



Report of the Masonic Medal of Merit Committee

Bro Calvin D Shaver, PGM, Chairman

On this, the completion of the 2016–2017 Masonic year for this Grand Jurisdiction, it is with much pleasure that I present this report on behalf of the Masonic Medal of Merit Committee.

This Annual Communication again brings to us the opportunity to recognize worthy Brethren who have not been an installed Worshipful Master and exemplify the General Charge in every way — within their community, the walls of their Lodge and wherever their daily lives take them. From the first recipients in 1993 through to the current year, this Jurisdiction has recognized 89 worthy recipients from 51 different Lodges within all 14 Districts with the Masonic Medal of Merit.

Brethren, you hear me talk about the Masonic Medal of Merit year after year, urging you to keep an eye open for those deserving Brethren in your Lodge

and/or District. This can never stop, as there are many other individuals who deserve to be recognized. Keep the true philosophy, principles and certainly those characteristics portrayed in the General Charge front and center in your never-ending search.

To all the Committee members, I again extend my sincere thanks and appreciation for your zeal and assiduity, which contributes towards achieving the objectives of this rewarding and gratifying Grand Lodge Committee. Not wanting to single out certain members over the others, however, I especially want to recognize those efforts of Bro Bill Graves and Bro John Pelletier. Unfortunately, these were the last two remaining members from the original Grand Master's Special Committee in 1991 that was charged to consider the merits of creating a form of recogni-

tion for Brethren in this Jurisdiction. Due to health reasons, Bill has had to step down and John recently moved to Ecuador, but until this year they continued to serve on this Committee with dedication. Again, thanks to all the Committee members, whose hard work and enthusiasm continue to make the position of Chairman a breeze.

Brethren, remember your Committee remains ready, willing and able to work on your behalf to recognize those Brethren who meet the requirements for the Masonic Medal of Merit. If any individual, Lodge or District requires information, please do not hesitate to contact myself and arrangements will be made for a member of the Committee to attend a meeting to assist in any discussions or during the special recognition of a recipient at the Lodge level.

Bro Michael Andrew Loraas

Bro Michael Andrew Loraas was initiated into Freemasonry in Ivanhoe Lodge No. 142 on 19 September 2013, passed to the degree of a Fellowcraft on 20 February 2014 and raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason on 20 March 2014.

He is a regular attendee at Lodge and District meetings and at functions, and willingly assists in whatever the Lodge requires, such as innovative ideas to renew interest of the members, repairing the VOSL and helping with the Lodge widows christmas cake program and casual social functions. As an active participant in degrees, he assists with the coaching of candidates. He is also heavily involved with the Job's Daughters and recently joined the Al Shamal Shrine.

Bro Loraas has been married to Denise for 19 years and they have two children and two dogs. Bro Loraas not only demonstrates his personal values through his everyday life in guiding his children and aiding them in becoming functional members of their community, but also in always looking for



See **Bro Loraas**, page 2.

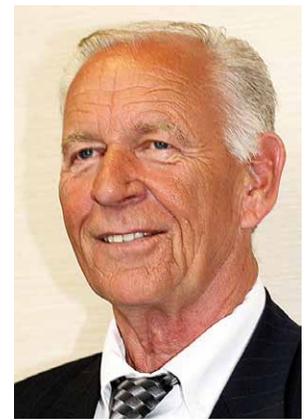
Bro Donald Allan Powers

Bro Donald Allan Powers was initiated into Freemasonry in Redwood Lodge No. 193 on 19 September 1990, passed to the degree of a Fellowcraft on 17 October 1990 and raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason on 16 January 1991. He subsequently affiliated to Wetaskiwin Lodge No. 15 when his son was initiated. Bro Powers is active with the Al Shamal Shriners Provo Corps. In addition, he is an active member of the Alberta Widows Sons Riding Association, and is currently VP of Badlands Chapter and VP of Alberta Grand Chapter.

Don has always been a strong mentor for floor work, stemming from his first career with the RCN as a Naval MP. He assists Redwood Lodge on their Audit Committee and willingly assists the JW in many ways. Bro Powers is currently serving as Tyler at Redwood. He is a frequent ambassador to Lodges in the Edmonton area and a contributor to various fund raising efforts undertaken by the Lodge.

Don has been married to Ruth (Cherot) for fifteen years

See **Bro Powers**, page 2.



Bro Loraas, from page 1.

ways to improve himself as a member of society by learning and pushing himself to be the best person he can be. He is very proud of his son Thomas, who received the DeMolay Life Saving Award and The St. John Ambulance "150 Heroes" Life Saving Award. He is equally proud of his daughter Andi, who is currently Junior Miss Alberta Job's Daughter, in which they have been active for four years.

He served in the Royal Canadian Navy for 20 years, attaining the rank of MCpl as Finance Clerk and received the Canadian Decoration. Subsequently he started his own construction company, which he has since sold. Bro Loraas was a member of the Royal Canadian Legion for six years.

Here is a quote from the nominators:

He is a great friend, has an infectious laugh that will have anyone around him in good spirits — a kind-hearted and respectable man who enthusiastically jumps at any opportunity to help someone in need.

Bro Powers, from page 1.

and together they have four boys. Don is also "Super Grandfather" to nine grandchildren, all of whom affectionately call him "Grumpy."

As noted above, his first career was with the RCN, where

he served three years. After retiring, he entered into a career as a long-haul truck driver, travelling throughout much of North America. After retiring from driving, he entered into fleet operations and management until starting up his own oilfield service company, which specialized in leak detection and sealing.

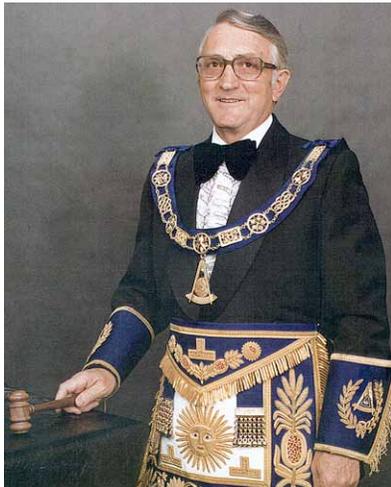
Bro Powers was an active sports coach and referee with amateur hockey, baseball, Karate and Taekwondo, as well as being a competitive shooter and firearms coach. He is also active in the Construction industry as a safety consultant.

Of special note is the assistance provided to a Brother and his family. After establishing a close bond with VWBro Tim Wrightman through their mutual love of cars, motorcycles, dogs and things Masonic, in 2016 he was called one evening for a "rescue." VWBro Wrightman had suffered a mechanical breakdown and while collecting him and his motorcycle, he noted something was seriously wrong and immediately conveyed him to the U of A Hospital. Subsequently VWBro Wrightman was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer and required permanent hospitalization. Along with his wife, Bro Powers, in association with his Masonic Brothers, undertook the steps to care for VWBro Wrightman's acreage and transportation of family members. To this day, following the death of VWBro Wrightman, Bro Powers and several other Masonic Brothers continue to assist the family in any way necessary.

Bob Costigan's Legacy

On 30 September, at the Al Azhar Shrine Centre in Calgary, two presentations were made by Worshipful Brother Don Whalen, Past Master of Corinthian Lodge No. 22, GRA A.F. & A.M. Don is the son-in-law of the late Bob and Lois Costigan. First, he presented a significant donation to the Grand Master, Most Worshipful Brother Gordon Berard, who received it on behalf of the Masonic Higher Education Bursary Fund.

Then he presented a donation in the same amount to Past Grand Master Most Worshipful Brother Brian Shimmons who received it on behalf of the Masonic Foundation of Alberta. Both charities as represented gratefully acknowledged the most generous contributions from the Costigan Estate. The Costigan legacy will continue for many years to come in our Masonic Jurisdiction.



MWBro Bob Costigan 1923–2008

Masonic Tour to Israel Webinar Presentation

21–30 October 2018

Join Murray Pay 21–30 October 2018 for a live webinar and learn about the Masonic Tour to Israel, as well as the add-on tour to Petra, Jordan. Register now to join the webinar conducted by Goway Travel by following the link information — register.gotowebinar.com/register/7201325459112862209 Click on the link and follow the steps. Just fill in your name and details, hit register.

You will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. On the day of the webinar click the link and join the presentation. Ask questions and get a live response. Presentation date



The 350-metre long Templars' Tunnel at Acre connected the fortress to the port.

and time is **16 November 2017, 18 00 h (6:00 PM) MST**. For more information contact RWBro Murray Pay, 403-286-8557; email murraypay43@gmail.com.

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“Free” vs “Freeborn”

RWBro Glenn McConnell, Bow River Lodge No. 1, June, 2017

Sherwood Lodge No. 183 deserves credit for having requested the Alberta Grand Lodge Committee On The Work to review use of the word “freeborn” (and, presumably, “free by birth”—both terms being used in Alberta ritual and the Petition For Initiation).

The committee’s statement — in the Preliminary Report, 112th Annual Communication — that “There is no actual proof when the masonic ritual was written, [that] the intent was to mean to be born free from slavery...” is correct. However, we note in Bernard Jones:

*... the Old Charges were written in full consciousness of the existence of feudal serfdom. Our ritual borrowed from those Old Charges, and all through the century in which the borrowing took place the air simply echoed with discussions of the slavery question, for although feudal serfdom had long been left behind, there were other serfdoms everywhere.*¹

And Jones states elsewhere:

It is quite idle to ignore the fact that the freedom which most of our Brethren in the lodges associate with the word freemasonry’ is the physical

*freedom denied to the slave or serf... Everybody knows that until late in the eighteenth century human slavery was a very real and ugly thing which had existed from ancient days, and was known throughout the world.*²

Slavery was abolished in England in 1772, and the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) acknowledged the event in 1845 by changing “freeborn” to “free.”³ Some Masonic writers regarded the change to be contrary to the Order’s landmarks — which were derived from the Old Charges. But, as Jones said in 1950, “Fortunately the question no longer arises.”⁴

We also note Christopher Haffner’s argument that the Old Charges were “exhortations,” not regulations,⁵ and many of them were not adopted into Freemasonry. It would follow that there is no obligation to adopt or retain “freeborn.”

In 1855, the Grand Lodge of Canada (GLC) adopted the UGLE Constitution “mutatis mutandis” (the necessary changes having been made) including the changeover to “free.” Although the GLC ritual reverted back to use of the “free by birth” phrase in 1856, the ritual

wording issue had been acknowledged.

The Committee On The Work also raised the point that the term “freeborn” is allegorical and philosophical, thereby implying a disconnect between our choice of ritual language and the historical realities of slavery, and the dramatic social, political and economic changes abolition brought about. To the extent that “freeborn” is a philosophical term, it is, in fact, an argument for using only the term “free.”

Retention of “freeborn” and “free by birth” in Masonic ritual leaves an impression that Freemasons are insensitive to an important modern social convention. The Alberta Grand Lodge was among the last in Canada to offer recognition to Prince Hall Freemasons in Ontario. We should try not to be last in dealing with the “freeborn” issue.

¹ Bernard Jones, *Freemasons’ Guide and Compendium*, London: George W. Harrap & Company Ltd., 1963, p 157.

² *Ibid.*, pp 153–154.

³ Tony Pope, “At A Perpetual Distance: Liberal and Adogmatic Grand Lodges.” *Transactions of Waikato Lodge of Research*, Vol 14, March 2005, p 3. Accessed at Pietre-Stones, www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/pope7.html

⁴ Jones, p 158.

⁵ Pope, p 3.

Ontario’s 2017 Masonic Essay Contest — Second Place

There were over 25 Masons who participated in the Masonic Essay Contest sponsored by the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario. Second Place was Bro Ed Hartman, Ashlar Lodge No. 610 of London West District (who was First Place last year).

The Soul of Freemasonry

Bro Edward J. Hartman, Ashlar No. 610, London West District.

The world we live in today is more connected than ever before in history. Cultures, philosophies, practices and beliefs that have been separated from each other by time and distance are now easily accessible to all. Here in the western world, information can be obtained easily, freely and, most importantly of all, quickly. Now the ancient practices of the East such as yoga and meditation have become commonplace, although they have ‘evolved’ into forms of exercise and relaxation. We are familiar with the old Hindu concepts of karma and reincarnation, the idea that our actions cause the effects of our lives and that we are forced to repeat over again the mistakes of our past until we are brave enough to correct them—a wheel of ups

and downs, constantly turning around, bringing with it the same old dramas. If you stop and look you can see this phenomenon in action during daily life. People move through it. Families move through it. Nations move through it. Even institutions move through it. Freemasonry is not immune, it appears, and finds itself also stuck on this wheel, its past problems shaping its future ones, all while it struggles with its recurring worries.

The question that has now been put forward is the same question that has been asked with concerned and ruffled brows by generation after generation of Freemasons, The question is this: “Has Freemasonry evolved enough to still be relevant to young men today?” The wording of the question alone discloses

the mindset of the Brethren who ask it. It suggests that it is the responsibility of the Masonic order to evolve or change to fit the constantly shifting interests of the general uninitiated public. The original question itself leaves much to be questioned, such as; what is it that is irrelevant to young men today that was relevant to them yesterday, the year before, the decade before, or the century before? Are they now so perfected in social and moral virtue that any institution designed to aid them in this endeavour is obsolete? The true motive behind asking the question as to whether Masonry is still relevant to young men today is one of concern over membership, or more specifically concern over how to attract more members. In Masonic circles, there is a constant comparing of the new generation to the old, along with the harkening back to a time

when all Lodge meetings were full and when membership was at a peak. To the younger Brethren, it must seem as though they have come too late to the party, or that they have joined a dying organization. But this is not the case.

In an article written by MWBro Dwight L. Smith, he addressed this issue saying, "In our membership decline we again see history repeating itself. It simply is a case of our sins catching up with us. We had a decade in which there was a membership influx that was both unhealthy and unhappy. We ran a production line; we counted new members by the hundreds of thousands; but we could count new Masons only by the score."¹ Many of those who intend to help Masonry 'evolve' do so by watering it down to make it easier for mass consumption. These Brethren seem to view the Craft as if it were a business and to them the numbers are the bottom line. Freemasonry is not a business, it is a living, breathing being whose many cells are composed of the individual Masons who support it. Unlike any business, Freemasonry possesses a soul, which contains its philosophy, its ritual, its symbolism and its lessons. If the soul is in distress, then the symptoms will manifest in the body. If Masonry is irrelevant to men today, then let us not patch its body with quick-fix, band aid solutions, but let us reinvigorate its soul. This can be achieved if the individual Mason opens his heart to the lessons of the Craft and places value on his membership. Our focus should not be so narrowly fixed on getting bodies through the door without first worrying about what they will encounter on the other side. A study composed by WBro Vincent Lombardi notes that demits and suspensions are the largest contributing factors to the decline in membership.² This suggests that men are joining, but are either not finding what they are looking for or are becoming unsatisfied with their Masonic journey. What they find is an institution desperately trying to be all things to all people and failing to maintain its own identity.

Freemasonry is a school of learning that has been a part of the fabric of our culture for over 300 years. It is a great promoter of self-knowledge, of study, of growth and self-improvement. It encourages men to become thoughtful, introspective, meditative and rational thinkers. It is a gift to the world, but

only if Masons embrace the Crafts true mission. Manly P. Hall wrote "...the true wealth of Freemasonry lies in its mysticism."³ This great Masonic sage offers his advice, writing, "With a smile of paternal indulgence the venerable Master, who senses the true dignity of the mystic tie, should gravely incline the minds of the Brethren towards the sublimer issues of the Craft."⁴ These "sublimer issues of the Craft" are what lies at the very core of Freemasonry. This core has been relevant to men who have recognized it in the past and will remain relevant to future men, but we must act as true and faithful custodians of it. We are entrusted to pass along Masonic philosophy to future generations. Let us not hesitate, therefore, to study it ourselves, share it, discuss it and learn it in open Lodge. Let us not be repelled by the word mysticism for it means nothing more than a deeper personal connection between Craftsman and his Craft.

If our goal is to stay relevant it can be accomplished by supporting, teaching, strengthening and encouraging the present membership and not by adopting strategies that cheapen the Craft in hopes of arousing the interests of outsiders. The perfect ashlar exists within the rough stone and as the skilled craftsman removes the material that is unnecessary and useless, let us do the same. The way to affect a profound

change within the institution is not by piling on new ways to force it to 'evolve,' but by the removal of all that is unnecessary and useless in the hopes that Masonry's soul will once again shine. Take pride in calling yourselves Freemasons and view the safeguarding of the Order as your sacred duty. May we do all in our power to ensure a vibrant, noble, and important Craft that may be inherited as a birthright by our sons, grandsons, and great grandsons.

In closing, remember the words of Wilmshurst who wrote:

*It remains with the Craft itself whether it shall enter upon its own heritage as a lineal successor of the Ancient Mysteries and Wisdom-teaching, or whether, by failing so to do, it will undergo the inevitable fate of everything that is but a form from which its native spirit has departed.*⁵

¹ Dwight L. Smith, "Whither are we Traveling?" AQC, Volume 76, 1963, pp 34-35.

² Vincent Lombardi, *Study on the Present Condition of Freemasonry in the World*, 2016. www.freemasonryresearchforum-qa.com/conditions-of-freemasonry.php

³ Manly P. Hall, *Rosicrucian and Masonic Origins*. Nu Vision Publications, p 35.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p 39.

⁵ W.L. Wilmshurst, *The Meaning of Masonry*. Cornerstone Book Publishers, p 123.

Widows Sons Raise \$4,000 for Bursaries

On Wednesday, 17 May 2017, Bro Heath Foster of the Widows Sons presented a cheque for \$4,000 to RWBro Murray Pay, DDGM Alpha District, for the Masonic Higher Education Bursary Fund. Attending also was WBro David Rawlinson, District Secretary and Bro John Kubinski, Masonic Foundation Co-ordinator. Widows Sons of Alberta, Five Points Chapter raised funds for charities including the MHEBF through a draw for a quarter of beef, which worked out to about 100 lbs of Grand Coulee Ranch beef.

Throughout the year, the Widows Sons also donate to

other charitable causes.

The Widows Sons of Alberta is established as the premier Motorcycle Riders' Association for Freemasons in the Jurisdiction with the objective of providing Freemasons with an enthusiasm for motorcycles the opportunity to combine those passions in a positive manner.



Left to right — WBro Doug Baine, VWBro Terry Murray, Bro Mike Weiser, Bro John Kubinski, WBro Larry McKinley, WBro David Rawlinson, VWBro Les Champ, MWBro Brian Shimmons, RWBro Murray Pay, Bro John Jenkins, Bro Derrick Wilson, Bro Heath Foster (cheque presenter), Bro Jamie Hume, Bro Dave Murray.

Your DDGMs 2017–2018

We are pleased to introduce to our readers the District Deputy Grand Masters serving the Craft in Alberta during the 2017–2018 term. This will be continued in the next two issues of The Alberta Freemason.

Athabasca District

RWBro James Hunt was born in June 1968 in Edmonton and, other than a very short stay in Cornwall in 1968 and two short stops in Calgary, has lived in Edmonton. He attended a Private Catholic High School called Caritas (now closed). He is single and over the years has enjoyed the athletic pleasure of distance running and biking with 13 full marathons, 30+ half marathons, and shorter races too numerous to count. He has also completed three, 100k bike events. He was planning to start a career as a cabinetmaker, but an incident with a table saw ended that. He is working on his 25th year with Thomas & Betts, performing almost every job in the facility over that time.



James was initiated into Exemplar Lodge No. 175 on 1 February 2001, was passed and raised in April and May, proving proficient in June of that same year. He has held several offices in the Lodge since then, including JW in 2003 and SW in 2004, and was installed in the chair of King Solomon (by his father, no less) on 2 December 2004. He is a frequent visitor to many Lodges and enjoys the friendships created with the Brethren.

James is a member of the Valley of Edmonton A&ASR and was coroneted with the 33rd degree in 2017. He is the First Principal of Capital City Chapter No. 13 of the Royal Arch and affiliated with Norwood No. 18 as well. He is in two Councils of Allied Masonic Degrees and is a Past Master of Fiat Lux lodge of Research No. 1980, serving a 2-year term in 2011–2013. He served the Brethren as Grand Steward in 2014–2015 and was elected DDGM for the 2017–2018 term.

James is committed to assisting the Lodges in the Athabasca District in any way that he can and looks forward to the challenges that will be upcoming during this term.

Alpha District

RWBro Terry Murray was born July 1959 at RCAF Station Cold Lake, Alberta. He lived and was educated in Zweibrücken, Germany, Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, Cold Lake and Calgary.

He graduated Forest Lawn High in Calgary and then went on to a career in the Royal Canadian Air Force as a Radar, Communication and Avionics Technician. He served in Edmonton, Baden Solingen, Germany, and Cold Lake. Terry retired in 1996 to Calgary and worked with Raytheon Canada as a technician, special engineering projects technician and then Quality Manager. Attending the U of C Strategic Management program, he worked in various companies as a Quality Manager. Since



2012, Terry has been working at REV Engineering as the Quality and Safety Manager.

Terry is the proud father of two adults, Robert, 32, who is serving in the RCAF at 410 Squadron, Cold Lake and Jacquelyn, 27, who has just finished her education, getting degrees in history and teaching. Terry lives in Chestermere and has been sharing all life's experiences with his wife Peg, a fellow Chrome Couch Adventurist, since December 2014 and extremely happy being married since October 2016.

Terry joined Masonry in 2007 in Calgary at St. Mark's Lodge No. 118. He was honoured to work through the chairs to become St. Mark's 93rd Master in 2013. Terry was appointed Grand Senior Deacon for 2016–2017. He volunteers and serves as First Vice President on the St. Mark's Building Society Board, a low-income seniors residence with 21 suites.

Terry is an officer in Otuskawin Chapter No. 9, Royal Arch Masons. He is also an officer in Cyprus Preceptory No. 33 and a Shriner at Al Azhar Temple. Terry is currently serving until March 2018 with the unofficial title, Consort to Queen Peg Murray, Daughters of the Nile, Sakarra Temple No. 115.

Outside of Masonry, Terry is a motorcycle enthusiast and has enjoyed the role of leadership within the Grand Council and Five Points Chapters for the Widows Sons of Alberta Riding Association.

Terry finds the most enjoyable parts of belonging to our Craft are the Fraternal relations and the travel that Masonry has afforded him, which is second to none — meeting, socializing and bringing Masonic principles to practice through his participation at home and abroad in all the varied concordant bodies as well as within and without the Craft.

Beaverhills District

RWBro Brother Kenneth Rosal was born April 1982 in Fort McMurray. He attained his Bachelors of Arts in Economics from the University of Alberta in 2005. During his University career, he was active in the Student Union as well as the fraternity of Phi Gamma Delta.

In August 2007 he married Heather Stone.

Brother Rosal was initiated into Commercial Lodge No. 81 on 19 March 2005 and was raised on 27 August 2005. He served as Worshipful Master in 2013 and 2014.

His Masonic journey has taken him into many Masonic bodies and he is active in every one of them.

Brother Rosal is a member of the following Masonic Bodies:

- Northstar Chapter No. 2, Royal Arch Masons — served as First Principal in 2014 and received the degree of Holy Order of High Priesthood. Affiliated member of Norwood Chapter No. 18;
- Zohar Council No. 4, Cryptic Rite Masons of Western Canada Royal & Select Masters and Alberta Lodge No. 2 Royal Ark Mariner;
- Edmonton Preceptory No. 46, Knights Templar;



- 32nd Degree in the Edmonton Valley, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite;
- Yellowhead Council No 220, Allied Masonic Degrees as well as founding member of Borealis Council No. 223;
- Alberta Rose No. 52, York Rite Sovereign College of North America;
- Northern Lights Tabernacle No. 130, Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests;
- Al Shamal Shriner;
- Currently serving on the Board of Freemasons Hall of Edmonton;
- Was appointed the Grand Representative of Hawaii; and
- Appointed Grand Junior Deacon 2016–2017.

In his free time he enjoys learning about various wines and spirits, which has led him to obtain his Level 2 with the Wine and Spirit Education Trust. Further to that, Brother Rosal also enjoys learning about tobacco blends in cigars, which has earned him international recognition with various Tobacco Organizations.

Battle River District

RWBro Mitchell Elhard was born September 1964 in Castor, Alberta. The attending doctor was his Great Uncle, WBro C.R. Cousineau, a member of Beaver Lodge No. 56. Mitchell attended grades 1 to 12 at Gus Wetter High School in Castor. Upon graduation, he attended Olds College in the Agricultural Mechanics Program and then returned home to the family farm. Mitchell farmed with his father, Richard, and is the fourth generation of this family to steward the land.



He is the proud Father of three sons, Brandon, Jesse and Kyle, all of whom are living in Castor and apprenticing in

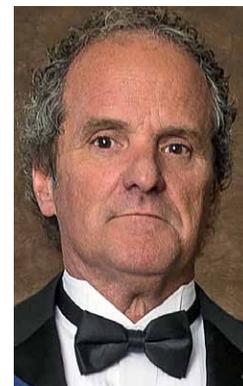
the trades.

Over the years he has served on the Castor Economic Development Board, as 4H East Central District President, in Castor Little Theatre and has coached and managed minor hockey teams. Mitchell was an avid hockey and ball player in his youth. He also enjoys car restoration and has a couple of projects underway.

His Masonic journey began in 1998 when he was initiated into Beaver Lodge No. 56, where his maternal Grandfather was a long-time member. Mitchell particularly enjoys the Ritual Work, the Conferring of Degrees and is always willing to lend a helping hand to other Lodges.

Calgary-Highwood District

RWBro Doug Brown was born September 1958 in Calgary. He is a past Master (2006) of Mt Lebanon Lodge No. 54, a Past Thrice Puissant Grand Master of the Scottish Rite and a member of the Royal Order of Scotland. He has been District Education Coordinator and District Coordinator for the Masonic Higher Education Bursary Fund. He also served Grand Lodge as Grand Steward for 2016–2017.



Doug supported the Order of the Eastern Star in Alberta through designing a website in 2000. He maintained the site for 16 years until 2015. He now volunteers for the Scottish Rite Learning Centre in Calgary.

As a graduate from the U of C and SAIT, Doug worked in IT for over 25 years and served on several boards and committees. Doug is a Past President of the Canadian Information Processing Society of Alberta.

Doug now works as a realtor. He adores his daughter and enjoys skiing and golf.

Reflections on My Three Degrees — Part III

Bro Chris Sitter, Bow River Lodge No. 1

Bow River Lodge (Canadian Rite) asks new members to present their “Reflection” 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. Previously, Bro Sitter discussed the lessons of the first two degrees.

The **Third Degree (Master Mason)** represents old age, and teaches that we should not fear death if we follow the symbolic lessons of the tools and abide by the lessons given to us in the former degrees. The tools here are the **skirret, pencil** and **compasses**. The Master Mason Degree teaches us loyalty to ourselves and our Brethren, dedication, living a life of virtue and morality, and the importance of focusing on our work.

When reflecting on the working tools in this degree, I found that they represent both what is to come as a result of our knowledge and of our use of the working tools in the prior degrees, as well as tools to use in the moment. In a way, it

creates a full circle, for me, back to the First Degree.

The first tool we are given in the degree is the **skirret**, which is to connect us not only to each other, but also by a straight line to the Volume of the Sacred Law, an instruction already given to us in the First Degree. This also represents the importance of loyalty to ourselves and to our Brethren. For me, this is an extremely important part of Freemasonry and was something that I saw when I first entered the building for dinner. It was something that I started to learn and live, and that I saw in every aspect of communication between those of you in this room. I now, myself, have the privilege of calling you

Brother, and being called Brother. This degree emphasized and explained why this was something that was so obvious, and many aspects of this degree instilled and reinforced these values.

The next tool is the **pencil**. This, for me, is extremely important. I know many of you have been on the wrong side of someone’s words, or possibly you’ve been the person using words to tear someone down. The pencil reminds us that all our actions and words are observed and recorded by the Almighty Architect. I don’t believe this is a lesson intended to scare us into trying to behave. This is something that can be positive and will bring us joy and hap-

piness when we look back at our lives to see that our actions were recorded as a positive to mankind. I know for myself when I first looked at the pencil my thoughts went to “Wow! This is quite the realization, that everything I do is recorded. I better be on my best behaviour.” But the more I thought about it, and the more I looked at the lessons I have learned and incorporated into my life, I really don’t have things in the present to be worried about or ashamed of. My actions are things that I can be proud of and have the pencil record. How I live and act can bring me pride and joy. It is not a fear tactic as much as it is way to reflect on how I want my life and my person to be viewed in the end. Can I be proud of the person I became and grew to be. Yes, the pencil reminds us that our actions will be recorded. Let’s make sure that is a good thing!

The last tool is the **compasses**, reminding us of justice in how we used our tools and instructions. Did we use them to build ourselves and our Brothers up? Or did we use the tools for more destructive and harmful purposes? The compasses help us to measure and perfect our work and actions, to gauge our structure and to ensure that everything is properly assembled. It will help us build and, in our final moments, will show us whether we will be rewarded or punished when we arrive at the entrance to the Grand Lodge Above.

I went into the tools of the three degrees because one of the many highlights of the Third Degree was receiving the apron of a Master Mason. This was not because of the status, but because I felt

that I belonged to something greater. I felt that receiving this honour now opened up doors for me to continue my studies, to learn more about things I was unsure of, and to get answers to questions that I didn’t know how to ask as an Entered Apprentice or a Fellowcraft. In the former degrees I had the job of learning what was laid out in front of me and not get ahead of myself. Now I feel as though I have the freedom to dive deeper into those lessons and other areas of Masonic studies. This was immediately shown to me by my visits and conversations that I had the following week with Brothers in three sister Lodges, including a Lodge in Arizona. I really did feel like we were on the level, and my conversations and questions were always valid, respected, answered, and engaged, even as new Master Mason.

That moment when I received my apron, I was filled with excitement and craving for study. And even though this degree was to represent old age, I felt like a kid ready to learn. This may have been from the restraints I had put on myself during the previous two years (as an Entered Apprentice and a Fellowcraft) to ensure that I kept within my studies and didn’t try to move forward without proper instruction.

There are so many aspects of the degree that meant a lot to me and, of course, I had to make my decision on what to talk about this evening. There are many moments that will always mean a great deal to me personally and, as I see others lie where I had lain, I will remember my experience. This may be one of the most important aspects of the

degree, and the lecture and story along with it helped to tie so many pieces of our lessons and rituals together. Our rituals are based around stone masonry and the building of King Solomon’s Temple. The story of Hiram Abiff in this degree helps to pull everything together. I was always told that the degrees are not separate, but that they build on each other. After going through all three, it is evident in this moment how true that is. Hence why, tonight, I chose to build on the tools in each degree.

I truly feel that my learning is just starting. I have often said that the degrees and education I have received in my life have only given me the right, and path, to study more once I graduate. I feel the same after this degree. It is not the end of my studies, but merely just the beginning.

These are my reflections from my experience going through the Third Degree, as well as things that I learned in the days after, while reading and studying books, and seeking clarification on subject matter discussed throughout the early stage of my Masonic life. I will always be grateful that I chose to knock and enter through the west door.

There is a great quote in a book I was recently reading that highly influenced my talk tonight, and I would like to finish with that quote:

It is better to be the wisest person in the room than the smartest. The smart man lists every Masonic symbol and how they can improve him, the wise man uses every Masonic symbol to improve himself.

