degrees (bachelor, master or doctor), Freemasonry uses the terms Entered Apprentice (first degree), Fellowcraft (second degree) and Master Mason (third degree) to describe a progres-

See **Symbols & Rituals**, page 2.

Editorial

Let It Be Known

Since the first *Grand Lodge Bulletin* was published in 1935, and to the present time under the familiar title *The Alberta Freemason*, our publication has been a source of information printed for the benefit of all Freemasons in the Grand Jurisdiction of Alberta.

Aside from that, copies are mailed to other jurisdictions, to libraries and to individuals throughout the world (and many acknowledgements are received from far away places), but, for some time now, thanks to the good services

of our Grand Lodge Webmaster and the Grand Lodge web site, the monthly bulletin's contents are opened up to any web browser who shows an interest in them.

It is for this last mentioned reason that the lead article in this issue appears, as it is very informative and easy to understand by anyone who knows little or nothing about Freemasonry. It might even lend itself as a tool for a Brother who has been approached to answer questions about the Order. A suggestion: *Clip it and save it.*

It is, however, not meant to replace any of the many other published expla-

nations of what Freemasonry is all about, which are available to our membership, nor the efforts of the Public Relations Committee of our Grand Lodge. Experience has shown that more recently, more and more (and generally younger) men ask intelligent questions about our Fraternity. Therefore, the more ways we have to satisfy the thirst for knowledge, the better it will be. In the end, let us recognize the value of disseminating unembellished facts which, however, will gain from truthful, personal enthusiasm when telling the story of Freemasonry, our beloved Craft.

LET THAT BE KNOWN!

rej

Letter to the Editor

(Reply to letter "How to get free publicity..." *The Alberta Freemason* Vol. 72, No. 1, January 2007)

Perhaps Brother Dafoe's last sentence in his Letter to the Editor disparaging my efforts says it all. That sentence is "...better served by relating that information man to man." Clearly, our declining membership over the years is indicative that such an approach no longer works. A more public approach is required and that would include even small efforts as I have suggested.

First let me put into perspective my background, as I have considerable experience in the print media business. I am editor of three trade publications. My opinion columns regularly appear in the *Western Standard Magazine*, the *Calgary Herald*, US publications and a

number of small town newspapers. I have a pretty good understanding of publishing, editing and writing as that is how I make a living.

Brother Dafoe mentions that there is a conflict between using advertising as leverage with editorial. That may exist in very large publications, but such liberties do not exist in small publications that are highly dependent on a limited number of advertisers. It's a bit of journalistic mythology that news must be unbiased and unsullied by the power of advertising. It's a tough business out there and publishers and editors do what they have to, to survive.

Brother Dafoe states that working editors of small town newspapers have no time for potential stories on topics like Freemasonry. In my business I have met with those editors, and the contrary is

true. The reality is that there are more times than not when actual local news is hard to find. Sometimes nothing much happens in a small town in a particular week and editors are scrambling to find any story. In such situations editors and reporters become remarkably cooperative to potential stories.

What I am suggesting is nothing really new. Other groups have done exactly the same to garner attention to their activities. I have been involved with such a PR approach myself. It's always easy to come up with a hundred reasons — real or imagined — not to do something, and nothing will happen. Perhaps my free PR suggestion is too simplistic for Brother Dafoe, but it is more doable than he implies. The other alternative, as I noted in the beginning, is to see our membership continue to decline. It's a different world out there, Brother Dafoe.

Will Verboven,

Canada Lodge No. 165

Symbols & Rituals, from page 1. sion from the "darkness" of ignorance of Masonic principles to the "light" of their knowledge.

Freemasonry's symbolic language and its instructional system are derived mostly from medieval stonemason guilds. To differentiate themselves from their stonemasons, Freemasons employ the terms "operative Masonry" and "speculative Masonry." While stonemasonry is the craft of building edifices, Freemasonry professes to be a

"Craft" devoted to building better men. Operative masons organized in lodges or guilds and were taught ways to use tools to improve stone for construction. Speculative Masons call their organizations "symbolic" Lodges and apply the symbolic meanings of the stonemasons' tools to discern ways — obvious upon further reflection but often overlooked — to improve themselves and become useful and productive members of their communities.

Although Freemasonry's rituals have

remained nearly unchanged and remarkably similar throughout the country, each American Grand Lodge has its own peculiar traditions and unique characteristics. While Freemasonry is one universal language, it is one spoken in a myriad of local dialects. Indeed, like all migratory folkways, Freemasonry has been adapted and used by different men for different purposes.

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330 - 12 Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta T2R 0H2
Tel 403-262-1140 — Fax 403-290-0671
www.freemasons.ab.ca

Grand Master	MWBro J.R. Malcolm Berry
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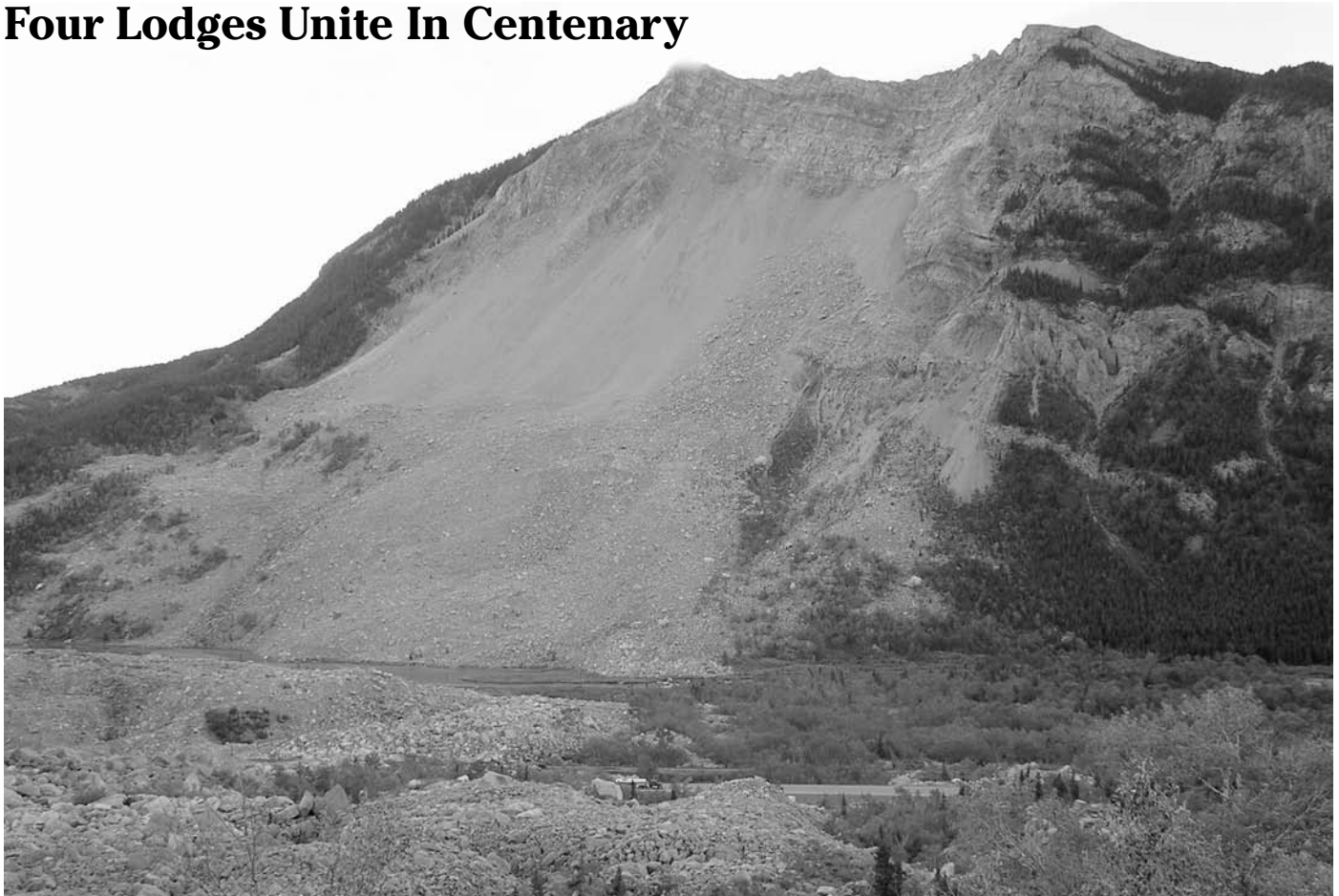

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Editor: MWBro Robert E. Juthner
14103 Buena Vista Road NW, Edmonton, AB T5R 5S2
Tel 780-483-5124 — Fax 780-486-4512
e-mail: praga@shaw.ca

The Committee on the Grand Lodge Bulletin
MWBro Robert E. Juthner (Chairman);
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Four Lodges Unite In Centenary



Top: The Frank Slide in the Crowsnest Pass. In the early morning of 29 April 1903, in about 100 seconds, 30 million cubic metres (82 million tons) of Turtle Mountain buried the town of Frank killing 76 people. Left: The interior of the Lodge room at Frank, Alberta, the site of the quadruple centennial celebration. Bottom left: The Masonic Hall was a church that was relocated from Frank Slide Danger Zone to its current location on the north side of the highway, west of the Slide. It was also used as a Union Hall and a community hall prior to becoming the Masonic Hall.

Four Southern Alberta Masonic Lodges are coming together to celebrate their 100th Anniversaries. They are:
Sentinel Lodge No. 26 of Frank;
Rocky-Summit Lodge No. 30, also of Frank;
Cairo Lodge No. 32 of Claresholm; and
Stavely Lodge No. 33 of Stavely, Alberta.

The ceremony to Confirm the Consecration of these Lodges, presided over by the Grand Master, MWBro J. R. Malcolm Berry, and assisted by Grand Lodge Officers and appointed Brethren,

will be performed on —
Saturday, March 3rd, 2007
Tyling at 14 00 h
Frank Masonic Hall
Crowsnest Pass

A banquet will follow at the **Crowsnest Centre**, with cocktails at 17 30 h and supper served at 18 30 h.

For enquiries contact
 WBro Jeff Schlender,
 e-mail: schlender@shaw.ca,
 phone 403-563-3573,

or mail to
 Sentinel Lodge No. 26,
 Box 27, Bellevue, AB T0K 0C0.

Heritage Park Lodge Upgrade

Last year, as a Centennial Project, Glenbow Lodge No. 184 decided to undertake repairs and improvements to the Masonic Lodge at Calgary's Heritage Park. The proposed work was approved by the Park's Curator with guidance from RWBro Norm Downs and the Masters Wardens and Deacons Association. The repairs and improvements consisted of painting the walls in the viewing room and entrance, replacing broken glass in display cabinets, adding backs to cabinets and repairing broken furniture. The Brethren of Glenbow Lodge used their time and various talents to ensure the work was completed prior to the Park's season opening in May. In addition, Glenbow Lodge donated \$400 to the Park so their staff could install stair treads, paint the floor and install an electrical outlet.

While discussing the Heritage Park Lodge during a recent meeting, it was agreed that the regalia in the Lodge room are deteriorating. With the Park's approval some regalia should be replaced



The Masonic Lodge display at Heritage Park Calgary. Many of the artifacts shown have considerable historic significance and have been collected from all over the province.

in kind. If your Lodge can help or has suggestions we would like to hear from you. Let's continue to utilize the Heritage Park Lodge as an opportunity to showcase our Craft in the best possible

manner. Contact:

RWBro Ed Balleine
Historian, Glenbow Lodge No. 184
Ph. 403-255-4263
Email: efc@shaw.ca

Alberta Miscellany

Selected by Bro Trevor Morris

Redwood Lodge No. 193

I heard a man speak at a funeral; he referred to the dates on the individual's tombstone. He noted that first came the date of her birth, and then he spoke of the following dates with tears. He said, "What mattered most of all was the **dash** between the years," for the dash represents all the time we spent on earth, and now only those who knew her know what that little line represents and is worth. For it matters not how much we own: the cars, the house, or the cash. What matters is how we lived and loved, and how we spent our **dash**.

So, think about it long and hard: are there things that you'd like to change? You never know how much time is left. If we could only slow down enough to consider what's true and real, and always try to understand the way other people feel. Be less quick to anger, show appreciation more and love the people in our lives like we've never loved before. If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile, always remembering that this special **dash** might only last a little while longer. So, when the day comes when your eulogy is read you would be proud of the things they say about how you spent your **dash**.

WBro Barry Kaye, WM

Evergreen Lodge No. 166

In the last while I have run into a number of situations dealing with integrity and ethics in a two-hour seminar directed at public servants. I understand ethics, in the general context of society, to be the principles of honour and morality and accepted rules of conduct. In terms of the individual members of society, the moral principles of an individual. A dictionary defines integrity as "fidelity to moral principles;

honesty." Can these be taught in a two-hour seminar?

I think society's current dilemma with ethics and integrity can be best illustrated by the description of a high profile [party deleted, Ed.] politician in Canada — an individual promoted as a candidate to lead the country. Commenting on his participation in one of the many scandals afflicting the government of the day, he was described as not having an issue with integrity because he has flexible ethics.

I find myself confused with the popular concept of "situational ethics." What are situational ethics? A justification for the behaviour of too many political and business leaders? Are we out of step with the new reality?

One of the things that drew me to Freemasonry was the integrity of its members. I always understood integrity to be the way you lived your life. Some human behaviour can sometimes be changed, but the underlying values are virtually impossible to change.

The reaction to the proposed criminal reference checks [of petitioners, Ed.] can be taken as an answer to the question; if we cannot judge the character of our members, who can, and why would we sub-contract that important duty?

[There] is the resurgence in the Craft: good men with strong moral values, seeking that moral compass. It appears we are Raising the Bar.

WBro Doug Elford, WM

Calgary Lodge No. 23

I believe that we need to keep Candidates fully aware of their responsibilities that they owe to themselves and to the Lodge once they've sworn their Obligations that they will learn and apply Masonic principles to their everyday lives, and this starts by learning the Ritual and knowing their Obligations that they were sworn to in open Lodge, and this should be the responsibility of whoever has sponsored that Candidate

Book Review

The Origins of Freemasonry: Facts & Fictions

Margaret C. Jacob

University of Pennsylvania Press, 168 pages, 2006, ISBN 0-8122-3901-0

This is the second book by Margaret Jacob on the history of Freemasonry. This book has six chapters: Origins; Daily Lives as Measured in Masonic Time; Schools of Government, Money, Equality, and Fraternity; Freemasons Negotiate the Market; Women in the Lodges; and Conclusions. The book draws heavily on works in the archives and library of the Grand East of the Netherlands and documents, captured by the Russians during World War II, recently returned to the original owners.

The author points to the early 1650s as the beginnings of modern Freemasonry when impoverished English and Scottish guilds of stonemasons began to admit relatives of members as well as prominent public figures with philosophical interests. As more non-operative masons joined the character of the Lodges slowly changed. Jacob does not find any connection between the Knights Templar and the origins of the Craft.

The second chapter tries to create a picture of daily life in the early days of the Craft to establish what the appeal was to join. Between 1650 and 1750, the membership grew to include, by most estimates, tens of thousands of members. She uses pocket diaries, which were very popular then, to understand Freemasonry's appeal and rapid expansion. Unfortunately, this chapter made little impression upon your reviewer.

The third chapter explores the novel concept of constitutional government as practised in the Lodges. This was a new approach and differed from the monarchical forms of government practised in Europe and England. In addition, the advancement of members within the Lodge based upon merit rather than birth or wealth was also a novel approach. The Dutch were active Freemasons and the interaction between Freemasonry and the Dutch

Calgary Lodge continued.

to join our Lodge. This is serious stuff, but not stuffy stuff, and with this in mind we should always keep it simple and fun because, after all, Masons are made of the same cloth, sort of speak as normal everyday people and we enjoy ourselves every bit as much as other people.

WBro Jaime Wong, WM

Republic led to written constitutions. As Freemasonry spread to Germany and France this new approach to government may have laid the groundwork for republican government that slowly evolved in those countries.

The fourth chapter, like the second one, was very interesting but made little impression upon the reviewer. The author seemed rather fascinated by the idea that the members regularly paid "taxes" (dues) to the Lodge. Charity is also discussed in this chapter. Freemasonry and its emphasis on charity, to its members, was one of the first forms of organized social welfare in England or the Continent. This discussion was the most interesting part of the chapter.

The chapter on women in the Craft was, to this reviewer, the most interesting. Women played a major role in the Craft, especially in France. There were women lodges and Lodges of Adoption, i.e. members of both sexes. The author points out that in these lodges, women had an early taste of equality in male dominated societies. Men and women learned to vote, to orate, to practice social discipline, and pay dues to their lodge. The author discusses how the rituals were different in Lodges of Adoption to include women and use women from the Bible and mythology as role models for women. Male dominated societies eventually suppressed all lodges

with women members. What we have left is the Masonry we practice today. This chapter was the most interesting in the whole book for your reviewer. What would the fraternity be like today if women had not been excluded?

Margaret Jacob is not an author whose work is an easy read. Her previous book on the Enlightenment was a difficult book. While the current book is a "little heavy," it is well worth the time and effort to work through. Some of her findings, such as the stonemason origins of the Craft, are well explored by other authors; however, the rest of the book provides new and interesting insights into the early development of Freemasonry.

Loren W. Kline

Grand Master's Itinerary March

- 3 Especial Communication to Reconfirm the Consecration of Sentinal No. 26, Rocky-Summit No. 30, Cairo No. 32 and Stavely No. 33; Masonic Hall, Frank; 14 00 h
- 13 Patricia No. 91, Blarney Night; Freemasons' Hall, Edmonton; 19 30 h
- 17 Eastgate No. 192, Taste of the Orient; Edmonton
- 24 Griesbach No. 191, Mess Dinner; Jefferson Armoury, Edmonton; 18 00 h
- 27 Kitscoty No. 131, Fraternal Visit
- 29 March to 1 April; All Canada Conference; Winnipeg, Manitoba

Bring Your Stories to the Workshop

This year's Spring Workshop has the theme *Storytelling* and that's what goes on in the "private seminars" following the public sessions. Brethren, like those below, make new friends and gather together to trade stories and discuss their Craft. It's probably the most productive part of the entire weekend — certainly, it's the most satisfying. Plan to attend the **42nd Annual Masonic Spring Workshop** to be held **20 to 22 April 2007** at the **Delta Lodge at Kananaskis**. Mail-in registration forms are in the January *Alberta Freemason* (available at www.freemasons.ab.ca) or you can register on-line or download a form at www.masonicspringworkshop.ab.ca



Fiat Lux Meets in Westlock on 24 March

Fiat Lux Lodge of Research No. 1980 is Alberta's only travelling Lodge — it has no premises of its own in which to hold meetings. As a result, it is wholly dependent on the good will of sister Lodges who offer their facilities and host meetings. For 26 years, Fiat Lux has never been let down.

The next meeting of Fiat Lux Lodge of Research will be held Saturday, 24 March 2007 at the Memorial Hall in Westlock hosted by the Brethren of

Westlock Lodge No. 114. and will tyle at 14 00 h. A banquet, cost \$20, will follow the meeting at 18 00 h.

As research Lodges are not assigned to a specific District, they come directly

under the Deputy Grand Master. The march meeting will receive the DGM, RWBro Bob Drury, on his official visit to the Lodge. RWBro Drury will also present one of the papers during the program of research

Whence We Came

The inquisitive mind might ask, "What is our Masonic Ancestry? What is the path that was taken from the days of the Premier Grand Lodge, winding its way down to the establishment of the Grand Lodge of Alberta?"

One has to consult numerous books to learn about this development, and spend many, many hours reading about it, wherefore it is much more expedient — at least for the person who can read graphics without losing his way — to present this chart which the editor had first prepared for the *History of the Grand Lodge of Alberta 1905-1980*, page 125.

Enjoy!

