



## *Inaugural Address*

# Embracing the Future and Meeting its Challenges — We Are a Progressive Science

First, thank you to the Brethren who remained to witness the Installation, including the members of my Lodge, Lodge Renfrew No. 134; you honour the newly installed and invested officers. Secondly, thank you MWBro Chris Batty and your team for a memorable Installation Ceremony. MWBro Brian Shimmons, thank you for placing me in the East; I guess we are now even.

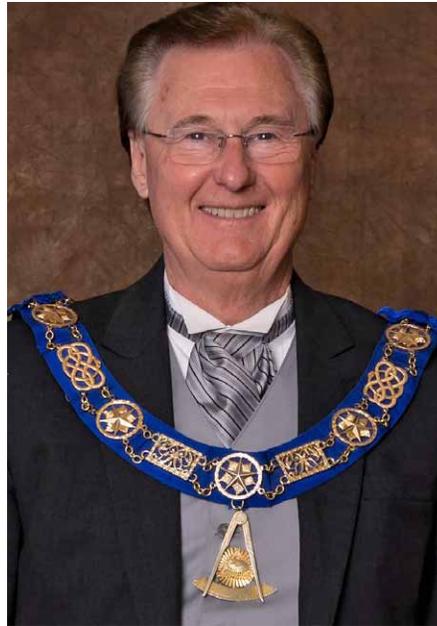
A thank you to all who have committed to serve our Fraternity in 2017–2018. We will work hard to earn the trust of the Brethren. While we wish to acknowledge the officers, we also want to acknowledge those overlooked Brethren who serve on our Board and Committees. Thank you for your dedication.

Finally, a special thanks to all who came from so far, including my good friend RWBro Warren Gray, who has travelled from Portland, Oregon, to be here.

I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge my uncle, MWBro Albert Dutton, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Saskatchewan 1984–85, for it was he, on passing through Calgary after attending the Banff Spring Workshop, who bluntly told me to stop procrastinating and join Freemasonry. Thank you Uncle Albert.

It is fitting to begin this journey as Grand Master in Red Deer, my home during my adolescent years, and it is also bizarre to be in a hotel next to Gasoline Alley, which becomes Gaetz Avenue if you follow it straight into town. It was on Gaetz Avenue that I was run over by a taxi at the age of 4 years — no foreboding of things to come, I trust. A repeat performance took place the following year at the bottom of a sleigh hill, which is now the location of the north end of the Red Deer Hospital. This time my mother didn't bother to take me to the hospital, thank goodness. I didn't appreciate the nurses pulling down my pants.

This Masonic year marks the 300<sup>th</sup> year of the founding of the United Grand



**MWBro Gordon Berard  
Grand Master of Alberta  
2017–2018**

Lodge of England and the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of our nation. We are still here, which is a testament to the Craft's resilience, but it is time to "reboot" and move forward. We cannot ignore the world around us and we need to adapt. Change must be embraced rather than ignored. Accept it or be run over and hope for the best. I have some experience in this area.

WBro James Free and VWBro Leam Weir are to be commended for leading the planning for our 24 June 2017 Masonic Day in Edmonton and Calgary. The Province has declared that date to be Alberta Masonic Day.

We need to be cognizant of the changes in society, which means adapting to attract members with different needs and priorities than found in the past. We need to use technological advances to streamline our operation, to

improve communication and to improve our officer training. Our approval processes are outdated, misunderstood and frustrate our membership, creating the impression they are being ignored, and that Grand Lodge is insensitive to their needs. This negative impression must be dispelled through the implementation of improved business practices.

First, consider societal changes. Some predict machines will take half of all current jobs, creating more leisure time. In addition, 2/3 of all occupations are expected to grow. Women will dominate — this includes nursing, accounting, child care and food preparation. Salaries will continue to flatten in real terms; job reductions, job retraining and further global competition will be the norm. Artificial intelligence is a blessing and a curse. In the US, 20–25 per cent of all malls are forecast to disappear over the next five years, to some extent due to on-line shopping. Our oil industry is facing some of these changes as we speak.

This is a picture of a future where, ironically, males may have more leisure time, focused more on leaving a better world for their children, searching for self worth, not necessarily being the prime bread winner, and, to top it off, needing to adjust to less disposable income. The good news is that Freemasonry offers an outlet, if we can adjust and meet the need of this demographic. After all, we offer fellowship, leadership training, public speaking skills, education, improved self-confidence and support to our communities. And yes, we mustn't forget our prime goal of self-improvement.

To make a lasting impression on new members we need to take pride in performing our ritual. No matter what happens next, this is the moment they never forget. The state of our buildings also leaves a lasting impression; our infrastructure is in such a state we are

looking for new lodge accommodations in even our major urban centers. We have neglected too long the need to upgrade.

To address our processes and communication tools we have established a Vision Team to look at our operation from top down. Our Board and Committees are large and unwieldy, giving the illusion that results improve with numbers. The experts will tell you the reverse is true. Young people use "Apps" (The Grand Lodges of Manitoba and Montana are among others who already do so) and so we should do the same to improve communication. Millennials aren't interested in web pages. Millennials don't write checks, they use online tools to pay bills. Lodges can now even pay their per capita to Grand Lodge through email transfer.

Our new Grand Lodge Data Base should reduce the work of our Lodge

Secretaries, DDGMs, and the Grand Lodge Office as well. We need to use on-line tools to train Lodge officers rather than face to face meetings a few times a year. Officers can be trained on computers in their own homes, the way it is being done in the school system. Our DDGMs making official visits have but a short time to assess the condition of their Lodges. Time and again we see where such a cursory assessment isn't sufficient to get a true picture of Lodge health. We need to use the Grand Lodge Data Base to gather numerical information and better use the DDGM's time to assess the Lodge leadership and quality of work.

I will mention in passing our Constitution and Regulations, which is in the process of being updated. Much work remains to correct and improve this "tome." Hardly a Board or Committee meeting goes by wherein we don't have

to refer to the C&R to keep from slipping. Imagine what it means to the regular member if even the so-called "informed" cannot function without constantly referring to the C&R. The online version is still being updated, so you can imagine the state of the written version. Why we don't just give everyone a thumb drive and just keep a few bound copies is a good question.

I see a busy year ahead, starting with the search to find a new modern home for the Grand Lodge of Alberta, and proposed changes to the operation of Grand Lodge, which will be presented to you for your approval.

You may have noted my message is more about what the leadership should do, rather than you, the members. This, you may find refreshing.

Thank you, and may the Supreme Architect guide us in our endeavours.

## Biography

# MWBro Gordon Berard Grand Master of Alberta — 2017-2018

Gordon was born in Windsor, Ontario, of parents raised on homesteads near Hazlet, Saskatchewan. His family returned to the farm months after he was born and subsequently relocated to Red Deer, Alberta. Upon his father's re-enlistment in the Royal Canadian Air Force, he completed high school in Quebec and France. His post-secondary education was completed at the Universities of Manitoba and Alberta. He has a BSc and PhD in Mechanical Engineering and is a life member of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta, as well as a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

Gordon was raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason in 1984 in Lodge Renfrew No. 134 and served as its Worshipful Master in 1993. He was Junior Grand Deacon, 2009-10 and

elected Junior Grand Warden in 2014.

He is a member of the Scottish Rite and the York Rite, serving in the "East" in the Lodge of Perfection, Royal Arch, Cryptic Rite and Preceptory. Gordon is a 33<sup>rd</sup> Degree Scottish Rite Mason and recipient of the York Rite College Purple Cross. Membership in invitational Orders include the Red Cross of Constantine, the Royal Order of Scotland and Knights of York Cross of Honour.

Gordon is a member of Shriner's International and served as Potentate of Al Azhar Shriners in 2008. He subsequently served on the Board of the Mexico City Shrine Hospital and is an emeritus member of the Colorado Corporation (Shrine Children's Hospitals).

He is a former Vice President of the Calgary Scottish Rite Learning Centre, served on the Board of the Fort Calgary Preservation Society and a Past Presi-

dent of the Chinook Lions Club.

His work experience includes 24-year employment with Nova Corporation in various positions including Vice President, Nova Gas International, and after retirement from Nova, a partner in AmeriCompass, providing consulting services in Mexico.

Other work experience includes secondment from Nova Corp. to the Prime Minister's Executive Exchange Program (Business/Government Executive Exchange Program) as Director General, Major Projects, Federal Dept. of Western Economic Diversification; Defence Scientific Service Officer with the Defence Research Board, Dept. of National Defence; and Research Associate and Part Time Sessional Lecturer at the University of Calgary.

Gordon became a widower in 2002 with the passing of his wife Peggy. He has two children from his marriage to Peggy and is now married to Martha, with two children from her previous marriage. Martha and Gordon live on an acreage in Springbank, west of Calgary.

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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# Reflections on My Three Degrees — Part I

Bro Chris Sitter, Bow River Lodge No. 1

*Bow River Lodge (Canadian Rite) asks new members to present their "Reflections" on their three Degrees within one to two months after each Degree. They read the ceremony and related mentoring materials and are asked to discuss several points arising from the ceremony's lectures and lessons which stood out for them and will remain in their minds.*

These reflections are about the Master Mason degree. However, when I look at and reflect on this degree, I also see the Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft degrees; with all three, a story is laid out to help guide and influence my life, studies and purpose, not only as a Mason, but also as a man. The more I considered, the more I returned to past degrees, and therefore felt that for my reflections I had to go over things that stood out over the course of the past two years. The Master Mason Degree is not a standalone degree, nor are my reflections.

As we know, the three degrees represent various parts and times of our life.

The **First Degree (Entered Apprentice)** represents youth, with the working tools being the **24-inch gauge, common gavel** and **chisel**. We learn in this degree the importance of keeping one's word, following truth and practicing charity — this last lesson being taught in the North East corner. In this degree we are encouraged to study and learn about ourselves.

The **24-inch gauge** helps us regulate our time. I believe this is one of the most valuable symbolic lessons we have in life. There is no way for us to trade for it, or work more for it. It is not something that we can simply add to, or extend our day with. If we don't watch how we spend our time, it can be easily lost and wasted.

We are told that our time should be spent between service to God, work, sleep and refreshment. The last three may seem very easy and self-explanatory. However, I had to dig a little to understand how I was to spend eight hours in service to God, and what this actually meant. While doing some reading, I realized that service to God can be anything that is pleasing to the Almighty. If you look further into that, anything that you do in order to improve yourself as a person will be a service to both yourself, the people around you and, in turn, the Great Architect of the Universe. So, spending this time can be anything from conversing with someone, learning, studying, laughing with friends, helping your Brother or donating your time. Regardless of what it is, make sure that you are using your

time wisely.

I urge you to occasionally reflect, and 'check in' with yourself. Ask yourself if you are **present in the moment**, and using your time wisely and purposefully when you spend it with your friends and family, or are you focusing on what you need to do next or the email you need to respond to. Are you 'in the moment' when talking with your spouse or are you still thinking of work or meetings?

Not learning how to focus your time, in turn, will put your life out of balance. The 24-inch gauge is the perfect representation of balance. The gauge has three equal sections and, when folded, will create a triangle showing perfect support and balance, with a base supporting two sides leaning against each other to provide strength.

The number 'three' is seen in many symbols of balance, for example, past, present and future in relation to time, or mind, body and spirit in relation to self. Balance in life is extremely important, as without it, focus is lost and life becomes hectic and chaotic.

We see two pillars that are mentioned throughout our lectures; they balance each other on the entrance to the Temple. And we know that together they denote stability, so internal balance=stability, and if we have no balance in life we definitely will find no stability. Balance is taught in most religions — for example Yin and Yang or heaven and earth — and is seen across the globe. It is also represented in many things within our Lodge, for example Senior/Junior Warden, sun/moon, black/white tiles and the two pillars.

The 24-inch gauge is the first working tool, as it should be, because we need it more than ever in this day and age to learn how to control and govern our time.

The **common gavel** and the **chisel** are tools that are, in my opinion, to be used together in creating a perfect ashlar or fine-tuning our lives. The common gavel is used to chip away at larger and rougher aspects of the ashlar. In a way it can be said that the gavel can also be related to *choice*. It is a tool we chose to use in order to refine us as men and keep all negative thoughts and actions in check. This, in essence, is a tool of choice. Life

is comprised of choices, and our actions are the driving force for the gavel. We use this to help smooth out vices and chip away at rough edges. These could relate to various personality traits, your thoughts and your judgements. We can use the gavel to choose how we are going to act and live all aspects of our life. For example, do we choose to be truthful or deceptive? Humble or prideful? Will we be honest or will we cheat? These are all choices we, as humans, must make, and, as we use the imagery of the gavel to help remove these temptations, we create a more just and upright *building* or person. The gavel can be seen as will power and a tool we use to power our choices.

Using the chisel, like the gavel, is a way to smooth the rough edges of the ashlar to create a better man. As the gavel can help to take off large rough sections, the chisel is used to fine tune the stone and create perfect edges. This is done through knowledge, studying and learning. By using education and studies, we can refine ourselves to establish a solid foundation which others can trust, lean on, and receive support from.

The use of knowledge is, of course, expressed to us through all degrees, with focus coming in the Second Degree when we discuss the importance of studying the seven liberal arts and sciences. Therefore both the gavel and chisel are tools used together in creating that perfect ashlar and a just, upright man.

*Next month, Bro Sitter will discuss the Second Degree.*

## Thoughts for Freemasons

The following quotations ought to provide food for thought for Freemasons

Sign over a medical college entrance.

*Enter by this gateway and seek the way of honor, the light of truth, the will to work for men.*

A.E. Alderman.

*Of all the characters that apply to honorable men, not one is so highly prized as that of character.*

Henry Clay

*To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.*

Attributed to Theodore Roosevelt.

# 2017 Conference of Grand Secretaries of North America

RWBro Bill Kostenuk, Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Alberta

The Conference of Grand Masters and Grand Secretaries was held in Omaha, Nebraska, beginning on Sunday, 19 February 2017 with the Flag Presentation and the introduction of the new Grand Secretaries by the President RWBro Reid Gardiner of Montana. These were followed by the keynote address by WBro Daniel Gardiner, Assistant Grand Secretary of Montana, “Our Peculiar System of Morality” in which he discussed in depth our basic principles and landmarks in light of the 1717 revival.

I would like to quote from his conclusion, which I think summarizes the entire paper very well.

*Freemasonry whithersoever dispersed around the world has spent 300 years urging us all to break free from our molds, and to push the envelope; in short, she has asked us to do the most dangerous thing of all: associate with other good men. There is yet work to do. There are other good men who you will be asked to reflect on and reconsider as a Mason, if you wish to become a better man yourself. My Brothers,*

*I can think of no better calling. And, I can think of no better way to end this address, than with a quote from Marcus Aurelius, a Stoic philosopher and one of the later — and greater — Roman Emperors, who said, “Waste no more time arguing about what a good man should be. Be one.”*

We were then introduced to a Masonic Leadership Training Manual from the Grand Lodge of Florida, presented by Bro Jorge Aladro. This is an extremely comprehensive tool for Lodge officers and secretaries. Some 257 pages in length, the Manual was made available to all participants of the Conference. It covers the span of the duties and responsibilities of Lodge officers (including a variety of sample letters). This was followed by a panel discussion on Masonic Education.

One striking point from the Florida mentor guide was that 42 per cent of their candidates are under 25 years old — if we are not ready for them, we will lose them. This challenge was further identified by Dad Bill Sardone when talking about the DeMolay opportunity,

who pointed out that the United States has 25,000 DeMolay members. These members can edit their own data in their membership app, as well as access their ritual on another app on their smartphones.

There were also breakout sessions in the afternoon with Grand Lodge Officers. I attended “Discovering Best Practices,” which included a personality profile test called “True Colors,” available online. It proved to be quite accurate. The presenter, Jack Beck, also talked about “mentor disconnect” — we are *not always a good fit* with our candidates.

“Time and Services Awards” proved enlightening for me. I did not realize that there was so much potential in this area to create interest and excitement at the Lodge level.

The Masonic Renewal Committee now has an online library at [www.MasonicRenewal.org](http://www.MasonicRenewal.org). Downloads are available there, including a Leaders Resource Handbook.

The President for 2018 is MWBro Terence Shand, from the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario.

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## Fire!

### Decoding the beloved tradition of the Masonic toast

Patrick C. Craddock, *California Freemason*, March/April 2017

If one were to exclaim “Fire!” during a Lodge event today, it would likely be cause for alarm rather than celebration. But “Masonic fire” is the traditional name for Masonic toasts, which came to be savoured from an obscure drinking vessel known as a “firing glass” or “firing cannon.”

It is a tradition for Masons to share meals together following degrees, stated meetings or celebrations — one that members of the Craft have enjoyed, as they say, “since time immemorial.” But, the form and function of this Masonic breaking of bread has changed over the course of centuries and varies from county to country. In fact, in the United States, the traditional form of a Masonic dinner, or “Festive Board,” along with its toasts, has all but died out — with notably few exceptions.

What does this have to do with firing and cannons? Everything! But first, a little history.

The Grand Lodge of England, founded in 1717, was established at

the beginning of the Georgian Period (1714 to 1830), when it was customary for the military to fire a volley honouring a person of distinction. In June 1741, the *Dublin News Letter* reported an open-air celebration at Coleraine, which was attended by the mayor and army officers. Toasts were dedicated to the king and royal family, and it is noted that “...at each toast there was a volley from the Army.”

Our ancient Brothers’ Festive Boards were private affairs, not conducive to actually firing guns, and so the glasses used to mimic their sound became known as “firing glasses” or “firing cannons.” The practice of rapping glasses upon the dinner table became the preferred form of acclamation to honour a toast. The earliest glasses used in this tradition, known as “thumping” or “hammering glasses,” were designed to withstand the shock of being brought down heavily upon the table. When glasses struck the table, they emitted a loud and sharp report, quite similar

to the crack of a rifle shot.

Distinctive rituals were developed accordingly. Filling the glasses with wine was known as “charging the cannons with powder.” Once each glass was filled, the Lodge Master would command, “Present arms. Take aim. FIRE!” A practiced effort would be made for everyone to drink simultaneously and then bring their glasses down hard upon the table in an attempt to create the sound of rifle fire. This would be followed by a clapping of hands, similar to our current public display of grand honours.

It is important to remember that the convivial and customary practice of toasting became a part of Masonic culture because it was practiced in the broader society at the time of the fraternity’s founding. There is no Masonic symbolism or hidden, esoteric meaning in the description or actions associated with “Masonic fire.”

#### Reviving a lost tradition

In some parts of the world, ceremonial Masonic toasting has changed little over the past 300 years, yet in others — most US jurisdictions among them

— it has been nearly forgotten or was never practiced. But now, Brothers wishing to reconnect to the practices of our ancient Brethren are revitalizing this tradition.

To begin, all that is needed are “firing glasses,” jovial and eager Brethren, a proper dinner and a Director of Ceremonies. And, of course, an appropriate amount of wine (usually red) for dinner and toasts!

The first toast takes place after the meal is complete. Before then, the Master may request for the Director of Ceremonies to call for the “taking of wine” to acknowledge special guests, such as Lodge officers, visitors, a new initiate, etc. These honours are not toasts and only require the recognized Brother to respond by standing and taking wine in a manner of mutual respect.

Once dinner is complete, toasts can begin. In Britain, traditional Masonic toasts honour the Queen, Grand Master, Grand Lodge, Provincial Grand Master, Provincial Grand Lodge, Lodge Master, initiates and guests, followed by the Tyler’s toast. In the United States, toasts typically honour the Office of President of the United States, the founding fathers of our nation and the Craft, the Holy Saints John, Grand Master, Grand Lodge, Worshipful Master and visitors, followed by the Tyler’s toast.

To begin each toast, the Director of Ceremonies stands and announces the toast; for example, “Brothers, please rise and join me in a toast to Most Worshipful Brother John Heisner, the Grand Master!” Silently, each Brother stands, holding a charged firing glass judiciously to his front. Then, the Brothers raise their glasses and reply, in unison, “The Grand Master!” They drain their glasses and again, in unison, bring the glasses down hard upon the table, creating the “Masonic fire.” If the recipient of the toast is present, etiquette dictates that he remain seated rather than drinking to his

own health. In some jurisdictions, like England, Scotland, and Wales, firing the glass is often followed by a series of hand gestures (pointing and clapping) of which the Director of Ceremonies instructs the proper form.

This basic form and function of the toasting and firing tradition is just an introduction. Lodge customs follow their own pattern—and must be allowed to do so. Each Lodge may have different suggestions for toasting and firing, and there should never be any criticism of the manner in which each Lodge conducts its Festive Board or the toasts it chooses to give. As ever, each Lodge should observe its own customs and traditions, and most importantly await instruction from its ever-present Director of Ceremonies.

#### **A much more elaborate toast, used by Prometheus Lodge No. 851, Grand Lodge of California**

*Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance—  
These are the seals of that most firm assurance  
Which bars the pit over Destruction’s strength;  
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity.*

*To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;  
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;  
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;  
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates  
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;  
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;  
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be  
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;  
This is alone Life; Joy, Empire, and Victory!  
Brethren, to Prometheus Lodge!*

*(Response,) To Prometheus Lodge!*

## **Open House — Freemasons’ Hall, Calgary**

Freemasons’ Hall hosted its annual Open House on 24 June. It was well attended by Concordant Bodies representatives and visitors from the community. The event — this year helping to celebrate three hundred years of Freemasonry — was organized by WBro James Free, Bro Ilya Raykhlin and Viola Teuling. Mayor Naheed Nenshi was in attendance and presented his proclamation for Freemasons’ Day in Calgary. Justice Minister Kathleen Ganley was also an honoured visitor. She was shown through the building by RWBro Glenn McConnell.



*(Above) Bro Ilya Raykhlin receives a proclamation from His Worship, Mayor Naheed Nenshi. (Left) Justice Minister, The Honourable Kathleen Ganley and RWBro Glenn McConnell.*

## Bow River Lodge — Stampede Meeting

Bow River Lodge No. 1 held its annual Stampede Lodge dinner and meeting on 12 July. The Lodge was opened to receive RWBros Kenn Culbertson, Terry Murray and Reg Karbonik plus other Masonic visitors. The Lodge room was then opened to families, friends and guests to hear the special guest speaker, Worthy Grand Matron of the Order of the Eastern Star, Deb Buxton (right). Deb discussed the Order's activities and enlightened the audience regarding extensive fund raising activities carried out province-wide. There has been one million dollars raised and donated to innumerable charities over the past five years.

RWBro Murray Pay performed a great White Hat ceremony for the "out-of-towners."



## 70-Year Bar Presentation



On 4 June 2017, VWBro Bob McRae, Secretary-Treasurer of St. George's Lodge No. 169 in Elk Point, presented a 70-Year Bar and framed certificate to VWBro Ray Reiersen in his home — Bro Ray did not leave his home often and did not feel up to attending a meeting. VWBro McRae was accompanied by Bro Jean Garon (Senior Warden of the Lodge) and RWBro Jim Fadden (DDGM-Elect) for the presentation, with Mrs. Reiersen witnessing. Congratulatory letters from the Grand Master and the Lodge's Worshipful Master were also given to Bro Ray. Congratulations Ray!

