



The Overy Papers

Number 14 Now is the Time to Repair our World

Fraternal Greetings Brethren

This article was written with the help of:

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How is that for names dropping,

This is my last talk as the District Director of Masonic Education and so decided on a subject that has been talked about a lot and is appropriate as May 2015 is Champion Civility Month although I did not know that when I wrote it. As usual these are my ideas and may not be everyone's opinion but as you all know that is my way.

During a Lodge meeting at Sedro Woolley in Washington State the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Washington, M.W.Bro. Sam ROBERTS made a comment on the state the world was in.

He said "maybe it was time for Freemasons to step up and set an example to our world and to bring it back to the quality it once was."

I was fascinated by the prospect and the more I thought about it the more I thought that he was on the right track and maybe we as Freemasons were just the people to endeavor do something about this, and maybe now is the time.

Of course any "Masonic Group" that calls for change would be acting against the Grand Lodge Constitution, and as we are an integral part of our Grand

Lodge we must not express any opinion of domestic policy or allow its name to be associated with any action, however humanitarian it may appear to be. We are also committed to the basic principles of the 25 Landmarks of Freemasonry as laid down by Grand Lodges across the world and of course they are sacrosanct.

I sometimes wonder if we have lost the "Community Builder Spirit" of our ancestors even though they may not have known what they were doing it at the time. Do our rituals and how we run our lodge become more predominant instead of equal to what we should be thinking as Freemasons,

Each Worshipful Master is different, bringing his own self to the Lodge and I am sure he always "Does His Best" and we should be happy with that. It is one thing that has endured in "our Lodge" across the last 100 years.

I have on, occasion, sadly, heard adverse comments when our various past Worshipful Masters have made a small error in the ritual and that does not make for a happy lodge. We should also not talk about traditions that are nothing but one person's interpretation on "what we have always done in the past".

If you want to look at how we did things in the past then read the history of our lodge written by Very Worshipful Brother Con Newdorf and see what change is all about. Do you know at one point they actually stopped giving free cigars at the festive board, how is that for sacrilege.

I do realize it has been a complicated few years for us with falling membership and the staggering cost of living but as so often happens, things are looking up once more in the cycle of Masonic life in our Lodge.

So with the new membership this could be the time for another change of focus. Maybe it is time for us to come out of the shadows and show ourselves to our community once more for what we are and what we stand for.

This could be an uphill battle because of the bad name we have received from the media and certain other groups that tend to always dog our steps. But whatever it is we do we should start on a small scale, and consider the issues that affects our own community today?

In 1912 Abbotsford was a small village and many of our members were instrumental in the building of our community as can be seen by the names of our streets.

Today we live in a different world but the problems in our community are just as difficult to face. Most of us are living longer and will need more elderly support than we would have done in 1912. Families today are spread

across this great land of ours so sons and daughters often do not live, just down the road.

Today we see people who are demanding their rights, while the problems in our community such as drugs, crime and homelessness, continue unabated.

Freemasonry does not say anything about rights, but it has a lot to say about duties and obligations that we owe to our families, our community and our country and we must remember with every "Right" there is a corresponding obligation and we as Freemasons know all about "Obligations".

So "*What can we do as Freemasons help our modern world?*"

Of course Freemasonry does not deal with the mass media, it works at the individual level by the example it sets.

I also realize this is not easy task but then, nothing worthwhile often is.

We should show ourselves by "Our Example" and we should be represented in as many functions and events of our community that we can.

The Cancer Car Program, The Bursary for young students, the Masonic Legacy of Life for BC organ donating or Movember for Prostate Cancer research and our own Teddy Bear Club, are examples of what we already do.

Every year we have Canada Day and even if we do not have a float maybe we could have a stand in the Community Section of the display in the Stadium.

Our Teddy Bear Club will be there with the Abbotsford Emergency Services and I hope to there to help.

We should wear our aprons when it is appropriate such as the 11 November Parade to the cenotaph and the very successful Candle Light Ceremony for Vimy Ridge Day this year when, together with Pacific Lodge, we each laid a candle.

It will all help to let the population know what we are about and to help us, once more, become accepted as an integral part of the community of the City of Abbotsford.

Let us face up to the fact that the world really needs what Freemasonry has to offer and do something about it.

It would be nice if Pacific Lodge #16 could join us in some of our endeavors and maybe enable us spread our wings or aprons to Mission, who knows, we need all the help we can get.

As I said this is just my opinion but it does meet the words of my appointment as a Director of Masonic Education to "initiate informative discussion",

And in the famous words of Margaret Mead,

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed people can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

And in the words of our own MW Philip Durell, The Grand Master of British Columbia and Yukon.

"Through our dedicated efforts to promoting and nurturing civility, we "will" begin to repair our world."

Thank you all for putting up with me during what I consider a fantastic year as the District Director of Education and hope to continue to see you, often in Lodge,

Thank you 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.