



Kilwinning 565 News

From The Chair



Back To Work!

Greetings Brethren,

I hope you all had a great summer and had an opportunity to enjoy some time off.

For those who attended the Grand Lodge Convocation, I am sure that you enjoyed the activities, especially the hospitality suite which was deemed a huge success.

Our new DDGM R. W. Gabe R. Spoletni has, once again, appointed our W. Bro. Rob Lund as Chairman of the District Education committee but, this time, co-chairing with W. Bro. David Barnwell of Ionic Lodge. We look forward to another enlightening year.

Our summer Barbecue at Bro. Kevin Young's home was a feast for the senses. Kevin and Elizabeth's beautiful home and garden were the perfect venue for the great food presented. Bro Phil Horrigan and Elizabeth again proved their culinary talents.

We find ourselves approaching the end of summer and, with that, our minds turn once again to our Masonic activities.

We have a grand event planned for our September 18th Regular meeting. We will be celebrating our esteemed Brother George MacLean's long Masonic career. He will be presented with a long service award for 70 years service as a Mason. This promises to be a wonderful evening recognizing the achievements and Masonic service of Bro MacLean, including a pin presentation and banquet. We look forward to your support of this evening.

We also look forward to the many events and fun activities, including our visiting Pontiac Brothers in October.

Planning for our fall and winter meetings should be in our minds. Those wishing to progress should be meeting with their sponsors and mentors.

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I look forward to seeing you all soon

Watch for upcoming events and communications around the District. See the newsletter for some of these.

Sincerely and Fraternaly,
W. Bro. Marc Decorte
Worshipful Master

Summer BBQ Pics



Article

In this issue of the newsletter, I have included another excellent article by well-known Masonic author—Julian Rees, “A Seeker After the Inner Meaning of Freemasonry”. His comments on the spiritual teachings of Freemasonry are very worthy of consideration.

Further information on the author and his work can be found on his web site: <http://www.julianrees.com/>

THE PLACE OF BROTHERHOOD IN FREEMASONRY

By W. Bro. Julian Rees

In a fascinating essay written in 1896, the Freemason J.E. Thomas of South Africa wrote:

“To assist in the ceremonial duties of the Lodge without seeking to unfold the symbolism, is to remain satisfied with the externals only, those husks which envelope and protect the grain. Our quest is to ascertain the internal truths of which symbolism is but the index. For instance, to what extent are the fraternal relations between my fellow Freemasons and myself different to those which I hold with my neighbours and friends? “

With these words, the author places brotherhood firmly at the centre, both of our masonic existence, and of our initiatic quest.

Brotherhood, the bonding between human beings, exists of course on different levels and in different spheres of human experience. In the profane world, brotherhood may be more often relied on in times of danger and distress than in the hour of ease and comfort. There is ample evidence of bonding between men on the field of battle, or between those caught up in a natural disaster. And after each of the world wars of the twentieth century, the numbers of lodges and consequently of Freemasons increased substantially, testament to the search for fraternal comradeship in their daily lives by men who had experienced it so dramatically in war. But the answer to Brother Thomas’ question above may be to say that masonic brotherhood transcends danger or necessity, and requires that we exercise the same selfless qualities towards our masonic Brethren in everyday life and in everyday situations. I should be towards my Brother such a mainstay that my own pillar of strength should mirror his own in any situation in life, whether that situation be a negative or a positive one. But I believe that, to practise true brother-

hood masonically, it is a prerequisite that I first learn to practise it in respect of myself. Let me explain.

If I am to achieve the desired close bond of brotherhood with men and women of any group, it requires that I fully understand my Brethren. And to understand them, to know them, I first have to know myself, to achieve true gnosis as the Greeks call it, most accurately translated as the Act of Knowing. If I can come to truly know myself, and therefore to understand myself, with all my virtues, vices, merits and failings, then I can begin to validate myself, to acknowledge my uniqueness as a part of the Creation, a part of the Cosmos. Through this validation, I achieve some measure of self-esteem. This is neither pride nor prejudice; it is being still at my own centre, and knowing. ‘Man, know thyself, then thou shalt know the universe’ wrote Pythagoras. So it is with Brotherhood, since only at that centre of my own being will I be able to look outwards, and be able to esteem my Brother or Sister, to experience their humanity alongside my own.

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In this context, it is also important to understand the principle of tolerance. In today’s world, in religion as in philosophy, what is true for me may not be that which is true for my Brother. The plumb-rule, one of the most important symbols in Freemasonry, denotes correctness on many levels, and through that it strives to denote that which is true. Truth however is elusive. What was shown to be

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scientifically true in previous centuries has been superseded by advances in scientific research, and is now no longer true. It was once deemed impossible for men to explore space. Advances in material science have superseded that. On the other hand, a mathematical equation formulated many hundreds of years ago is still true - one has only to think again of Pythagoras. Our task, as Brethren, is to achieve a 'fusion point', where the religious or philosophical truth held by my Brother, a truth mutable or immutable depending on the individual viewpoint, becomes united with that truth held by me. This has less to do with sacrificing my own strongly-held beliefs than with acknowledging the parallel truth of the belief held by my Brother. Correctness is transitory - truth ought to be absolute, and brotherhood rests on us being tolerant of many truths. When a person comes to a lodge for initiation, he is basically saying 'I am going to be your Brother, and you will be my Brethren', a commitment as basic and profound as any that can be made by a human being. It is the oneness extolled by Buddhism. But the tolerance required to do this to perfection is not a passive tolerance. We are required to practise tolerance actively, in making sure that the brotherhood is all-inclusive. In a lodge I visited there was a very disputatious Brother. One of the members expressed the view that this Brother had been sent to us, in order to test our tolerance.

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Let me give you an example of how tolerance can be engendered by close companionship. There was an offensive confrontation some years ago in Belfast, in an area where a catholic school is situated in a predominantly protestant area. At that time, for the catholic mothers to take their children to school in the morning, they had to

run a gauntlet of hostile protestants, shouting abuse and menacing them, adults and children alike, shameful behaviour by any standards. Some time later, a television company, in the 'reality television' now so popular, devised a programme in which adults from both sides of the sectarian divide in Belfast spent some time, outside Ireland, camping in a desolate and mountainous area, where they had to come to terms with their primitive surroundings. This environment required that they all worked together in some sort of harmony, without which their day-to-day endurance would not have been possible. The participants were obliged to cooperate in all their activities, simply to ensure survival. They were subjected to the severest tests of fortitude and inner strength. Among them were two mothers - one a parent of a child at that school, the other a mother who had shouted abuse. These two had come on the programme in ignorance of each other's part in that episode, but as their relationship to each other slowly developed, they became aware of their previous confrontation, and began to learn to accommodate their differences. They had begun better to understand the sterile 'blame culture', that barren landscape lying between, and alienating them from, each other. Towards the end of the programme, these two women were teamed together in an abseiling exercise, the protestant woman suspended over a very frightening sheer rock-face, paralysed by fear. The catholic woman, her former antagonist, paid out the rope from the top and, to encourage the other, called out the words we all long to hear from time to time when we feel abandoned or helpless, the words which resonate to us from the memories of our mother in our childhood. 'Trust me,' she said, 'I won't let you fall', among the most evocative words one human being can speak to another, spoken here by a woman to her former enemy. This was active tolerance at its best, in extreme circumstances.

Mutuality without tolerance is an unstable building. Mutuality requires not only physical closeness, but closeness of spirit, impossible if tolerance is missing. The verb 'tolerate' is of course latin in origin, meaning 'bear', 'carry'

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Links

- **Lodge Website:** kilwinning565.com

This site has back issues of the newsletter, and many articles.

- **District Website:** www.torontowestdistrict.com

- Educational articles can also be found on the District web site.
- **Grand Lodge:** www.grandlodge.on.ca

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or 'support'. This aspect of mutuality is illustrated by Laurence Dermott, the first Grand Secretary of the 'Antients' Grand Lodge, who wrote in his seminal work *Ahiman Rezon*:

"For human society cannot subsist without concord, and the maintenance of good offices; for, like the working of an arch of stone, it would fall to the ground provided one piece did not properly support another."

"In today's world, I hope to learn from a new aspirant as much as, or more than, he may learn from me."

The integrity of such an arch is often said to depend on the keystone, but in fact its integrity depends on every stone, the smallest and the newest, together with the largest and the most important. It is of course in this respect like a chain, whose efficacy depends on every constituent link, and not only those links perceived as the strongest or most important. This is what we mean when we speak of equality among Brethren.

At the time when I was initiated into Freemasonry, it was commonplace for the senior members of the lodge to say, with a certain amount of self-importance, 'When you have been in Freemasonry as long as I have, you will be qualified to express a view on it'. The implication was, that I should simply listen and learn, and not say too much. That is, of course, not a valid standpoint, however much humility is needed. There is a tendency in some masonic jurisdictions for masonic rank to play a large part in our activities. Grand Rank awarded as an active, administra-

tive rank, awarded in respect of merit or achievement, is necessary and laudable, but the awarding of past ranks in profusion can only lead to corrosion of brotherhood. One younger Brother ironically described this aspect to me as 'masonic graffiti'. The joy of hermetic thought was that the teacher taught, and the student in time became himself a teacher, qualified to teach others. This did not place him on a higher plane, and those who do so place themselves, are hindering themselves on their masonic journey, since the equality we experience as Brethren is what makes the journey possible.

In today's world, I hope to learn from a new aspirant as much as, or more than, he may learn from me. It is true that I can instruct him in the form of ritual, allegory and symbol of which he may not yet be aware. But if I fail to take note of how he invests those forms with his own unique interpretation, I shall be the loser, and Freemasonry will lose not only its diversity, but its vitality as well. From this it follows that, as a member of my lodge, however 'experienced' I may be, I am dependant on the most newly-initiated Brother. This is true. If I claim, as some do, that I have nothing to learn from a new, 'inexperienced' Freemason, then I am making a grave mistake, for myself as well as for the Brotherhood.

But central to all of this is the notion that I must first attend to my own moral progress. A manuscript was discovered in 1696 in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, setting out the purported examination of a member of the masonic fraternity by King Henry VI:

"Do Masons love one another mightily as is said? Yes, verily; and that cannot be otherwise, for the better men are, the more they love one another."

And can we come nearer to understanding the nature of this brotherly love? Many masonic jurisdictions world wide lay great stress on the practice of charity to those in

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Words of Wisdom

"He who makes the investigation of his spiritual nature his chief object will be able to bring all his studies to a focus, and this concentration of his energies will render him capable of arriving at a condition of sensibility to impressions similar to that which belongs to a young child."

Lao-Tse

Excerpt from *Tao-The King, or Book of the Values of the Tao*

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need, a charity which most often expresses itself by financial assistance. In those jurisdictions Freemasons of course also support those of their own members who need assistance, often believing that the exercise of brotherly love requires no more. The brotherhood of Freemasons, to be perfectly effective, does require more. It requires the seizing, daily, of opportunities to cultivate a spirit of true brotherhood in those ways that do not involve financial assistance, by lightening a Brother's burden, by gladdening his heart, by gentle words of encouragement.

Paradoxically, although the pursuit of self-knowledge and moral progress and development is an individual pursuit, to engage in it within a group such as a lodge or other masonic fraternity, increases its effectiveness, as though the force of the whole is greater than the sum of its several parts. It is as though each member of the group acts as a catalyst for the transforming power of Freemasonry for all of his Brethren. It is this that truly sets Freemasonry apart from other fraternal pursuits, and this is possibly the best answer to Brother Thomas' quotation cited at the beginning.

"In seeking to serve others, we become free."

If the pursuit of brotherhood with my Brethren requires first a pursuit of that brotherhood, that humanity, which is individual to me, then I need to look at that centre from which that humanity springs, the centre within myself. I am reminded that different jurisdictions in Freemasonry use different words for this centre, if not different concepts. For too long, the question of belief in a Supreme Being has tragically divided Freemasons, when it is indeed that essence which ought to unite. How does my new-made Brother view his own humanity and his place in the cosmos? In my own masonic jurisdiction, a belief in a Supreme Being is a sine qua non of membership, an immutable condition. An aspirant came before my lodge com-

mittee for interview, and was asked if he had such a belief. After a long pause, he said 'It depends what you mean by "believe"'. He told me afterwards, without irony, that it was like asking if a wave believed in the sea. He regarded himself as a part of the Creation. How should he question, therefore, the very life-force of which he was himself a part?

I believe that, in this sense, Brethren from different jurisdictions, so-called believers and so-called unbelievers, might like to examine this question in a common discourse. We might like to consider whether it is simply language that divides us. Pierre Mollier, Grand Librarian of the Grand Orient of France, remembers a senior member of the Grand Orient saying to him, 'Pour le Grand Orient, le vrai athéisme n'existe pas' ("For the Grand Orient, true atheism does not exist"), and if we can, collectively, come to acknowledge the spark of Being - divinity or humanity - within ourselves, we will already have made a great leap forward. Brotherhood, I believe, requires that, in the process of validating each other's humanity in the way I have spoken about, we seek out that spark in our Brother which does make him unique and estimable.

We call ourselves Free-Masons. In the same way that we need air to breathe, we need to be free, and that freedom exists, for Freemasons, on so many levels. It can be freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, freedom from dogma, freedom of positive purpose, freedom of speech, freedom from political or ideological coercion. I believe there is another freedom, perhaps the most important of them all, and that is, the freedom to serve our Brethren. According to tradition, there was supposed to be an inscription on the Round Table of King Arthur which read:

In seeking to serve others, we become free.

For more information on the author and his various books, and to read some of his articles, or watch his videos, visit his web site at:

<http://www.julianrees.com/>

If you are interested in the following:

- **The study of comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science**
- **To investigate the unexplained laws of Nature, and the powers latent in man**

Consider joining the Theosophical Society, whose motto is: "There is no religion higher than Truth"

For further information, please contact:

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Reflections

The Newsletter of the Committee on Masonic Education is published quarterly. Its goal is to make available articles and presentations written for Masons of Ontario.

The cost of a yearly subscription is only \$ 18.00 for the 2014 Masonic Year and can be ordered by writing to "Masonic Education Newsletter", c/o the Subscription Manager for the Reflections Newsletter: R.W. Bro. Lindsay Reiach, 41 Dunrobin Drive, Caledonia, Ontario, N3W 2N. Lreiachz@shaw.ca. 905 765 8341. Your cheque should be made out to "Masonic Education Newsletter". Please indicate your Lodge's name and number, your District's name, your name and the mailing address where you would like to receive this publication.

Reflections is always seeking articles about Freemasonry written by Freemasons. Please submit them to its Editor, Bro. Andrew Douris, F.C.F., e-mail: deon-fortuna@hotmail.com. Articles are often approximately 1,200 words in length. Articles of special merit might be printed in sections over several issues while short articles provide an excellent resource for a brief Masonic Education moment in Open Lodge. Please adhere to the following deadlines for submissions: Fall issue = August 1, Winter issue = November 1, Spring issue = February 1, Summer issue = May 1.

College of Freemasonry

The Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education offers interesting Correspondence Courses on Masonic Education throughout this Jurisdiction which is comprised of nineteen different modules. Any Master Mason may take any module individually for \$10.00 each or they may wish to complete a course of study for a set fee. If a Brother takes an individual module today, and decides to complete a course of study later in time, he will be accredited with the module he has completed prior. In other words, he does not have to pay for or rewrite what he has already completed in the past. There are three courses of study offered by the College of Freemasonry:

1. "The Masonic Arts and Sciences" course (eighteen modules).

2. The "Past Master's course" (eleven modules)
3. The "Worshipful Master course" (eight modules). Any Brother looking to run for the DDGM of their District or Grand Registrar, the course required by the Book of Constitution, Section 50(b), is the "Past Master's Course". This course is also great for those looking to be a District Secretary.

For those who wish to pay by cheque, please send it to W. Bro. George Warner, 4010 Chadburn Crescent, Mississauga, ON, L5L 3X2. For those who wish to pay via credit card, just fill in the application form and send it to masonic.college@gmail.com, and the Brother will be emailed payment instructions through Paypal (an account is not necessary). If any Brother has any questions, they may email R.W. Bro. Rick Cadotte, FCF, Principal, College of Freemasonry, masonic.college@gmail.com.

You may also get information by going to the Grand Lodge Website, sign in, click "Membership", then "College of Freemasonry". There are many electronic books and other resources there.

Heritage Lodge

Heritage Lodge No. 730 G.R.C. was formed to provide an intellectual environment for the pursuit of Masonic knowledge and also to provide a means for receiving and recording historical artefacts to ensure the preservation of our Masonic Heritage without encroaching on the normal functions of Constituent Lodges.

Heritage Lodge accepts, by affiliation in the usual manner, all Masons of like-mind, desirous of working together to fulfil the aims and objectives established by the membership.

The Lodge Secretary is R.W. Bro. Kenneth E. Campbell, e-mail: heritagelod730@xplornet.com. The fee for Affiliation is \$ 55.00 and the annual dues are also \$ 55.00. R.W. Bro. Robert C. McBride is the Heritage Lodge Regional Liaison Chairman for the Ontario, Peterborough and Victoria Districts. He can be reached by sending an e-mail to ddgm2007@nexicom.net.

Upcoming Events



**Congratulations to the Toronto West District
CORNERSTONE LODGES
Flower City 689 | Ionic 229
West Gate 734 | Kilwinning 565**

September 2015

**70 years service award presentation to
Bro. George MacLean**

Fri. Sep 18 7:30pm—Kilwinning Lodge
West Toronto Temple—151 Annette Street

How often has a Mason served the Craft for 70 years?

Come and join us for this memorable event.

There will be a short presentation ceremony, followed by a
banquet.

Other events to be announced

**Check the District Web Site for more upcoming events,
and for updates, and pictures from past events:**

<http://www.torontowestdistrict.com/calendar.html>

This newsletter was compiled and edited by W. Bro. Rob Lund

Any contribution for content can be emailed to robvlund@gmail.com