



Biography of MWBro John G. Cameron

MWBro John Cameron was born in Ottawa, Ontario on 10 October 1943. John spent his early years on a farm in Navan, Ontario before moving to London and then to Woodstock. John joined the Canadian Armed Forces and served in the Signal Corps. He moved to Alberta in 1968 and spent the last 30 years of work involved in both contractor and dealer sales with *Mr. Fireplace* before retiring in 2003.

John and Dorothy moved to Chestermere in 1991 to work on their golf games. John says he subscribes to Herman's philosophy on golf: he needs a caddie with extreme wilderness experience. John has been very active with the Mac's AAA Midget Hockey Tournament every year through the

Christmas Holidays. John and Dorothy have no children but have a cat named Boo.

John joined Crescent Lodge No. 87 on 26 February 1991. He served as Worshipful Master in 1997 and 2004 and as DDGM for Phoenix District in 2007–2008. John was elected to the Board of General Purposes in 2009 and was also appointed to the Finance Committee the same year. He is a member of Strathmore Lodge No. 53 and is also chairman of the Strathmore Temple Board. John is an Honorary Life Member of Carstairs Lodge No. 20, Drumheller Lodge No. 146 and Canada Lodge No. 165, past president of the Vintage Car Unit of the Al Azhar Shrine and a member of the Tuscan Benevolent Society.

*MWBro John Cameron
Grand Master of Alberta
2013–2014*



MWBro John Cameron's Inaugural Address

YOU!

"If you always do what you always did, you'll always get what you always got!"

In the modern world, many people attribute this quote to Anthony Robbins, renowned motivational speaker and self-improvement guru. Go back a few years and people will tell you that Albert Einstein said it, then back another generation or two and Henry Ford gets the credit. But before him, it was Brother Mark Twain who coined the phrase. The key word in this quote is YOU.

But first, let's talk about me, what I believe in as a Freemason and why I stand here today. I believe in equality for all mankind, practicing charity for our communities and throughout the world, and striving to live a life with high moral standards. It's all about Brotherly love, relief and truth.

The truth is, I stand here today as Grand Master because I want to make a difference within Freemasonry here in Alberta. The real truth is that I am Grand Master because I visited many Lodges, and a lot of Brothers know me and hopefully believe and trust in me to make a difference within Freemasonry.

When I joined I did not visit Lodges. But once I started I forgot to stop. I have attended the All Canada Conference in Winnipeg six times and the Conference of the Grand Masters of North America three times. I have visited the four Western provinces and four States. I have seen and heard of a number of good ideas.

I have brought some of these ideas back to my own Lodge, and we have tried them. Some worked and some didn't, but at least we tried.

When MWBro Brian Shimmons introduced the Strategic Plan, it focused on a five to seven year commitment from the Lodge. The Lodge Officer Line is groomed to take their chairs and to be proficient in their duties.

When MWBro Gerald Waldern offered training seminars for officers who wanted them, ten of the fourteen Districts opted to take them. The zeal and enthusiasm shown by the participants was remarkable. In many cases the results were immediate, as

I saw Lodges implementing what they had learned at their very next meeting. We knew we had a winner.

MWBro Peter Dunlop targeted mentoring. It is important that mentoring does not stop once a candidate becomes a Master Mason or we will lose him.

This past year I learned from MWBro David Roth's Ten Year Officer Training Program that "training the trainer" and education are imperative if we are to succeed and grow. These programs have been well received to date.

At the Western Canada Conference two years ago I presented a paper on what I planned to do as Grand Master in my year. Afterwards, my fellow Brothers informed me I was trying to do too much. However, I disagree and feel that we cannot do too much.

For the past many years, Freemasonry has suffered from a number of problems. Some even say it has been going on since the beginning of the Craft. However, I believe we need to correct and enhance the following:

- Declining membership;
- Suspensions for non payment of dues;
- Demits;
- Candidates who are not carrying on with their degrees;
- Low attendance;
- Decline in proficiency in the degree work;
- Boring festive boards;
- Lack of or poor mentoring; and
- Non-existent communications.

Now, and as always, we have new members joining the Craft. Today these new members are more cognizant of Masonry than we were when we joined. These new members are looking for different things of value, such as these five key points California discovered in an extensive survey. I feel that they apply to us in Alberta.

- 1 Member Experience
- 2 Masonic Education
- 3 Leadership and Management
- 4 Beyond the Lodge
- 5 Identity and Philanthropy

I picked a wide spectrum because no two Lodges are the same, and why should we only work on some of our problems? Remember, we need to be perfect in ALL our parts. If I were to pick only one point – mentoring for example – it will benefit only the active Lodges. What about those Lodges with stagnant growth and no new young Masons? Will they be lost for another year?

1. Membership Experience

I feel that there needs to be a better, more thorough investigation of prospective candidates. How can we find out if he is going to be a good Mason? Invite the prospective candidate to attend the festive board, barbecues, Lodge picnics, open houses, etc. Having the festive board prior to the meeting works particularly well, as it is much easier to get a prospective candidate to attend.

Usually only one or two members know the prospective candidate in the first place. Three others will meet with him for the investigation but never

really get to know him. Only when you have broken bread with him and met him socially will you be able to make a true and informed judgment as to who he is as a man. The candidate will have developed a closer bond with the Lodge members and will be less likely to drop out prior to finishing his degrees. This is a win-win situation.

When you sponsor a candidate, sit with him until he has found new friends that he will seek out and sit with on his own. Then you will know that you have done your job.

2. Masonic Education

Mentoring and education do not stop once he has become a Master Mason, and it's not just the sponsor's duty. It is every single member of the Lodge's duty to be his Mentor in Freemasonry. I have made it a habit that if there is an initiate, I will sit with him when the Lodge is being tyled if the Worshipful Master allows me. I feel that both the candidate and I benefit from it.

Membership experience will vary from one Mason to another. First we must be honest with the prospective candidate. There is no benefit in sugar coating what we expect or require from him. Often expectations are downplayed in order to get him to join. The same also applies with coercing members into taking an office. If we downplay the office or our expectations, why should we be upset when they live up to the standards we have laid out for them? We should concern ourselves with the quality, not quantity of the prospective candidates and following through with one of our three great principles — the Truth.

Then finally, our meetings must be more interesting, informative and educational before any of the above points can be successful. If you can't write something unique about Freemasonry, type the word Freemasonry in Google and you will get 7,430,000 results offered. I am sure you can find something of interest to discuss. There is nothing that says it

has to be about Freemasonry. Education comes with everything this planet has to offer. Any topic can be discussed except politics and religion.

3. Leadership and Management

All Lodges should have a Mentor Overseer. He would be responsible to ensure the candidates have been fully prepared for their degrees. He would see that the ritual is explained and questions answered. In reality, it would benefit Lodges to have the sponsors as the candidate's mentors. The Mentor Overseer can follow up to see that the candidate is being taken care of. It's about checks and balances, and it helps when all Brothers are in sync and have the skills to be Mentors.

Next, one or more of the Brothers should be appointed to organize the education for every single meeting. It doesn't have to be long, but at least have some education. I consider it a day lost if I don't learn something new every day, regardless of the subject. Does anyone here in this room remember being called upon to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge?

Third, I would like to see a Communication Coordinator within the Lodge. He may enlist the help of as many Brothers as needed to contact all the Brethren regularly. They can bring the members up to date on what's new in the Lodge as well as bring back to the Lodge an update on what is happening in their lives. It is about keeping up friendships and offering Brotherly love and simply to let them know that they are not forgotten.

Fourth, I would like to see someone designated to "meet, greet and seat." We encourage our new Masons to visit but I have been to some Lodges, fortunately few, where if I were a new Mason I would have felt intimidated by the lack of attention as to who I was or what brought me there. He should be introduced around the Lodge to the membership and be seated with one of the more experienced Brothers. That

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Brother can explain the various nuances the visitor sees between his Lodge and theirs. This will boost his confidence and leave him with a positive impression of Masonry and the Lodge.

Fifth, I don't believe in having meetings for the sake of having meetings. The meetings must be interesting, informative and short. Once the business and education are done, retire to the festive board. You can now use this time for informal discussions about what is happening in your District, further education, debates etc. In reality I have found some of the more interesting ideas have come from the relaxed atmosphere at the festive board.

4. Beyond the Lodge

I am a big fan of monthly dinners where the wives, family and friends or prospective candidates meet at a different restaurant each month. This raises our public profile and is an excellent way to build a better bond with your Brethren and families. There are some Lodges who alternate between members' homes. This would work well in some of the smaller or rural areas.

Now, imagine beyond your mother-Lodge with your Brothers. A number of rural Lodges have had problems with dwindling membership. I ask you to pick a country Lodge and visit it regularly. Bring some Masonic education to present or help with ritual degree work if asked. We have some fantastic Masons in our rural Lodges. I invite you to meet them.

For the rural Lodges it is time to stand up and be counted. Stop talking about no new prospects in town. You have fire departments, police, EMT, schools, banks, hospitals and numerous other businesses within any small towns. Have a barbecue, advertise and invite them. Target the ones you feel would make good Masons and give them a personal invitation. Invite Brothers from Lodges in your area to help meet and greet. If they don't come to, you go to them, e.g. police, fire, EMT, etc. Simply be a part of the positive, get out on the town and meet your neighbours.

5. Identity and Philanthropy

Grand Lodge has endorsed both the Masonic Higher Education Bursary Fund and the Masonic Foundation. However, I feel that we have missed a golden opportunity to promote ourselves to the general public.

We are second only to the Alberta Government's Rutherford Scholarship and Bursary Fund for supporting students in their post secondary education. For the past five years we have given 100 bursaries of \$2,000.00 each. We will do that again this year. Last year we were selected to present two \$5,000.00 bursaries in the medical and pharmaceutical fields. This year it will be two \$7,500.00 bursaries. We have given away just shy of \$3,500,000.00 since 1957 and have received little press to show for it.

I have approached two Brothers, one in Calgary and one in Edmonton, to be Public Relations Advisors. Both VVBro Roger Matas and VVBro Don Stannard are involved in the advertising and public relations fields. It is common knowledge that Freemasonry as a whole has a less than stellar identity with the masses, and having a successful image is the most important requisite to any organization.

For organizations to seek and experience long term success they will have to create the most compelling, relevant and consistent image for their target market. Roger and Don will be willing to help the Lodges in achieving that goal. They will also take on the monthly publication of the Masonic Mentor.

Either make the customer experience or it will get made without you. In Freemasonry's case it has been made without us, as in the past we never spoke about anything in regard to Freemasonry. It was an off limits topic to anyone not in the Craft. Unfortunately a portion of the outside world has always looked in through our windows and wrongly assumed we are up to no good. They told everyone what they believed, while we stood back and said nothing to defend ourselves.

In business terms, an image is the sum of the good, the bad and the ugly. It is defined by your best product as well as your worst product. It is defined by its people. For every grand and finely worded public statement, the brand is also defined by derisory comments overhead in the hallway or in a chat room on the internet. They become psychological concepts held in the minds of the public where they may stay forever. As such, you can't entirely control an image; at best, you can only guide and influence it.

So what does this all mean? It means

that each member, each Grand Lodge officer and each Lodge throughout Alberta must be accounted for in their actions. We must be educated on what we want to say as a whole. It needs to look and sound perfect and be truthful. This applies to everything we do, from Lodge web sites to simple forms online to how we act as individuals in public.

We know we will never make everyone like us or believe Freemasonry is great. I, however, am more concerned about the ones sitting on the sidelines wondering, and the ones that do not know that we exist. It is time to get the word out and positive words at that.

Brothers, I began with a quote from Brother Mark Twain. "If you always do what you always did, you'll always get what you always got." And remember, the key word of this quote is YOU.

YOU as Freemasons need to take charge and ensure Freemasonry stands the test of time for our future Brothers to come and for yourselves immediately. YOU as members of the Craft are our strongest asset. Freemasonry's success now and in the years to come starts with YOU.

Contact Information for the Public Relations Advisors:

Don Stannard — office 780-440-9444 or cell 780-554-9444, or email absolut@absolutcanada.com
Roger Matas — 403-366-8199 or cell 403-903-5753, or email roger.matas@mataspr.com

Grand Master's Itinerary September

9 Hanna Lodge No. 78 and Strathmore Lodge No. 53 Joint Meeting, Hanna
14 Job's Daughters Bethel No. 1, King George Masonic Hall, Calgary
20-22 Tri-Jurisdictional Masonic Gathering at Waterton Lakes Provincial Park

Prospective DDGM Training Session — 8 Sept 2013

Grand Lodge is presenting a training session regarding the responsibilities and duties of DDGMs at 10 00 h on 8 September 2013 in Red Deer Freemasons' Hall. This training session is open to current DDGMs and to Masons who are considering running for DDGM in the future. Cost of \$20 includes lunch. The registration form is found on line at:

<http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/pdfs/DDGM%20Reg%20Form.pdf>

Presentation of Ross Shepherd Memorial Bursary

Zoe Gould

I am honoured to have been invited to speak about the Masonic Higher Education Bursary and to receive the Ross Shepherd Memorial Bursary.

I was raised on a beef farm just outside of Consort, Alberta along with my two older brothers and my sister, Bronwen. I have just completed my third year at the University of Alberta working towards a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Classics and minoring in Italian. After much indecision, I chose to study Classics (Greek, Latin and history) and Italian because of a strong interest in and passion for languages, history, and travel. This bursary will be instrumental in helping me minimize my debt while finishing my degree next year.

There is an archaeological field school each spring in Italy during which students work on excavating an historical site in Tuscany while learning about Roman history. I would love to attend this field school, which would provide me with the last credits to finish my degree, because I would be able to employ the archaeological techniques I have learned in my classes already and develop more advanced knowledge and skills, while learning about and experiencing Roman history in context. This would be an invaluable experience and this bursary will make attending this field school much more plausible.

Upon completion of this degree I plan to do my prerequisites for, and apply to, Veterinary School in pursuit of another

passion of mine: caring for animals and working in the agricultural industry. I have recently started volunteering at the Leduc Veterinary Hospital to gain experience and understanding of the profession to ensure I want to pursue it; my time spent there has solidified my desire to become a veterinarian. Receiving the Masonic Higher Education Bursary and the Ross Shepherd Memorial Bursary will be significant in helping me to be able to attain a Bachelor of Arts and then continue directly into my pursuit of Veterinary Medicine without a build-up of debt. It will also allow me to focus on my studies and still have time for extracurricular activities, sports and trips home to the farm on weekends.

Spending time at home during school has always been important to me, but recent changes have caused there to be even more impetus. In July 2012 my father was diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia. While this was the date of the formal diagnosis, the personal and familial difficulties started long before. The adjustments and the attempts to understand and accept have been difficult, and I have struggled to focus on my studies throughout this. The management of the farm has also been challenging. Both of my brothers have moved home and are working to take over the farm and now manage it along with my mother. I plan to be involved in the farm in the future, but because



MWBro David Roth introduces Zoe Gould, the first of two sisters receiving a bursary at the Annual Communication Banquet.

my brothers are home now, I am able to continue my studies. My family has always been incredibly supportive of my pursuit of education. This bursary is especially meaningful to my family and me as it will provide substantial financial support of my education, which is not as feasible for my family to provide at this point in time.

I greatly appreciate the support of the Freemasons of Alberta in my pursuit of education. Once again, thank you for your financial support and encouragement. I am honoured!

Presentation of Lauraine Douchet Masonic Bursary for Pharmacy and Medicine

E. Bronwen Gould

I am honoured to be here this evening and to have been selected to receive the Lauraine Douchet Masonic Bursary for Pharmacy and Medicine.

In May I completed my first year of medical school. I am more sure than ever that a career in medicine is a good choice for me. I am fascinated not only by the curriculum but also by the process. Learning to think critically and to integrate information to make diagnoses is rewarding. Interacting with patients as I learn to take a medical history and as I shadow in family clinics is a privilege. People visit their doctors when they are most vulnerable, and I look forward to the opportunity to serve, and to earn

the trust of, my future patients.

While I haven't yet decided what I want to specialize in, one area in which I'm keenly interested is rural family medicine. Like Lauraine Douchet, I grew up in a small farming community and am aware of the need for rural doctors. What I want to do is train in family medicine and then take an extra year of training in a specialty such as obstetrics or emergency — something needed in rural communities. In order to learn more about rural family medicine, I've applied to a program that would send me to a small community, such as Peace River, for four weeks during my gastrointestinal block. I would listen



Lauraine Douchet Bursary recipient Bronwen Gould, sister of Zoe Gould (above), addresses the Annual Banquet.

to my lectures by vodcast and spend several half-days a week shadowing in the hospital and the family clinic. I'm quite excited about this opportunity, as it would allow me to really get a feeling for what rural medicine would be like—all of my shadowing experiences thus far have been in major Edmonton hospitals.

Whatever specialty I ultimately choose, I know that a career in medicine will integrate my academic interest in biological systems with service and teamwork.

During my next year of school, in addition to my regular classroom lectures, anatomy labs and clinical learning experiences, I will be studying for the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Exam Part I, which occurs at the end of second year and is cumulative for the first two years of medical school. By alleviating the financial burden of university, this Masonic Bursary will

allow me to devote my energy to my studies; I want to become a health care professional who exemplifies the values upheld by Lauraine Douchet. It will also help me to maintain balance in my life, through taking time to do things that I love outside of school: to play rec hockey and basketball, to take a ballet class, to read something aside from medical texts (right now I'm in the middle of a Russian classic, Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*) to keep the scope of my perceptions wider than the field of medicine and, most important, to go home to the farm to spend time with my family. There is something about being home that grounds me, keeps me sane.

The knowledge that I would be receiving this Bursary has also been helpful to me this summer. I chose a summer job in medical research so that I would be able to learn more about the statistical methods used in evidence-

based medicine, so I will be better equipped to stay current with medical literature. While I was fortunate to be selected to receive a grant for this work, the salary is modest. This Bursary has allowed me to focus on my research and also have time to return home on weekends to visit and to help with calving, rather than seek a second job.

Zoe has already mentioned why these Bursaries are of special meaning and support to her and to me and to our family. On that note, thank you to the Grand Lodge of Alberta and to Lauraine and George Douchet for funding and administering the Lauraine Douchet Masonic Bursary for Pharmacy and Medicine. I am honoured to receive this award.

Thank you especially to the Grand Lodge for generously funding both Zoe and me. We and our family greatly appreciate your support.

Report on the 2013 Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America

RWBro Chris E. Batty, Senior Grand Warden, Grand Lodge of Alberta

The Conference was held at the Sheraton Kansas City Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri on 17–19 February 2013. The theme of the conference was “Restore, Retain, Renew” and it was chaired by MWBro Walter W. Rogers, the Grand Master of Texas.

The representation from the Grand Lodge of Alberta included MWBro David Roth, (then) RWBro John Cameron, RWBro John Slade, RWBro Jerry Kopp and our spouses. Our attendance facilitated team building for the Alberta Grand Lodge officers, meeting counterparts from other jurisdictions and education as to what is happening and successful in other North American jurisdictions.

As with any conference that includes 60 plus Grand Lodges and other organizations, there is the actual business of running the conference, and with the ratio of American Grand Lodges to Canadian Grand Lodges there were a number of topics that, while interesting, were not necessarily relevant to Alberta Freemasonry.

However, the breakout sessions were interesting and relevant. The first session I attended was “Mentoring & Membership Retention,” presented by MWBro Robert Conley, PGM, Michigan. In his presentation Bro Conley talked about

making a concerted effort to attract and retain their membership and that the loss in membership was considered a Grand Lodge problem. As a result, the Grand Lodge of Michigan developed a Public Relations Plan, with a budget of approximately \$3.00 per member. He referenced, a number of times, the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon's Constitution and their “Six Steps to Initiation” and *Mentor's Handbook*. He further talked about building prospect and membership awareness, developing acquaintance, fellowship, and knowledge of the prospect by the Lodge and vice versa, and acceptance, where the prospect finds a circle of friends and a mentor, the point within a circle.

The second session I attended revolved around the youth groups:

DeMolay, Job's Daughters, and the Rainbow Girls. The general message

of these three groups indicated what they do, how they do what they do and why they do what they do. In addition, all three indicated that they needed the help of you, the Freemasons. The presentation by DeMolay was particularly insightful, in that they are re-sculpting their message and emphasizing “Why DeMolay?” so as to inspire and create emotional sign posts that speak to the general population. In answer to this question, they believe that the DeMolay and the Masonic community as a whole have an enormous track record of enriching the lives of their membership, supporters and the communities they touch. As a result of attending this session I had to ask myself the same question, “Why Freemasonry?” — something that we all should ask and be able to answer!

The final two sessions I attended had similar themes: “The IRS, Grand Lodge, Local Lodges and You” by Bro James Cole of Virginia, and “Grand and Local Lodge Business and Finance” by Bro Nick Cichielo, Grand Treasurer, Missouri. The common message of

these two presentations were: good documentation of investment policy, budgets, financial reports, audits, segregated duties, dual cheque signing and regular meetings of the Worshipful Master, Secretary and Treasurer. It seems that a number of Grand Lodge jurisdictions have had problems where money has gone missing, so these common messages are not without reason. In addition, each Lodge in the USA has to continually, every year, report to the IRS. At this time Lodges

in Alberta do not have to report to the Canada Revenue Agency. However, we should all ensure that our Lodges have good documentation for our members’ assurance and in case Revenue Canada decides to change its current policies.

Having never been to Kansas City, Missouri, it was very interesting from an American history and geographical perspective, as well as being a great conference and learning experience that was enjoyed by all the Alberta participants.

Brethren Support Cancer Treatment in High River

Bros George Blake and Mark Fox from the Nanton Lodge No. 17 present a cheque for \$3,000 to Cathy Couey of the High River District Health Care Foundation to purchase a treatment chair for the Community Cancer Centre at the High River Hospital. Bro Tom Nelson, currently a patient at the centre, spearheaded this initiative. Nanton resident and patient Linda Loree is seated in a treatment chair similar to the one that will be purchased.



Kananaskis 2014

Bro Hugh Young, 2014 Masonic Spring Workshop Chairman

The question was asked, “Would I?” I knew that my head moved in some direction — I guess it must have been up and down — and as a result, in my 49th year in Freemasonry, I have the honour and privilege of being the General Chairman of the 49th Annual Alberta Masonic Spring Workshop, 25–27 April 2014.

I’m definitely going to Kananaskis. How about joining me? If you actually know me, please consider this as an opportunity to support my endeavours (I am trying to lay a guilt trip on you) and accept this as my personal invitation to YOU (I’m not paying). If you don’t know me personally, it is still my personal invitation to you to attend (I’m still not paying).

In the mid-80s (that’s the 1980s) I was the Secretary-Treasurer of the Workshop, and the biggest complaint from those who had to find a reason not to attend (or just to complain) was the cost. I hear that excuse is still used today — Freemasonry never changes! We are not staying at the Motel of Ill-Repute nor are we eating at Joe’s Diner (nor Macdonald’s). The Delta Lodge at Kananaskis is a quality hotel with the

same level of catering.

This year’s theme is **To Promote Happiness**, which is something we should always focus on, both in Freemasonry and in life in general — nobody likes a sourpuss. Our theme speaker has just completed a very successful tour in California and will be talking to us about the “Happiness and Harmony created by the Union of 1813 (in England).” This year, there will be something new: a web-link with a well-respected Brother in New Zealand, who will talk on Maori Customs and Freemasonry. That is just the beginning.

There are four streams in this workshop: “Happiness...”; “History and Legend”; “Symbolism and Philosophy”; and one which will offer some specific training. Finally, the bookstore will be well-stocked with titles to appeal to all tastes. Your organizing committee is busy working on the program right now. We are doing our part, why don’t YOU do yours.

Register before the year end and save money; form a Group of Eight (or more), also before the end of 2013 and save more money. Cancellation fees no longer exist if you must cancel up to a



month before the Workshop — after that there is a penalty. If you want, we can take installment payments on your credit card, but it must all be paid before the Workshop.

While there is no Women’s program (much to the delight of the vast majority of the ladies who attend — they do like the complimentary wine), if you want to have your wife or significant other accompany you (one, not both, as we are, after all, a moralistic fraternity) then book a single room accompanied by spouse/fiancée/girlfriend/partner, purchase additional meals for them and you are set to go.

NOW is the time to get online — <http://www.masonicspringworkshop.ab.ca> — and register. To assist me in maintaining my good looks and not gain any more grey hairs, don’t let me worry about registration numbers. Register early.

Masonic Knowledge, Masonic Education, Masonic fraternalism for YOU. Make the decision today!