



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Vol. 63, No. 10

Editor: MWBro Robert E. Juthner

December 1998

The Season's Greetings

As we approach the season of Christmas, it is good to remember the vision that comes from the Prophet Isaiah, in the Volume of the Sacred Law. The prophet reminds us that we need to be a people of vision, as we continue on that journey that seeks the genuine secrets of a Master Mason. Each time we meet we are reminded that it is our SEARCH that is important. If our earth is ever to reflect the completion of the temple or the city of God, here are some of the characteristics we need to incorporate into our way of doing things, both symbolically and in reality:

Build houses and inhabit them.

Plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

Enjoy the work of our hands, and not labour in vain.

Bear children blessed by the LORD.

And then we shall see.

The wolf and the lamb feed together, the lion eats straw like the ox; this vision of peace and wellbeing is really saying to us that we must live in the world today as we wish everyone to live in the world to come, or the world we want will never be formed.

At a time when circumstances in many ways appear dark and bleak, it is good to remember that we would not see without the darkness. Remember that the average number of stars seen from a suburb is about 250, while the number visible from the wilderness is about 2500. May the light of God, creator, redeemer and sustainer shine in all our lives this blessed Yuletide.

VWBro Ted Wigglesworth
Grand Chaplain

Christmas Lights

When General Burgoyne surrendered to General Gates at Saratoga in 1777, a regiment of Brunswickers under the command of Major General Frederick von Riedesel also were made prisoners of war. At the end of the war and after their release, General von Riedesel and his wife, called affectionately "Lady Fritz," spent some time in Canada before returning to Europe. It was in Canada where the following story took place:

On his release, von Riedesel, prior to returning to his homeland, took up residence in Sorel (Canada) and it was there on Christmas Eve 1779 that Lady Fritz, seeing a pine tree in her garden outlined against the velvet blue of a starry night, conceived the idea of putting small lighted candles on her Christmas tree and thereby wrote a charming page of Canadian History by giving Canada its very first illuminated Christmas tree, a sight so familiar to us all at the Festive Season.

John Patience, PGM (GRQ), STB 12/91



Happy Hanukkah!

As our Brethren of the Jewish Faith begin their eight-day remembrance of the Festival of Lights on the 25th day of Kislev, this year falling on the 14th of December, all Brethren of this jurisdiction join in extending to them warmest, best wishes!

Editorial

Freemasonry and the Judiciary

The year 1998 draws to a close, another year marked by attacks on Freemasonry from various quarters and in different parts of the world. At the Masonic Spring Workshop of 1998, Bro Gary Leazer gave his audience the benefit of his experiences with such attacks from religious fundamentalists in the United States. We have also previously reported on the problems the United Grand Lodge of England and its members have been subjected to from high state authorities. In both instances, we, as Freemasons, are made out to be the "Baddies" and are left little room for setting the record straight. Recently, on September 9, 1998, the UGLE's Pro Grand Master, Lord Farnham, talked about public relations and "Freemasonry and the Judiciary", an address printed in *Grand Lodge News* (after the date cited), which your editor feels warrants the printing in full, in lieu of his usual, own opinion statement. What follows is quoted verbatim, and merits the attention and interest of Alberta Brethren:

"In July, with the backing of all Provincial Grand Masters, I wrote personally to the Home Secretary to protest against the introduction of so-called 'voluntary' registers of Freemasons. We are a law-abiding association of God-fearing men whose aim it is to improve the individual and make him a better member of society.

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"We are protesting against this measure because we have been unfairly singled out despite all the evidence that we do not deserve such discrimination and, more fundamentally, because we believe that such registers do not accord with the right of free association and privacy.

"When the Home Secretary first announced the intention to set up these registers he said that they would be introduced unless Grand Lodge could provide the required information. While I am sure that certain of our members might be able, perhaps by virtue of their employment, to list and identify several Freemasons who are involved in certain occupations, Grand Lodge neither has nor needs to have details of the present occupations of our membership as a whole. To embark on an internal inquiry on this scale would place an unreasonable burden on our present or potential resources.

"If the authorities really feel they must find out the occupations of our memberships, they should carry out their own research.

"As a result of my letter, the Home Office has invited the Grand Secretary to meet some of its officials. On that front, therefore, we must wait and see. In the meantime, however, the Lord Chancellor has decided to 'invite' all holders of judicial office to register whether they are Freemasons or not. Obviously, we object to that register too, for the same reasons that I have already outlined.

"We are however worried that all those non-Masons who, for reasons of conscience or whatever, refuse to register will be assumed by certain sections of the media, or even by the Lord Chancellor's Department itself, to be Freemasons. This will inevitably give a distorted view, one which will be used to the disadvantage of both the judiciary and Freemasonry.

"We have therefore written to the Lord Chancellor's Department asking them to distribute, at our expense, a letter to all holders of judicial office, urging them to correspond to the Lord Chancellor's invitation.

"The Lord Chancellor's request to the holders of judicial office has been expressed as voluntary but its impact on new applicants for such offices is certainly not. The unfairness of singling out Freemasons in this way is apparent; the perception among our members is likely to be 'Freemasons need not apply' and we are pressing the Lord Chancellor for re-assurance on this point. As we believe our members are particularly

well qualified to give valuable service to the community, we can see that discouraging Freemasons from public service in this way is likely to be not only an unfair disadvantage to our members but also an unnecessary loss to the community.

"We lose no opportunity to remind inquirers such as the Home Affairs Committee that Freemasonry is a strong supporter of proper authority. For all the reasons I have already mentioned we protest strongly that singling out Freemasonry in this way is wrong and unfair. We firmly believed that requirements such as those contemplated should not be implemented without due legislative process. Nevertheless we have come to realise the impact on individuals of a request from such senior Ministers as the Home Secretary and the Lord Chancellor is much the same as it would be if it derived from an Order of Parliament or from primary legislation.

"I have concluded therefore that, whatever our misgivings, our members should respond to such requests. I ask you all to do so with pride but at the same time to register your protest at the unfairness of this discrimination. I deplore the pressure these requests to register are already imposing upon our members and I am adding to this with my advice today. Nevertheless, I am confident that the strength we derive from our Masonry will reinforce our pride in declaring it. The same pride will ensure that we do not, when challenged, deny it.

"In the end, the decision must be one for the individual. The perception that disclosure could adversely affect an individual's employment may lead some of you to resign from the Craft in order to save your jobs. This would be highly regrettable and we will be pressing the Home Secretary and the Lord Chancellor to show why this perception may be ill-founded.

"As the Grand Master said in April, if anyone does feel it necessary to resign, we hope he will plan to return to the Craft later and that his Lodge will understand his reasons for leaving and welcome him back. Initiatives such as those emanating from the Home Office or the Lord Chancellor's Department are worrying for everyone and do take up a lot of our time. There is much in all this that will continue to be considered urgently by the Board of General Purposes and by senior Masons throughout the Craft. In due course there will be more to tell you. But these initiatives should not divert us from planning and implementing a campaign to change the perception of Freemasonry where we believe it is both necessary and possible to do so.

"To that end, as you already know, I set up a Public Relations Steering Group, and the Group's outline proposals for a long term campaign will be put to a meeting of Provincial Grand Masters.

"The campaign will involve each and every member of the Craft and I trust that when the campaign is fleshed out you will give it your full support."

As far removed as we are, geographically, and perhaps not yet subjected to the same kind of political pressure, should we not also guard against such suspicions levelled at our Craft, and step up our own "Public Relations" enlightenment drives which, so far are still in an embryonic state?

Grand Master's Itinerary

December

- 1 Fidelity Lodge and Kenilworth Lodge, Amalgamation
- 3 Foothills Lodge, Calgary
- 9 Dominion Lodge, Edmonton
- 12 Commercial Lodge, Edmonton

Our DDGMs

Calgary-Highwood District

RWBro Walter L. Woodward was born on December 12, 1923 in Swift Current, SK, and was raised on a farm nearby. He graduated from high school in Tompkins and joined the RCAF in 1943, to spend four years in that service. There followed forty-two years in the construction business and as a Certified Management Accountant, working for the Mannix Corporation and Montreal Engineering Company. He retired in 1989. Walter and Faye have been married for forty-six years and have four married children and six grandchildren.



Brother Woodward was initiated in Kelvingrove Lodge No. 187 in 1966, served as WM in 1973 and as Secretary-Treasurer for ten years. In 1994-95 he was the Grand Tyler of the Grand Lodge of Alberta. In concordant bodies, our Brother is a member of the Scottish Rite in Calgary, PTPGM of the Calgary Lodge of Perfection, a member of Otuskwan Chapter, RAM, Centennial Chapter No. 136, OES, and the Al Azhar Oriental Band, AAONMS.

Chinookarch District

RWBro Eric W. Weigelt, born February 22, 1947 in Gravelbourg, SK, is an agricultural equipment salesman, now residing in Lethbridge. He is married to Shirley.



Brother Weigelt received the degrees of Craft Masonry in Banner Lodge No. 154, GRS in 1968, and after affiliation with Brooks Lodge No. 73, GRA, served as its WM in 1991. He is now a member of Lethbridge Lodge No. 39, GRA. In Capitular Masonry he holds membership in Shekinah Chapter, RAM, Acre Preceptory, KT, Southern Alberta Tabernacle No. 109, HRAKTP, Alberta Council No. 5, R&SM, Pompilius York Rite College, the Red Cross of Constantine and the York Cross of Honour. He is also a member of Al Azhar Temple, AAONMS and of Laurel Chapter, OES.

Dinosaur District

RWBro Walter L. Seifert was born in Lumsden, SK on April 6, 1933. He is a business owner, residing in Calgary. He and Marilyn have been married for 41 years, and have four married daughters and eleven grandchildren. They like to travel and to accompany their grandchildren to numerous sports activities, and to go fishing and camping on their own. Walter has done maintenance work on Bowmont and Strathmore Lodge halls, as well as volunteer work in

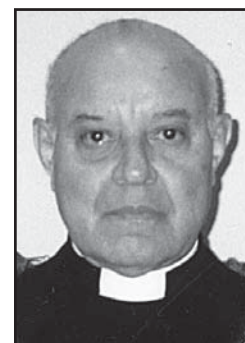


the community and neighbourhood schools.

Brother Seifert was initiated, passed and raised in St. Mark's Lodge No. 118, GRA in 1975 and affiliated with Rockyford Lodge No. 123, where he served as WM in 1987. His Capitular Masonry memberships include Calgary Chapter No. 11, RAM, Cypress Preceptory No. 33, KT, Zodak Council No. 3, R&SM, Red Cross of Constantine, Chinook City Conclave, Pompilius York Rite College No. 79, and the Order of the Silver Trowel. He is also a member of Edith Cavell Chapter No. 25, OES and has served as Associate Guardian for the Order of Job's Daughters.

Lakeland District

RWBro Joshua Hindmarch Eden Phillpotts was born May 3, 1929 in Spanish Town, Jamaica. It was there and in Kingston where he was educated, graduating from theological seminary in 1948. Serving as an Anglican missionary priest, he came to Canada in 1965. He married Yvonne in 1954 and became the father of twin daughters, Margaret and Kathleen and son Andrew. He now has three grandchildren. Yvonne passed away in 1997.



Brother Phillpotts was raised in Portland Lodge No. 7740 EC of Port Antonio, Jamaica, affiliated with Whitehorse Lodge No. 46, BCR, in 1971, then with Wahpun Lodge No. 88, GRA in 1976, which Lodge he served as WM in 1982. In 1986 he became a Charter Member of Ye Olde Craft Lodge No. 196, GRA, and again affiliated with St. George's Lodge No. 169, GRA, in 1991, and in 1996 with St. John's Lodge No. 25, GRA. In 1986-87 he was the Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Alberta. In Capitular Masonry our Brother has been a member of Yukon Chapter No. 38, RAM and Wapiti Chapter No. 34 GRA, RAM, Edmonton Preceptory No. 46, KT, Zohar Council No. 4, R&SM, Alberta Rose No. 52 York Rite College, Northern Lights Tabernacle No. 130, HRAKTP, Taylor Conclave No. 5, Red Cross of Constantine, and recipient of the York Cross of Honour and the Order of the Purple Cross. He is also a member of the Edmonton bodies of the A&ASR and of Edmonton Chapter No. 19, OES.

Mighty Peace District

RWBro Gordon H. Astle was born in Edmonton, AB, on October 23, 1933. He is a businessman, residing in Grande Prairie, and is married to Eleanor, nee Peacock, and the father of two grown children and two grandchildren. He has served his community as president of the Alberta Easter Seals drive and has been Alderman in Grande Prairie as well as Councillor and Mayor of Beaverlodge.



Brother Astle received the degrees of Craft Masonry in Lake Saskatoon Lodge No. 106 in 1971/72, which Lodge he served as WM in 1978. His previous service

in Grand Lodge includes the Masonic Higher Education Bureau Committee, the COMELY Committee and the Board of General Purposes. In concordant bodies he belongs to Wapiti Chapter No. 34, RAM, Edmonton Preceptory No. 46, KT, and the OES, where he holds the rank of Past Grand Patron. He has recently demitted from the AAONMS.

Book Review

Who's Afraid of Freemasonry?

By Alexander Piatigorsky

Harvill Press, 398 pages

ISBN 1-86046-029-1, \$60.00

This is probably the most difficult book to review that I have ever attempted. The title is most attractive to a Freemason in view of all the negative press we have been receiving over the past decade. I had hoped this book would be an examination of the Craft for the layman to read and understand more about the organization. In a way that is what the book is; however, I did not find it an easy read. The word enjoyable would not be my first adjective; difficult maybe, but not enjoyable. This may explain why it took me six months, off and on, to read it.

The author tries to weave some philosophical concepts into his examination of Freemasonry and its history. The introductory chapters are entitled "Secrecy, privacy and provocation," "Freemasonry as Theme and a 'Thing Apart,'" and "Method, Phenomenology and Religion in General." Here the author starts his examination of Freemasonry as a philosophy. He also analyses Freemasonry as an object of thought, what do Masons think of Masonry, themselves, and what do others think. He also delves into Masonry as an object in itself, the Lodges, the rituals, signs and symbols, their habits, language and speeches.

The main body of the book gives an extensive outline of Masonic history. Piatigorsky discusses the founding of the Grand Lodge in Covent Garden in London in 1717. He views Masonry's inception, in Britain, as an instrument to solve the endemic tension between individual desire and public responsibility. He also discusses its religious and ethical conceptions. The author dissects Anderson's *Constitutions* to separate history, myth, and fancy concerning the historicity of Freemasonry. Besides rehashing the British origins of the Craft, the Freemasonry of Scotland, France, Germany, and United States and their histories are examined. The author attempted to interweave the history of British, French, and Germanic Freemasonry into a continuum; however, this reviewer did not feel the job was very well done. In fact, I felt a little more confused than enlightened by the time I had finished this main portion of the book.

The last part discussed the rituals and symbolism "within which all principal Masonic religious ideas find their place." While Dr. Piatigorsky is a professor of comparative religion at the University of London, I did not feel that large quotes of rituals (taken from the many books disclosing our rituals) did much to discuss the effects of ancient religions upon Masonic symbolism. Rehashing bits of the ritual may sell some books to those who have not discovered the ready availability of our ritual in the public press, the discussion of those disclosures did not add anything to my understanding of the symbols or meaning of those rituals. Chapter 12, "A Digression on Com-

parative Religion, Comparative Mythology and Comparative Psychology," tries to demonstrate how elements of religion, mythology, and an appeal to psychology are interwoven, cleverly, into our ritual. While his insights are interesting, I am unsure that anyone who has sat through our ceremonies would be surprised that those 3 elements are part and parcel of the rituals. An outsider, who thought about what we do, would probably not be surprised either.

The end of the book discusses the concept of Freemasonry as a social abstraction. The author concludes that Masonry is a part of British civilization. The organization has been generally benign. He also feels that the institution has been on the decline since World War II due to:

1. In Britain, as an institution, it does not constitute a political, politically influential, or politically influenced group. The membership in Britain is spread over most of the political spectrum, except those beyond slightly right of centre. This makes it an easy target of those of all political stripes to attack.
2. The author suggests that the United Grand Lodge and the Church of England seem to be rather intermingled due to the number of Anglican clergy that are members; therefore, Freemasonry has never been anti-clerical as in France. This point baffled me.
3. It is "due to their political noninvolvement, social abstractedness, religious vagueness, and ideological unseriousness that Masons in Britain spontaneously worked out and developed an entirely informal and loose intra-structure, an intra-structure which can be conceived of as a set of unsystemized 'soft' preferences, based on the following principle: that when there is a choice between two options of equal value, one Masonic and the other non-Masonic, then a preference is given to the first. It may be dubious practice, but I do not think that there is much more to it than that, or more sinister than the 'old boy' network in whatever guise it may take." This point seems to me to be a mixed message. The first part of the quote suggests that we are fading from the scene due to a lack of political involvement, a vague commitment to society and some sort of ideological unseriousness. The latter part of the quote suggests at worst we are a group that uses a form of patronage amongst ourselves.

This book puzzled me. The historical section followed a well worn path. The quotes from the ritual and their analysis seemed consistent with other authors, including Masonic authors. However, after the author reviewed our history, examined our rituals, examined the effects of various religions, both ancient and more recent, upon our teachings, used psychology on our ceremonies, he concludes that the organization need not be feared for, at worst, we are a small group, within the total population of any country, who exercises a form of patronage to dole out jobs, references, etc. The author seems to ignore the fact that our ceremonies attempt to teach our members to be better men; men who follow ethical precepts in their everyday lives. This makes society better, a little at a time perhaps, but better nonetheless. I am unsure that the author, after all the research done for the book, has any real understanding of the Craft. As far as an examination of comparative religion and symbolisms in our ceremonies, I would recommend a reading of Albert Pike's *Morals and Dogma*. It is better written, unbiased, and more complete.

lwk