



The Overy Papers

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Fraternal Greetings Brethren

This feels like the equivalent of an opening speech in the House of Commons and as you have granted me the honour of being your Director of Masonic Education I will try to keep my talks, short and sweet as ordered by our Worshipful Master.

As a very active amateur historian, I had planned to talk to you tonight, about the interpretation of Masonic Pre History.

But then I thought about the comments of WBro. Allan KRAUS who was my predecessor and who had been the Director of Masonic Education for the past 5 years.

He reminded the Brethren, in our last Lodge meeting, that they should not forget two things, their Obligation and the purpose of the Craft.

These are two very important cornerstones of our fraternity. For me as with many of you I suppose I found my Obligation, when I first made it, something that I understood but did not full comprehend.

When I next listened to it, as someone else said those words, I realized just how important it was. How it bridged the gap across the years and was just as relevant at the beginning of our fraternity as it was today. I felt I understood it better and discovered it was something special that I was proud to have made. Even today I listen to it and am taken back to my early days in the craft.

To listen to the ancient words is to be proud of where we came from, what we are and what we hope to be.

This brings me to the second equally important comment. "Don't forget the Purpose of the Craft".

I never met WBro Tom MacKurdie but in doing the survey of the lodge records, his name stuck out as one who knew well the "The Purpose of the Craft".

I had heard about him of course with his keen keeping of Burns Night, a similar taste as mine in single malt and of being a very active member of our lodge for many years.

But it was the little things that he did and he maybe did not say much about that stood out. The small mats with Masonic symbols that his wife made, that both us, Sedro Woolly and many local Lodges still display today. He was involved with other Lodges around the world, that he seemed to do on a very personal level.

And the one I liked most were the notes he kept in his files that showed he must have had a close contact with our community with what he called "Random acts of Kindness and Senseless acts of beauty".

These acts personify one of the principles of our fraternity, the act of doing and giving freely of yourself. Then, without pretension, disappear into the crowd because these good acts are not for yourself but for the good of the community spirit.

T.G. MacKirdy relates examples in his notes in the Lodge History Files:

In Random acts of Kindness for example;

It's a crisp winter day in San Francisco. A woman in a red Honda, Christmas presents piled up behind her, drives up to the Bay Bridge Toll booth. "I am paying for myself and the next 6 cars behind me," she says with a smile handing over 7 commuter tickets. One after another the six drivers arrive at the toll Bridge, dollars in hand, only to be told, "Some lady up ahead already paid your fare. Have a nice Day.

In Senseless acts of beauty he gives several examples:

A man who plants daffodils along the roadway, his shirt billowing in the breeze from passing cars while another appoints himself a one-man sanitation service and roams the city collecting litter in a supermarket cart, while another scrubs off graffiti from a park bench.

They say you can't be a recipient of such acts without feeling a shock, a pleasant jolt. If you were one of those rush-hour drivers who found the bridge toll paid, who knows what you might have been inspired to do for someone else later? Maybe wave someone on at an intersection? Smile at a tired overworked shop assistant? or something larger, greater. Like all revolutions, "guerilla goodness" begins slowly, with a single act.

SO LET IT BE YOURS.

Thank you for listening and whatever I say may we continue in peace and harmony.

Bro. Bill Overy

Member of the Education Committee of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon.