



## 2014 Masonic Medal of Merit Presentation (Final Part)

**Bro Richard Michael Drozdowski** was initiated into Freemasonry in Ivanhoe Lodge No. 142 on 15 September 1994, passed to the degree of a Fellowcraft on 10 October 1994 and raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason on 17 November 1994.

He is a regular attender at all Lodge functions and willingly participates in all aspects of the Work. While encouraged for the Wardens and Worshipful Master offices, his preference has been the various appointed offices. He partakes in degree work and investigating committees, coaches candidates with their proficiency and volunteers eagerly for anything the Lodge requires.

Bro Drozdowski is a single father who supports his two children, Shelby and Josie, in their education — Shelby is soon to be an EMT, with Josie pursuing a University education. He is very conscientious and supporting towards his family, while raising his two daughters to be independent and free to pursue their own post high school interests.

Bro Drozdowski is an accomplished outdoorsman, with extensive backpacking experience in the National Parks, Mount Robson Provincial Park and the Kananaskis Wilderness area. He

is a motorcycle rider who loves to tour and gain access to various mountain parks. He is also an auto enthusiast who helps repair friends' and family vehicles. He has also been known to parade his "antique" Mustang with other antique car enthusiasts through the town of St. Albert on civic holidays.

He has been known to provide organizational help and volunteering to other Masons who wanted to realize their desires for political office. He is very conscientious and dependable in giving of his free time when fellow Masons want to make a difference in political or community involvement. His easy going nature and accommodating spirit make him an ideal person to depend on to get the job done.

He is the district manager for a successful steam valve business (Steam Specialty Controls). His business territory stretches over Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. His practical experience in the industry and knowledge from his mechanical engineering degree has served him well, providing a keen eye for troubleshooting of industrial steam equipment and controls. He enjoys a very successful reputation in the industry as a result and is usually sought out for his



*MWBro John Slade presents the Medal of Merit to Bro Michael Drozdowski.*

opinion on design and construction by consultants and industrial clients alike.

To quote his nominators, "No other member of the Lodge does more, not wanting any recognition" and "He is of an excellent moral nature and has a sound disposition that is friendly and helpful to all those who need his assistance."

**2015 nominations must be submitted prior to 28 February 2015. Forms are available on the Grand Lodge Website [www.freemasons.ab.ca](http://www.freemasons.ab.ca) If you have any questions, please contact the Committee Chairman, MWBro Cal Shaver, [calvinshaver@ccewireless.ca](mailto:calvinshaver@ccewireless.ca)**

## Upon the Level, By the Square

### An antique limerick offers age-old wisdom

MWBro John L. Cooper III, Past Grand Master, Grand Lodge of California  
*California Freemason*, December-January 2015

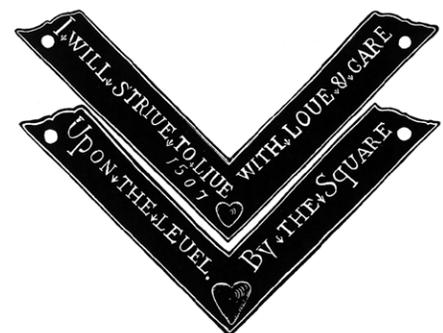
In 1830, workmen were repairing an old stone bridge in Limerick, Ireland. When they removed some of the stone to effect the repairs, they found a curious relic of an earlier era. It was an old brass square, with this engraved upon it:

*I will Strive to Live with Love and Care  
Upon the Level, By the Square  
1507*

The square is currently the proud possession of Lodge No. 13 in Limerick. Also known as the "Baal's Bridge Square,"

it was presented to the Lodge in 1871 by the widow of the Provincial Grand Master, to whom it had been given upon its discovery.

There is no way to know if the square originally had a Masonic association, but the sentiments in the engraving are clear enough. The echo of these words is still found in the closing ceremony of a Masonic Lodge. One of the last reminders for Brothers before they go forth into the world is that Masons "act



*Both sides of the Baal's Bridge Square.*

by the square" at all times and that they must "meet upon the level," meaning that they are expected to treat all men and women as equals wherever they

may be. To this sentiment is added the expectation that everything we do will meet the test of the plumb — the emblem of justice.

This concern with right behaviour is a Masonic characteristic and it is important not only within the Lodge, but also when members are abroad in the world. Therefore, the ancient Masonic symbols of the square, the level, and the plumb are equally applicable to our political and social dealings when abroad in that world. Freemasons have contributed much to the development of the democratic society in which we live, but the most valuable contribution may be this principle of how we should act when in the company of others. Masonic Lodges are places where debate and discussion are done freely and fairly, without the need to attack those with whom we may disagree. It is an ordered space, under the direction of the Master, whose authority to control and direct the debate is almost absolute. But this, in turn, requires that he adhere strictly to fairness in allowing such discussions, asking all those present to “conduct themselves with due order and propriety” while the debate is in progress.

Political society is held together by

an agreement — John Locke called it the “social contract” — whereby men and women surrender their individual right to live as they please in exchange for a society in which we give to one another the right to also live a life of fulfillment. The [American] Declaration of Independence phrased it this way:

*We hold these truths to be self-evident  
That all men are created equal,  
and are endowed by their Creator  
With certain unalienable Rights  
That among these are Life, Liberty  
and the Pursuit of Happiness*

It is sometimes easy to forget that our political discussions should be shaped by principles larger than the immediate issues of the day. But this is a concept our earlier brothers understood quite well. They brought the Masonic passion for free discussion to the emerging political society that was the product of the American Revolution. It is for this reason that our country did not turn to tyranny or dictatorship. The preservation of freedom was empowered by the creation of the “public space,” something that is missing from all totalitarian movements, religions, cultures, and political states. Masonic Lodges served to be akin to “schools of government.” And although they were that, they were

also so much more: they were the model for free and open discussion within the rules of civility and respect.

It is difficult to preserve the freedoms that are won with an original revolutionary impulse, but these freedoms are essential to the longevity of a society. Americans were successful in their fight because they found that the secret of living in an ordered society was to encourage political and social dialogue and to treat opponents with courtesy, civility, and respect.

And, going back to our limerick, if our conversation with others is shaped by “love and care,” we will listen to one another with respect. If our response to others is “upon the level, by the square,” we will treat others’ opinions as we would wish them to treat ours. And, if we use the test of truth — squaring our actions by the square of virtue — we won’t misrepresent the views of others in our discussions, as we will trust them not to misrepresent ours.

Freemasonry has much to offer our political dialogue today. And one place to begin is by making sure that our own comments meet the test of the old square found under a bridge in Limerick, Ireland:

*I will Strive to Live with Love and Care  
Upon the Level, By the Square*

## Alberta Miscellany

*Thoughts from the summonses, selected by Bro Trevor Morris*

### Avon Glen Lodge No. 170

#### **Responsibility and Choice Make Character**

One of the biggest problems we see in society today is that people don’t take responsibility for their lives. They all look for the quick fixes you get on an hour-long crime show. But that is not how life works. We all know people (or maybe we do it ourselves) who blame someone or something else for the troubles that befall them. You can blame the fast food chains,

cigarette makers, television, video games, schools or even our parents, but you are responsible for your life. Yes, there may be uncontrollable events that occur in your life, but you do not have to take them lying down, because that is negative thinking. You get to make a choice and it is 100 per cent yours, and no one can take charge of your life but you.

I have read many biographies of people who have succeeded in life. The vast majority of them had to pay their dues and needed to pursue their quest

and endure their failures. Yes, there are shooting stars who come out of nowhere and rise to the top without developing character, and usually they disappear just as quickly. Character is developed during difficult, challenging and complex times. Our determination is tested when we are told “no” and we need to remain determined. These grueling lessons make us strong, real and unwavering, and we award the gifts of virtue, honour, mercy and brotherly love for others to all, but especially to fellow Masons.

Abraham Lincoln is a prime example: he ran for office several times and

Provided to Freemasons of Alberta and the Northwest Territories west of the 4<sup>th</sup> Meridian who are members of

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Published each month except July and August by  
**The Grand Lodge of Alberta, A.F. & A.M.**

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was defeated several times before he was elected to the President's office, while many others might have given up. Thomas Edison had thousands of failed experiments before he succeeded, and Michael Jordan was told he would never play professional basketball.

Our Fraternity asks us extol the virtues of Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice, and when we do so we develop into a person worthy to be called a Mason. Just because we have taken a step of faith in joining this Lodge does not mean we can avoid all the character building steps. God usually builds slow and solid, not fast and fragile.

Take responsibility for your life and make good choices.

WBro Barry Jones

## Exemplar Lodge No. 175

Over the past two years, I would normally impart some knowledge or

give you something to think about, but as this is my last message as Worshipful Master I'm going to step away from that.

As my time as Master ticks down, I am left with a bittersweet feeling. I'm happy to have "done the good act" and that I now will have time to pursue my personal journey in Masonry. But I won't lie. I am going to miss it. I am also a bit scared because I'm not sure what comes next. As this chapter of my Masonic career is closing, I am left wondering what will the next chapter bring?

It must be a similar feeling many of us had after being raised to the Third Degree. What is next? It is that "undiscovered country" we know not of? But whatever is in store for me. I assure you that my dedication to Exemplar Lodge is as strong as ever.

I would like to thank you all for the confidence you placed in me these past two years. I can't say they weren't without their trials but we made it

through, and as I look back I am proud of what we have accomplished as a Lodge.

Exemplar has been on the forefront of many things within the Craft, the City, the District and even the Province, and you Brethren made that possible. We have been recognized by Grand Masters, the Grand Secretary, DDGMs past and present, and many others. Brethren, Exemplar Lodge has truly lived up to its name and it has been my honour to be Worshipful Master.

So now as I prepare to retire back into the masses, I am reminded of one of those lessons my Dad taught me when I was growing up: "When you borrow something, make sure to return it in as good or better condition than you received it." So as I pass the torch on, my hope is that I have done that with Exemplar Lodge and that torch now burns a little brighter.

WBro Iain Girvan

## Masons Offer Financial Support in Strathmore

Shannon LeClair, *Strathmore Times*, 19 December 2014

The Strathmore Regional Arts Collective (SRAC) got a boost to their finances on December 9, when representatives of the Masonic Foundation of Alberta and the Strathmore Masonic Lodge presented them with a cheque for \$2,000.

"That was suggested to me by a member of Strathmore Lodge No. 53, and then I told him to bring up the application form and come to the meeting," said Doug Barnard, a member of the Foundation. He explained that there are 14 Districts that each have one representative sit on the committee which helps determine which group(s) in their District will receive a charitable donation of \$2,000. Right Worshipful Brother Joe Bratton, District Deputy Grand Master Alpha District for 2014-2015, of Strathmore suggested SRAC as one of this year's recipients.

"[We're] super excited and very grateful. We're going to try and maximize those dollars to offer something for as many people as possible at our festival," said Brandy Hebbes, SRAC chair, speaking of the annual Arts and Sounds in the Park Festival held in September.

The Masonic Foundation of Alberta is a charity group of the Masons. Each year \$30,000-\$40,000 is budgeted to be donated. "We like to support a lot of different organizations," said Barnard. Last year one of the donations made in



*Shown in the picture are (left to right): RWBro Ted Currie, PDDGM; Brandy Hebbes and Wanda Reinholdt of the Strathmore Regional Arts Collective (SRAC); Bro Geoff Scott, Secretary-Treasurer, Strathmore Lodge No. 53; and RWBro Doug Barnard, Dinosaur Representative for the Masonic Foundation of Alberta. — Photo by Shannon LeClair.*

this district was to Rosebud Theatre.

The Masons also have the Masonic Higher Education Bursary Fund. It's for needy kids who want to continue their education," said Ted Currie, past District Deputy Grand Master. "They don't have to be a Mason, they can be anyone, so if you know someone, get in touch with a Mason and we'll give you an application,

or you can go to the Alberta Masonic website [[www.freemasons.ab.ca](http://www.freemasons.ab.ca)]," said Barnard. "There are 38 bursaries awarded each year in the amount of \$5,000, making it the second largest donation of bursaries in the province, second only to the government," said Currie.

# Freemasonry and Fraternité

## The Ideology of Fraternity Claims an Influential Role in Shaping a Nation

Jack R Censer, *California Freemason*, February–March 2014

[Dr. Jack R. Censer is a professor of history and a former dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA. Among his many publications is *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution*].

Revolutions rocked the Western world during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. One occurred in France, the largest and richest country in its region, and another in English North America, in the colonies that would become the United States of America. These revolutions — characterized by their effort to alter society, not to recover a pristine past, but to create something entirely new — had a lasting impact worldwide.

Inspired in part by a shared vision from the Enlightenment, revolutions on both sides of the Atlantic sought to establish societies based on personal and political liberty and on equality before the law (a qualified “equality” that excluded many, particularly women and African Americans). Although these revolutions expressed similar ideals and aspirations, one very significant difference existed: Desire for *fraternity*— defined variously as friendship, caring, and brotherhood— suffused the French experiment but could scarcely be found in the American Revolution.

### ***The influence of fraternal culture***

The concept of *fraternity* had a long pedigree among the French. The country’s Catholic heritage and numerous religious institutions had accustomed society to communities of brothers and sisters. But the 18<sup>th</sup> century witnessed an upsurge in the notion of brotherhood. Associational life had begun to bridge the vast, largely socially-imposed differences within the educated elite. In France, some interaction had long occurred between the nobility and bourgeoisie, but significant gaps in social and economic experience also existed.

Breaching this chasm were new organizations, including literary and scientific societies, in which individuals pursued mutual interests.

Also important were the Lodges of Freemasons that spread throughout France. Regardless of the communal practices of other secular organizations, Freemasons originated the ideology of brotherhood. According to Marcel David, the most diligent researcher of the term “fraternité,” and author of *Fraternité et Révolution Française*, French Freemasons at the time first and most frequently used the word “fraternité” in describing themselves as a brotherhood.

### ***A sometimes-favoured ideal***

Despite their enthusiasm, French revolutionaries expressed hesitation with the ideal of fraternity, never inscribing it in a constitution and seldom mentioning it in official documents.

Though the Old Regime offered significant precedent for revolutionaries to embrace fraternity in 1789 and despite revolutionaries’ desire to make an even bolder statement than American

revolutionaries, fraternity was not added to any original constitutional documents. It is likely that fraternity, as an idea amid rising social turbulence, frightened middle class legislators because the term suggested social equality.

Nonetheless, French society considered fraternity to be a very important value. During 1789–91 when revolutionaries replaced the practices and laws of the Old Regime (over objections but no serious armed resistance), the notion of brotherhood, or unity, flourished alongside the legislatively approved liberty and equality. In fact, at the revolution’s beginning, David’s famous sketch of the Tennis Court Oath depicted three orders — nobility, clergy, and commoners — entwined together and celebrated by the Estates-General.

Perhaps the apogee of this positive sentiment about brotherhood occurred on 14 July 1790, the first anniversary of Bastille Day, when the king demonstrated his support of the nation’s reconstruction on new principles. Images of this event featured the king’s earlier visit to the parade grounds in everyday

clothes where he physically assisted in preparing the site.

### ***Freemasonry’s response***

French Freemasons aligned themselves with the revolution by embracing liberty and equality, as well as continuing their commitment to fraternité. As one Paris Lodge, Contrat Social, noted, “Equality, liberty, and fraternity were duties that were easier for us to fill; we are decidedly far from those errors and prejudices which have for so long been the despair of nations.”



The Oath of the Tennis Court by Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825) depicted an event on 20 June 1789 at the start of the French Revolution. David went on to become a deputy of the National Convention.

Freemasonry's influence can be found in certain revolutionary symbols, such as the interlaced hands — connected to Freemasons form of greeting. Freemasonry also pioneered the revolutionary iconography of triangles, as well as practices such as planting trees, which celebrated desirable values.

### ***An oft-misconstrued term***

Even as the revolution embraced more radical notions, the concept of fraternity became no more acceptable to the government. Although increasingly open to acknowledging the importance of the working class and its needs, officials still shied away from touting fraternity as an ideal. The term became more visible, but was grouped with a fourth word: “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or Death.” In the rising tide of political repression — including the Terror of 1793–94, which likely claimed 300,000 victims — this slogan was

problematic. Other political situations also made the idea of fraternity more fraught. In 1792, war between France and other parts of Europe began in earnest, and counterrevolution soon grew. In such perilous times, the ideal of fraternity seemed either unrealistic or as casting doubt on the realism of the revolutionaries.

The French, in the name of brotherhood and with the goal of establishing likeminded regimes, occupied other countries, only to discover that, almost universally, their presence was resented. As the government became increasingly repressive at home, it turned against women and minorities. At the height of Robespierre's dominance, with power heavily concentrated in the hands of a few, the use of fraternity could even be seen as mocking the revolution's ideals.

From the fall of the revolutionary dictatorship, in August 1794, to Napoleon's ascension in 1800, a

succession of governments held power. After Robespierre's demise, the repression briefly relaxed, and two administrative committees even showed some interest in the official use of the term fraternity. But France soon disintegrated into warring camps, most visibly the Jacobins and an opposition, including Royalists. This conflict guaranteed the decline of the use of the word “fraternity”; and it was seldom, if ever, included in engravings or prints along with liberty and equality.

Half a century elapsed before the term was rehabilitated enough to be used officially during the short-lived revolution of 1848. Only at the inaugural festival of the Third Republic in 1880 would fraternity be formally incorporated into the constitution. Historians — and I am one of them — who have linked fraternity to the revolution in 1789, are guilty of a certain degree of anachronism.

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## **Civility**

Russ Charvonia, Deputy Grand Master, Grand Lodge of California

*The Short Talk Bulletin*, The Masonic Service Association of North America, April 2014.

I believe we have a problem in today's society: that the world about us is becoming increasingly uncivil.

Polarized and hostile speech dominates the news media, our political arenas and our everyday lives. This behaviour has become epidemic. It is costing us money, our health and our dignity, and is putting our democratic heritage in jeopardy.

We tolerate being talked at instead of talking with each other. Listening has become an endangered skill. We have allowed divisions to grow into chasms so deep that simply getting people into the same room to talk has become difficult, and at times impossible. We have allowed ideological intolerance to evolve into self-righteousness, condemnation and, ultimately, persecution — and we all know that's wrong.

And let's admit it: This incivility even makes its way into our Lodge rooms. I have to believe that each of us has been witness to situations where Brothers have disturbed the peace and sanctity of our Lodges by bringing inappropriate and undesirable behaviour and attitudes across the threshold.

I believe that if we don't address this state of affairs now, incivility will soon become our “new normal.” And when this happens, we may be within just

a single generation of it becoming so ingrained in our collective psyche that our children and grandchildren may not know any other way. Do we really want to imagine such a world?

“These are the times that try men's souls,” Thomas Paine said in his 1776 essay.

When we are uncivil to one another, we silence the other person; we take his or her voice away. This is not a Masonic value. As Masons, we are about allowing and perpetuating alternative voices and ideas. Masonic Lodges have long promoted the democratic habits of generous listening and civil discourse.

My Brethren, civil dialogue is the cornerstone that allows us to see things from a more enlightened perspective. This is not about avoiding difficult and complex topics. It is not about just “being nice” and keeping the dialogue on a superficial level. It does not silence those who wish to be heard. Instead, civil dialogue allows all voices to be valued.

And it can be achieved. We can restore civility back into our society.

Uncivil behaviour often triggers a physiological response in us that perpetuates this dangerous cycle. It limits the ability to have complex conversations and stops learning in its tracks.

Masonry is different

- The world is politically divided and antagonistic; Masons are taught to be good citizens and to welcome the opinions of others.
- The world is often dominated by factions that are hostile, confrontational and rude; Masons learn how to be civil and respectful.
- The world is fractured by religious intolerance and bigotry; Masons respect all religions and welcome all believers in The Great Architect of the Universe — in whatever form that belief may take.

So if society hungers for a return to civility, and if we, as Masons, have the common language, tools, values and desire to create a better world, isn't it our duty to do all that we can to breed civility back into society? Aren't we uniquely positioned to tackle this problem?

When we first crossed the threshold into a Lodge of Entered Apprentices, our Brothers impressed upon us the importance of learning to subdue our passions and keeping our desires within due bounds toward all mankind.

While it is perfectly acceptable, and even encouraged, that we debate policies where we have disagreement, we must always respect the office

that our representatives hold. The demonizing of others is the lowest form of human behaviour.

Thomas Jefferson said to William Hamilton in 1800, "I never consider a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy as cause for withdrawing from a friend."

And we can go further, my Brothers. The need for safe and open dialogue about difficult and complex subjects has certainly not diminished. There just are fewer places and opportunities for this to occur. We need to communicate in more than 140-character sound bites and we need to return to real, face-to-face conversations; and we can provide the forums to do so.

As Masons, we can serve as catalysts for change and be facilitators of civil dialogue. We are well skilled and aptly qualified to teach those in our midst the means of treating each other with dignity and respect.

And perhaps most importantly, we can be instrumental in this effort because we have what I refer to as a perfect and unique "delivery system" to promote civil dialogue. In North America, we have nearly one-and-a-half million men who have each taken an obligation to support each other and our fellow citizens, utilizing a common language and a system of morals and values. For example, when we, as Masons, meet "on the level," we set the stage for a dialogue where every voice matters. We can share this concept with others in an effort to improve our world. As Masons, we are stewards of

the language of civility. But we cannot keep it hidden in our Lodge rooms. Our communities need what we have to offer.

Together, as Masons, we can build a toolbox of resources that can be used by Lodges and members throughout North America to engage in civil dialogue and create more effective communities.

Think about how we might take the working tools of Freemasonry to fill this symbolic toolbox with implements that can be used to create and demonstrate civil behaviour. How might we utilize the plumb, square, level, compasses and even the trowel to illustrate and explain to our non-Mason friends how to deal with each other from a point of enlightenment?

As the current and future leaders of our beloved Craft, one of our roles is to engage more of our members in our respective jurisdictions in the lifestyle of Freemasonry. Perhaps our circling the wagons around such a civility effort will mobilize some of our less connected members. Didn't we all become Masons with the ideal of making the world better, by making ourselves better men?

Freemasonry provides the opportunity for ordinary men, who hold a shared set of morals and values, to do extraordinary things. And each of us has been honoured with this very special opportunity. We must not let our Brethren down. We cannot let society down.

I therefore ask you, my Brethren, if not us, then who? And if not now; well, I shudder to even consider the consequences of our inaction.

It is my hope that we, as the leaders of our gentle Craft throughout North America, will have the courage to incorporate our Masonic tools and enlightenment to help to repair our world. Do we have the fortitude to take full advantage of this opportunity to breed civility back into our society and into our own communities, which so desperately need our leadership? If so, then we, as the Freemasons of North America, will be true ambassadors of civility in society. We can demonstrate our relevance in our communities. We can say, with conviction that, due to our efforts, our world is a better place.

And then my Brethren, may harmony forever prevail!

*This presentation was delivered by the author at the Conference of Grand Masters of North America in Baltimore in February, 2014. Many of the delegates to the Conference have agreed to carry the torch to restore civility in our society. To join the effort, you may contact the author at [rcharvonia@freemason.org](mailto:rcharvonia@freemason.org). In addition, information about the National Civility Center, created in 2000 to promote civility in America by engaging local communities in civil conversation, can be found at the group's webpage at [www.civilitycenter.org](http://www.civilitycenter.org)*

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## **Grand Master's Itinerary February**

14-18 Conference of Grand Masters of  
North America; Vancouver, BC

