

# THE ALBERTA Freemason



Editor: RWBro  
George Tapley  
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## The Lodge

MWBro Raymond S. J. Daniels, PGM, Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario,  
[http://masonicrestorationfoundation.org/documents/RSJD\\_The\\_Lodge.pdf](http://masonicrestorationfoundation.org/documents/RSJD_The_Lodge.pdf)

*Editor's Note: This is one of the late MWBro Daniels educational papers from the series "A Masonic Minute" designed for use in Lodges. See <http://www.hamiltondistrictcmasons.org/raymond-daniels.php> for a complete list.*

The term 'Lodge' has several meanings in Masonic parlance — a building, a room, a body. In operative days, from whence we derive the term, it was a simple lean-to structure on the building site where the workmen took their break, stored their tools, and received instructions in the execution of the architect's plans and designs. In the Ancient Charges of a Freemason we learn that "A Lodge is a place where Freemasons assemble to work and to instruct and to improve themselves in the mysteries of their ancient science." We still use the word in this sense of a building or meeting place when we say we are going to Lodge

"men with a common purpose, governed by a common idea, believing in a common ideal." A Lodge is a body of men who have done great things in the past and hope to do great things in the future.

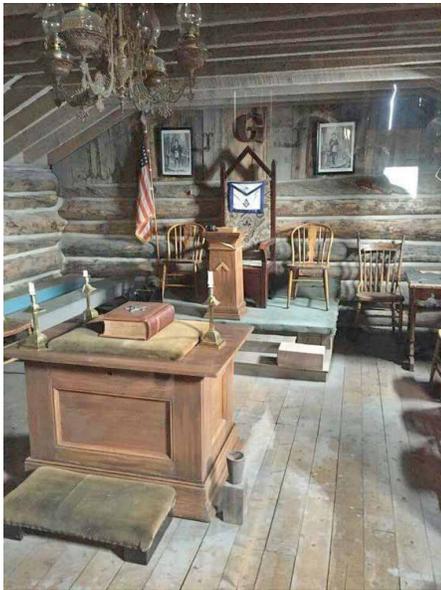
Today, as in former times, the Lodge is a place for instruction and self-improvement, where we study and learn from the ideals enshrined in the exemplary charges and lectures of our rites and ceremonies. Properly considered, the Lodge is a schoolroom and every meeting provides a learning opportunity. Freemasonry is, and always was intended to be an educational institution for "the cultivation and improvement of the human mind." It is the oldest and largest institution devoted to adult education in the civilized world. It lays the world of human knowledge and the accumulated wisdom of the ages open at one's feet.

We must ever be mindful that Freema-

sonry lives, moves and has its being in our constituent Lodges. At the opening of every meeting the Worshipful Master is reminded that it is his stated duty to "employ and instruct the Brethren in Masonry." Success or failure depends entirely on the leadership ability of the Worshipful Master and the support of the Officer Team. William Pollard might have been writing a manual for Lodge Officers when he wrote: "It is the responsibility of leadership to provide opportunity, and the responsibility of individuals to contribute."

A Lodge meeting should have more to offer than a friendly get together at the local Tim Horton's coffeeshop, as friendly, cheerful and pleasant as that may be. First and foremost, Freemasonry is an initiatory order based in and sharing the common purpose of the ancient mystery schools of early civilizations: Egyptian and Greek philosophy, in particular. This inheritance provides a further dimension. There is rather more to Freemasonry than sociability and philanthropy, important as those aspects are to the fraternity. We are in the business of changing men's lives; taking in good men and assisting them to make themselves better men.

How do we achieve this lofty goal? As Speculative Masons, we are charged to think seriously about the meaning of life: Where have we come from? What is our purpose here? Where are we going



*Pioneering Masons would seek out the company of like-minded men and create a Lodge wherever they were.*

However, Freemasonry is men and a Lodge is a living organism, a creative body of like-minded men, working together in peace, love and harmony, fellow travellers joined in a common cause, as MWBro David C. Bradley observed in his Grand Master's Address in 1990:



*Freemasons' Hall, Boston, Lincolnshire (above), built 1860–63, is plain brick with a unique portico. It has "Know Thyself" in Greek over the Lodge entrance (right).*



from here? These questions can only be answered by an intense study of our inner selves. "KNOW THYSELF" was engraved over the entrance to the ancient temples of initiation. Alexander Pope (1688–1744) penned this admonition:

*Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;*

*The proper study of mankind is man.*

In this context, the Lodge becomes a research laboratory of self-discovery — "a mutually supporting network of men joined on such a quest." There are five stages in the process:

1. Self-examination
2. Self-discovery
3. Self-analysis
4. Self-realization
5. Self-fulfilment

Freemasonry uses the metaphor of light to symbolize "progression from ignorance to understanding, the process described as passing from darkness to light. Freemasons were at one time known as "the Sons of Light."

Marcel Proust (1871–1922), the French novelist wrote:

*The real voyage of discovery con-*

*sists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.*

To quote the American pamphleteer, Thomas Paine (1737–1809), writing of the Enlightenment:

*We see with other eyes; we hear with other ears; and think with other thoughts, than those we formerly used. The mind once enlightened cannot again become dark.*

In the 'light' of Freemasonry, we are given new eyes to see natural Beauty and keener minds to comprehend divine Truth.

## The Point Within a Circle

Bro Michael Doucette, Cedar Lodge 270, GRC, Oshawa, Ontario  
*Reflections*, Vol. 31 No.1, pp 11–12, October 2017, GLCPOO

The point within a circle is an ancient symbol, much older than Freemasonry, and has been used by many cultures. Although the Third Degree opening describes a point (the location of the true secrets of a Master Mason) and a circle around this point, we generally do not see this symbol by itself in Freemasonry. Typically, two parallel perpendicular lines are added to both sides of the circle, as seen in the tracing board of the First Degree, either on the altar or at the foot of Jacob's Ladder. Both symbols are equally important and hold deep meaning.

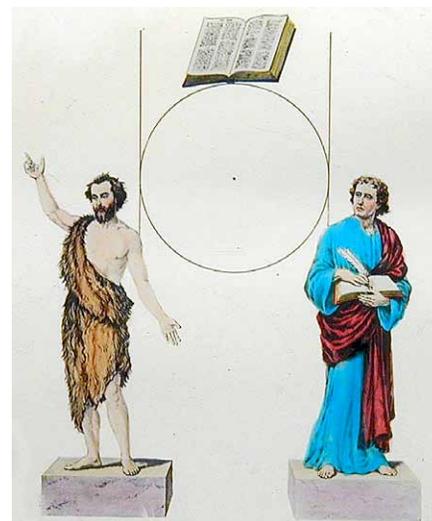
In Freemasonry, the symbol of the point, circle and two lines represent many different meanings. One generally accepted meaning sees the point representing an individual Mason, who uses his cable tow at its fullest extension to trace a circle around him, with the two lines representing the Holy Saints John, whose feast days fall on the winter (St. John the Evangelist) and summer (St. John the Baptist) solstices. Another interpretation is the point being the candidate at the altar, the circle being the light from the East encircling the candidate and the lines being the Brethren in the North and South protecting and supporting the candidate. Another representation of this symbol shows the point being the altar and the three great lights, the circle,

the circumambulation of the candidate and the lines, again representing the Brethren keeping the candidate within due bounds. Another sees the point representing the source or divine spark, the circle representing the soul and the two lines representing the material world keeping the soul and divine spark within its boundaries.

In Astrology, the ancient practice/science of studying the stars, which our ancient ancestors from all corners of the Earth used to determine the passage of time to aid in planting and harvesting of crops and to assist in navigation, the point represents the Earth, the circle represents the procession of the Zodiac as they move around the Earth and the two lines represent the tropics of Capricorn and Cancer, the positions of the sun at high noon on the winter and summer solstices.

As mentioned in the introduction, the point within a circle takes two forms. However, only one form is described in the opening of the Third Degree: the point where a Master Mason can find the true secrets, or the point from which a Master Mason cannot err and the circle encompassing it, also known as the Circumpunct. The symbol here described is incredibly ancient and its origins shrouded in time.

In some jurisdictions, when a candidate takes his obligation the Brethren in Lodge



leave their seats, come down onto the level and form a circle around him and the altar, creating this symbol.

In the Third Degree, three tools are presented to the candidate. These tools can be used to create the point within a circle. The compasses, are used to create circles on a small scale. The skirret, a tool which acts on a center pin, from which a line is extended to mark out the ground while constructing edifices, can also be used to create a circle. Drive the stake of the skirret onto the point in the center, extend the line to a desired length and using this line as a guide, trace a circle around the starting point, creating a curved perimeter. The pencil can be used to mark out the circle on a desired medium.

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Using compasses, a craftsman could create the point within a circle and with a straightedge and some simple geometry the craftsman could create a right-angled triangle. Using this right-angled triangle, the craftsman could use this triangle to right his tools, allowing him to create perfect ashlar from rough ashlar.

The ancient Egyptians used the point and circle as a symbol for their God Ra. Ra was the sun God and ruled over all creation. Another explanation of the Egyptian's use of the symbol was the path taken by Ra as he passed over our world during the day and the Underworld at night, in other words, the path that the Sun, seemingly, takes

around the Earth.

The Pythagoreans were an ancient Greek school of philosophy created by Pythagoras. Pythagoras showed an early talent for art and learning. He was a student of the Egyptian and Mesopotamian schools of philosophy. When he returned to Europe from abroad, he set up a school in Crotona, Italy that taught philosophy, art, music, mathematics and especially geometry. They used the point within a circle to represent eternity, the point representing the Monad, the first being, single source, or point of origin of all things and the circle representing the point in its fullest manifestation.

Alchemists were a group of Medieval

scientists who were concerned with the transmutation of matter, such as the turning of lead into gold. Their teachings have also been believed to represent the spiritual transmutation of the soul from a crude state (lead) into a perfected state (gold). The Alchemists used the symbol of the point and circle to represent the sun and gold.

As with all symbols used by Freemasonry, the point within a circle can trace its origin back into antiquity and provides a lesson for every Mason, regardless of their object of study. This symbol warrants serious contemplation and study. In so doing, a worthy Mason can discover many hidden truths of morality, nature and science.

## *From the Lodges...*

### **Exemplar Lodge No. 175**

Change is our one constant in life. It continues from birth to grave. It is our ability to adapt to change that sets us apart and allows us to enjoy a fruitful life and become the men we ought to be. As we progress through life we should welcome that which seems difficult or insurmountable and use this as an opportunity for growth, for by adapting and learning we grow and become infinitely more serviceable to the Creator.

We are at a unique time both in the Craft and in the world in general. At our Annual Communication in June the foundations of our Jurisdiction significantly changed. A motion from our Lodge limiting the Past Grand Masters on the Board of General Purposes to the three most recent was passed. The outgoing Grand Master strongly declared that the bureaucracy of the Craft was out of hand and that we need to return the power in our organization to the individual Lodges. Our incoming Grand Master, Most Worshipful Brother Gordon Berard has made it his goal to completely streamline the bureaucracy of Grand Lodge and become nimble and effective. We had, as of May this year [2017], over sixty members of the Board of General Purposes; he would like it reduced to under 20. Over 60 is three times the number of members of most Board of Directors for Fortune 500 companies.

We must be mindful, however, of the intent of change. How can we as an organization continue to be relevant in this changing society? We must change not who we are or what we stand for, but

must adapt how we engage and how we communicate. Prior to the World Wars we were an organization of leaders and philosophers. We focused on developing the inner man, and moral growth through ritual and allegory. It was an honour to be a Mason. Upon the return from both wars we had hundreds of thousands of men, who were used to living in close proximity to other men, now feeling lonely and abandoned. These brave men who fought for our freedom started joining fraternal organizations in droves and we quickly changed to an organization where fraternal relationships between Brothers were our primary concern and our other aspects became less prominent.

This also created an environment where men saw a social structure that one could move up. From our earliest days our leaders were superintendents of the work. They were servants of the Craft and its members. They were chosen by merit and in humility served. Now, however, there was a social ladder. There were accolades to attain and we lost some of that which the ritual taught us was foundational. This also inadvertently created the balloon in our bureaucracy. We added more positions of importance as more men wished to ascend and the organizational disfunction spiraled.

Fast forward another few decades. The 60s through the 80s were a transition, as society became more interconnected and rebelled against that of their parents. It went from the 60s rebelling against organizational structure and the man, to the 80s hunt for personal wealth and

self-gratification. These cultural shifts were fundamental opposed to what the Craft stood for and we saw continued decline of membership.

But where are we now. We now have a generation who are looking for something greater than themselves. Since man's earliest days we have had rituals. Regardless of the culture or people, each society had ritual. In this day and age we have lost ritual that is not a celebration of oneself. The great majority receives no moral instruction through organized religion, as church attendance is at its lowest levels ever. There is no moral instruction in schools or the media, as we would not want to offend someone. Freemasonry, however, uses ritual to teach morality, and we see many young men being drawn to the Craft to satisfy the most basic of human needs.

This does, however cause two problems. First, the Craft will need to educate and employ the new Brethren in a Fraternity whose average age continues to shift upwards and whose foundation for years was strictly Fraternal relations between its members. This is a challenge. Second, the purpose of Masonry will need to once again shift from being a social club to being that institution whose primary goal was to take good men and make them better.

The future is on our doorstep, my Brothers. The Craft is at a crossroads. We can continue on and find less and less relevance in our constantly changing world or we can adapt and embrace the opportunity to re-establish our purpose in society and why we exist.

WBro Geoff Chevrier  
Worshipful Master

# 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 concludes the series of bios. Northern Lights District*

## Northern Lights District

**RWBro Gerry Offin** was born in August 1948 in Rossland, British Columbia and grew up in the small village of Lillooet, BC. Gerry grew up liking the outdoors and particularly enjoyed hunting and fishing as a young boy. He moved with his parents to Nanaimo, BC and finished his high school in 1966.

He applied to join the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 1970 and was accepted into “the force” in March 1971. Upon graduation from the RCMP Depot he was posted to “K” Division (Alberta) and had mostly rural postings in northern Alberta. He retired from the RCMP in August 1999 and in May 2000 he was hired on as a rural traffic officer for the County of Strathcona in Sherwood Park, a position he held until August 2013.

RWBro. Offin has been married to his wife Peggy for 43 years, and they have two sons and four grandchildren.

He was initiated into Freemasonry in Edson Lodge No. 68 on 21 March 1985, was passed to the Fellowcraft Degree on 18 April 1985 and raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason on 16 May 1985. RWBro Offin affiliated with West Edmonton Lodge No. 101 in 1989 and served as the Worshipful Master for the Masonic year 1993–1994. He was appointed Grand Steward by MWBro Doug Troock in June 2001 and was invested at the Annual Communication in Red Deer in June 2017 as the DDGM of Northern Lights District.



## Phoenix District

**RWBro Steve Kennard** was born in Ashford England in 1957. In 1974 he joined the Royal Marines and served in various areas around the world, retiring in December of 1996. The family emigrated to Canada in 1997, spending their first year in Sooke BC, and moving to Calgary in July 1998. He worked for H&R Block Canada Inc. from 1998 through 2016 in various positions and now works with Dunphy and Associates in Calgary.



Steve and his wife Gill met in 1978, married in 1979 and have three sons, Alex, Thomas and Jon. They are now empty nesters and support each other in their various interests. They especially enjoy escaping in their motor home during the summer.

RWBro Kennard was initiated, passed and raised in Per Mare Per Terram Lodge No 9355 UGLE in 1990. He served as Master of the Lodge 1997–1998 and in 1999 he was appointed Past Provincial Junior Grand Deacon of The Province of Devonshire. Steve affiliated with King George Lodge No. 59 in 1999 and was Master 2004–2005. He is a member of both Brent Chapter 1276 UGLE and Strathmore Chapter Royal Arch Masons of Alberta, as well as the Calgary Valley of the

Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. He has been instrumental in the introduction of the 7-Step Program in King George Lodge, and continues to drive its development throughout the Province. He was appointed Junior Grand Deacon of the Grand Lodge of Alberta in 2015.

## Yellowhead District

**RWBro Karl Kuss** was raised in Edmonton Lodge No. 7 in 1982, becoming Secretary of the Lodge in 1983 and Master in 1998.

RWBro Kuss is a lifelong learner: after his Military Service his academic learning started in earnest, first obtaining his American CPA, then a BSc in Nursing and ending with a PhD in Business Administration.

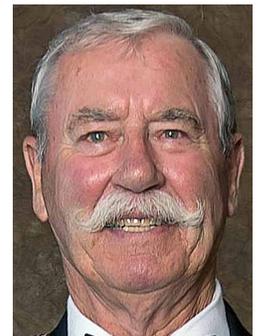
Throughout his volunteer life he has become President of many organizations, including, but not limited to, The Royal Canadian Legion, of which he is a life member, his Community League, even President of the newly formed Al Shamal Camera & Video Unit — and the list goes on. He coached hockey and softball, and instructed coaches for 26 years through the Hockey Alberta coaching program. He has received numerous awards and accolades for his achievements and volunteerism. Suffice it to say, a short novel could be written. RWBro Kuss is proud to represent the Yellowhead District for 2017–2018.



## Palliser District

**RWBro John Hamill**

No biography submitted



# The Secret Knowledge of Masonry

WBro Dennis H. Wilson F.C.F., *Reflections*, Vol. 30 No. 3, p 5, February 2017, GLCPOO

Antoine Faivre, Professor of Esoteric and Mystical Currents in Modern and Contemporary Europe at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Sorbonne), in Paris says that since its first use in 1828, the term “esotericism” has generally referred to three different areas of interest:

1. Secret knowledge or secret science preserved as arcana and passed on to only a select few.
2. Paths or techniques addressed to the truths hidden or secluded within Nature or Man, the knowledge of which is attained by only those who have achieved or received a gnostic or transformative experience.
3. Groups of works and currents dealing with perennial philosophy, Hermeticism, alchemy, astrology, Kabbalah, Christian theosophy, and so on, which can be subjected to historical studies. What is the secret knowledge of Masonry that is only known to the few, and what is the path to learning those secrets?

The Druids, the Egyptians, the Greek Mystery cults, the Pythagorean School, and Mithraism are all Mystery cults.

The Mystery cults seem to have been engaged in finding the philosopher’s stone and the elixir of life. If a part of the philosopher’s stone was put into molten lead, the lead would become gold. The elixir of life was reputed to give life eternal. So far, Masonry has revealed neither the philosopher’s stone nor the elixir of life to me.

The Pythagoreans focused on many

things, including numbers. But what I know about numbers I learned in public school. Masonry has not revealed anything new to me about numbers.

Other groups were interested in the destiny of the soul, and man’s path through life. Certainly, Masonic ritual does mimic one’s journey through life by allegory in the three degrees. The immortality of the soul, and not the material man, is illustrated in the third degree. Such information is not hidden, and is to be found in many religions.

What about brotherly love, relief and truth? Doesn’t the aphorism, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” cover those Masonic attributes? Those attributes are hardly secret.

So, what is the “secret knowledge”? The “secrets” of [each] Degree are explained as consisting of certain signs, tokens and words. These, of course, are figurative emblems of them. It is really what they signify that constitutes the secrets and is for the Candidate to meditate upon and put in practice. That is the only way that he can really learn them, and begin to understand why they are called “secrets.” They can never be orally communicated, except in symbolic form. The secrets of spiritual progress are learned only by those who actually live them (“skill without exertion is of little avail”). They are pointers to spiritual progress rather than confidential communications of secret information.

[The] rituals point to certain ancient mysteries which have been taught from time immemorial. These ancient mysteries (sometimes called The Divine Wisdom or, in modern times, Theosophy, Anthroposophy, and Rosicrucianism) all teach, in a nutshell, the following:

1. The Unity of the Creator (unity meaning: there is only one, and everything is part of the One and are all therefore connected);
2. The immortality of the soul and its reincarnation;
3. That any deed, word, or thought has a consequence; and
4. The necessity of understanding the former and learning to connect one’s soul to the spirit, in order to get closer to the Divine Source.

Masonry does not teach the hidden mysteries but, in our ritual, it does allude to them, like signposts, leaving it up to the individual to seek and understand them.

From the preceding, it can be learned that the esoteric secret of Masonry is that each candidate must learn how to decipher the figurative emblems of Masonry himself. Because the secrets of spiritual progress are learned only by those who actually live them, each Mason will discover different secrets depending on his own life experiences.

It follows, then, that the secrets can never be orally communicated, except in symbolic form because they are unique to each Mason.

