



New Year's Reflections

RWBro James Ratchford, DGM, Grand Lodge of Alberta

Christmas has just passed, and we still have those warm feelings nestled inside our hearts. The gifts of love and warmth are neatly tucked away, and you now have the time to sit and reflect over the past year. You sit at the table with a hot beverage and look out over the scene that is outside your window. The snow still sparkles, with the sun dancing across it like light reflecting from a prism, creating a peaceful surrounding for your contemplations.

You sit back and take a sip of your beverage and start to ponder over your past year. You look at your successes and smile. However, you reflect longer over your shortcomings or failures (much longer than you should). As the New Year approaches, you wonder if you need to make a resolution to correct the errors that were made in the prior year(s) — yes, we do tend to hold onto our past errors far longer than necessary.

Resolutions have been made for over 4,000 years. The ancient Babylonians would make promises to their gods that

they would return borrowed items and pay their debts. The Romans would make resolutions of good conduct to their two-faced deity Janus, the god of beginning and ending.

In the Medieval era, knights took the “peacock vow” (*les vœux du paon*) at the end of the year to re-affirm their commitment to chivalry, while early Christians believed the first day of the new year should be spent reflecting on past mistakes and resolving to improve oneself in the new year. At watchnight services, many Christians prepare for the year ahead by praying and making these resolutions.

New Year's Resolutions are made to be broken. Studies show that 88 per cent fail, even though we are extremely confident when they are being made. Men, do not despair, because if we make a plan to succeed there is a 22 per cent extra chance of sticking to our resolution; women who publicly make known their resolution have a 10 per cent extra chance of succeeding.

Now “here lies the rub” as they say. I have studied long and hard and have not found a philosophy or religion that condones the postponement of redressing your faults. We, every year, carefully listen to the charge delivered to our Wardens, “... what you have seen praiseworthy in others, it is expected you will carefully imitate, and what in them may to you have appeared defective, you will in yourselves amend.” Brethren, we should not wait until the New Year to address errors. Remember, knowledge is obtained through wisdom, and wisdom is gained by making errors and then learning from them.

Finally, my Brethren, from my wife Lorna, my family and myself, we wish the happiest of New Year's. May we continue to treat each other and the world at large as equals. May peace guide you, love hold you and happiness be spread all around.

[Read more on resolutions at Ancient Origins: <http://www.ancient-origins.net/myths-legends-news-general/ancient-history-new-year-s-resolutions-001185#ixzz3ncm7ROs4>]

Presentation of 60-Year Bar to Bro John Dobson

Zetland Lodge No. 83 of Calgary had the pleasure on 14 November 2015 of presenting a 60-year bar to Bro John Beaumorris Dobson.

Bro Dobson was born in Wymore, Nebraska in 1922. His British father had been living in Winnipeg, but decided to move south for better weather. Eventually, the family moved to England and was living there when World War II broke out. “I didn't have to join because I was a US citizen and Pearl Harbour hadn't happened yet,” Dobson says, but adds that he joined the Royal Air Force because he “could be far closer to God in an aircraft than in a submarine.” He served as a flying instructor until his release in 1945. He married Monica Savage of Calgary in 1949; they have two children and five grandchildren and still live in their own house.

Brother Dobson, a retired Senior Manager of Credit with the Bank of Montreal, was initiated into Freemasonry in Grande Prairie Lodge No. 105 on 22 September 1955, passed 27 October and raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason 24 November 1955. He affiliated with Zetland Lodge on 5 April 1960.

Bro Dobson says that his best memories of Freemasonry centre on the friendships he made. He joined the Craft

primarily due to his brother-in-law, Charles Steele, who was the Worshipful Master of Zetland Lodge. “He was raising thoroughbred horses about 40 miles north of the city and he would always pick me up and anyone else who needed a ride. The social functions were great. Robbie Burns Night and Birthday Night — we never missed them.”



Seated: Bro John Dobson. Standing (l to r): RWBro Bert van Helden; Bro Bob Herold; WBro Stuart Bentley, WM; RWBro James Ratchford, DGM; and Bro Brent Kaleta, SW.

Outgoing Masonic Foundation President Kept Busy on Final Day in Office.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Masonic Foundation of Alberta, held Saturday, 21 November, outgoing President, RWBro Angus Stewart, was kept busy. First he made a presentation on behalf of the Foundation to the featured presenter, Marc Quinn of the Edmonton Women's Shelter. Edmonton Women's Shelter provides a place of safety and support for Women and Children who are subjected to domestic violence.

Next, he accepted a donation from the Widow's Sons Masonic Motorcycle Association on behalf of the Foundation Board. At the 2015 Grand Master's Barbecue and 50:50 draw, Widow's Sons from across the Province raised funds that they chose to donate to charity. James Pruden, President of the Badland's Chapter of Widow's Sons, presented the cheque to RWBro Stewart, on behalf of all Alberta's Widow's Sons.

In addition to providing support to the Alberta Freemasons and their charitable projects, it is a primary focus of the Foundation to support charitable organizations who provide services

to children and young people who are at risk.

Right: MFA Presentation to Edmonton Women's Shelter/WIN House: Angus Stewart (left), Past President of The Masonic Foundation of Alberta, presents a cheque to Marc Quinn of Edmonton Women's Shelter, the featured presenter at the Annual General Meeting of the Foundation.



Below: James Pruden (left), President of the Badlands Chapter of the Widows Sons, presents a cheque to Angus Stewart, Past President of the Masonic Foundation



A Proper Subordination

The first Grand Lodge balanced the ideal of equality against strict social ranks

MWBro John L. Cooper III, Past Grand Master, Grand Lodge of California, California Freemason, December–January 2016

Regular viewers of the popular PBS television series *Downton Abbey* (now drawing to a close) can attest that although the lifestyle of the aristocratic Crawley family may have originally seemed foreign, after six seasons, it is easy to find parallels between it and our lives today. In a similar vein; contemporary Freemasonry still bears hallmarks from the bygone era in which the Fraternity originated.

When the first Grand Lodge came into existence in 1717, English society was characterized by social classes in which people's lives differed remarkably from each other, both legally and socially.

At the top of the society were the monarchy: the king and royal family. Then came the aristocracy, whose inherited titles were almost always associated with some of the great landed estates in England, such as the fictional *Downton Abbey*. The middle class came next, often composed of shopkeepers and public servants, followed by a lower class of farmers and labourers. The distinctions between these classes were sharp, and those from one class did not easily mingle with those of another.

Then Freemasonry came on the scene. The new Lodges that joined

the growing Fraternity after 1717 took seriously the Masonic belief that all members of the Lodge were equal. They addressed one another as "Brother," they elected their leaders, and they were truly "friends and Brothers among whom no contention should ever exist, except that noble contention of who best can work and best agree." This philosophy was at odds with the rest of their societies, and Masons were a bit concerned that the outside world would look askance at their egalitarian notions. So, they took some specific actions to make sure the non-Masonic world trusted them to behave properly

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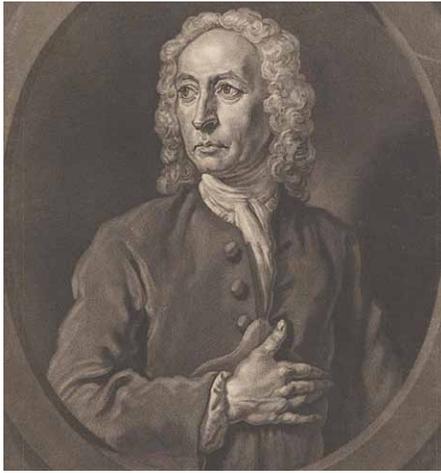
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Anthony Sayer (1672–1741), print by John Faber, ca. 1749, now in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. It is a copy of a lost portrait by Joseph Highmore.

in society.

To help establish social legitimacy, the new Grand Lodge sought members of the aristocracy to serve as Grand Master. They were not immediately successful; the initial Grand Masters came from the middle class.

The first, Anthony Sayer, is listed in our records as “a Gentleman,” but we know that he died in relative poverty. His successor, George Payne, who served as Grand Master both in 1718 and 1720, worked as a clerk in a tax office. The third was a minister of the Church of

England. Yet none of these men qualified as a “Noble Brother” — a member of the aristocratic class. To elect a “Noble Brother” to Grand Master was an important order of business for the new Grand Lodge. They succeeded in 1721, when John, the second Duke of Montagu, became a Freemason and was quickly elected Grand Master. He was succeeded by the Duke of Wharton, and from that point on, every Grand Master was either a Duke or an Earl, until finally his Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales (later King George IV) became Grand Master in 1790. To this day the Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of

England is a member of the royal family, for the Duke of Kent is a cousin of Queen Elizabeth II.

With all these noble leaders, there was little chance that anyone would accuse Freemasons of carrying their ideal of equality too far. We refer to this situation today in the Charge to an Entered Apprentice Mason, for we tell him [in the California Ritual]:

It is an institution having for its foundation the practice of the social and moral virtues; and to so high an eminence has its credit been advanced, that, in every age and country, men preeminent for their moral and intellectual attainments have encouraged and promoted its interests. Nor has it been thought derogatory to their dignity that monarchs have, for a season, exchanged the scepter for the trowel, to patronize our mysteries and join in our assemblies.



John Montagu, 2nd Duke of Montagu (1690–1749), by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

in rank or office you are to recommend obedience and submission; to your equals, courtesy and affability; and to your superiors, kindness and condescension.

The wording in our ritual comes from the *Illustrations of Masonry*, by William Preston, which he first published in 1772. Preston was the Worshipful Master of one of the original Lodges that created the Grand Lodge in 1717, and a student of the ritual of Freemasonry. His book was a compilation of the best of the lectures that he found in use in the Lodges of his day, and this phrase accurately reflects how Lodges instructed their members



Philip Wharton, 1st Duke of Wharton (1698–1731).

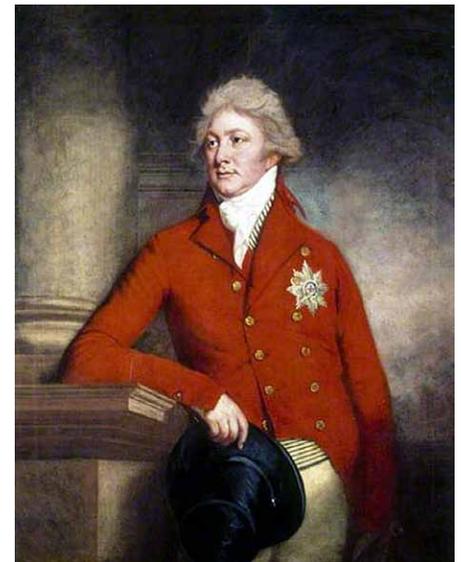
in the 18th century.

Today, this statement in our ritual seems a bit out of date. We are not used to thinking of other people in our society as being either our inferiors or our superiors. Indeed, American Masonry became much more egalitarian than English Freemasonry ever had been through the influence of our democratic society after the Revolution, and

the equalizing character of the American frontier. [North] American Freemasonry thus became unique, and it is different today than Freemasonry in many countries around the world.

Our membership is not based on an aristocracy of birth or wealth; it is not based on the exclusivity of an intellectual class; and it is relatively affordable compared with the situation in most other countries. We may have lost some of the original aims of Freemasonry’s founders with these modifications, but most American Masons would agree that we have gained more.

That Freemasonry is open to men of all levels of American society is something of which we can be proud. American Freemasons don’t have many “inferiors in rank or office,” nor do we have many, if any, “superiors” as was the case in England in the 18th century. What we do have is a Fraternity where we meet upon the level, act by the plumb, and part on the square. That, too, is from our ritual.



George IV (1762–1830), as Prince of Wales by Thomas Beach, ca 1792, in National Trust Collection.

Your DDGMs 2015–2016 (Continued)

We are pleased to introduce to our readers the District Deputy Grand Masters serving the Craft in Alberta during the 2015–2016 term. This concludes our series.

Calgary Highwood District

RWBro Stephen J. Schaff was born in 1973 at Scarborough, Ontario. He spent his formative years between Stratford and Oakville, where he attended Appleby College boarding school. After studying marketing at Mohawk College in Hamilton, he moved to Calgary in 1996. He worked in the furniture industry for a year, before doing a stint at the Whyte Museum in Banff. Finally settling down back in Calgary in 1997, he launched into a career in the computer industry, doing IT work and building web sites.



In February 2006 he was initiated into Freemasonry, passed to the Second Degree in April of 2006 and raised to the Third Degree in February of 2007 in Zetland Lodge No. 83. The strong positive impression of the Craft inspired him to immediately begin his journey through the Officers' chairs, reaching the pinnacle of that journey to the East as Worshipful Master of the Lodge in 2012. After visiting many Lodges in 2013 and 2014, he was encouraged to run for District Deputy Grand Master, for which he was elected in October 2014 and invested in June 2015. He is presently a member of Scottish Rite and continues to contribute to Freemasonry as a member of various committees related to the Craft. He is ever grateful for the personal growth and fellowship that Freemasonry provides, and continues to endeavour to provide the same rich experience for others.

Lakeland District

RWBro Robert A. Tomniuk was born in Smokey Lake, Alberta, in 1945 and is one of eight children. He attended H. A. Kostash High, with his post-secondary education at the University of Alberta Hospital and numerous post-secondary institutions. He is married to Dorothy, and they will be celebrating their 42nd Anniversary this year. They have two grandchildren and a large immediate and extended family.



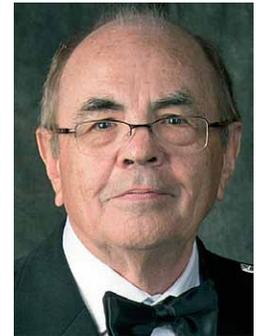
Bro Tomniuk had extensive training and a varied career, particularly in Emergency Medicine: (Emergency Medical Responder, Alberta College of Paramedics; Basic Life Support/ External Cardiac Defibrillation Instructor, Grant MacEwan; Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support, Canadian College of Emergency Medical Services; Advanced Life Support, St. John Ambulance; Instructor Trainer, Transportation of Dangerous Goods, NAIT; Trainer, Department of Corrections, Fort Saskatchewan and Emergency Planning Administrator, EPCOR. He is presently semi-retired, and working at Home Depot (Tool Rental).

He was initiated on 19 April 1979, passed on 17 May 1979 and raised on 20 September 1979 in Norwood Lodge No. 90, serving as Worshipful Master in 1986–1987 and 2012–2013. He served as the District Secretary in 1994–1995 under RWBro

Elmer Bly as DDGM. He is a member of several Concordant bodies, including Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite (Most Wise Sovereign of Mizpah Chapter in 1991–1992), Al Shamal Shrine (Captain, Provost Corps in 1994), Royal Arch Masonry and Cryptic Rite Masonry.

Dinosaur District

RWBro Jim Currie was born in Glasgow in 1948. He graduated in Medicine in Glasgow, and came to Canada in 1982 to complete his education at the Foothills Hospital and the University of Calgary. He became the Head of Obstetrics and Gynæcology at the Calgary General Hospital, Peter Lougheed Centre, and was the Division Chief Obstetrics for Calgary Health Region. He is happily married to Elizabeth, his wife of 44 years, and has two remaining children, Alison and Bill who is also a Mason.



Prior to his initiation, RWBro Currie had no knowledge whatsoever of Freemasonry itself, only a knowledge that his grandfather and favourite uncle were Masons. He was initiated in 1995 in Canada Lodge No. 165, passed and raised in 1996, and became its Worshipful Master in 2009. He affiliated with Irricana Lodge No. 137 in 2013, because of the quality and friendship of that Lodge. RWBro Currie is also the Southern Superintendent for the Masonic Board of Benevolence.

Central District

RWBro Robert R. (Bob) Cantwell was born in Edmonton in 1954, but lived his formative years in Calgary. Bob attended SAIT in Calgary in the Welding Engineering Technology Program, worked as a welding technologist with Nova and TransCanada Pipelines in the Material Quality Management Group and finally as the Manager of Technical Services for TransCanada Hottaps.



Bob and his wife, Sandra, have been married for thirty-five years and live in Red Deer. Bob is currently the Quality Assurance Manager for Arnett & Burgess Oilfield Construction Limited, where he manages both the CSA Z662 and ASME B31.3 quality management systems in four provinces. Bob is a CWB welding inspector, NACE coating inspector and an ISO auditor.

Being the last of three generations of known Masons, Bob was initiated, passed and raised in Beacon Lodge No. 190 in 2003 and served two terms as Worshipful Master, from 2007 to 2009. Bob served on the Masonic Foundation for three terms and is presently a member of the Royal Arch Masons (Stettler), the Cryptic Rite and Edmonton Preceptory. Originally elected as DDGM for Central District for 2014–2015, he is serving again this year. He still looks forward to working with Grand Lodge committees, updating their processes and forms.

Symbols. What Are They?

H. L. Haywood, NY Masonic *Outlook*, May 1933

If you will copy off on a large sheet of paper forty or fifty of the most widely used definitions of Freemasonry of the past two centuries, your eye will be struck by one outstanding fact. Perhaps it is **the** outstanding fact: with few exceptions all of them take it for granted that Freemasonry hides, conceals, or disguises its teachings behind its symbols, or at best that they merely suggest or illustrate its meanings.

Symbols are not, and cannot be, a species of camouflage, veils or darkness, designed to obscure or mislead. They are, and they must be, the exact opposite. Their nature and function is not to conceal, but to reveal; not to observe, but to express. The notion that Freemasonry employs a whole system of symbolism solely for the purpose of withholding its teachings from its own members has been the most disastrous blunder in the whole history of the Craft; in the last analysis it amounts to arguing that Masonry says one thing but means another; this weakens the force of its authority, transforms the ritual into one long puzzle, and bewilders all except the most learned with the unhappy feeling that they have no way of discovering what it is that they have obligated themselves to practice and to believe.

Scientists, mathematicians, philosophers and artists, none of whom are addicted to occultism or sworn to secrecy, employ symbols as a matter of course. They know the human mind to be so made that symbolism is a necessity to it; neither thought nor the communication of thought can be carried on without it; lacking it there could be no such thing as knowledge and therefore no such thing as science. If one were to tell any scholar, scientist or artist that symbols are to conceal ideas he would be laughed at for his pains; they know that symbols are themselves ideas and that no idea can be expressed and concealed at one and the same time.

A symbol is first of all an object in its own right with its own immediate uses and meanings. An hourglass, for example, is, to begin with, simply an hourglass, a species of clock, by which time is measured. A twenty-four-inch rule is a measuring rod that every carpenter, mason or machinist carries about with him for daily, practicable purposes. A circle drawn by a geometrician on a

piece of paper is nothing but a circle; an architect may make use of it to construct the arch over a window, an engineer may employ it for the purpose of manufacturing a steel pulley. Each is what it appears to be; there is no more mystery about it than there is about a lump of dirt or a glass of water.

At the same time each familiar object is an instance or specimen of some general practice, or rule, or law, or idea, or principle, or truth. The hourglass is but one of the countless instances of the fact of time, which operates as one of the primary and universal realities in human experience. The rule is but one instance of the principle of measurement, and measurement is a cardinal necessity everywhere which takes a thousand forms. A liquid may be measured in a cup, distance is measured by the rule, weight is measured by a scale, ignorance is measured according to an accepted standard of enlightenment, music is measured according to a system of beats, thought is measured by the degree of its approximation to the truth; without all such modes and methods of measurement human life would be impossible.

Confronted by such countless instances, with all their wide variety of forms which may be ever changing, the mind cannot handle them all together, but must simplify its task. It seeks out a law, principle, or idea which rims through and controls them all and makes use of that. To do this it seizes on some significant and familiar instance and uses it to stand for all the other instances or as a simple form or expression of the general truth. The moment it makes use of some one thing for that purpose, and regardless of what that thing may be, the thing becomes a symbol. A symbol thus stands for some general truth but at the same time it is itself an instance, embodiment, or expression of that truth. It doesn't hide that truth; it expresses it, makes it plain and clear; there is nothing artificial about its symbolical use because it is itself the truth in actual operation.

Thus an hour-glass is at once a clock for measuring time and an instance of the whole idea of time; it possesses, as symbol, a double purpose, for it is both a clock and a representative of the general idea of all possible kinds of

clocks. A two-foot rule is in itself nothing but a measuring stick, but at the same time it stands for the whole principle of measurement. A circle first of all is literally nothing but a circle, but as a symbol it becomes an expression of one of the most important of all types of relationship, whether in the natural world or in the human world. In the very nature of the case there cannot be anything queer, occult, hidden or secret about a symbol because its whole being and purpose is to exhibit something, express it, make it dear.

Nobody in his right senses will ever argue that men have all conspired together to conceal their facts and ideas behind a veil of allegory or to hide them in the depths of symbolism! Their motive, of course, always is the exact opposite: to reveal, to communicate, to express, to make clear, and if more and more they are making use of symbolism to that end it is because symbols are so expressive, tell so much in so little, so accurately, and with an intelligibility so universal.

There are in our ritual many elements other than symbolism — emblems, types, dramas and allegories for example — but in so far as it is composed of symbols the same things may be said of each and every one of them that has been said in the above paragraphs about symbols in general. Their one and only purpose is to make clear to every Mason what it is that Masonry teaches and what is expected of him.

Freemasonry is one of the great teaching institutions, like the school, the church, the press and similar organizations; where it differs from them is not in its use or understanding of symbols but in its exclusive use of a system of symbols as its method of teaching. Where they use books, speeches, lectures, written statements, creeds, all expressed in a form of words, it uses symbols and symbols only. There are words and lectures in our ritual but their place is not primary; their only function is to present or to explain the symbol.

It is because this is true that symbolism is of such paramount importance to every Mason. If he is indifferent to the symbols, does not know how to use them, leaves them alone, makes no effort to understand them, he must necessarily miss the whole meaning of Masonry and stand incapacitated to be a Mason or to live

its life. And a Lodge that leaves them out of its room, or slurs them over, or treats them as quaint curiosities survived from the Middle Ages is in so far in the real sense not a Masonic Lodge at all, but has missed its calling and is defeating its own end. Without its symbols Freemasonry necessarily is dumb because it has no other voice; if its own members pass them by its influence in their lives is paralyzed because it is through its symbols that it must operate on their minds, if at all.

Nothing is more urgently necessary in the Craft, tragically necessary, here or elsewhere, than the recovery (perhaps it is better to say the discovery) of the place symbols hold in our Craft and of their proper function in the experience of Masons. To teach and expound them, to require of a candidate that he study them, to help, aid and assist worthy Master Masons to know what they are all about is not a side issue, not a pleasant diversion, but a need so cardinal that if it isn't done more thoroughly than it is now there is no telling what will happen to the Craft in the future.

Why doesn't the Craft state its teachings in so many words and be done with it, instead of this puzzling, roundabout use of symbols? This is an

old question, but it is always the plain confession of a lack of understanding of the nature of the Craft and of the method it must always employ to effect its purpose. The answer to the question penetrates to one of the most deeply-rooted of all the "secrets" of our art. In the broadest sense of the words, and other things being equal, a man is made a Mason for the express purpose of causing him to study, understand, accept and practice the symbols. They are not pointers toward Masonry, pictures here of what Masonry is there, illustrations or commentaries of it; they are themselves Masonry, they are what it is, they are at first-hand and in their own right its teachings, principles, ideals.

And it is in the very process of understanding and assimilating them that a member grows into Masonic manhood. In them he finds the life he is pledged and called upon to live. His mind is developed by his work of studying them. His intellect is sharpened and disciplined by the toil of overcoming their difficulties. His imagination is enlarged and enriched by his insights into their significance. His character is strengthened by his effort to translate them into his own practice. His life takes shape and becomes harmoniously

ordered as he follows their lead.

Others may help him, books may instruct him, but it is for him chiefly to use his own wits, employ his own faculties, make his own observations, do his own reflecting, compare one symbol with another and discover how each is related to the system as a whole; by these methods, so remote from the easy acceptance of opinions and ideas at second-hand, which is the curse that always dogs the use of the printed page, a man grows. He can't help but grow, because he is using his own faculties to some purpose.

It was for this that he was initiated in the first place; it was to engage in this life-long labour that he was presented with Working Tools in each of the Degrees; it was to this end that he was made a Mason. In the Craft's great system of symbols there stands revealed and expressed one of the truest and mightiest philosophies of human life that our race knows anything about; he whom Initiation has brought into its presence, and who has inherited it by virtue of his membership, has received a possession beyond all possible computation in any of the ten thousand terms of money or riches.

