



Christmas is About Humanity's Common Ground

VWBro John Himmelman, Grand Chaplain, Grand Lodge of Alberta

Merry Christmas to the Brethren and their families. It is the time of year when we all get preoccupied with consumerism, complaining about the weather, plans for the New Year and how cold it is. As for me, I still don't know where the summer went.

Please take the time to reflect on the real reason Christians celebrate this time of year and attend a Christmas service. You'll be glad you did. I know something sincere resonates with us all at this time. For me, I can't help but be moved by thinking about the stories of the "1914 Unofficial WWI Christmas Truce."

In the midst of the horrors of trench warfare, some soldiers rose from their safe places and crossed into No Man's Land to meet their enemy and stand

together in harmony. It was unofficial, because both the British and German high commands knew it is more difficult to kill someone you have fraternized with.

To me this is the real power of Christmas. Seeing the enemy, even for a moment, as you may see yourself. Individuals with interests caught up in larger forces doing their duty but left wondering. If I can lay down my gun and trust and communicate why can't our leaders? Could it be they lack the clarity of priorities that comes from personally experiencing the horrors of war? Does my life really need to take second place to a rich man's agenda?

Masonry is the common ground for those of all faiths to meet. It is stated explicitly in our Constitution under the

"Charges of a Freemason." We are not setting aside our own faith but emphasizing that part about conducting ourselves as ethical and moral human beings; to strive by the purity of our own conduct to demonstrate the superior excellence of the faith they may profess.

In actuality in 1914 there was not a massive love-in across the entire battle line. There was some initial bobbing of heads to see if someone was going to shoot first in some sections. Later some soldiers slowly, gingerly, cautiously, faithfully made their way into No Man's Land to show the superiority of their faith.

To all brothers of all faiths and your loved ones,

"Have a safe and joyous season."

Seasons Greetings

From the Staff of the Grand Lodge of Alberta

One of the great pleasures of the Holiday Season is the opportunity to exchange cordial greetings and to say thank you to all those who have worked closely with us over the years. We thank you for the time you have so willingly given and your tireless efforts with our transition to our new premises.

We also want to extend Seasons Greetings to your families, for without their support and understanding, we would not have the dedication and commitment of so many of you.

We wish you all a wonderful Christmas and may the happiness and good cheer of the Holiday Season be yours throughout the New Year.

We hope to see you all at our Open House on 5 February 2019.

Nicole McCoy
Bill Kostenuk



The Christmas Day Truce in 1914 started Christmas Eve in the Ypres salient when the Germans lit candles, decorated a tree in their trench and sang the carol, Stille Nacht (Silent Night). The British responded with carols of their own. The next morning on parts of the front line, soldiers of both sides put down their arms and met in No Man's Land to share smokes and food, and even play soccer.

Western Canada Conference 2018

RWBro Terry Murray, Junior Grand Warden, Grand Lodge of Alberta

Why and what is the Western Canada Conference? Before and after attending this Conference, I've heard from Brethren across our Jurisdiction, "Is attendance valuable, necessary or relevant?"

The Western Canada Conference was one of the best Conferences I've attended in my personal, professional and Masonic career. Not for the lack of sophistication or technology, not the meals or the spectacular views, but for the sense of purpose and deeper understanding of the Craft across the Western Provinces. When I entered the room for the first time I felt like the rookie or the newest grown-up at the adult table. The fellowship started with acquainting myself with two other Junior Grand Wardens from the Grand Lodge of British Columbia & Yukon and the Grand Lodge of Manitoba and one Grand Junior Warden from the Grand Lodge of Saskatchewan. Each of us came to this Conference with the same sense of purpose and trepidation, thought to be **Audi-Vide-Tace** (Hear-See-Be Silent). This could not be further from the truth.

The format for the Conference is laid out just like a Lodge where each officer has a duty to serve and a purpose in supporting the entire Lodge. As a Steward is charged with assisting the Junior Warden in properly accommodating visitors — hearing, seeing and being silent to learn what the Junior Warden does — so is the Junior Warden hearing, seeing and being silent to learn what the Master is doing. With over 24 attendees, each Grand Lodge Officer in attendance had a particular purpose — each hearing, seeing and being silent to learn. I know some of you are finding this very difficult to believe that I could be silent! Let me explain!

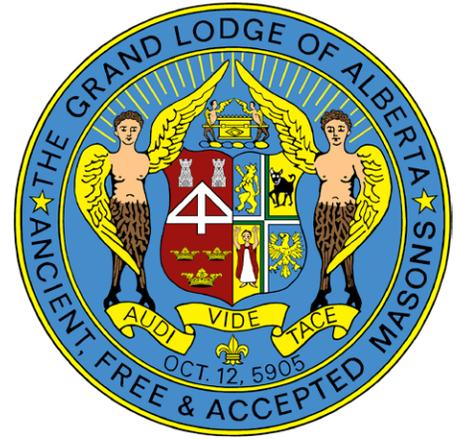
Besides the regular business of meeting minutes, Conference rules and the protocols being established, the primary activity was the presentation of four papers and the subsequent dis-

cussions. And yes, we all had something to do and say!

Starting with the Grand Masters as they lead the proceedings with a sense of purpose, we were in attendance to discuss, not just hear, see or be silent. Quite the contrary, all attendees were encouraged to speak and be heard. The Deputy Grand Masters each introduced one of the speakers (Senior Grand Wardens and Grand Senior Warden) with a short resume, followed by a presentation. Each Senior Grand Warden presented a paper on a topic of their choice. The Junior Grand Wardens and Grand Junior Warden had two jobs to perform. The first was to facilitate breakout syndicates of Conference members (no two groups the same) including a Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Grand Senior and either a Grand Treasurer or Grand Secretary. Each group proved that no two jurisdictions are the same; as we discussed each paper the syndicates required little or no facilitation. (Some may find it hard to believe I didn't say a word!) The second duty was to report the syndicates' discussions back to the conference as a whole (I got to speak!) The Deputy Grand Master then summarized the four reports.

Each participant at the Conference was deeply involved in the process: hearing, seeing and being silent, until it was their time to speak and give insight. Ultimately the real reason for this Conference was the progressive improvement of a Grand Master. The Conference could be given the title of the Grand Masters Developmental School.

The discussion papers brought light to topics dear to the "Seniors." Each breakout group discussion expressed various opinions and thoughts. One improvement opportunity is the sophistication level and emphasizing a particular subject. This is my recollection of the papers and a short synopsis of the ensuing discussions and may not



be my opinion.

Paper No. 1 — Governance Models by Senior Grand Warden RWBro Gord Fardoe (Manitoba) touched on the challenges of different models. Understanding the current methods and roles within Grand Lodge is the first step. How governance is embodied in organizations: doers or guidance bodies? How can communication be improved through technologies? Changing the model is important as technology and times change, some of the benefits of change.

The group discussed some of the challenges of different governance models: representatives of eight vs 24 DDGMs and their roles and titles. The key outcome was a matter of perception of what a DDGM or representative is and how the representation of the Craft can be achieved. Change importance was characterized as from don't care through to want to know, but through the education of a vision, the use of technology to convey the messages and timing that change. Change needs to be balanced while maintaining our foundation.

Paper No. 2 — Leadership & Change by Senior Grand Warden RWBro Reg Karbonic (Alberta) was a paper explaining the leadership selection process. How is the selection of its leaders important to the Craft? What are the qualifications? Legislative change relating to the make-up of the Board of General Purpose: proposing questions relating

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to being current in an ever-changing and dynamic world. In ancient times change was a strong arm versus glad-handing reflecting the strength of varying leadership skills.

The collective deliberations included shortcomings of some Lodges such as pressure by the “old guards” to rise through the ranks, repeating the Eastern climb. There was also Discussion about “What makes a qualified Master or District Deputy Grand Master?” Quite often it is an apathetic or rotational system that ends the quest for “Leaders.” A brief discussion ensued regarding the qualifications of a prospective Officer.

Paper No. 3 — Planning by Senior Grand Warden RWBro Don McKenzie (BC&Y) was presented. It takes time to plan for success and create its foundation; how to raise profile and awareness; the utilization of key milestones improves experience; and narrative of the Craft were the main topics.

The syndicate discussion was towards buy-in from all the Grand Lodge Officers of vision and mission, providing continuity and not contravention or counterproductive to the Grand Line; that the plan was to be cohesive, ever evolving and an informed narrative to the Craft. Utilize DDGMs & Masters to measure, through surveys, to get current issues and feedback. Knowing what is on the minds of membership is the first step to improve though education, Lodge

management, improved best practices.

Paper No. 4 — Dispensing Light Through Happiness by Grand Senior Warden RWBro Dan Olmsted (Saskatchewan) was a paper that provided thoughtful insight. He reminded us that random acts of kindness may be unimportant to us, but may mean the world to others. Expressing happiness to others is a fundamental act of selflessness. Harmony equals the balance of the Lodge and Life.

The group then went on to discuss how the candidates’ experience through a six or seven step process can demonstrate how we can create the balance and, inevitably, the happiness. Using the same philosophy with the Lodge trying to achieve a balance by including ladies, families and friends in social and community activities. Brotherly love, harmony and family provide the harmony and balance and increase the happiness of our Masonic experience.

Bonus Paper No. 5—Grand Secretary MWBro Richard Brown presented a short paper on the roles of Grand Secretaries. He reminded all the Grand Lodge Officers of the cooperation and facilitation skills they bring to the Grand Lodge, as well as their roles in communication to the Lodges and helping the Lodges. He also had a brief note on some upcoming and potentially challenging issues that could cause great

debate and concern for our Craft: Gender Policy; Social Media Policy; and Internet Misinformation. Awareness is the key.

The final aspect of the Conference was the business which included discussions on location and costs. The delegate’s review should always be mindful that we are attending by virtue of our Grand Lodges. The Conference costs were reviewed to ensure we are not being extravagant and that the Conference is being held within an affordable budget. Every attempt is being made to reduce costs in the future — analysing the Conference costs, examining relocating to less expensive locations and being ever mindful of the travel costs from the other jurisdictions.

My impression is that the Western Canada Conference is a particularly valuable part of the development of Grand Lodge. The experience is very beneficial to the development of Grand Lodge Officers beyond the relationships that are built through the good cheer, discussions and fellowship. The true value of the Conference is in the insight and perspective gained from the discussions on pertinent and similar issues, learning the lessons from initiatives and successes presented by all the jurisdictions.

Hearing, Seeing and Being Silent at the appropriate time. A challenge this Grand Lodge Officer has every day!

Preparing Proper Minutes — A Legal Document (Part III)

VWBro Richard Ashby, RPP

Grand Parliamentarian, The Grand Lodge of Alberta

In Part I, the definition of Minutes, a legal document, was presented and what should not be included. In Part II, items that should be included in the minutes were covered. Part III now covers wording and how to “adopt” the final record of the minutes.

In non-legislative, deliberative bodies operating under Robert’s Rules of Order, general consent is often used to expedite the consideration of uncontroversial motions, such as the adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting. It is used simply as a time saving device.

Generally, in a meeting of a deliberative assembly, business is conducted using a formal procedure of motion, debate, and vote. However, if there are no objections, action could be taken on items of routine business, such as the minutes, by general (or unanimous) consent. Only items that are everyday items, mundane or routine, can be handled in this manner. The procedure of using general consent is to expedite business in a timely manner by eliminating the need for formal votes on

routine questions in which the *existence of a consensus is quite likely*. The principle behind it is that procedural safeguards designed to protect a minority is of no effect when there is no minority to protect.

There is a difference between general or unanimous consent and a unanimous vote. Action taken by general or unanimous consent means that the Chair made a decision based on no objections and therefore agreeable to all members present. A unanimous vote means that a vote was actually taken and everyone present agreed to the adoption of the motion. There can be some confusion with the terms, which is why I recommend using the term general consent to avoid that confusion.

For example — adoption of the

minutes. **If** the minutes are printed and distributed prior to the meeting, the following script can be used:

Chair: The minutes having been published (or printed or distributed) are there any errors or omissions? (Pause and wait for a response — don’t wait too long, just long enough to see if there is going to be a reaction.)

If there is no response, the Chair states: “There being no errors or omissions, the minutes are adopted as published.”

If there is a response and a correction is made, the Chair states: “Are there any further errors or corrections? (Pause again.) “There being no further corrections, the minutes are adopted as corrected.”

Please don't declare the minutes adopted *as amended!* You cannot amend something that happened — but you can *correct* the record (minutes) to accurately reflect and document what actually happened.

When corrections to the minutes are made by the assembly, the corrections are done by the Secretary who immediately handwrites the correction(s) on the minutes and initials and dates each. The min-

utes of the current meeting merely state that the previous minutes were approved “as corrected” without actually stating the details of those corrections. The secretary simply crosses off the erroneous part of the minutes, writes the correction and initials it.

Because the minutes are a legal document, the Secretary and the Chair usually sign the minutes immediately after the adoption to signify and attest to their

accuracy.

Please note: The preceding information is provided in good faith as BASIC information and does not cover all situations. The author accepts no responsibility for anything which occurs directly or indirectly as a result of using any of the suggestions or procedures addressed in this article. All suggestions and procedures are provided in good faith as general guidelines only, as not all circumstances and situations can be covered. Suggestions above should be used in conjunction with relevant legislation, constitutions, rules, laws, bylaws, and with reasonable judgment.

Secrets, Privileges and Mysteries

VWBro George Allan, PGLec and Masonic Education contributor, *Freemason New Zealand*, Vol 46: No. 3, September 2018

At the time of writing this article I am sitting in the garden of a 500-year-old house in southern England. I was meditating on the “secrets and mysteries” of Freemasonry. The secrets are few and become well known to a Freemason as he progresses through our three Degrees. Likewise, the privileges are few: we are allowed to visit other Lodges and observe their work, we can invite our family and friends to attend Grand Installation when we accept a new Grand Master, we are sometimes asked to give Charges and take part in our own ceremonies in our own Lodge. One of the privileges that has changed slightly is that we can now initiate any man from eighteen years of age (from 1 November 2018). But the son of a Freemason, who is called a “Lewis”, will still be initiated before all others. But what of the mysteries?

Looking round at the flowers and shrubs in this summer garden (remember I am in England in August), I notice that leaves on different bushes have different leaf shapes and colour, but plants of the same type produce leaves of the same shape. So, I am thinking, what makes these leaves the same? What causes this to happen? What is the driving force behind a plant producing its leaves in a similar shape and colour?

Then I look at my hands and observe that my fingers have the same shape and only really differ in size. What driving force in my body makes this happen? Is my whole body driven by a life-force? Are we all driven by the same life-force? This is a mystery we don't understand but we do see its effects on us, and plants, and everything else.

What if this life-force is from TGAOTU, well beyond our understanding? Freemasons talk of Brotherly Love, could this be driven by the life-force from TGAOTU? It is a fact that if you smile at someone and are kind, they will usually respond in a

friendly manner. Is this how Brotherly Love begins to work? Is this one of the mysteries of Freemasonry?

Another mysterious fact is how Freemasonry started and has lasted so long, at least 300 years. What was the driving force behind that? What was it that drove well-to-do and sometimes “titled” gentry to adopt a working man's practice?

What is it that drives Freemasons to trust one another? We have all shared in a set of peculiar ceremonies and carry a piece of paper that says we are Freemasons, but what mysterious force guides us to put trust in this? This is one of the lesser-known mysteries of Freemasonry.

Freemasonry is spread over most countries on Earth, which is in itself a mystery. What has driven this to happen? What mysterious force has led the

ceremonies to be very similar wherever you go in countries speaking a variety of languages? One thought is that it does come from TGAOTU which is not of this physical world, but from another dimension beyond our Earthly world. This we label the spiritual world mainly because we do not understand it, it is mysterious to us. We are using the words “mysterious” and “mystery” to indicate that which we do not understand. Maybe one day we will understand a bit more than we do today.

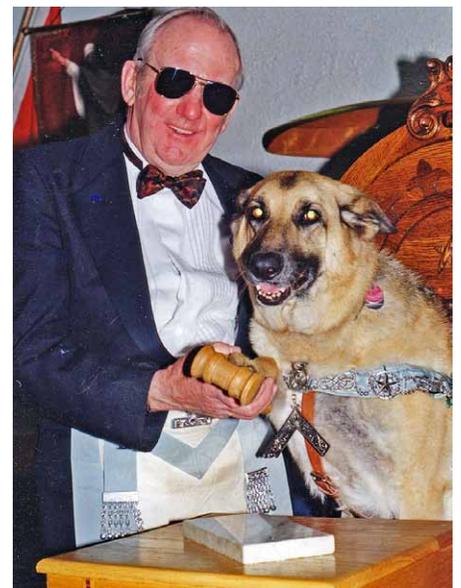
So, when we talk of the mysteries of Freemasonry, we are really noting events and happenings that we can't explain in the physical world. An important observation is that these events and happenings occur because of our ceremonies of making a Freemason and that is the biggest mystery of them all.

Is It Time for a Masonic Service Dog?

VWBro Garth Cochran

I was talking with our editor about an old friend and his dog — VWBro Graham Humphrey and Cara. She was an essential part of Graham's Masonic life. She guided him around the floor of the Lodge. She was also known to growl softly from under his chair when an error in ritual was made. She had, in Graham's heart, her own MM Degree — “Masonic Mutt.” She was even awarded the title “Grand Guide” on a small metal apron with a “collar” to hang around her neck, presented by MWBro Myron Lusk at the June 1994 Annual Communication.

When I look at some of the work in Lodges today, I wonder if some of our Masons could use a dog like Cara to guide them properly around the floor or growl at them when they get the ritual wrong — a Masonic Service Dog! Of course, we'd need dogs for each of our two rites: Cara was a York Rite Dog. — Aw, it's just a pipe dream! Cara



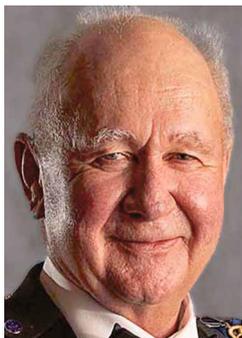
was just that unique! But it is a way to remember our good friend Graham and his Masonic Service Dog, Cara.

Your DDGMs 2018–2019

We are pleased to introduce to our readers the District Deputy Grand Masters serving the Craft in Alberta during the 2018–2019 term. This will be concluded in the next issue of The Alberta Freemason.

Central District

RWBro David McDonald was born in Rocky Mountain House, AB, where he spent his life on the family farm. He and his wife of 47 years raised their four children there and are now enjoying their fourteen grandchildren. He was initiated into Masonry in October 1981, passed in November 1981 and raised in February 1982. He is a second generation Mason and was the first in Lochearn Lodge to be raised by his father. He has served six different terms as Lochearn's Worshipful Master.



David has been heavily involved in the community, serving on several local organizations. He served from 1983 through 1992 on County Council and from 1989 through 1992 as Reeve and as Chair of the Red Deer Regional Planning Commission. From 1992 through 2003 he served on several Provincial Boards. When the Province amalgamated the Alberta Assessment Appeal Board, the Alberta Planning Board and the Local Authorities Board into one, he was one of three Albertans to serve on all three during the amalgamation.

In 2005 he and his wife built an RV park/campground and are enjoying their leisure years operating it.

Chinookarch District

RWBro Gordon Blaise Pitt (Gord)

was born in July 1959 in Victoria, BC. He finished school at Nanaimo, on Vancouver Island in 1976 with a pre-apprenticeship in heavy duty mechanics, and started working in the forest industry as a faller. In July 1980 he applied to the RCMP and graduated from Depot Division Regina, Saskatchewan on 4 October 1981 (Troop 1). Postings in Alberta included Faust, High Prairie, Peace River, Red Earth, Gleichen and Calgary International Drug Section, with a secondment to Burnaby Drug Section in BC. After this, he was posted to Pincher Creek, was transferred to RCMP Traffic Services and was a member of the CRASH team (serious MVC investigations) for southwest Alberta.



During his first posting in Faust, Gord met Monnie who was working as a Dental Therapist. They married in 1987 at Peace River and Monnie moved to Gleichen, where she started university in Calgary, earning her Education Degree (she is still teaching). Gord and Monnie have two daughters: Amy, a Registered Nurse married to Matt Kennedy, an RCMP Officer in Foremost, AB, and Tess, an RCMP Officer who is posted in Drayton Valley. Gord and Monnie have two grandchildren, Olivia and Johnny Blaise.

Gord retired from the RCMP in 2005. Soon after retiring, Gord started a long haul trucking company specializing in dimensional loads (large equipment) out of the USA. In 2009 he sold the company and hired on with the Town of Pincher Creek,

specializing in liability mitigation, and in September 2018 he retired again. Gord's interests include salmon fishing during the summer (Telegraph Cove, BC) with his soulmate Monnie, and building Cafe Motorcycles in the winter, but most important is being part of an effective Grandma and Grandpa team year round.

Gord's Masonic journey began in 2009, and in February 2010 he was initiated at his Mother Lodge, Chinook Spitzie Lodge No 6. He was passed to the Fellowcraft Degree in March and on May 17 raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason. Being retired, Gord is looking forward to spending a busy year with all his Brothers as the DDGM for Chinookarch District, and spending much time with family.

Dinosaur District

RWBro Ron Sigouin was born in Tisdale, Saskatchewan in February 1945 and was raised on a family farm near the town of Arborfield (only thirteen miles east from where the Humboldt Broncos bus tragedy happened). Ron finished high school at St Peter's College in Muenster, SK, then returned to the family farm for a few years. In 1969 Ron moved to Nelson, BC, to pursue an apprenticeship to become an auto mechanic and had to travel to Kelowna during the winter to attend Okanagan College.



During his years in Nelson, Ron owned a few different auto related businesses and met a certain young lady named Felicity who was having difficulties with her car. Ron and Felicity were married in September 1982 and their daughter Chelsea was born in November of 1983. Ron, Felicity and daughter Chelsea moved to Drumheller, AB in the spring of 1995 to pursue a new venture, where Ron met new friends and became interested in becoming a Mason.

Ron was made a Mason in 2007, was Worshipful Master of Drumheller Lodge No. 146 2013–15 and served as First Principle of Eheyeh Chapter No. 27, Royal Arch Masons, in 2016 and 2017. In 2015 Ron was challenged to take the course offered by Ashlar College of Freemasonry, which originates in Victoria, BC, and completed the course in 2016. Ron was elected DDGM at the Dinosaur District meeting in October of 2017.

Lakeland District

RWBro Jeff Knight was born in Chatham, ON in 1958 and graduated from Blenheim District High School in 1976. He joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1977 as a Weapons Technician (Land) in the Corps of Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RCEME) and in 1992 he was commissioned from the ranks as an Electrical Mechanical Engineering Officer. Jeff completed his Professional Military Education at the Canadian Defence Academy in 2001 and attended the



Canadian Land Force Command and Staff College in 2004. He completed his last years of service as the Officer Commanding Electrical Mechanical Engineering Squadron at 4 Wing Cold Lake, retiring in 2005 after 28 years service.

Jeff currently lives just outside of Cold Lake on a small farm and continues to work at 4 Wing Cold Lake under contract to the military, where he provides training to Canada's fighter force through instruction and operation of the CF18 flight simulator.

Jeff's decision to commit to the Masonic lifestyle began when he was initiated in Astra lodge No. 179 in 2003. He was passed and then raised as a Master Mason in 2004. Jeff progressed through the various chairs of the Lodge, sitting twice in the East as Worshipful Master and has been the Secretary of Astra Lodge for a total of 5 years.

RWBro Knight sought more light through Capitular Masonry by being exalted as a Royal Arch Mason in Cold Lake Chapter No. 39. He again progressed through the various offices sitting in the east as the First Principal of the Chapter three times. In 2012 Jeff was appointed as the Grand Sword Bearer of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons of Alberta. In May 2015 he was elected and installed as the Grand District Superintendent of District No. 2, and in 2017 was appointed by the Grand First Principal to the Executive Committee of Grand Chapter. Jeff has received the Past Masters (Virtual) Degree and the Holy Order of the High Priesthood.

RWBro Knight completed the Chivalric Degrees in Edmonton Preceptory No.46 Knights Templar. He completed the Cryptic Rite Degrees at Zohar Council No. 4 in Edmonton and received the Royal Arc Mariner Degree in Ft McMurray, AB. He was installed as the District Deputy Grand Master of Lakeland District at the Annual Grand Lodge Communication in June 2018.

Northern Lights District

RWBro Jared Vanoni was born in October 1981 in Edmonton, Alberta. After graduating from high school he was hired by the City of Edmonton ETS Department working as a bus service operative, where he has worked for 19 years and was recently promoted foreman.



Jared has since accomplished a third degree in Reiki healing, first degree black belt in Kung Fu, three albums playing percussion and guitar for various bands, while driving a limousine part time for six years. Jared has made it his mission to study the world and its history by reading hundreds of books and travelling extensively through 31 countries worldwide in the last twelve years. He is set to publish his first non-fiction book this year.

RWBro Vanoni was initiated, passed and raised into Freemasonry in February, March and April 2006. He served as Worshipful Master of Mystic West Lodge No. 101 for three consecutive years (2012–2015) presided over the amalgamation of Mystic Tie Lodge No. 188 and West Edmonton Lodge No. 101, followed by three consecutive years as Secretary/Treasurer (2015–2018) and served as Northern Lights District Secretary for 2017/2018.

