



## Masonic Foundation of Alberta — 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Masonic Foundation of Alberta. The Foundation was established by resolution of the Grand Lodge of Alberta and incorporated in 1991. The Foundation has supported Masonic Lodge charitable projects through matching the funds raised by those Brothers, and has made direct donations to charities focused on protecting children and youth at risk ever since.

In recognition of this milestone, the Foundation would like all Freemasons in Alberta to consider April as Masonic Foundation Month and donate generously. To the end of 2015, the Foundation has been able to contribute a total of \$1,070,000 to 108 charities in conjunction with the Masonic Lodges of Alberta, thereby greatly assisting those in need of protection and support and enhancing the charitable reputation of Alberta's Freemasons and Freemasons generally.

Individual Freemasons and numer-

ous Lodges from across the province have helped the Masonic Foundation of Alberta support charities familiar to all of us. From the Zebra Child Protection Society to WINHouse, from school lunch programs to Kidsport Alberta, your contributions have helped better the lives of Albertans, and especially the youth of our province. Your ongoing assistance will help the Foundation continue in its great and good work.

In the coming months, the Foundation will submit uplifting stories to *The Alberta Freemason* from some of the many organizations which have benefitted from the contributions to the Foundation. In the meantime, you can contribute to the Foundation by sending your donation to [treasurer@masonic-foundationofalberta.ca](mailto:treasurer@masonic-foundationofalberta.ca) by e-transfer or by mail directly to our Edmonton address at Freemasons Hall. If your Lodge currently supports a registered charity and would like some additional support



*Presentation on behalf of the Masonic Foundation of Alberta to Autism Support Dogs. Pictured above are (l to r) Autism Support Dogs representatives Gwen Layton and Jaime Arnup, Justine (18-month old Labrador) and the current MFA President, Alwyn Charles.*

from the Foundation, go to our website at [www.masonicfoundationofalberta.ca](http://www.masonicfoundationofalberta.ca) and follow the instructions there.

## What's the Point?

RWBro Richard Kaufman, The Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario from "Reflections — The Newsletter of the Committee on Masonic Education, Vol. 29 No. 4," published in *Ontario Mason Magazine*, Winter 2016, pp 11-12.

How would you answer the question; "What's the point or purpose of Freemasonry?" The answers you receive to this question may be as varied and unique as the people you ask. The ritual, however, provides a very clear answer to the question. The General Charge from the Ceremony of Installation very clearly defines for us the "aim" or "purpose" of Freemasonry. When an author or lecturer wants to emphasize a particular point, he repeats it. The authors of the General Charge tell us twice what our purpose is.

The original English text of the ceremony of installation from 1723, which we still use today, provides us with an answer to our question. It says, "I trust that we should have but one aim, to please each other and unite in the grand design of being happy and

communicating happiness."

To further make this point, the General Charge, in the final paragraph describing how we should conduct ourselves towards each other while in Lodge, concludes with these words "... then will be obtained the chief point of Freemasonry, namely, to endeavour to be happy ourselves, and to communicate that happiness to others." These are the words of then VWBro Otto Klotz, originating from his address presented on 27 December 1864 to the ladies and members of Alma Lodge No.72 on the occasion of Ladies Night.

What's the point? To be happy and communicate that happiness to others!

What is happiness? How do we achieve happiness? What "makes" you happy?

Happiness is personal and individual.

What makes one happy can have an equal but opposite reaction for another. Happiness doesn't come in a one-size-fits-all, pre-packaged, microwavable solution. Happiness is as individual as each and every person, and it is equally as multi-faceted. However, we cannot escape that the "chief point of Freemasonry" is "to endeavour to be happy ourselves and to communicate that happiness to others."

Let's explore this notion of happiness a little further. After all, it is our purpose as Freemasons. Research has identified a number of attributes that correlate with happiness: relationships and social interaction, extraversion, marital status, employment, health, democratic freedom, optimism, endorphins released through physical exercise or eating chocolate, religious



*MWBro Otto Klotz (1817–1892) wrote the addition to the General Charge “If you see a man...” 1886 photo from the Meg Dea Vail Collection.*

involvement, income and proximity to other happy people. Philosophers and religious thinkers often define happiness in terms of living a good life, rather than simply as an emotion.

The ancient Greeks had many schools of thought about happiness. Socrates advocated self-knowledge as the path to happiness. Plato’s allegory of the cave influenced western thinkers who believe that happiness is found by finding deeper meaning to life. Aristotle believed that happiness is constituted by rational activity in accordance with virtue over a complete life. The Epicureans believed in reaching happiness through the enjoyment of simple pleasures. The Stoics believed they could remain happy by being objective and reasonable.

More recently, studies measuring human happiness make some interesting observations. One is that human relationships are consistently found to be the most important correlation with happiness. Happiness tends to spread

through close relationships with friends, siblings, spouses, and next-door neighbours and the researchers reported that happiness spreads more consistently than unhappiness through the network. Moreover, the structure of the social network appeared to have an impact on happiness, as people who were very central (with many friends and friends of friends) were significantly more likely to be happy than those on the periphery of the network.

What have others had to say regarding the living of our lives and happiness?

Albert Schweitzer, winner of the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize, had this message for the youth of his day, “I don’t know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve.”

Helen Keller had this to say, “Happiness cannot come from without. It must come from within. It is not what we see and touch or that which others do for us which makes us happy; it is that which we think and feel and do, first for the other fellow and then for ourselves.”

Mahatma Gandhi offers this, “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

Buddha said, “Teach this triple truth to all: A generous heart, kind speech, and a life of service and compassion are the things which renew humanity.”

What is the common thread offered by these quotes from noteworthy figures of history? I trust it is obvious: service. Happiness is derived from our service to one other, to our community, to our Fraternity, to our fellow man and to our family. Service is what carries our principles as Masons into action, into practice. It’s through service that we communicate our happiness to others.

I also believe that Otto Klotz spoke from personal experience, and the happiness that he derived from his service to his family, his church, his community and to the Craft when he spoke to the ladies and members of Alma Lodge more than 150 years ago. Klotz is described as

“Waterloo County’s most public-spirited citizen of the nineteenth century.” He was a Notary Public, a Commissioner for taking affidavits, a Clerk of the Division Court, a Justice of the Peace, the first secretary of the Hook and Ladder Company of Preston, secretary of the Preston Fire Brigade, first Clerk of Council for the Village of Preston, President of the Waterloo County Agriculture Society, first President of the Preston Horticultural Society and Chairman of the Building Committee for St Peter’s Lutheran Church. His major contribution, however was in the field of education. Klotz was the Secretary-Treasurer of the School Board, elected School Commissioner and later appointed Superintendent of Schools. This is a condensed version of Otto Klotz’s public service, not to mention that he was in the service industry, building and operating the Klotz Hotel for some 40 years! Without detailing his service to the Craft, suffice it to say that his service to the Craft warranted the bestowing of the honorary rank of Past Grand Master in 1885. If, the happiness you experience in your life is in fact related to your service to others, Otto Klotz lived a very happy life. The extent of service that Klotz exemplifies should lead us to belief that when he spoke the words “to endeavour to be happy ourselves and to communicate that happiness to others,” he spoke from his life experience.

We all enjoy moments of happiness, of pleasure, of joy or satisfaction. But, I don’t think that MWBro Klotz, who penned the chief point of Freemasonry, had in mind anything less than achieving perpetual happiness in the lives of Freemasons.

If true happiness is to be achieved by each and every one of us, and if it’s our responsibility to communicate the genuine tenants and principles of Freemasonry through our lives and actions, how can we achieve this? Could it be that the only way to happiness is through service?

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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# Interesting Times

WBro Barry Gurnsey, Calgary Lodge No. 23, Grand Lodge of Alberta

There is a saying often attributed to some unknown ancient Chinese philosopher that is intended to be a curse and is usually stated as “May you live in interesting times.”

However mysterious it may sound, it is neither ancient nor of Chinese origin, but in fact has its roots in a letter reportedly written by Frederick R. Coudert to Sir Austen Chamberlain, brother of the then UK Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, referencing the time period preceding the start of WWII.

But even this is not certain. The first verifiable recorded use of the term is from a speech given by Robert Kennedy in Cape Town South Africa in 1966, where he said:

*There is a Chinese curse which says “May he live in interesting times.” Like it or not, we live in interesting times. They are times of danger and uncertainty; but they are also more open to the creative energy of men than any other time in history.*

While the origin of the term is not known for certain, the term itself is quite fascinating on its own merits. There can be no doubt that the current times are at the very least “interesting,” as the entire world economy is being shaken to its very foundations yet again, because of the overabundance of a product that we had been told for years we would soon run out of. In the early 1970s we were told that oil production capabilities had reached their maximum and that the world was entering the era of “peak oil” with no more major discoveries of reserves likely. For decades we lived with a fabricated “truth” that the world was going to run out of affordable energy supplies. Instead human ingenuity and endeavour have managed the exact opposite by discovering enormous reserves and developing the technology to exploit them.

An interesting situation indeed, where the “truth” — as shouted from soapboxes and repeated endlessly — has been exposed to be a falsehood. Unlike some of the other “truths” that used to be considered unassailable but were merely annoying, this one has had a devastating impact on the entire economic system of the world. By transferring incredible wealth and its control to a very small group of individuals, it has led to the destruction of societies, countries and even entire regions

of the globe. It has led to ruinous and unsustainable practices, despite highly touted, well-meaning intentions.

In the rush to be seen to be “doing the right thing,” we have thrown caution to the wind and whole heartedly embraced “renewable” and “sustainable” energy sources. The irony is that entire ecosystems are being destroyed in the name of that sustainability. While it is only fair to our fellow inhabitants that we not wantonly despoil or waste, the reality is that the Earth and its ecosystem are far from being ours to control, and it is the height of arrogance to presume that we can. A cosmic event such as a slight change in solar output or a collision with an object the size of Mt. Everest could wipe out our entire species in short order, yet we have the audacity to say that world as we know it today is the way it has always been

and shall always remain.

Our researches have shown us that other civilizations thought the same, and presumed to be able to influence weather and climate by entombing children in high mountain caves or cutting hearts from living victims in order to appease the deities of the day.

We look at those societies as backwards and savage while we sacrifice the welfare of millions of our fellow creatures to ruination, collapse and war.

Yes Brethren, these are indeed “interesting times,” but as Mr. Kennedy alluded, they are also open to possibility. We are Freemasons and Brothers. We are the good guys. We are bound by the chains of indissoluble friendship and Brotherly love. We can and we must not only help, aid and support one another but we must also, of necessity, provide the strength of our philosophy and our support to our society, or the times may get a little too “interesting.”

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## Reading — Using Masonic Perspective

MWBro Carl A. Krause, Past Grand Master, The Grand Lodge of Saskatchewan, *The Short Talk Bulletin*, Vol.94, No.1, January 2016, The Masonic Service Association of North America

In 2009, I presented a paper at Solomon Lodge of Research No. 5986 of the Grand Lodge of Saskatchewan which was entitled “Kipling’s *Kim* as a Masonic Novel.” In the paper, I attempted to make the point that *Kim* can be read from several perspectives, including a Masonic perspective.

Indeed, if one has Masonic background, the novel takes on a new dimension. It is no longer just a good novel; it has become a good Masonic novel, in that Masonic allusions are found in all chapters but one.

Then, at a 2011 meeting of Solomon Lodge, I presented another paper, in which I explored the Masonic influences in yet another well-known writer, namely Mark Twain. Twain, a Mason, as was Rudyard Kipling, made frequent references to Masonic symbolism in stories such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

It is not my intention to repeat what I said in those two papers, but to show how Masonry infuses our thoughts and perspectives so that no matter what we read or observe, the principles and practices of Masonry influence whatever we are doing.

Recently I have had occasion to test that assumption when I least expected it. I have been re-reading one of my favorite

works, namely, Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*. Well into the Prologue, I came across a passage that had never previously caught my attention, namely a passage about five men who were all associated with a guildhall. But I am already ahead of myself.

*The Canterbury Tales*, written about 1390, is a story about 32 people, 27 men and five women, who go on a religious pilgrimage from Southwark, which is south and across the Thames from London, east to Canterbury, a distance of perhaps 50 miles. The reason for their pilgrimage is to visit the shrine of St. Thomas.

They are a motley crew: a knight, a squire, a yeoman of the guards, a couple of nuns, the wife of Bath, a clerk, a serjeant of law, several shady characters as well as five skilled tradesmen, men who would be found in a guildhall. It was while reading about these five tradesmen that my curiosity was piqued. The following are but a few lines of what Chaucer had to say about them:

*An Haberdassher and a Carpenter,  
A Webbe, a Dyere, and a Tapyicer,  
Were with us eek, clothed in o liveree  
Of a solempne and greet fraternitee. ...  
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys  
To sitten in a yeldhalle on a deys.*

*Everich, for the wisdom that he can,  
Was shaply for to been an alderman.*

So what was there that prompted me to take a second look?

Chaucer describes these men as similarly clothed: “in o liveree”; as members of a fraternity: “a solempne and greet fraternitee”; as respectable citizens: “ech of hem a fair burgeys”; and as men of status in the guildhall because they were seated on a dais: “sitten in a yeldhalle on a deys.”

My first thought was, could these men be Masons? The answer is “no,” but there are certainly similarities to Masonry as practiced at that time. That is, as members of a guild, there were similarities to Masonry, both then and now.

Guilds had a number of features in common. Members were bound by ordinances that reflected their common interests, and guilds tended to be much more inclusive of women than were other social groupings. All of them had a pronounced religious dimension. They thus provided an alternative to family and other social networks, much as they offered an alternative to the

rigours of social hierarchy. The guilds also crossed the boundary between the living and the dead by commemorating deceased members in prayer and ritual. The sense of fellowship and continuity, of the guild’s *sui generis* and in its own time frame, was further enhanced by the particular history of its origins which a guild might possess and celebrate.

Although we don’t know this for certain, these men because of their diverse occupations — four cloth-workers and a carpenter — were probably members of a parish guild rather than a craft guild. In a parish guild, members were associated with acts of piety and mutual welfare.

My “discovery” of this passage in the Prologue reminded me of the *Regius Poem* written about the same time as *The Canterbury Tales*, i.e., ca 1390. That poem has also now taken on a new and different dimension because it reminds me that operative Masonry in all likelihood evolved from a craft guild. After all, we still refer to our Lodges as Craft Lodges.

In summary, whether we are working our way through a manuscript written



*Illustration of the guildsmen from The Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, London, 1841, drawn by R. W. Buss and engraved by S. Sly.*

more than six hundred years ago, or reading a passage from the Book of Kings or the writings of one of our favourite authors, we may well encounter glimpses of the Craft when we least expect it. Such is the pervasive nature of Masonry.

## Visit to Cárdenas Lodge, Cuba

RWBro Kenn Culbertson, Junior Grand Warden, Grand Lodge of Alberta

Worshipful Brother John Harper, of Meridian Lodge No. 129, Stony Plain, had a vision of organizing a Masonic family vacation to Varadero, Cuba. He began the process in January 2015, with an information poster sent to Lodges throughout the Edmonton area with the date, cost and resort reserved. There needed to be at least twenty people interested in the venture. During the year of organizing and advertising the vacation, thirty people in total signed up and paid the necessary fees. There were eighteen Brethren, representing eight Lodges, and twelve of their spouses making the trip.

WBro Harper tried in vain to make contact with the Grand Lodge of Cuba as to the possibility of our Brethren attending Lodge meetings in that jurisdiction. However, the Wednesday before departing on the trip, I was visiting Dominion Lodge No. 117, where I chanced to meet Bro Jesse Swarchuk of Mystic West Lodge No. 101. Bro Swarchuk informed me that he had just returned from a vacation in Varadero, where he had met a Brother Mason from Cuba who assisted him in visiting a Masonic Hall in Cárdenas, which was approximately twenty-five km from Veradero. He had a contact number

which he gave me. The Cárdenas Lodge would be holding its first regular meeting of the New Year on the Monday after our group’s arrival, and Bro Jesse encouraged us to give Bro Rolando Himley a call to see if our group might be able to arrange a visit to the Lodge meeting.

After we arrived in Cuba on the following Sunday, I called Bro Rolando and we arranged a meeting at our hotel with him and the eighteen Brethren. When he arrived, he was greeted wholeheartedly by our group. Bro Rolando invited us to attend the Cárdenas Lodge meeting the following day. The question was how to get eighteen Brothers to a Lodge twenty-five km away and return. No problem. Bro Roland arranged for us to be picked up by a bus at a cost of \$7.00 each, return, and on top of that he would be with us to guide us and translate as best that he could.

At 18 00 h on Monday, Bro Rolando arrived at the hotel and walked us to the main highway, where the bus picked us up for our Masonic adventure. The sights of rural Cuba were all around us. Old cars, horse-drawn wagons, bicycles and scooters are the transportation method most Cubans use. The streets were narrow and the bus maneuvered slowly towards

the hall.

We arrived at 19 00 h, which was the expected opening of the meeting. As the members of Cárdenas Lodge arrived, time seemed to stand still, since there was no hurry to open Lodge — just more time to welcome us and give us an opportunity to view the magnificent lodge room.

The hall was built in the early 1900s with all the symbolism and craftwork of Master Masons’ hands. We all were invited to sit with the WM in the East — nine on one side and nine on the other. For some of our group, it was their first time in the East at any Masonic meeting, truly a sign of the honour which the membership of Cárdenas felt towards our visit. While we were unable to understand the words of the members, the Masonic meeting followed a very recognizable pattern.

The government wishes to close the hall for safety reasons because the first floor is unoccupied and the building is in need of major renovations. The members are trying to raise this money by donations and working with the government to save the hall, and this was the focus of the meeting. During the meeting, we, as a group, presented the Lodge with over twenty Master Mason aprons to be used by their members. They were gratefully accepted and will be put to good use.

There were two collections that evening: one for benevolence and one for the building renovations. Needless to say the generosity of our group overwhelmed the Cárdenas Lodge. Their appreciation was conveyed by hearty thanks and hugs after the meeting. We all returned to our hotel with an emotional high, knowing that we as Freemasons had done a good deed.

Arrangements were made to meet with Bro Rolando on the Friday before our departure, and he met once more with us

in the hotel conference room. All our ladies attended the meeting as well. Bro Rolando presented us with eight gifts commemorating our visit to Cárdenas



The exterior (l) and interior (r) of Cárdenas Lodge at Cárdenas, Matanzas, Cuba.



Lodge. He explained that while they were very simple gifts, they were given from the heart, because this was all they had to give. Everyone, including our ladies, could not

help but be moved by the fellowship and love transmitted in that room at that moment. That is certainly a memory that will live with the group of us until our last days.

## Excerpt from Grand Oration, 2015 Annual Communication

### Respecting Our Trade Secrets

WBro Andrew Hammer, Grand Orator, Grand Lodge of North Carolina. (Conclusion of three parts.)

*In part two of his oration, Bro Hammer discussed the pursuit of excellence and how that should affect our attitude towards membership in the Craft. In his conclusion, he suggests we must respect our secrets and our uniqueness.*

Now, there are some Brothers who are of the opinion that the ideas of Freemasonry should be transformative in the world directly. Consequently, they feel that the increased visibility of the Fraternity is useful in achieving that aim. However, that opinion not only plays into the old canard about our seeking to 'control the world', it also forgets that our method of sharing the ideas with the world is through the transformation of the individual. We are a Craft; one would no more offer up that Craft to the world as the solution for humanity's ills than the potter would offer up his wet clay and the wheel as his final product. The process of transforming clay into an object of utility or beauty is his craft, and as with all crafts, there are techniques, methods and trade secrets that are not offered to or before the entire community, lest the potter find himself with a trade, but no longer a job.

I return to the analogy of the craftsman because it is so relevant to us as Brothers in our speculative Craft. Just because one knows how to make pottery does not mean that one has the skills of the master potter. What one ends up with when that skill is indiscriminately dispersed is that same crowd of a thousand people discovering the trade se-

crets, making their own mediocre cups and plates, while never having the full skill and art of the craftsman. In time, the craft dies out because the masses lose appreciation for the inner method and value of the potter's work. Soon, the master potter's idea is lost. All Masons should immediately connect with this unfortunate scenario.

Our Craft can also be lost if we do not appreciate our trade secrets, and choose instead to spread our art before the entire world for the vain and superficial goal of being liked by others who are determined that we be misunderstood anyway.

Freemasonry is older than that nation which gave birth to it; it is older than the established religion of that nation as well. We owe no explanations to anyone else for who we are, what we do, why we do it or how, and no one has the right to demand an explanation from us. We claim this right as a fundamental freedom of conscience, as would any other self-respecting body of thinking people.

If that seems a bit harsh, I can only state once again that nothing I have said here is anything other than that which has been said even more harshly by some of our most respected Masonic

forefathers. I am merely adding another voice to affirm what seems to need a rmination with every new generation of the Craft. Again, the words of William Preston:

*Many are deluded by the vague supposition that our mysteries are merely nominal; that the practices established amongst us are frivolous; and that our ceremonies may be adopted or waived at pleasure. On this false basis we find too many of the Brethren hurrying through all the degrees of the Order, without adverting to the propriety of one step they pursue, or possessing a single qualification to entitle them to advancement. Passing through the usual formalities, they consider themselves authorised to rank as Masters of the Art, solicit and accept offices, and even assume the government of the Lodge, equally unacquainted with the rules of the Institution that they pretend to support, and the nature of the trust which they are bound to perform. The consequence is obvious; anarchy and confusion ensue, and the substance is lost in the shadow.*

For so many Brethren, the substance has been lost in the shadow. They live in darkness despite the light.

The pursuit of excellence in Freemasonry necessarily means that one is placing the structural and philosophical integrity of our system above all other concerns that might be raised in relation to it. It means that neither a concern for numbers, fundraising, publicity nor expediency will cause us to alter our institution in such a way that it becomes just like any other. This, because that quality of surpassing, of rising up from within ourselves, is not and can never be served by subjecting our efforts to the benchmarks of ordinary commercial endeavours.

You did not join Freemasonry to remain in ignorance. Freemasonry was never intended, and cannot be allowed, to make good men ordinary.

Rather, our object is to sustain intellectual curiosity; to seek to improve our minds through that curiosity, and to dare to be good men who do great things. And this sentiment is validated by the words of one of our great American Masons, Bro Theodore Roosevelt, who memorably said:

*Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat.*

Some might say that I'm taking all of this way too seriously; that in calling for a return to a serious, thoughtful,

and accurate approach to the Craft, I am asking for something that can no longer be expected in today's busy world.

But Freemasonry has ever been a serious pursuit. At times, and even today it has been a difficult and dangerous one, and it would not have been so were it not intended to speak to the liberation

and transformation of our minds, free minds in pursuit of intellectual and philosophical light. I suggest to you, and I tell you today that there are hundreds of Brothers across this nation, in Lodges from Miami to Fairbanks, who would join me in saying to you, that this is exactly what you came here to do.

## Can You Help Identify This?



The above pictures are of a Masonic Funeral — date and place unknown. Can you help identify this event?

