

The District Light

The information bulletin
of Niagara B District

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A Time of Calm

We are fortunate to be living in a time when masonry is generally accepted and we need not hide or defend ourselves. It was not always so. Masonry has a long history of being the target of distrust, anger, or fear.

But we are still a concern to some because people tend to be suspicious of anything which they don't understand. Due to its secretive nature, Freemasonry has long been a target of conspiracy theories in which it is either bent on world domination or already secretly in control of world politics.

And when we are attacked, we don't fight back.

Under Attack

The earliest anti-Masonic document was a leaflet printed in 1698 by a Presbyterian minister named Winter. It reads:



*TO ALL GODLY PEOPLE,
In the Citie of London. Having thought it needful
to warn you of the Mischiefs and Evils practiced
in the Sight of God by those called Freed Masons,
I say take Care lest their Ceremonies and secret
Swearings take hold of you; and be wary that none
cause you to err from Godliness. For this devllish
Sect of Men are Meeters in secret which swear
against all without ther Following. They are the
Anti Christ which was to come leading Men from
Fear of God. For how should Men meet in secret
Places and with secret Signs taking Care that none
observed them to do the Work of GOD; are not
these the Ways of Evil-doers?*

[Notice the date of the writing. Although the Grand Lodge of England was formed in 1717 to have four of the lodges in London meet to discuss matters of mutual benefit, masonry had existed for 200 years.]

A Brief History of Dark Times

Historically, complaints have been made that the Masons have secretly plotted to create a society based on the revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity, and the separation of church and state. These ideals often conflicted with the prevailing political structure.

Consider these campaigns against us:

◆ Persecution by Communists

Soviet Russia outlawed all secret societies, including Masonry, in 1922. Postwar revivals of Freemasonry in Czechoslovakia and Hungary were suppressed in 1950.

◆ Persecution under Nazi regime

Fascists treated Freemasonry as a potential source of opposition. The Nazis claimed that high degree Masons were willing members of "the Jewish conspiracy" and that Freemasonry was one of the causes of Germany's loss of the First World War.

During the war, Freemasonry was banned by edict in all countries that were either allied with the Nazis or under Nazi control.

The number of Freemasons from Nazi occupied countries who were killed is not accurately known, but it is estimated that between 80,000 and 200,000 Freemasons perished under the Nazi regime.

◆ Persecution in Spain

Following the military coup of 1936, many Freemasons trapped in areas under Nationalist control were arrested and summarily killed, along with members of left wing parties and trade unionists. It was reported that Masons were shot, tortured and murdered by organized death squads in every town in Spain.

◆ The Roman Catholic Church

In 1738, the church prohibited membership in Masonic organizations, citing both political and religious reasons.

Closer to Home

◆ The Anti-Masonic Party was formed in upstate New York in 1828. It strongly opposed Freemasonry and was founded as a single-issue party aspiring to become a major party.



Some people feared the Freemasons, believing they were a powerful secret society that was trying to rule the country in defiance of republican principles. These opponents came together to form a political party after the Morgan affair convinced them the Masons were murdering

their opponents. This key episode was the mysterious disappearance, in 1826, of William Morgan (1774-1826?), a Freemason of Batavia, New York, who had become dissatisfied with his lodge and intended to publish a book detailing the secrets of the Freemasons.

The event created great excitement and led many to believe that not just the local lodge but all Freemasonry was in conflict with good citizenship. Because judges, businessmen, bankers, and politicians were often Masons, ordinary citizens began to think of it as an elitist group. Moreover, many claimed that the lodges' secret oaths bound the brethren to favor each other against outsiders, in the courts as well as elsewhere.

◆ British Political Anti-Masonry (1990s-current)
 Since 1997, several members of the British Government have attempted to pass laws requiring Freemasons who join the police or judiciary to declare their membership publicly to the government amid accusations of Freemasons performing acts of mutual advancement and favour-swapping.

If You Want to Know More

A good way to address anti-masonic accusations can be found at the web site of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia. Click on 'Search' .



What Can We Do?

Although we are 'at peace' for now, we need to be aware that we are visible and that our actions direct people's opinions.

If we display a masonic symbol, we are ambassadors for the Order. If that symbol is on our vehicle, we should behave with courtesy, knowing that we are in the public eye.



If we wear a masonic pin or ring, we must be prepared to answer "What do you do?"

If we are offered an opportunity to aid another, we know what we must do.

Our District Deputy Grand Master, R.W.Bro. Tom McClellan reminded us:

"When we leave the building, we should never leave behind what Masonry teaches us. There are the character-building lessons of Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice, along with the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, which is more commonly referred to as Love."

Our District Charity



This year's charity is Habitat For Humanity. The ReStore is located at 150 Bunting Road in St. Catharines. They sell new or slightly-used building items to fund Habitat homebuilding projects.

Commonly donated items include windows, doors, paint, hardware, lumber, tools, lighting fixtures, furniture and appliances. The inventory changes daily, so shopping there offers a new experience every time.

Making a personal donation to any ReStore may earn the donor a charitable tax receipt.

Items can be brought directly to the ReStore or you may contact our District Chairman of Masonic Charity, Bro. Chris Wright, for pick-up. Call 905-329-9726.

Masonic CHip Event

W.Bro. George Sider, our Masonic CHiP Chairman, organized another Child Identification event at the fire hall in Port Robinson. It proved to be a milestone evening as our district processed its 500th child and also the 50,000th child in Ontario.

This distinction came to Jocelyn Nopper age 6. She is the daughter of Don Nopper of King Edward VII lodge.

18 volunteers were present from 7 of our 11 district lodges.

The Port Robinson Thorold Station had a full night of activities and hands-on demonstrations for the families in attendance. Chief George Upham is a member of Myrtle Lodge.



Niagara B District Secretary W. Bro. Brian Radford, DDGM RW. Bro. Tom McClellan, RW. Bro. Larry Williams, Niagara B District MasoniCh.I.P coordinator W. Bro. George Sider with Jocelyn (White shirt), Anastasia (Purple shirt)



The Cornerstone Initiative

Palmer and Dominion lodges have completed the Cornerstone Project this year. It is a program of revitalization offered by Grand Lodge.

There is a list of directives from which a lodge chooses what they would like to try. Each of the suggestions are worth the effort for the sake of an active lodge.

The information is available at the Grand Lodge web site or you can contact Bro. John Newton for help and advice. Reach him at 905-994-9444.

The Gift of Life

Our Blood Donor Chairman, Bro. Clark Stickland, reminds us that we can both give blood and volunteer at clinics.



Masons tend to be quite charitable.

One thing about giving blood is it is a charity, but it's free. All it asks of us is to give an hour of our time.

And we are assured that every drop is used for good. It saves lives. And it doesn't cost a thing.

Plus we have further choices of donation of platelets or plasma. Information is available at www.blood.ca.

Lighter Thoughts

How many Past Masters does it take to change a light bulb?
... Change it?! Why?

In wine there is wisdom,
In beer there is freedom,
In water there is bacteria.