

# The District Light

The information bulletin  
of Niagara B District

January, 2014

bhodwitz@gmail.com

## We Have to Do

Although Masonry is philosophical and even spiritual in its lessons, the image suggested is that we sit around and listen to gurus imparting wisdom.

Certainly there is some presentation of ideas and some listening and learning, but we advance through doing,  
through . . . . .

***ACTION***

## Take Charge of the Work

Lodge work is like a play. Each person has a part, and each part is important.

Here is a story to illustrate the point:

In December a local school planned a Christmas concert. In one household the little boy came running in to say that the class was going to do a play and that he was going to be the star.

The mother was so pleased.  
“What will you do in the play?”  
“I’ll twinkle.”



Each of us gets our chance to twinkle in lodge, and each of us is important to the whole effect.

Just as in school or clubs, we have lines to learn and we practice with the group to make the final showing impressive.

In school, when we are young, the teacher or group leader tells us “stand there”, “speak up”, “smile”. We do what we are told and we present a respectable show.

As children get older, they begin to offer suggestions about the ways of staging or better ways of saying the lines. And often, some students decide they can put on a play without teacher supervision. The result usually has a lot of energy and the participants are proud of their work.

If only we could reclaim that passion and self-direction.

## The Play’s the Thing

The same progression of preparation styles applies to masonry. When you first are given a part, you may be directed by a senior member. You move and stand where you are told, and try to create his vision of the work.

Or the cast can get together to try to do it themselves. They might do it by following the book or they might say, “We can do it ourselves, but we would appreciate a little guidance.” The product will be ‘good’ and the members will have the pride of personal achievement.

Masonry wants you to enjoy your experience in the lodge. Your audience wants to witness men who take pride in their work. The more you take ownership of your part here, the more you and the craft will benefit.

Let your light shine.



It is easy to sit up and take notice, What is difficult is getting up and taking action.

(Honore de Balzac)

**Performing Ritual**

[Condensed from W.Bro. Charles Watson's message in the Myrtle summons.]



When I was setting up the November step-up night, the enthusiasm of the new officers and the more experienced ones put a smile on my face and a spring in my step. While talking to the newer members about joining the line of officers, they said they were nervous if

their ritual work would be good enough.

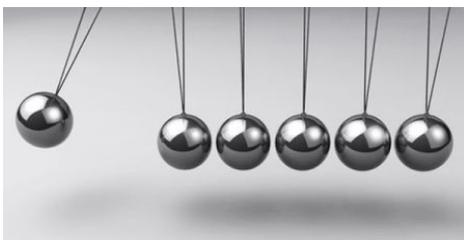
I thought about that for a while.

A long time ago when I did my first piece of masonic work I was afraid. Afraid of what? Afraid of rejection. This is a big fear. No one wants to be rejected by friends, family, or even an acquaintance, but especially by our lodge brothers.

From that first night of work that I've done till now, what I've learned is that if I make a mistake my brothers will not reject me. This knowledge and feeling is very powerful and it is where the confidence comes from.

I was speaking to a pastor about prayer. He said he thinks we pray backwards, asking for things like a better job, new car, good health. The relationship with God should be more about the things we learn on the way and less about the destination.

Being an officer and going through the chairs is like this. It's more about what you learn about yourself during the journey and less about the destination.



**Try** [Still from W.Bro. Charles Watson]

A couple of years ago Grand lodge sent a questionnaire to each mason online. It was a bold initiative. Two questions grabbed my attention:

Is the quality of ritual work important? I said yes. Rituals performed well can I have profound effect on the candidate's experience.

Second question. Do you have to be a good ritualist to go through the chairs and become master? I looked at the question for 10 minutes. I remembered another experience:

Many years back at a family scout dinner, a scout stood to recite the Scout Law and promise. It Quickly went bad. The words that he had practiced left him. He fumbled through it as best he could and then sat down embarrassed and befuddled.

The guest speaker rose, smiled, and said, "I congratulate the young scout. Anyone can do something well when it is going well but persevering though difficulty is the true spirit of Scouting and is the type of character that will secure our future."

Every brother has something to contribute to the lodge and that makes us stronger.

R.W. Bro. Fuller told me, "Better to come out and be prompted than to stay at home and be perfect."



.....

The brain is an activity-dependent organ. It adjusts to accommodate new input.

The more you try something new, the more the brain exercises its plasticity.



**Let's Talk About It** [W. Bro. Martin Van der Kant: Chair of Future Planning]

Planning for the future is something we all do in our everyday lives. The way we plan our future is by making assumptions from past experience and applying that knowledge to our future.

Unfortunately, the future has many variables and makes planning very hard to do. We may have saved money for years so that we can retire comfortably, but then we lose equity when the economy changes. So we may feel that most of our planning was for naught.

The last 25 years has seen paradigm shifts in many parts of our society. Technology and moral standards are changing faster than we can follow.

Business, especially large business, has all strongly focused on restructuring to survive. The most common saying in the modern work place is, "the new way of doing things."

We are all trying to survive in a time of change. The question is, must we change to survive the times and if so, what will those changes be?



I believe that Masonry has come to its cross roads and we are now in need of some very careful, well thought out, future planning.

What will we do as Masonic Lodges to rejuvenate ourselves? This is a question that should be

brought up, in every lodge, as a topic of discussion.

I suggest that we could start with a Discussion or Suggestion Night, where every idea is considered, where no critiquing is done, so that every brother feels free to speak openly about his thoughts and ideas without fearing ridicule. Then we could evaluate these ideas with a mind to develop what everyone agrees would be a reasonable course of action.

If we work together as Brothers, we will find the solutions, so long as we have the will to do so.



**Let's Do Something**

Some lodges have put the ideas into ***ACTION***

Macnab Lodge recently had a Fish Fry:



The cooks: Jamie Schooley, Bill Upfold Jr., Greg Bull, Bob Bitner, Al Peterson

Brent Tarabalka, the master of Macnab Lodge, challenged his members:

"In the spirit of giving, I ask that every Brother who plans on attending our December meeting to bring with them a non-perishable food item.

I will match can for can, box for box the donations given from our members and guests who attend. Our donation will be given to a local family or families in need.

Then,

"A thank-you all of the brethren who donated food and money to our food drive. In total we collected 250 lbs of food and I received \$40.00 in cash donations which was used to purchase more food items. This will make a difference in the life or lives of a few Port Colborne families over the holidays."

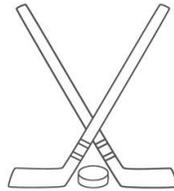


Brent Tarabalka, Craig Rohe

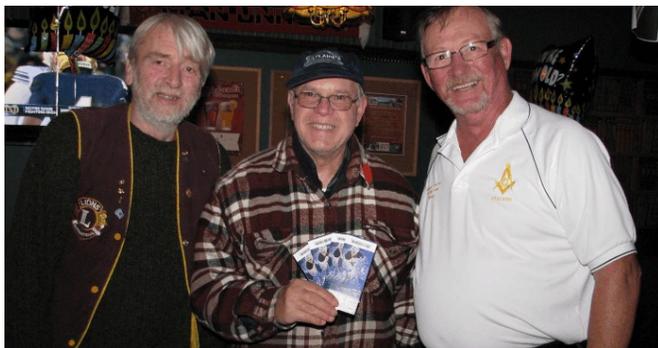
**Hockey Draw**

In conjunction with the Masonic Lodges of Niagara B District, The Welland Lions Club held a draw to benefit Prostate Cancer Research.

The prize was 4 Gold ice-level tickets to a Toronto Maple Leafs vs. Buffalo Sabres hockey game which were donated by the District Deputy Grand Master of the Niagara B District Masons, R.W. Bro. David T. O'Neill



Mr. O'Neill stated that the Charity chosen by The Masons in Ontario for the next two years is Prostate Cancer Research, and he was so happy to work with the Lions Club to promote such a worthy cause. We now have \$2,500.00 to donate to Prostate Cancer Research.



The winner of the draw was Mr. Lawrence Goring, of 96 Maple Ave., Welland.

Special thanks go out to Jim Shanasse and Cam Wilson of the Welland Lions Club.

It really is a great thing when two different groups can team up for a project that can have such a wonderful outcome.

We appreciate the support of all Niagara B Masons, the Welland Lions Club, and everyone who made this happen!!

David T. O'Neill\_

**Donating Blood**

[Clark Stickland:  
Blood Donor Chairman]

Donating blood is like giving to a charity, and Masons are charitable by nature. In the first degree, you were asked, "Would you give if it were in your power?" This time you have something to give and it's free to give.



To be sure that you are counted as a masonic donor, a new registration form is available on the District B website as well as from your Lodge secretary. It can be filled out on line or handed in when donating blood. It can also be filled out by family and friends of Masons. You will get credit for their donations.

The Canadian Blood Services operate 20,000 clinics in Canada each year with approx. 77,000 new donors annually. While these sound like great numbers, there is still a constant need for blood.

Remember, the life you save could be that of a loved one, or even your own!

**Lapsed Members?**

Where are the members who used to come out? Is there a way of reclaiming their interest?

One suggestion is to host a Rusty Masons' Night. But, we must be cautious.

The idea of such a night is to encourage men to come back to lodge.

Reviewing the openings and closings and all the signs would only show them that there is too much to remember. It would intimidate them.

What you want to do is to remind the men of the benefits of attending:

- ★ meeting friendly people,
- ★ being with men who take pride in their work,
- ★ hearing masonic education,
- ★ and to be welcomed at social events they could attend again.

I suggest that, before planning for the night, you get a committee to interview a few of the men who you want to come back. Find out what has kept them away and what would entice them to return.

Then give them what they need.



**Martin Luther King.....**  
"We must learn to live together as brothers or we will perish together as fools."