

# THE KEYSTONE



Publication of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons  
of British Columbia and Yukon

## *The Grand First Principal's Spring Message*

*Volume 4, Issue 1  
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My Companions,

Royal Arch Masonry is in a unique position to build strong and meaningful relationships with our Masonic Brethren in every branch of Freemasonry, particularly those in the Craft Lodges. In part, this is because we have a presence in virtually all reaches of the Grand Jurisdiction of British Columbia and Yukon.



Equally important, the strong sense of dedication which our Companions have demonstrated not only to Royal Arch Masonry in specific, but to Freemasonry in general speaks volumes for the responsible position of Royal Arch Masonry as a genuine pillar of our Masonic brotherhood. I am gratified by the way in which so many of you have embraced my theme for the year. The many success stories which continue to pour in from around our Grand Jurisdiction are examples to both our Companions and to the communities in which we live.

Spring is traditionally a time of renewal, both in terms of natural cycles and in terms of spiritual cycles. As we approach Eastertide, none of us is immune to the moving story of the re-birth of our Lord. Many of us use the Easter church celebrations as a means of re-affirming our faith, and often we will do so in the company of fraternal members of one or more of our Masonic bodies.

Spring is a time of Masonic renewal as well. For, as we pass the half way point in both the Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter years, we look to completing one year's work and turning our thoughts

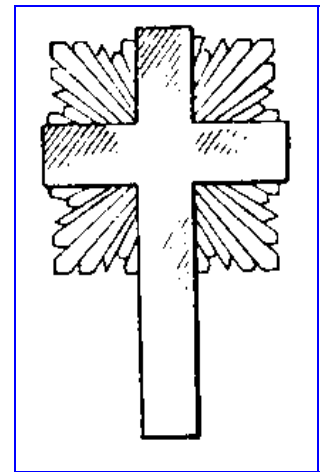
to the new year ahead and to the new team who will lead us through that year. I have been heartened by the companionship, cooperation and spirit which all of you have shown this year. My travels throughout British Columbia and Yukon have enabled me to meet many of you personally.

Your friendship and fellowship, Companions, has been the true highlight of serving as your Grand First Principal. I hope that those of you whom I have not had the opportunity to meet will take a moment to look at my itinerary and see if you cannot be present at one of the functions that I will be attending over the rest of our year; including, in particular, the Spring Board of General Purposes on April 3rd in

Victoria, Grand Lodge

June 17-19 in Salmon Arm, and of course the Grand Chapter Convocation September 16-18 in Campbell River. I also look forward to holidaying with many of you and your wives on the Hawaiian cruise in early June.

M. Ex. Comp.  
Basil Roland Hobbs  
Grand First Principal



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## *The Ark in Freemasonry*

Two years ago at this time, I had been recently accepted into one of our concordant Masonic bodies, the Order of the Red Cross of Constantine, a York Rite body which seeks to elucidate the connection between Freemasonry and Christianity. I had taken at the time to read up on some of those connections and was reminded of the Ark of the Covenant when I had occasion to visit Ottawa and took the time to visit the Memorial Chamber in the Peace Tower of the Parliament Buildings where the Book of Remembrance is placed atop a stone replica of the Ark of the Covenant. The role of the Ark of the Covenant in Freemasonry is an interesting one, really involving two arks.

You are all familiar with the Biblical story of how the Ark of the Covenant was a chest constructed by Moses at God's command to house the two tablets of stone containing the Ten Commandments as well as a golden pot filled with manna, Aaron's rod and the Tables of the Covenant. Made of Shittim wood, overlaid within and without with gold, it was surmounted with golden Cherubim with expanded wings. The cover, the *kaphiret*, was regarded as the place where the intercession of sins was made.

As in the case with King Solomon's Temple, the Ark of the Covenant once enjoyed an honoured place in

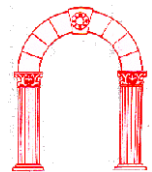
Craft Freemasonry, as it still does in Royal Arch Masonry. Indeed, a replica of the Ark of the Covenant was once a part of the furnishings of a Lodge. But, with the Union of the Grand Lodges in 1813, there was a deliberate movement to de-Christianize Freemasonry, largely at the instigation of the first Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge, HRH the Duke of Sussex, as a part of his grand design for Freemasonry. Oddly enough, though, the Ark was to play a final, very important role in the Act of Union; for, the Duke of Sussex caused the architect of the new Grand Lodge building, John Soane, to be not only initiated, passed and raised within a year, but to be appointed to the new position of Grand Superintendent of Works. In that capacity, Soane was commissioned to design and commission the building of a Masonic Ark of the Covenant of the Act of Union. That structure bore no resemblance to the Biblical Ark of the Covenant, for it was triangular in plan, made of mahogany, its corners being three classical pillars representing wisdom, strength and beauty, and the whole supporting a domed top. Surviving illustrations depict it as a triangular altar to support the VOSL.

Unfortunately, much of the original portion of the Grand Lodge building and furnishings were destroyed by fire in May of 1883. And, though the Articles of Union had been preserved elsewhere, the Masonic Ark of the Covenant was

lost and was never replaced. Various references to the Lodge, itself, as an ark are recorded by Masonic scholars and scribes, even into the 19th century; but, the place of both the Masonic and Biblical Arks in the Craft Lodge has disappeared except by reference, though it figures prominently even today in Concordant bodies, notably the Royal Arch Chapter. Thus, one of the two Arks in Freemasonry continues to be preserved in symbolism and ritual.

This address was based on the runner-up entrant for the Norman B. Spencer Prize Essay of 1998, *Two Masonic Arks*, written by Bro. Peter Hamilton Currie and published in the *Ars Quatuor Coronatum*, Vol. 112, 1999, by Quator Coronati Lodge No. 2076, London. The writer has also relied on the King James translation of the Holy Bible and Albert G. Mackey's *Lexicon and A History of Freemasonry*, 1908, Philadelphia.

From an educational address to Manoah Lodge No. 141, by V. Ex. Comp. John McIntosh, 10 March 2001



## *Jean Sibelius: Patriot, Musician & Freemason*

Johan Julius Christian Sibelius is well known as Finland's greatest composer. That he is also the greatest Masonic composer after Mozart is a lesser known fact. And that he was one of Finland's first Freemasons is of even less renown.

Born to a Swedish-speaking family on December 8th, 1865, "Janne", as he was known as a child, came from a small town 100 km north of Helsinki. He and his brother and sister all played musical instruments as children. The precocious Janne composed his first piece

of music for violin and cello at the age of 10. In 1880, he began taking violin lessons, and quickly began to dream of being a violin virtuoso. Enrolling at the Helsinki Musical Institute (now the Sibelius Academy), he completed his first masterwork by 1889. Furthering his musical studies in Berlin and Vienna, he conducted his first choral/orchestral work in Helsinki in 1895.

Marrying in 1892, at the height of his early popularity, he was often found partying through the night with his friends and fellow nationalists. It was during that time that he composed the famous tone poem, Finlandia (1900). His wife was scandalized by a famous painting of drunken musicians and national heroes, Sibelius among them. So, in 1905, Sibelius took up residence at a lakeshore some 60 km away in a villa which he named for his wife, Ainola. It was there that he composed the bulk of his work, including several shorter pieces of Masonic music, following his introduction into Freemasonry.

Within hours of the creation of the Grand Lodge of Finland in 1992, Suomi Lodge No. 1 was constituted in Helsinki, with Sibelius as one of its founding members. He continued to write Masonic music until his death in 1969.



Sources:  
Hamil, John and Robert Gilbert. 1992. Freemasonry: A Celebration of the Craft. Mackenzie Publishing: St. Albans, UK. 256p.

Kilpeläinen, Kari. 2001. Jean Sibelius. Text of the Jean Sibelius Museum web site: [www.abo.fi/fak/hf/musik/sibelius/en](http://www.abo.fi/fak/hf/musik/sibelius/en).

From an address to Manoah Lodge No. 141, by VEC. John McIntosh, 14 April, 2001

### **Principal Officers of Grand Chapter**

<b>Grand Zerubbabel</b>	<b>MEC</b>	<b>Basil R. Hobbs</b>
<b>Grand Haggii</b>	<b>REC</b>	<b>George W. Eaton</b>
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<b>Grand Junior Sojourner</b>	<b>REC</b>	<b>William Fooks</b>



The Keystone is a publication of  
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*The Gospel According to St. Luke, Ch. 24 (1-3, 14-16, 44-53)*



**Now**, upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher. And they found the stone rolled away from the Sepulchre. And they entered in and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. . . .

**And** they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed

together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. . . .

**And** he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in

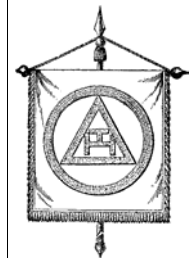
the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye

are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye are endued with power from on high.

**And** he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and he blessed them, and it came to pass, when he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.

**Amen**

*Thus it is written  
and thus it be-  
hooved Christ to  
suffer and to rise  
from the dead on  
the third day*



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