



## 112<sup>th</sup> Annual Communication

The **One Hundred and Twelfth Annual Communication** of the Grand Lodge of Alberta, A.F. & A.M., will be held at the Holiday Inn and Suites, Red Deer South, 33 Petrolia Drive, Gasoline Alley, Red Deer, AB commencing **Friday, 9 June 2017** at 09 00 h and continuing on **Saturday, 10 June 2017**. Brethren are encouraged to be in place at 08 45 h in order to receive Special Dignitaries, Representatives of Concordant and non-Masonic groups etc.

**Agenda:** The Annual Communication under provision of the Constitution PART I.1.L.1 will be conducted by MWBro James Ratchford, governed by the Rules of Order as per the Constitution and/or those listed in the Preliminary Report. The Grand Master reserves the right to revise the Agenda (PART I.1.A.4).

**Notices of Motion & Nominations:** The complete list of Notices of Motion to amend the Constitution and Regulations and all Nominees for Election will appear in the May Edition of *The Alberta Freemason*.

**Registration & Balloting:** Shall begin at 08 00 h, 9 June 2017 and continue until 18 00 h. Registration and Balloting resumes at 08 00 h, 10 June 2017 and closes at 10 00 h, as per PART II.1.B.9.

**Accommodations:** All reservations are on a first come basis at the host hotel, Holiday Inn and Suites, 1-403-348-8485, Group Code "GLA." The cost of a room (1-King or 2-Queen) is \$135. Prices in effect until 25 May 2017. Alternate hotel: Holiday Inn Express, 1-403-343-2112, Group Code "Grand Lodge of Alberta." The cost of a room (1-King or 2-Queen) is \$125. Shuttle provided and Continental Breakfast included.

**Function Tickets:** Can be ordered through Grand Lodge Office. **Prices and details to be announced.** Ticket orders (with payment) **must** be placed before 29 May 2017. After 29 May 2017 prices will be increased by \$5.00/ticket. **Only those tickets ordered by the Lodge Secretary will be mailed out.** Any individuals ordering tickets will retrieve them at the registration desk at the Annual Communication. Payment will be expected at the time of pick up if not previously paid for.

**Installation of Grand Lodge Officers:** Immediately following the business before Grand Lodge, MWBro Chris Batty will be the Installing Grand Master with the assistance of Past Grand Masters.

**Dress:** Grand Lodge Communication — Business Suit/Regalia (includes Grand Lodge Officers). Grand Lodge Banquet — Dark Business Suit, Semi-Formal, except Grand Lodge Officers to wear Tuxedos at Grand Master's Banquet, Grand Lodge Banquet and at the Installation of Officers.

**Regalia must be worn at all sessions**

Master Masons are encouraged to attend the Annual Communication

## Address, New Year's Levee, 2017

### What is Freemasonry?

MWBro James Ratchford, Grand Master, Grand Lodge of Alberta,

*A beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.*

We have all heard this as the explanation of Freemasonry. However, does it tell us what our beloved Craft really is? Many eloquent individuals have attempted to address this topic and yet there always seems to be a need to delve further into it.

First, we need to explain what we are not. We are not a religion. However a belief in a deity is a necessity to join our ranks. We do not discuss religion at our meetings so that we do not disrupt the harmony of our Lodges.

We are not a political organization. Yes, we have had many politicians that have been members of our Craft. They have been examples of how to be a

Mason and at times, unfortunately, how not to be a Mason.

We are not a building. Our Fraternity was not founded on having a building, but on creating a building, whether it be the physical or spiritual. The founders of modern day Masonry did not have a regular place to hold their meetings. They would go from location to location, drawing their trestle boards and pavement as they arrived. Upon completion of the meeting they would remove all evidence of their being there. The human desire for a state of permanence has created the buildings that many believe represent Freemasonry in a community.

We are not the furniture, the sign out front or the statues that may adorn our building.

We are not the regalia that we wear. Though the regalia does indicate the position or rank that we have achieved in Masonry, it does not define Masonry.

...Let me take a quick aside here. A Master Mason is the highest goal that can be achieved in our beloved Craft. The aprons that are bestowed on us as we become Master Masons are the most cherished. All the other aprons after that are just a reward for service given to the Craft through being elected or appointed to certain offices. These aprons do not make anyone a "higher

status” Mason. Remember, Brethren, once we have completed our elected tasks, we too shall return to the ranks from whence we came. Neither does joining the concordant bodies of our Craft make us any better than those who choose not to join. ...

We are not the clothes, jewelry or vehicles we drive. We are not the insignias that are placed upon these things. They only indicate that we hold ourselves to a higher standard, and people will notice if we do not.

So, if we remove all these external images of what many believe define Freemasonry, then what is Freemasonry?

Let’s try to explain Freemasonry in a way that when communicating with our children, grandchildren or strangers they will understand what we are trying to accomplish. We are a group of men who have already the foundation of strong morals and a solid definition of right and wrong within us. We are seeking to make ourselves better by applying the teaching of our gentle Craft to our daily lives.

We know that when we enter a building we need to remove our hats. We are not ashamed to hold the door open for anyone, but most importantly our wives and daughters. We already believe that chivalry is a code to be practiced daily. Each and everyone one of us is trying to be better than we were yesterday and purposely apply the teaching of Masonry to our actions.

We believe that there is only one race, the human race. A person is not defined by their colour, religion or the sexual orientation. They are not revered for their position in life, the job they hold or the people they assemble with. We will support each person through his journey in life and we will not impose our personal progress upon anyone else. Each man’s journey is his own and we will cheer him on as he daily strives for improvement.

We quietly apply the lessons of charity to all who need it. We do this without seeking praise or acknowledgement of



*Freemasonry is fellowship and family. Such fellowship was apparent (top) at the Amalgamation of Mosaic Lodge No. 176 and Loyalty Lodge No. 197 on 26 November 2016. Calgary’s Mayor, Naheed Nenshi witnessed the family of Freemasonry at Freemasons’ Day, 24 June 2016. Here is the mayor with the young women of Job’s Daughters (middle) and the young men of DeMolay (bottom) — a great afternoon!*

our actions. We offer wisdom to those who seek it and guidance to those who need it. We are a kind and understanding group of men who have the best interest of humanity at heart.

We believe that by applying the lessons of Freemasonry to our daily lives we will become better men, workers, bosses, husbands and fathers. Above

all we will become better Masons by stepping together into light, improving our lot in life by being healthy, wealthy and wise and being the best leaders we can be. Masonry is a way of life, and if we practice the virtues so plainly hidden in our rituals we will be able to look in the mirror and see someone who has done all he can to be a better man.

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

**The Grand Lodge of Alberta, A.F. & A.M.**

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**THE ALBERTA**  
**FreeMason**

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

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**Deadline for copy** is the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month prior to the month of issue.

# Thoughts from Otto Klotz

*This German immigrant with a thick accent wrote marvelous prose*

The General Charge used in Canadian installation ceremonies is unique. With the obvious exception of William Preston and Thomas Smith Webb the writers of Masonic ritual are most often obscure. We are fortunate to know that Otto Klotz made this beautiful contribution to our Canadian and York rituals.

According to the late MWBro Robert Juthner<sup>1</sup>, Otto Klotz (1817–1892) was a German immigrant who arrived in 1837, was naturalized in 1844 and was very active in public service. He became a Notary Public (1846), a Justice of the Peace (1853) and was involved in civic service and education, serving as secretary of the school board from 1847–1892 and establishing the first free public school in Upper Canada in 1848.

Klotz was initiated in The Barton Lodge No. 11, Hamilton, on 10 June 1846 and immediately embraced the Craft. He was Chairman of the Committee on Benevolence (1863–1892), Chairman of a Special Committee to Revise the Constitution, which work was adopted in 1887, and was named to the Standing Committee on the Ritual in 1867 and again in 1884. This latter function saw Klotz compile rituals for consecrating, dedicating and constituting a Lodge and for installing and investing the officers that were published in 1876. But his most important contribution was the General Charge used in the installation. For his work he was awarded the honorary rank of Past Grand Master in 1885.

Despite his thick accent, Klotz was an accomplished speaker and writer. Several parts of the General Charge arise directly from his pen: “All this Masonry has done and is still doing...”; the description of the Lodge as “the temple of Peace, Harmony and Brotherly Love...”; “the object of meeting in the Lodge”; and “the ideal of a Freemason.” We know that many of the thoughts had been previously penned for a Toast to the Queen and the Craft proposed 27 December 1864 at a Ladies Night banquet in Galt, Ontario. His intent was to explain to the ladies “what the Masons are all about.” His talk covered aspects that are not in the Charge itself, but are

nevertheless of interest, viz.

*To the Ladies, therefore, I shall endeavour to explain what Freemasonry is — and in what the real secrets of the Craft consist. ...*

*The foundation of the spiritual building is “Brotherly love, Relief and Truth”; its structure is erected by the practice of the four cardinal virtues — Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice — its ornaments are composed of the chief attributes of a noble mind — Virtue, Honour and Mercy.*

*Its furniture is formed by Music, Poetry, Eloquence and it is crowned by the three theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity.*

*In the erection of such a building, we Masons are engaged to accomplish which, it will be admitted, that without good order, peace and harmony as observed in our lodges, so important an undertaking cannot be proceeded with.*

*The various Masonic symbols and emblems have all a moral meaning and tend to inculcate the practice of virtue and morality. Among the various emblems I may mention the Apron.*

*The Apron is used by operative masons to protect their garments from spot or stain but we as true and Accepted Masons use it for a more noble and more glorious purpose. From the purity of its colour, and from the innocence of the animal from which it is obtained, we are admonished to preserve that purity of life and conduct, which alone will enable us to appear before the Great Architect of the Universe, unspotted by vice and unstained by sin.*

*More ancient than the Golden Fleece,  
More dignified than the Star or Garter  
Is the badge of peace.*

*From the various circumstances that occurred at the building of the Temple of Solomon we draw moral influences. For instance, we learn from Holy Writ that during the whole time of the erection of the building there was not heard the sound of a hammer, an axe or any other tool of brass or iron, within the precincts of Mount Zion, to disturb the peaceful sanctity of that holy place.*

*The moral influence which we*



*This photo of MWBro Otto Klotz is from the Meg Dea Vail collection and is signed “Fraternally yours, Otto Klotz, 1886.”*

*draw from this prohibition is that our ancient and venerable institution does not depend for its permanency and support upon the principles of any coercive or compulsory nature, but is best cemented by the perfect unison and harmony of its constituent parts...*

At this point comes the section Klotz later used in the General Charge and to which he added the portrayal of the ideal Freemason “If you see a man...” He continued:

*The chief aim of Masonry being to conciliate and tame the passions, to establish among men the spirit of peace and concord which may render them impenetrable to the feelings of hatred and revenge, those bitter enemies which poison the best of our days — to inculcate sentiments of honour and probity which may render men more attentive to their respective duties — to teach a dutiful obedience to the orders of parents and governments — to support towards one another the tender relations of brothers, by which name Masons address each other, and, in a word, to form an admirable fraternity whose only aim is liberty, love and equality.*

*He who is in possession of these facilities to their fullest extent is in reality in possession of the real secrets of our Order and these secrets cannot be expressed or communicated*

<sup>1</sup> Juthner, Robert E. “Otto Klotz and the General Charge.” *Vox Lucis* Vol. 16: 5–18.

by words. They can only be felt and practised, and the means of acquiring them is only by study and practice. There is no royal road to geometry or any other science, neither is there a royal road to Masonry. It is therefore correctly said that the most a man, if he be a Mason, keeps this one secret, there is no risk of him being punished, expelled — he never tells.

If he talks in his sleep it is not about the secrets of Masonry. Bribe him in his wants, tempt him in his pleasures, threaten him or torture him, he is a martyr here — but he never tells. ...

I have now, Ladies, endeavoured to the best of my ability to explain what Freemasonry is and in what the Secrets of Masonry consist, and trust that you will have been able to understand me. You will thus perceive that Freemasonry is a benevolent institution, founded by virtuous men for the praiseworthy object of spreading the blessings of Morality and Science amongst all ranks and descriptions of

men; it promotes education, relieves wants and alleviates calamities; it is styled a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. Peace on earth is its object, Christian Morality its practice and the reward of virtue its end.

Klotz also expressed his thoughts on privacy of the Craft, likening it to the privacy of a family. However, we'll leave that for another time. Robert Juthner concluded his biographical look at this remarkable Mason:

...we met Most Worshipful Brother Otto Klotz whose love for his second language, for English, made him an outstanding speaker and ritualist. We shall forgive him the quoted 'tendency to favour long involved Teutonic sentences' of which any Brother who has ever committed the General Charge to memory is only too aware. Therein, however, lies much of the beauty and poetic impact of many of our rituals, notably the 'General Charge'. Thank you, Otto Klotz.



One of the very few pictures of Otto Klotz, this studio portrait is by James Esson, date unknown but between 1875 and 1892. James Esson was a photographer in Preston, Ontario practicing from 1875 to 1920. The photo is in the collection of the Waterloo Historical Society at the Kitchener Public Library.

VWBro Garth Cochran

## Part 2 of 4

# A Triad of Masonic Ideals — The Ideal of Quality

Excerpted from the Grand Oration of Matt S. Hughes, Grand Orator, Free & Accepted Masons of California, 1915

In his introduction to this series, Bro Hughes pointed out that Freemasonry cannot exist by trading on past glories nor be content with the idea that our best is written in dusty volumes. By the same token, no current Mason can do his best work "unless he is inspired and sustained by a vision of the future" without which "he lacks the soul of a true Mason." To that end, Bro Hughes identified three Masonic ideals that shape that vision.

Our first Masonic ideal is that of **quality** — of quality as related to membership. It is of first importance in every particular. One of the cookbooks of a past generation had a recipe for cooking rabbits. The first direction was: "Get your rabbit!" The recipe for a Masonic Lodge calls for the getting of men; and, not only so, but the getting of men of a certain quality. The paramount importance of this ideal may well be emphasized by calling attention to certain indubitable facts:

In the first place, Freemasonry is not an association of the average. It contemplates a body of picked men; it demands certain distinctive qualifications of those who seek its fellowship; it insists that those who

are admitted to its mysteries shall be worthy and well qualified; it inquires whether those who stand at its doors are in harmony with its honoured past, its accepted principles, and its defined purposes. You could not make a Masonic Lodge out of the first one hundred men you might pick up on the street. That is the reason our doors are so jealously guarded; that is the reason candidates must be vouched for by those who have themselves stood our tests; that is the reason those who join us must take such solemn obligations. No other human organization is intended to pay greater attention to its membership quality; no other organization depends more for its standing and influence in the community upon the quality of its membership.

A second reason for this emphasis on quality is that no institution is any better than the material out of which it is built. The weakness of many existing organizations is that their specifications call for marble while the material furnished for the building is only mud. If the Masonic Order stands out as one of the great institutions of our civilization; if it exercises an influence on the social order far beyond its mere

numerical strength; the only reason is that it is an association of superior men. In other words, the efficiency of Masonry depends upon the quality of those who are recognized as Masons. The point needs no labouring.

Still another reason for regarding this matter of quality as of paramount importance is that every other interest of the Masonic Order depends upon it. It belongs to our fraternity to guard its ancient landmarks. But what do men who lack Masonic character and Masonic spirit care for ancient landmarks? In the keeping of many men our priceless heritage is not an inspiration and an honour; it is a contrast and a reproach. It belongs to Masonry to exemplify certain great principles in life. But we need to remember that principles are only safe in the keeping of men of principle. That is a lesson writ large on the pages of our history. It belongs to Masonry to further certain great purposes. Those purposes are unselfish and humanitarian. I am not mistaken when I say that the true Mason will ask: "What can I do?" The spurious Mason will always be asking: "What can I get?"

The ties of Brotherhood are so close

in Masonry that every opportunity and inducement is offered to the man of mercenary spirit who would prostitute it to personal uses. The result is that nearly every Lodge has those who are continually calling upon their Brethren to turn their grindstones. There are those who capitalize their membership for business purposes; there are those who capitalize their Masonic affiliations for political ends. Such persons are the panhandlers of Masonry. Whenever public-spirited citizens in a community begin to shake their heads and say it will be hard to defeat an office-holding barnacle because of his Fraternal support, it is high time for those who love the Order to sit up and begin to take notice. Under such circumstances the hallmark of excellence is being erased from the Lodge door.

It is also to be noted, in this connection, that there are certain tendencies of our times, which affect the whole social order. They are atmospheric in their prevalence and no one of us is wholly immune from their influence. One of the most striking examples of such a tendency may be found in what may be termed the great American fallacy of numbers. We are everywhere suffering from a craze for numerical strength. We gloat over the census returns once in ten years when they announce our growing millions. The newspapers of every little town beat the tom-tom and our metropolitan dailies sound the new gag over an increase of population. A distinguished ex-president of the United States shows his teeth against race suicide, as if what

we need above all things is numbers. Even our churches are tainted. If one of the great denominations shows a falling off in the usual rate of increase for a single year, at once there is heard the sound of lamentation like unto the chant of resurrected Jeremiahs. Ministers are sometimes rated by their ability to draw crowds, without any reference to the methods by which they draw them, or what they do with them after they get them.

Now all this sort of thing is simply a species of lunacy. Anyone with sufficient intelligence to raise an umbrella under proper conditions ought to know that there is not a State in the Republic that could not lose a certain part of its population to its tremendous advantage. In fact, we pay enormous sums of money for the operation of cumbrous machinery for the sole purpose of getting rid, temporarily or permanently, of some units of our population that are counted by the census-taker. There is not a church in this country, in all probability that would not be better off by reason of a few first-class funerals. And there are Masonic Lodges, not a few, whose quality would be vastly improved, if instead of preparing classes to get in, they could devote some time to preparing a class or two to get out. We Americans, in state, church, and in fraternal orders, need quick recovery from the insanity of numbers.

This whole tendency is against the Masonic ideal of quality. One does not need to seek afar the symptoms of this common craze in Masonic Lodges. Whenever the Master of a

Lodge, in answer to your inquiry as to "the progress of the work," tells you with pride of the phenomenal number of candidates received under his administration you will find yourself face to face with a moon-struck brother. And some of our Fraters have suffered such violent attacks that one feels as if he ought to ask for a writ of *de lunatico inquirendo*. Another acute symptom of the distemper is found in connection with the work of the Lodge, It comes to be regarded as nothing better than a degree factory. Members get the idea there is nothing doing unless there are degrees to be conferred. The good old call, hallowed by the years, for anything for the good of the Order, is not the signal for suggestions, motions, discussions and appointment of committees. The Lodges that put their whole emphasis on the work of initiation are those complaining of lack of attendance and getting up kitchen revivals to warm up the Brethren of the Craft.

The whole matter, with all its symptoms and all its effects, goes back in the last analysis to the primary problem of quality. We need to be more careful in the choice of material and we need more care for the material after it has been chosen. Of a certain sort of members it may be said, as of fleas and boils, the more you have of them the worse off you are. Better a small Lodge of quality than a great aggregation whose Masonry has been largely furnished by the jeweler. Increasingly our emphasis should be placed on the matter of quality.

*Next, in part three, Brother Hughes discusses **The Ideal of Knowledge.***

