

THE ALBERTA FreeMason



Editor: MWBro
Robert E. Juthner

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Grand Chaplain's Message

The story is told of a Methodist congregation in England in the late 1800s that needed new hymnbooks but lacked the money to pay for them. The churchgoers learned that a large company, a maker of patent medicines, would furnish hymnbooks at a penny apiece if the books could carry some advertising.

The congregation saw no harm in making that concession, and so they ordered the books. The new hymnals arrived at the church the day before Christmas. On Christmas morning, the minister announced the first hymn. The good people turned to their new books and in a few seconds were aghast to hear themselves singing: "Hark! The herald angels sing/ Beecham's pills are just the thing;/ Peace on earth and mercy mild./ Two for man and one for child."

It would seem our fears about the commercialization of religious faith are older than we might think!

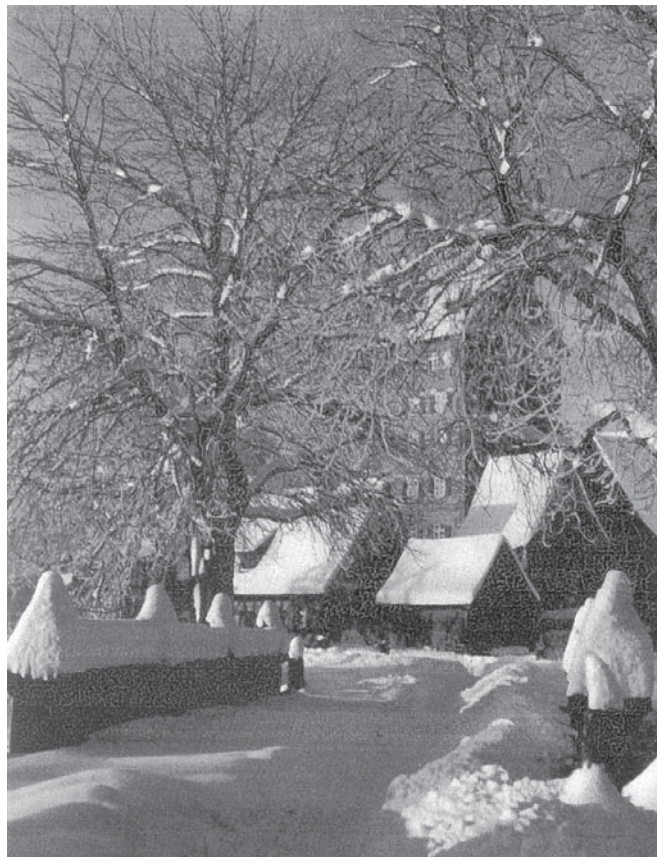
This season is a time for rejoicing. Forget about the ringing of the cash registers. Lay aside for a few moments the responsibilities you will have when you put down this paper. God is at hand. This is a time for yielding ourselves to the blessed presence of the Most High.

What does it mean to rejoice because God is at hand?

First, it means that God is in control. Not George W. Bush. Not Jean Chrétien. Certainly not the terrorists who left their mark upon history this past September. The Great Architect of the Universe is in control of his creation.

Alan Paton's novel *Cry, The Beloved Country* contains a scene that reflects this kind of confident hope. An old South African man, Stephen Kumalo, has gone

to Johannesburg to find his son Jonathan. Jonathan is in jail for killing a white lawyer named Arthur Jarvis, who was an advocate of black rights and had written a book about the urgency for



justice in that hate-filled country. Kumalo then goes to the elder Jarvis, the lawyer's father, to apologize for his son's crime. Jarvis receives him kindly. He has been reading his son's book, and it has spoken to him of what must be done. Learning that Kumalo's little village needs a new place of worship, Jarvis vows to build it for them. He also promises to send earthmoving equipment to build a dam for the village so that the people will have a year-round supply of safe water.

The very rumour of what is to be done sends a wave of hope through the people of the village. There will be wa-

ter for irrigation. They can raise cattle. There will be food and milk for the children, so the young will no longer drift to the cities for work. There will be laughter and singing and dancing again.

Although nothing has happened yet, it is as though something is here already. Everything is changed.

This is the real joy of our faith. Not just the celebration of our great religious festivals, however joyful, but the announcement that God has started a great work. God's earthmoving equipment is in place, and God will not cease work until every heart is opened to God's love and justice.

Secondly, it means that we are to be diligent in making a difference in this world. It is so easy to neglect our responsibilities, to slide away from sharing this good news of God's love.

Back in 1981, *Campus Life* magazine carried a story about a new cassette tape program for high school and university students. "Genius at Work" was for students living at home who had parents who expected to hear the sounds of constant productivity from their room. According to the article, the student who purchased the "Genius at Work" cassette could retreat to his or her room, shut the door and turn on the tape recorder. Instantly, the walls would echo with the industrious sounds of paper being rolled into a typewriter, followed by the clickity-click of somebody hard at work. The tape would produce a full hour of stereophonic typing, while the student reclined in peaceful procrastination.

I have no doubt there was a brisk
See **Chaplain's Message**, page 2.

Editorial What Next?

The year 2001, the first year of the Third Millennium is drawing to a close, and it seems in order to reflect on its achievements and failings. This writer, of course, will not be able to come even close to covering the whole range of what happened to and around us in this year, but he is confident that the reader will be able to add substantially, in his mind, to the musings that follow.

On the grand scale of global occurrences, we are all very much subject to the awful attacks on what we like to call "the free world" and the warlike response by the attacked. Why is all this happening — are we not one bond of brothers under one ever-loving God? Those who were attacked pray to God for the souls lost, and the attackers hail (presumably the same) God in whose holy name they thought of fighting a just cause, to be rewarded in the hereafter. Is this to be the highlight of the year 2001 we expected? Did we not think that now, that the 20th century, which not only featured the two World Wars, but a hundred other wars worldwide, being behind us, the 21st would bring us the peace we so earnestly desire. Did we achieve or did we fail?

Closer to home, in our world of Freemasonry within the borders of Alberta, what happened? We had consecrations of two Lodges, that's positive, no doubt; we had amalgamations, and that's what? Positive because something was sal-

Grand Master's Itinerary

December

- 3 Evergreen Lodge, Edmonton
- 6 Zetland Lodge, Calgary
- 8 Renfrew Lodge, Calgary
- 10 St. Mark 's Lodge, Calgary
- 11 Highlands-Unity Lodge, Edmonton
- 12 Dominion Lodge, Edmonton
- 13 Saskatchewan Lodge, Edmonton
- 18 Drumheller Lodge
- 20 Ivanhoe Lodge, Edmonton

vaged, or negative because we lost the identities of well-established Lodges? What about "Surrendering the Charter"? Nothing positive about that. We had an upswing in petitioners for initiation into Freemasonry, notably many of a younger age than in previous years, and that's certainly good, but we continued to have losses in membership. Those, where some of us are called to the Grand Lodge Above (or as our Austrian Brethren call it, "are being perfected") are not in the area of achievements and failures, they're unavoidable, but Demissions and Suspensions NPD are in the latter category: we have failed somewhere, somehow. So, was this any different from what we experienced in the former century, the former millennium?

This is only scratching the surface; every one of us can think of other events meriting applause or causing concern — let us just leave it at that, but let each of us ask the question "What Next?" and become part of the solution, not of the problem!

Any New Year's resolutions?

Chaplain's Message, from page 2. market for "Genius at Work"! However, there is no prerecorded substitute for our presence in the life of another person: our smile, our words of encouragement, our touch, our helping hand. When we grow weary in well-doing, this season offers us a time to rekindle our enthusiasm, our devotion to God's love and to the well-being of each and all of God's children.

Finally, in this holy season we need to recall that the centrepiece of history is God himself. Whether we are telling the Christmas story, or the story of Hanukkah, or the sacred story at the heart of any of our religious traditions, at the centre of our message is the Most High God. And so, may the love of the Most High bless your hearts and homes, in this festive season and always. May you listen for the voices of angels who have never quit singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." And may all your celebrations be filled with holy joy!

Dr Earle Sharam,
The VW Grand Chaplain

Greetings from the Grand Lodge Office Staff

The staff in the Grand Lodge Office has gone through several changes in the last year. Marjorie DeMerchant joined us in May to assume the responsibilities of Bookkeeper and Office Assistant, RWBro Ed Hunter has remained on staff as Assistant Grand Secretary and I, RWBro Jerry Kopp, was appointed to the office of Grand Secretary at the Annual Communication in June 2001. Our office also had a bit of a "face lift" by creating a better work area. We have a new reception desk which gives our office a more professional look.

We would like to invite you to our "Annual Open House" Thursday, December 20, 2001 from 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM. Our Open House has proven to be a wonderful time to wish our friends a wonderful Christmas season.

Please feel free to drop by, share a bite to eat, a glass of wine, eggnog or cup of coffee and check out our office.

We wish to extend our best wishes to you and your families for the best Christmas ever.

May you enjoy time with your loved ones in peace and harmony.

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Judy Rivers

From time to time our publication, The Alberta Freemason features biographies of Brethren with the intention to make them better known to our reading public. The time has come, however, to break the gender barrier and to introduce a lady who, to many in Alberta, really needs no introduction. Not every Mason in the jurisdiction may have had the opportunity to meet her in person, but there are also many telephone users who know her as that cheerful voice on the other end of the line, belonging to an ever ready helper and problem solver — **Judy Rivers** of the Grand Lodge office in Calgary.

This past September, Mrs. Rivers had completed twelve years as right-hand lady to the Grand Secretary: first Allen Aylesworth; then Gerry Webber; John Knox; Ed Hunter; and now Jerry Kopp. Just how she feels about her place of employment we shall find out when reading the last paragraph of this tribute.

Judy was born in Ormstown, Québec, the daughter of the late MWBro Kenneth W. Aldridge, Past Grand Master and Past Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Quebec, an outstanding Masonic leader and effective communicator with high-ranking Roman Catholic clergy, and a witty speaker whom many of us remember as the informative and entertaining guest speaker at our Grand Lodge banquet in Calgary, in 1988.

Judy attended Graham's Business College and first worked for Saguenay Shipping, both in Montreal. Having moved to Calgary in 1969, she was employed by Hudson Bay Oil & Gas, and then by Cummings Properties (now Trizec Realty). After the arrival of two daughters, she spent sixteen years as a stay-at-home Mom, and loved it!

Always active in sports and dance activities, Judy took a Fitness Instructors' course and became an Alberta Certified Fitness Instructor. As such she worked for the YWCA, the Calgary Board of Education (Leisure Learning) and ran

a private fitness group known as "Fitness First." When it was time to get back into the work force full time, she worked for Goal Setters Fitness Centre in Cochrane as receptionist and fitness instructor.



While still working in Montreal Judy was a member of the Alouette Football dance squad. On arriving in Calgary, she joined a dance group that performed at the pre-show and half-time show at Stampeder home games. Now she is a member of the Brenda Dennis Line Dancers, a troupe which has entertained with country performers such as George Fox, Rick Tippe, Patricia

Conroy and the Jonnar Brothers. They have competed in Minnesota where they placed first and also have taken first place in the Stampede Pre-Parade for best overall entertainment.

Judy is happily married to Jim Rivers who is quite a congenial person in his own right. They have four children and two grandchildren, although her good looks belie her status of grandmother. Jim and Judy have a cottage north of Pincher Creek in the Porcupine Hills which they built with their own hands together. It is their great escape from the busy city life and the demands of untold numbers of Lodge Secretaries, Grand Lodge officers and inquisitive Freemasons.

Once Judy realized that she had to get serious about fulfilling employment, she discovered that working for the Grand Lodge of Alberta was just it! She found this to be a great place to work and, before she knew it, twelve years had passed. Grand Lodge has been like a family to her and a place where she is very happy, arriving for work shortly after seven in the morning, five times a week. She always tells people that she has a great job and that she works for the best people. What a compliment! She also says that she hopes to continue working for the Grand Lodge of Alberta for a long time yet, and we in the Craft can only say, "Judy, as far as we're concerned, you haven't reached the halfway mark yet!"

Alberta Miscellany

Ivanhoe Lodge No. 142 — I was recently involved in a discussion of the history of Freemasonry, its roots and its goals of mutual support and self-development. A friend mentioned that in today's society with universal health care and welfare, organizations such as Freemasonry do not have the same value as in years gone by. I thought about this for sometime and came up with an example of why Freemasonry is more important now than ever.

Recently my wife has been watching "Survivor" on television. The precept of the show is to be the last survivor and win \$1 million. After watching an episode, I must admit that I was amused, but very disappointed. In my opinion, the show advances concepts such as greed, deception and conspiracy as positive traits. This type of entertainment is quite popular today. It seems that our popular culture is becoming more and more geared to the "dog eat dog" or "success at any cost" mentality.

Freemasonry teaches us that to succeed with others and to support one another is a goal to which we should aspire. When one of us is in need, we should all pitch in and help. My friend was very wrong when he said that organizations such as Freemasonry have limited value today. Freemasonry has the ability to see right from wrong and allows us to keep on the straight and narrow path. Without it we may become like an entire society of those people on "Survivor," and I don't know about you, but I never want to judge or vote against one of my Brothers!

Art Mackie

Yellowknife Lodge No. 162 — The Lodge summons for the month of October included information on two Brethren from Yellowknife and one from Inuvik to be passed to the degree of a Fellowcraft on October 13th, and four candidates from Inuvik to be initiated into Freemasonry on October 20th. They also had three petitioners from Yellowknife awaiting initiation, bringing the number up to seven, wherefore another emergent meeting was scheduled for November 5th.

The Secretary-Treasurer, VWBro Kenneth Bibby, noted that "There are members travelling from Inuvik (to Yellowknife) at great cost as to time and money. Airfare in the amount of \$1000, hotel lodging \$160 per night, food and,

of course, the cost of a present to take back to your wife. The dedication they are showing to the Craft is unique. Let us, the Brethren of Yellowknife Lodge, show them the hospitality and support they so deserve.”

York Lodge No. 119 — Building bridges has always been the great goal and the great good of the Masonic Fraternity. Masonry builds bridges between men and unites them by focusing on their internal, and not their external, qualities. It teaches that we are alike in far more ways — and far more important ways — than we are different.

This is a key and useful aspect of Freemasonry, since many people are often more willing to see differences than likenesses. It is all too easy to divide ourselves into economic classes, social cliques, racial groups, political parties, etc. Such actions are natural, but so are earthquakes, floods and hurricanes. Being natural does not, of ne-

cessity, make something desirable. When we are tempted to focus on what divides us as opposed to what unites us, Masonry brings a great lesson to mankind, “Build bridges, not battlements.”
D.A. Gyulai, WM

Lethbridge Lodge No. 39 — How many of us, if we were to pass to the Grand Lodge Above tomorrow, would look back upon our lives and not have regrets? What does Freemasonry teach us about life and death? Freemasonry teaches us that we should appreciate each day. We may have it all one day and lose it the next. We are also taught that we are owed nothing by society, yet it is we who owe society. We take good men and make them better — but does that mean we never falter? Of course not.

We have all of our Brethren to help us along the way, so that when we stray off course, we are rerouted on the correct path. Alfred Bernhard Nobel (1833–1896) is a prime example of changing

one’s course. Mr. Nobel had invented dynamite and as such had become infamous. While away from home he had read in the paper his premature obituary. The account of his life mortified him to no end. He was credited with the loss of many lives and having been a monster for inventing such a destructive item. On returning home, Alfred vowed to change what society thought of him. He started the Nobel Peace Prizes [also in the fields of physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, and literature — Ed.] and donated much money to those who could change society for the better. Now when his name comes up it is his contributions to society that one remembers, not his invention of dynamite.

Let us all reflect on our lives and see what changes need to be made in order to leave a fitting legacy. A legacy fitting for men who belong to the beautifully moralized fraternity of Freemasons.

Scott Sawatsky, WM

More on Alaska 2002 “Lodge At Sea”

The October 2001 issue of *The Alberta Freemason* carried an invitation by RWBro Terry Drolet, DGM, to join with him and his wife Marilyn on a Masonic cruise to Alaska, September 5–14, 2002, an opportunity to participate in the first Tyled Lodge aboard Holland America Line’s *MS Zaandam*. Here are some of the tour highlights:

- Airfare from Calgary or Edmonton;
- 2 nights in Vancouver’s four diamond Metropolitan Hotel in the heart of the city;
- Hiwus Feasthouse day tour in Vancouver and Mendenhall Glacier tour in Juneau;
- sailing the Inside Passage & all meals;
- fraternal visits in Vancouver and Juneau and, of course, the Tyled Lodge meeting aboard ship mentioned above.

Register soon as there is a January 15, 2002 deadline for the deposit (final payment on or before June 14, 2002). Air-Land-Cruise package example \$2869 per person, in category “H” outside stateroom.

View the Grand Lodge website at <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/trip2002/> and contact Bro Murray Pay, M.V.P. Travel Services, 266 Dalhurst Way NW, Calgary, AB, T3A 1P5. Phone 403-286-8506, Fax 403-247-0774, email parade@cadvision.com

Will the Masonic Family Survive?

by RWBro Ed Hunter, Past Grand Secretary

A paper presented to the All Canada Conference, Winnipeg, March 16–17, 2001

On looking up the Masonic family in our constitution and Regulations, I find a group of organizations with whom we are in amity, known as “concordant bodies.” Looking up the meaning of *concordant* I find the synonyms “agreeing” and “harmonious.” *Amity* means “friendship” or “harmony.”

Where and when this (recognition) was decided, is hard to say, however, in this day and age it is a fact. To bring this into closer perspective, I would like to make a comparison between Craft Masonry and the concordant bodies, that is, I would consider Craft Masonry as the roots and body of the tree, while the concordant bodies would be considered as branches, or offshoots, or suckers. From time to time these concordant bodies have seemed to use Craft Masonry as the personal source of recruits for their organization. I guess that this is due to their structure, where some place [the prerequisite membership] in their ritual or regulations. This does seem to allow them to recruit on their own. Now, I personally have nothing against this, but I have found in my short term as a Freemason, that Craft members have not attended their Craft Lodge because they have been too busy attending other functions. One thing the

leaders in concordant bodies must realize is that unless the members support their Craft Lodge, it will in turn fail, and so, in turn, will the concordant bodies.

Whether or not we should be particularly concerned with whether they survive or not, is a moot point. It would seem to me that for some time we have been more concerned with whether or not Freemasonry will survive, than to worry whether or not a concordant body will survive or fail due to a lack of members or participation. When I look at the loss of membership in our own jurisdiction from the 1950s to now, from just about 20,000 to just under 10,000, I would think that unless a dramatic change takes place, we are going to be the ones who are wondering if we will survive or not. The situation looks grim, people might rationalize, and that is the same all over Canada and the USA. Not good enough to hide behind this rationalization! Let’s face the facts, if Masonry, the “body,” fails, so will the concordant bodies. Once the root or trunk suffers injury, it will assuredly affect the branches. Is there any hope for our beloved Craft, or will it die at the same time as the concordant bodies? We have to remember that the main purpose in

See *Masonic Family*, page 6.

Our DDGMs

Calgary-Highwood District

RWBro J.R. Malcolm Berry was born July 26, 1942 in Bury, Lancashire, England where he attended Grammar School for Boys and was captain of the rugby team. He attended Swansea University in South Wales, graduating with a BSc in Geography and a BSc (Hon) in Geology. Following graduation, he taught geography and geology at the Derby School in Bury. In 1965, he emigrated to Canada to take up postgraduate studies at McGill University, Montreal and, after receiving his Master's degree in Geology in 1966, he was hired by Texaco Exploration Company as an exploration geologist in their Calgary office. He ultimately became Vice President of Exploration with a junior Oil and Gas company and then formed his own consulting firm in 1982.

In the mid-1980s, Malcolm and his wife, Dawn, moved to the west coast where he took a year off to attend Western Pacific Academy of Photography in Victoria, achieving top student status and his accreditation with the Professional Photographers Association of British Columbia. They then pursued their passion of sailing, buying the *Halicon II* and living aboard the sailboat during the summer months, spending their time cruising the coastal waters of British Columbia. Since their return to Calgary in 1993, Malcolm continues to consult to oil and gas corporations.

Brother Berry's father was a member of the Craft in England. Malcolm was initiated, passed and raised in Calgary Lodge No. 23 in 1977, served the Lodge as WM in 1982 and as Secretary-Treasurer for two years prior to being elected DDGM of Calgary-Highwood District. He has been a member of the A&ASR, Valley of Calgary, since 1979 and currently holds the office of Prelate in the Delta Chapter Rose Croix HRDM. He is also a member of the Tin Lizzie Corps of Al Shamal Temple, AAONMS.



Medicine Hat Lodge No. 2 in 1983 and, on relocating to Lethbridge, he affiliated with Diamond City Lodge No. 65 in 1990, serving there as WM from 1996 through 1998. He became a member of the Central Alberta Lodge of Perfection, A&ASR, in 1974, Chapter of Rose Croix HRDM in 1999 and Consistory 32° also in 1999. He was initiated in Shekinah Chapter, RAM in 1980 and was its First Principal in 1999. He received the Knight Templar degree in 1980, and that of High Priesthood in 2000. He was initiated into Al Azhar Temple, AAONMS, in 1980 and has served as President of the Lethbridge Shrine Club in 1995. In May 2001 he was invested as Grand Pursuivant of the Grand Chapter of Alberta, RAM. Our Brother has maintained an active role in all segments of Freemasonry.

Dinosaur District

RWBro Al Maygard was born in the community of Gwynne on May 18, 1928. He considers himself a proud Albertan. He was a founder and leader of the Western Canada Concept Party. In his working life, Al has been active in real estate sales and as a road construction foreman, now retired. He is happily married to Anne.

Our Brother received the degrees of Freemasonry in Gleichen Lodge No. 36 in 1994, served a term as District Secretary in 1996/97 and as Worshipful Master of Gleichen Lodge in 1998/99. He is also an affiliate member of Strathmore Lodge No. 53 and was its Worshipful Master in 2000.



Lakeland District

RWBro Nestor Kwasnycia was born November 25, 1944 and raised on a farm near Derwent, Alberta. Educationally, he holds a science degree and a postgraduate diploma in education, both from the University of Alberta. Occupationally, he has been a farmer, a lumberjack, an equipment operator, a teacher, a millwright and a mechanic. As a teacher, he worked and travelled for a number of years in Ghana and in Australia. Presently he and his wife operate a small fleet of school buses in the Elk Island School Division and an apartment complex in Wetaskiwin. Bro Nestor and his wife, Pam, have raised four children and are blessed with two grandchildren. They reside in Strathcona County near Ardrossan, Alberta.

Our Brother was made a Mason in Norwood Lodge No. 90 in 1986 and served as Worshipful Master in 1994/95. He is a member of several concordant bodies including North Star Chapter No. 2, RAM, Edmonton Preceptory No. 46, KT, the three bodies of the A&ASR Valley of Edmonton, and a Noble of the Mystic Shrine. Bro Nestor is a PTPGM of the Edmonton Lodge of Perfection, A&ASR and a Past Captain of the Provost Corps of Al Shamal Temple, AAONMS. Presently he is the Associate Guardian of Bethel 13, IOJD.



Chinookarch District

RWBro Cyril Clayton Stobbs was born at Brancepeth, SK, on October 14, 1929, was raised on the family farm and received his formal education there. He moved to Alberta in 1947 where he worked for a time in Calgary before joining the military, serving in Canada and Korea. Following his military service he was engaged in police work in Calgary and Medicine Hat for a period of sixteen years. He was then employed by the Alberta Liquor Control Board as an inspector for seventeen years in Calgary and Edmonton and, following promotion to Senior Inspector, in Red Deer, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat, retiring in 1986. While in Medicine Hat he became active in the Scouting movement, culminating in his appointment as Assistant District Commissioner for the Medicine Hat District.

While in Red Deer, our Brother received the degrees of Freemasonry in Beacon Lodge No. 190 in 1973; affiliated with



Northern Lights District

RWBro Stanley A. Bembridge was born December 26, 1926 in Yorkton, SK. He is a retired Agricultural and Oil Field Supplier. Stan had served in the RCNVR from 1944 to 1946. He is married to Margaret Ritchie and the couple has two children, namely, a daughter who is a Past Honoured Queen and Past Grand Bethel Honoured Queen, IOJD, by whom he has one granddaughter, also a Past Honoured Queen; and a son who is a Past Master Councillor of the Order of DeMolay, by whom he has three grandchildren. The family are members of Millwoods United Church in Edmonton.



Brother Bembridge was initiated in Evergreen Lodge No. 166 in 1958 and passed and raised in 1959. He served that Lodge as Worshipful Master in 1980. Our Brother is also a member of the three bodies of the A&ASR Valley of Edmonton, holding the 32°, and of the Legion of Honour of Al Shamal Temple, AAONMS.

Masonic Family, from page 4.

Craft Masonry is to take good men and make them better. We have all the tools to accomplish this without much difficulty, from the lessons in the General Charge to the Working Tools in the various degrees, or do we forget that “the purpose of meeting in the Lodge is of a twofold nature: moral instruction and social intercourse”?; and “our meetings are meant to cultivate and enlighten the mind, induce the habit of virtue and strengthen the fundamental principles of our order: brotherly love, relief and truth.” Where else can a man join an organization and have an opportunity to become a leader of men, a philanthropist, have an opportunity to rub shoulders with kings and statesmen, to be able to visit from Winnipeg to Argentina, from Chile to Nome, from Auckland to South Africa? What other dues card, about the size of your favourite credit card, gives you access to this? Think about it, Brethren, there is hope!

Yes there is, but it will take some very tough measures, some very hard work, decisions that will not be popular and a great deal of fortitude. Some of the solutions, however, might lie within our reach — for example, each of us replace himself this coming year! Some of the smaller Lodges, in order to obtain financial stability and strength, will have to merge. This might be difficult in rural Lodges, but should not be so difficult in city Lodges. Some of the larger Lodges may have to be capped and not be allowed to grow as big. This might be very unpopular, but then again we have to consider the welfare of the whole Craft rather than one Lodge.

Education should be given to younger Masons as to how to approach their acquaintances as to joining, by an approach that wouldn't be considered “soliciting.” Each of us, including the Grand Lodge officers, has to go out into the marketplace and preach the lessons of Universal Brotherhood, and convince the world of the benefits of being a Freemason. Show them, by example, that our teachings encompass all of the things that make men better, from “Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth” to a WAY OF LIFE like no other. If this could happen, then we will survive, and so will all the branches, the concordant bodies — and in closing:

Book Review

Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close For Comfort

C. Berlet & M.N. Lyons, 1-57230-562-2, Guilford Press, 2000

This book was reviewed in the July, 2001, issue of the *Scottish Rite Journal* by Jim Tresner, 33°, GC, the monthly publication of the A&ASR Southern Jurisdiction. The review was so interesting that I special ordered the book to read for myself. As Ill. Bro. Tresner states, “The title may not seem as gripping as a thriller, but be not deceived — this is riveting.”

The authors, Berlet and Lyons, trace the history of an attitude found in the American culture which distrusts knowledge, education, and rational thought. “It is a mindset which loves paranoid imaginings about the ‘secret, powerful others’ who ‘really run everything’ and who ‘want to keep you from finding out the truth.’” Freemasonry is mentioned early in the book under the heading “Antimasonry” which discusses the Antimasonic Party that existed in the US in the 1820s and 1830s. Berlet and Lyons suggest, “in the early nineteenth century, Freemasonry cultivated a male subculture based on elitist fellowship, cosmopolitanism, religious tolerance, and Enlightenment liberalism. By the 1820s, Freemasonry had spread throughout the United States” and had about 100,000 members, “mainly upper-class men or those with upward aspirations.” Freemasonry provided businessmen with a network of contacts and a sense of community which replaced that more static sense of community as in never leaving the town one was born in. This immediately made Freemasonry a target of this group of people who felt Masons had an unfair edge or could manipulate the system. This sounds much like the complaints about Freemasonry being made in Great Britain now.

The book does not dwell on Freemasonry. It explores other manifestations of the conservative paranoid outlook which bubbles up in America and elsewhere from time to time. The writings of Pat Robertson, *The New World Order*, are examined. The skilful use of the “Red Menace” to play upon fears that someone somewhere is selling a population down the river for personal gain or political advantage are discussed. Another example of the mindset explored in this book include using innuendo to attack a group. Berlet and Lyons show how a group suggested that all the French members of the Trilateral Commission were members of French Freemasonry. The attacking group suggests it may be just a coincidence or it may mean that prominent Frenchmen are all Masons and therefore out to look after their privilege and the “elite.”

This book is a fascinating read. However, it is not light entertainment. It will make one think and reflect on the state of the world and how Freemasonry always seems to be a target when a right-wing group starts to “make a name for itself.”

Loren W. Kline

Isn't it funny how Princes and Kings
And Clowns that caper in sawdust rings
And ordinary Folk, like you and me
Are Builders for Eternity.

To each is given a set of Tools,
An Hour Glass and a Book of Rules,
And each, before his time has flown,
Will build a Stumbling block or a Stepping Stone.

Brethren, build stepping-stones!