



The People of Light in a Time of Deep Darkness

Bro Timothy Thomas, The VW the Grand Chaplain

Brethren,

As you read this message, the winter solstice is probably less than four weeks away, and while we are literally headed into the darkest time of the year, metaphorically we are also headed into the season of light. It is not just a coincidence that many ancient peoples chose the time of the year that is closest to the winter solstice to give thanks to the giver of life — God — through some kind of celebration of the gift of light.

Of course many ancient people chose to celebrate the light at or near the winter solstice because they actually believed that the sun was dying, and that it was only through their spiritual endeavours that the sun could be coaxed back to life. As modern people we have a more scientific world view. We know that the sun is not dying, and that the earth is simply tilting on its axis so that the days and nights become respectively shorter and longer, yet we still choose to celebrate the light and the giver of the light at the darkest time of the year.

As modern people one of the reasons that we continue to celebrate the gift of light at this time of the year is that we have inherited the religious traditions of those who have gone before us, but there is also a great spiritual advantage in celebrating the gift of light during the darkest time of the year. By choosing to celebrate the light at a time when one might intuitively conclude that the light is failing, both ancient and modern people are affirming faith in God, the giver of light and life. By celebrating the Holy One with lavish displays of light we have also made the dreariest time of the year a time of awe and wonder.

Christmas and Hanukkah, as well as other celebrations of the gift of light, help us to move through the dreariest time of the year and allow us the opportunity to worship our Creator and to celebrate the wonder of God's love. This year Christmas Day falls right in the middle of the Hanukkah season, which begins on 22 December. Christmas celebrates the birth of Christ and it is one of the two most important Christian festivals. Christmas has always been associated with light, even before the modern fashion of stringing electric lights on trees and houses became popular. Some of the images of light associated with the Christmas season are the Star of Bethlehem, the light (literally "the glory of the Lord") that shines as an angel announces the divine birth to startled shepherds, and of course the heavenly light of the Divine Child that shines to illuminate the whole Creation.

Hanukkah celebrates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem which the Maccabees had captured in a victory over the Romans circa 165 BCE (Before the Common Era). When the Maccabees searched the Temple they found only enough sacred oil to last for one day, but by a

miracle the oil burned for eight days, giving the celebrants time to find more purified oil. In contrast to the importance that Christians place on Christmas, Hanukkah is a relatively minor Jewish festival. Hanukkah is sometimes referred to as the Festival of the Lights because it lasts for eight nights and a new candle, in a nine branched menorah, is lit by the centre candle on each night.

As modern scientific people we recognize that light is the basis of almost all life on this planet Earth. With the exception of some of the bio-chemical processes that take place around volcanic vents deep in the ocean, all life on this planet began with, and continues to be sustained through, the gift of light

See **People of Light**, page 2.

Grand Lodge of Alberta

Christmas Open House

The Grand Lodge staff and I extend an invitation to you, your spouse and friends to share some Christmas cheer with us at our Open House at Calgary Freemasons' Hall, 330 – 12 Ave SW, on Sunday, 14 December from 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM (13 00 to 15 30 h).

Please mark this date on your calendar. We look forward to seeing you there so we can wish you a Merry Christmas in person.

Jerry Kopp, Grand Secretary

Season's Greetings



God's Cathedral is always open for prayer.

From Grand Lodge Office and
The Alberta Freemason.

Editorial

Light in the Lodge

In this issue's message from the Grand Chaplain he points out that we are approaching both the darkest time of the year and a season of more light. While he discusses this dichotomy on a personal and cultural basis, it can also apply to our Lodges.

December can sometimes be a dark time for a Lodge, its officers, and its members. Sometimes the darkness outside spreads inside — enthusiasm wanes, and the feeling that it has been a very, very long year creeps in. But the light of Masonry still shines through that darkness. And more light will come.

For many Lodges in this Jurisdiction this is the time for the installation and investiture of new Lodge Officers, a time for reaffirmation and renewal, a time for new ideas

and new goals. This should be a time to again let our light shine brightly.

MWBro A.M. Mitchell, the Editor of the *Grand Lodge Bulletin*, wrote in December 1938 that

The admittedly wide attractions offered in our fast moving and entertainment loving world are highly magnetic. The quiet grandeur of the Masonic philosophy and ritual may appear dull by comparison but it is more lasting, more solid, more comforting. Social contacts are not developed in a moving picture theatre, nor huddled up half asleep by a radio receiver, nor hunched over the latest paper covered thriller. No. The proper knowledge of mankind is man, and you meet man at his best in your Masonic Lodge. Your Lodge is what you make it. You make no contribution by staying away. Freemasonry as a social force may be at a low ebb, but it will not be helped by your empty chair.

Sound familiar?

People of Light, from page 1. that streams to our world from the sun. As Masons, however, we know that when we speak of light or employ it as a symbol in our Lodges we are acknowledging a great deal more than just a physical process. As Masons we remember that light has always been associated with wisdom; a fairly simple example of this is found in all of those cartoons where someone gets an idea and a light bulb appears above his head.

A more profound association between light and wisdom is found in the

words of the prophet Isaiah who, in the latter half of the eighth century BCE, wrote that "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined" (Isaiah 9:2). Surely Isaiah is not just talking about a physical process. For observers both ancient and modern, Jewish and Christian, this passage has always been associated with our Messianic hopes. For Christians this passage has always been identified with Jesus Christ as witnessed by the author of the gospel of Matthew,

who chose this passage to announce the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. If you attend a Christmas Eve service this year, it is quite likely that you will hear this passage amongst those used to announce and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

However you and your loved ones choose to observe the mysterious love of God during the season of light I would like to offer you God's blessings upon all your celebrations. Merry Christmas! Happy Hanukkah! Happy Holidays! God bless you all.

Grand Master's Itinerary December

- 2 Kenilworth Lodge No 29 Annual Moose Supper; Red Deer Masonic Hall; Dinner 17 30 h; Tyle 19 30 h
- 4 King Solomon Lodge No. 41 100th Installation of Officers; Bowmont Masonic Hall, Calgary; 19 30 h; Banquet to follow
- 9 Crescent Lodge No. 87 Installation; King George Masonic Hall, Calgary; 19 30 h
- 11 Camrose Lodge No. 37 Ladies Night & Fraternal Visit; Camrose; Cocktails 16 30 h; Dinner 17 00 h; Tyle 18 00 h; Christmas program to follow
- 18 Apollo Lodge No. 27 25-Year Pin Presentations; Stettler Masonic Hall; 19 30 h

Daffynitions

Esoteric, *adj.* Very particularly abstruse and consummately occult. The ancient philosophies were of two kinds — *exoteric*, those that the philosophers themselves could partly understand, and *esoteric*, those that nobody could understand. It is the latter that have profoundly affected modern thought and found greatest acceptance in our time.

Freemasons, *n.* An order with secret rites, grotesque ceremonies and fantastic costumes, which, originating in the reign of Charles II, among working artisans of London, has been joined successively by the dead of past centuries in unbroken retrogression until now it embraces all the generations of man on the hither side of Adam and is drumming

up distinguished recruits among pre-Creational inhabitants of Chaos and the Formless Void. The order was founded at different times by Charlemagne, Julius Caesar, Cyrus, Solomon, Zoroaster, Confucius, Thothmes, and Buddha. Its emblems and symbols have been found in the Catacombs of Paris and Rome, on the stones of the Parthenon and the Chinese Great Wall, among the temples of Karnak and Palmyra and in the Egyptian Pyramids always by a Freemason.

Illuminati, *n.* A sect of Spanish heretics of the latter part of the sixteenth century; so-called because they were light weights — *cunctationes illuminati*.

Ambrose Bierce

The Devil's Dictionary, 1911

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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 John D. Hart
Deputy Grand Master	RWBro Brian Shimmons
Senior Grand Warden	RWBro Sam Moore
Junior Grand Warden	RWBro Gerald Waldren
Grand Secretary	RWBro Jerry W. Kopp



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Editor: RWBro George Tapley

339 Whitefield Dr NE, Calgary, AB T1Y 5S2

Tel 403-280-6776 — Fax 403-290-0671

e-mail: editor@freemasons.ab.ca

The Committee on the Grand Lodge Bulletin

RWBro George Tapley (Chairman);
MWBro Robert E. Juthner, Editor emeritus;
WBro Garth Cochran; WBro Loren Kline;
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Reflections from Afghanistan

Yes, We Are Doing Good Work

RWBro Capt Kim Greenizan

CJ9 Chief Ops with Regional Command South Headquarters in Afghanistan

These days you constantly hear individuals ask “Why are we in Afghanistan?” and “Are we actually achieving anything over there?”

Although there are some inherent bureaucratic difficulties, we have made some significant differences in the ability of the population not only to feel safe, but also to advance their education and expand their commerce.

On the education side, I can show you a building that was being used as a school because there was nothing else available.

This building was originally used as apartments for the Russians, and during their withdrawal period many of the buildings were significantly damaged. Once the withdrawal was complete, many Afghan families moved into the area, making use of the remaining buildings.

One such building became the school for the area. With the continuing work of the NATO forces, the area around this community has become very stable, and the families have felt safe enough for their children to attend the school. Such is not the case in most areas of southern Afghanistan.

This school, known as Sahid Paga Elementary and High School, is home to over 500 students. It is one of the very few that have girls attending. Although there is no wall surrounding the school the girls still attend and are segregated on the third floor. Of the teachers, the principal is the only one with a degree. Seven teachers have grade twelve and the remaining four have grade ten.

This school was still considered to be better than most because of the freedom of movement the community enjoyed since they were so close to the NATO military base.

As you can see by the pictures the

building has been rebuilt and the children this year have been able to start their year in a more comfortable facility. Dutch families across Holland gathered supplies and small items for the students and presented them to the children last month.

On top of that a project is underway to provide students with a playground and some overhead cover to allow them a place to relax outside, but out of the direct heat of the sun.

It is in small areas like this that we have been successful in assisting the local communities.

As well as schools we have been able to open bazaars and improve movement between villages so that their economy can improve. Building wells for drinking water and canals for irrigation have also been completed.

What we lack is the open coordination of information between our diplomats and our military forces, so that we can increase the security corridors in a controlled and coordinated manner. For now that hurdle is not one easily overcome.

The front (r) and rear (l) of Sahid Paga School rebuilt from an abandoned Russian building by NATO forces



The front (top) and back (above) of former Russian quarters showing common damage to the buildings after the withdrawal. This building was abandoned and then reoccupied by Afghan families looking for shelter.



Upper Canada's Oldest Lodge

Masonry was introduced to the part of Canada that became Upper Canada and then Ontario by the Lodge of the 8th or King's Own Regiment of Foot around 1780. The Lodge operated under a "field warrant" and the Regiment was garrisoned at Fort Niagara. The Lodge initiated a number of civilians in 1780 and 1781, and in 1782 these civilians along with other Masons who had settled in the area formed a civilian Lodge called St. John's Lodge of Friendship on a warrant believed to have been granted by the Provincial Grand Lodge of New York (Antients).

The Provincial Grand Lodge of Upper Canada (Antients) was formed by the Antient Grand Lodge of England in 1792 after the Constitutional Act of 1791 divided Canada into Upper and Lower Canada. St. John's of Friendship was re-warranted by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Upper Canada in 1795 and numbered 2 on its register. No. 1 was reserved for the Provincial Grand Master's Lodge but existed for only two years. In 1822 another area Lodge, Lodge of Philanthropy No. 4, merged with No. 2 and the new Lodge became Dalhousie No. 2. In 1855, the Lodge joined the new Grand Lodge of Canada as Niagara No. 2 and has retained that name and number ever since.

The meeting place of St. John's of Friendship No. 2 was in the first Masonic Hall in Upper Canada, located at the corner of King and Prideau Streets in Niagara (now Niagara-on-the-Lake). This Masonic Hall was destroyed by fire in 1860 and the Lodge was forced to meet elsewhere until the early 1900s when the Brethren were able to return to a building on the original site. Much of the history of the Lodge is displayed on the walls

of the Hall including restored copies of the warrants for No. 1 and No. 2 Lodges.

A tour of this Lodge Hall will be one of the highlights of the Grand Master's Tour of Upper and Lower Canada in September 2009, hosted by the Grand Master-Elect, RWBro Brian Shimmons and his Lady, Victoria. Brethren and their Ladies will fly to Hamilton on September 4 and spend 15 days visiting the Niagara region, Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa, Quebec City and Montreal.

The tour will return on September 18 from Montreal. Other special events include a Thousand Islands lunch cruise, Fort Henry dinner, tour of the Montreal Masonic Hall, visit to the Shriners' Hospital and visits to Lodges in Toronto and Montreal.

Cost of the tour is \$3,575 per person. Complete Upper and Lower Canada Tour details, as well as registration forms, are available from Bro Marv Foote at Grace Travel 403-294-0452 or mfoote@travelmasters.ca



Niagara Lodge No 2, GRC, Lodge Hall as it existed in 1917 (above) and in 2007 (below). Note the removal of the dormers and the creation of the "widow's walk" on the roof. (Photo above courtesy of Niagara Falls (Ontario) Public Library.)



Alberta Miscellany

Thoughts from the summonses, selected by Bro Trevor Morris

Calgary Lodge No. 23

Just when you think there's all the time in the world to get things done eventually...

Surprise!

There isn't.

Now what?

Some might rail against the unfairness or reluctantly make accommodations, but what do Masons do? They adapt. Quickly and effectively, because they have that presence of mind that allows them to dispassionately view the possible outcomes of a situation and choose a course of action.

That seems to be a defining characteristic of Masons. It is not coincidence that some of the most accomplished men in history have been Masons because of their ability to focus on a task and see it through to completion. Perhaps there is something to all of this memory work after all, as the same skills required to master the various lectures are directly transferable to other things: skills such as discipline and perseverance that are so handy to have and yet seem to be in such short supply in the unenlightened.

This is not to say that only Masons possess these qualities, but they do seem to be more prevalent among Masons than in the general population. The next time that you are in Lodge, look around at those who are giving or who have given such amazing renditions of our lectures and ask yourself what qualities they have in common.

As I carry on in my own Masonic career, I have noticed that after a while (a long while) those lectures that used to look so intimidating by virtue of being more than a single line in length aren't so scary. Some of them even seem too short now.

This raises a "chicken and egg" kind of question for me. Does putting in the effort to learn lectures result in a greater ability to focus and therefore accomplish, or is it that by learning focus and self-discipline, it becomes easier to learn?

Personally, either way works for me. I recently attended a presentation by a psychologist, who normally works with professional athletes, on the topic of improving racing driving performance

through learning how to focus. And now you are asking yourself, "That's nice, what does that have to do with Masonry?"

Simply, the traits that make for a successful athlete or racing driver are exactly the same as those that make for a "successful" Mason and are directly and easily transferable from one to the other.

WM Barry Gurnsey

Gift of Burns Bronze

The Freemasons of Medicine Hat Burns Club plans to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns with a gift of a bronze by sculptor David Cornell (I) to Medicine Hat College. The official unveiling of the bust by the Grand Master MWBro John Hart, will take place on Sunday, 25 January 2009. This is the culmination of a weekend of celebrating the bard that starts on the 24th with the 2nd Interprovincial Third Degree (Swift Current Lodge, SK attending) and the 3rd Annual Burns Supper. For details contact Ken Montgomery at 403-580-5080 or by e-mail at mhburns@canopycanada.net



Why is Masonic Ritual Regarded as So Important?

Truth may be taught without ritual, but truth taught by ritual is always taught as the original teachers desired and makes a lasting impression upon the mind of the learner. Man has always devised ceremonies of initiation for his organizations. The Men's House of the Indians had them; savage tribes bring their young men officially to manhood by rites which are sometimes rather terrible; ancient religions admitted to the temple only those who could qualify by successfully completing a course of initiation; many modern churches, especially those denominated "high," have set forms for religious worship; crafts and guilds of all kinds in all ages have had certain preparatory rites. A ritual which becomes sacrosanct in human belief tends to stabilize truth and to keep it uncontaminated by "modern" ideas. Many a man has thought he could "improve" the ritual of Freemasonry.

What Masons do ...

WBro Jack Pidgeon, a Past Master of Perfection Lodge No. 9, was the recipient of the Volunteer in Profile Award at Volunteer Calgary's 12th Annual Leadership Awards. The Leadership Awards, a yearly event held during National Volunteer Week, is an opportunity to celebrate those who have become the pillars of the non-profit sector and the greater community through their work - the volunteers. The Volunteer in Profile Award recognizes a volunteer's commitment to a Volunteer Calgary member organization.

Jack Pidgeon not only drives cancer patients to and from their medical appointments, but he drives with a passion. He has been shuttling patients almost every day and never tires of lending a hand when extra assistance is needed. In the last two years, Jack Pidgeon has driven a total of 1339 hours, 16,539 kilometres and 354 trips. The total number of patients he has assisted? Innumerable. Without Pidgeon's valuable service, cancer patients would have to go through the hassles of commuting to get to treatment. Pidgeon also devotes time to recruiting and training new drivers at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre. Pidgeon goes the extra mile to help out, and is actually grateful for the opportunity. "It gives me a lot of satisfaction. The association I have with the volunteers in the Cancer Society and the driver program is really valuable to me," says Pidgeon.

None has succeeded in making better that which was already "best" since its content was and is living, breathing, sentient truth, conveyed in words, action and symbols which by their very antiquity prove that they are "best" for the purpose.

Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, beloved teacher of the spiritual aspects of Freemasonry, said "Ritual is the dramatization of belief, hope and spiritual dream. It assists imagination by giving form to what otherwise would remain formless, presenting vivid mental images which lend a reality feeling to what is often abstract and unreal. It is picture philosophy, truth, visualized, at once expressing and confirming the faiths and visions of the mind."

[101 Questions About Freemasonry, MSA 1960, pp 38-39.]



Pidgeon is a true hero to the people he has helped out and a shining example of volunteerism to the rest of the community.

WBro Pidgeon has been volunteering for the Canadian Cancer Society's driver program for the last six years. To Masons in Calgary he is also well-known as the Volunteer Driver Coordinator for the Calgary Masonic Board of Relief. The need for volunteer drivers has increased greatly in the past years, while the number of available drivers is decreasing, and WBro Pidgeon's request for assistance on behalf of the Board of Relief can be spotted on the notice boards of most Lodges in the Calgary area. If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information he can be reached at pidg@shaw.ca or 403-242-7854.

Cheel, from page 6.

member of Saskatchewan Lodge No. 92 in 1987 and was its Worshipful Master in 1994 and 2004.

He joined the Scottish Rite's Lodge of Perfection and Mizpah Chapter of Rose Croix in 1991 and the Alberta Consistory in 1992. During his Masonic career he has been associated with numerous charitable processes, and from 2002 until 2005 was a member of the Doric Committee, which was set up to help Lodges manage themselves in a more business-like manner.

Your DDGMs 2008–2009

We are pleased to introduce to our readers the District Deputy Grand Masters serving the Craft in Alberta during the 2008–2009 term. This will be concluded in the next issue of The Alberta Freemason.

Calgary-Highwood

RWBro Roy S. Zurowski was born 30 May 1944 in Stirling, Scotland. He served in the Canadian Provost Corps from 1965–1973, and was a member of the Regina City Police from 1973–1977, Chief of Police in Oxbow Saskatchewan from 1977–1980, and Superintendent of Canada Customs until his retirement in 2004. He and his wife Jeanette, reside in Calgary. They have three children, 10 grandchildren, and one great-grand child



Our Brother was Initiated, Passed and Raised in 1979 in what was then Boscurvis Lodge No. 39 under the Grand Lodge of Saskatchewan. He is currently a member of Elbow River No. 180 and was its Worshipful Master in 2004. He is also a member of Zetland Lodge No. 83 and of the Scottish Rite's Valley of Calgary.

Chinookarch District

RWBro Douglas A. Turigan was born 12 September 1958 in Stettler. He grew up on his family's horse farm near Stettler and received his education there. He went to SAIT after High School, found employment with John Deere in Calgary, and has worked in the John Deere world for over 31 years. He has been married to Yvonne for almost 31 years. They have two children, a son aged 26 and a daughter aged 23, and reside in Coaldale. He enjoys golfing, fixing things, woodworking and of course being around horses.



Our Brother is a member of North Star Lodge No. 4 in Lethbridge, where he was Initiated, Passed and Raised in 1998, and was its Worshipful Master from 2002–2005 and again from 2006–2007. He served as Grand Registrar of the Grand Lodge of Alberta in 2007–2008. He is a Past First Principal of Shekinah Chapter No. 4, Royal Arch Masons and a member of Acre Preceptory No. 66, Knights Templar; Alberta Council No. 5, Cryptic Rite Masons; Wild Rose Conclave No. 3, Red Cross of Constantine; and Diversity College UD of the York Rite Sovereign College.

Lakeland District

RWBro Jesse E. Carr was born 19 February 1943 in a rural farming community near the Town of Bancroft, Ontario. In February 1962 he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force and retired from that Service in 1985 with the rank of Sergeant. He then became a member of the Cold Lake Ambulance Society in 1985 as an Emergency Medical Technician



and retired in 2006 as its Operations Manager. He married his wife, June, on 21 September 1963 and they reside in Cold Lake. They have two children, Connie and Steven, and are the proud grandparents of five grandchildren.

Our Brother was Initiated, Passed, and Raised in Moira Lodge No. 11, under the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, in 1968 and is currently a member of Astra Lodge No. 179 in Grande Prairie. He was its Worshipful Master in 1976, 1993, and 2006. He served as Grand Steward of the Grand Lodge of Alberta in 1986–1987 and is a member of a number of concordant bodies.

Mighty Peace District

RWBro Robert Myles Buchan was born in Ontario and moved to Alberta in 1975, where he has worked as a truck driver and heavy duty mechanic for the past 33 years and is involved in a hydraulic business with his son in Grande Prairie. He has been married to Karen for 30 years, and they have three grown children and three grand children.



Our Brother was Initiated, Passed and Raised in Grande Prairie Lodge No. 105 in 1997 and later became its Worshipful Master as well as a member of Star of the West Lodge No. 34 in Leduc. He is also a member of Wapiti Chapter No. 34, Royal Arch Masons, in Grande Prairie; Edmonton Preceptory No. 46, Knights Templar; and Al Shamal Shrine in Edmonton.

Northern Lights District

RWBro Ken C. Cheel was born 20 March 1956 in Peterborough, Ontario and raised there. He has been employed in the computer industry for over 25 years, starting as a programmer and then moving into operations, and has just completed two years in a small community in northern Alberta working as an IT Manager within a forest products manufacturing plant. He is currently employed at Peavey Industries Ltd. at their head office in Red Deer as an IT System Administrator. Bro Cheel met his wife, Daphne, while attending a social event at Trent University in the fall of 1978 and they were married in September 1980. They have two children, Kaitlin and Kelsey, 20 and 16 years old respectively, and reside in Millet.



Our Brother was born into a very strong Masonic family, in which his Grandfather, two uncles and a number of cousins were all members of the Craft. He was Initiated in Royal Arthur Lodge No. 523 in March 1978, Passed in February 1979, and finally Raised in Hastings Lodge No. 633 in March 1979, all under the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario. Having moved to Alberta in 1981 he became a

See **Cheel**, page 5.