

THE KEYSTONE



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

The Grand First Principal's Christmas Message

Volume 5, Issue 3
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Companions;

As we are about to decorate our homes in preparation to celebrate the holiday season called Christmas let us reflect what this season is. For some it is the celebration of the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, for others it is the gathering of the family for an exchange of affection, through the giving of gifts. For many in this world it has no significance at all. For a few it is a season of bitterness and loneliness.

These lonely few are those that for a myriad of reasons have lost contact with their families and because of their solitary existence only have business friends. Therefore, while all others of their society are celebrating, they are on their own, with perhaps only a pet to keep them company.

We, in this glorious order pride ourselves in having a high degree of friendship and hospitality. This hospitality goes first to the active members of the order, and secondly to the widows & widowers that belong to the Masonic family. We tend to forget these family members as we do not see them as frequently as we use to & they in particular miss the connection that they had for many years. As I have said many times in my travels, we **must** extend that hospitality to those that are outside our order. For those few, we must in many ways, try to relieve their discomfort. Consider inviting them into your home to help celebrate the family gathering, or take them to coffee & present a small gift in friendship, or

find out their address & take them a plant as a remembrance of the season. Extending our hand in friendship is perhaps the most important & most rewarding gift we can give or receive.

With that plea, I wish each and every companion and their families a happy and loving season and may the Lord keep you in his loving arms.

Most Excellent
Companion

Brian A. Richman

Grand First Principal

British Columbia
and Yukon



M.E.C.
Brian A. Richman

Royal Arch Masons
of
British Columbia
And Yukon

**Spring
Board of
General
Purposes**

**Saturday
April 8, 2006
Chilliwack, BC**

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The Grand Chaplain's Christmas Challenge

I recently read about two men looking at a Christmas sign in front of a Church which read "Put Christ into your CHRISTmas." One was then heard to say to the other, "What do you think of that, now the Church is trying to barge into Christmas."

A similar spirit is portrayed in the 2nd Psalm where the rulers of the world form a type of 'God is Dead' League, but the Great Architect of the Universe laughs at them and has them in derision. How does He do it? By a Child –the Child in a Manger "Thou art my Son; this day I have begotten Thee."

A number of years ago two non-Christian lawyers met and agreed to each write a book that would put an end to Christianity. The first book would prove that Christ never rose from the dead, and the other that Paul was never converted on the Damascus Road. They wrote their books and they can be found bound in one volume in the Los Angeles City Public Library, except; the first proves that Christ did rise from the dead and the second proves that Paul was converted on the Damascus Road. Honesty and reason can reach no other conclusion, that Babe in a manger was God incarnate, Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour.

There is only one way to put Christ into Christmas; that is to let Him be born by faith into our hearts, lives and actions.

I spoke to our Grand 1st Principal at Discovery Chapter, in Campbell River a few days ago. It seems that as he travels around our Province, to the various Royal Arch Chapters, a pattern begins to emerge; the fellowship is excellent, the attendance is fair and the ritual is poor. It seems to me that everyone from the Craft Lodge

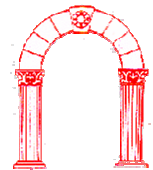
through the Concordant Bodies is at a loss on how to improve things. I have always believed that if you get the leaders and senior people inspired that inspiration becomes contagious. So, here I am with an idea in the hope of inspiring a few Royal Arch Masons.

Gift giving that becomes a burden loses significance. Giving should always be a joyous and spontaneous act of love. One very busy man only gives cheques for Christmas because he says, "Christmas crowds frustrate me and I waste hours trying to make decisions; but I love to give nice clean efficient cheques." He does not however give out just any old cheques or ones with holly and Christmas trees. No, he gives out special ones which carry short partial Bible quotations. These include only enough Bible to arouse the recipient's curiosity, for example, Galatians 5:22, "The fruit of the Spirit is love...." He is always happy when sometimes weeks later some one says "I just had to look up that verse."

With this in mind this Christmas season I want to challenge every Royal Arch Mason to perform a random act of kindness for someone, anyone, and if asked tell them as a Royal Arch Mason you are doing Christmas kindnesses and they are to pass a kindness along to someone else. My idea gets worse, I am going to ask people; including the Grand First, to share what little kindness they did during the holidays. After all, Brian can only fire me or as we said in the army 'they can kill you but they can't eat you.' This kindness can be as little as letting someone go ahead of you in the check-out line. One Person saw a family getting coffee at Tim Horton's and offered to pay. Just simple kindnesses to inspire us with the Spirit of

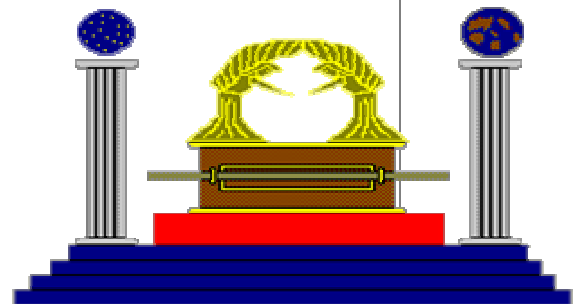


Christmas and to remember why there are Masons in the first place. The Masons of past generations were famous for doing things in their community and for people. A Freemason started the first modern hospital and others began homes for the elderly. Freemasons not only strived to make good men better but to make life better for those around them. We still do great acts of charity, but what about the little things that bring a smile to some ones tired face? As a society let's get excited about Christmas and the Royal Arch and in doing so let's bring a little joy to someone we meet this Season.



Merry Christmas

Very Excellent Companion
Rev. Dr. Joel Chiri



The Knights of Pythias

This short article is the first in a series describing some of the fraternal bodies and other groups which are often mistaken by the general public for concordant bodies within the Masonic Fraternity.

The Order of the Knights of Pythias was founded in 1864 in the City of Washington, DC by Justis Henry Rathbone, a school teacher, musician, occasional playwright, a member of the improved Order of Red Men, and a Royal Arch Mason. He had begun thinking about establishing a new fraternity as early as 1858.

It was a popular play of the time, Damon and Pythias, by John Banim, which gave Rathbone the idea for the name of his new fraternity. By the turn of the Twentieth Century, it would begin to rival Freemasonry and the Odd Fellows as a popular fraternity. But the aftermath of the US Civil War was a boom-time for fraternities in a nation striving to heal the wounds of that grave and divisive strife.

When the news of the new brotherhood reached the ears of President Abraham Lincoln, he was so impressed by its concepts and the potential that it held to reunite the North and the South, that he suggested that application

be made to the American Congress for a charter. Thus the Order of the Knights of Pythias became the first American order ever to be chartered by an Act of Congress.

The Knights of Pythias embraces more than two thousand lodges in Canada and the United States as well as other lodges having occasionally been founded elsewhere in the world. Not surprisingly, its tenets are familiar to Freemasons: They are FRIENDSHIP, CHARITY and BENEVOLENCE.

The lessons and the ritual of the order are based on the historical tale of the friendship of Damon and Pythias who lived about four hundred years before Christ. In another coincidence with Freemasonry, Damon and Pythias were both students of Pythagoras and members of the Pythagorean Brotherhood, which is regarded by many Masonic scholars as a forerunner to Freemasonry.

As the story of Damon and Pythias goes, when Damon spoke out against the King of Syracuse, whom he considered to have fraudulent claim to the throne, Damon was imprisoned and condemned to die. In order



that Damon might bid his wife and child farewell, his friend Pythias offered himself as hostage. When Damon's return was delayed, Pythias faced execution in his place. At the last instant, Damon returned and bid the King to slay him instead of his friend. So moved was the King by their honesty and devotion to one another, that he freed them both and made them advisors to the court.

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Principal Officers of Grand Chapter

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Rudyard Kipling, Author & Freemason

Born December 30, 1865 in Bombay (now Mumbai), India, where his father taught arts and crafts at the Jeejeebhoy School of Art. The house in which the boy was raised still stands on the school grounds. His mother also had a connection with the arts, being the sister-in-law of the well known painter Edward Burne-Jones. It was from Rudyard Lake in Staffordshire where his parents courted that their son got his name. The family had political connections as well, Kipling's cousin being the three-time Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin.

Like so many of the Raj, young Ruddy, as he was known, was brought up by an Indian nanny who taught him Hindustani as his first lan-

guage.

After a time at United Services College in Britain, Kipling returned to India in 1881 to work as a newspaper editor and poet. By the mid 1880's, he had become a traveling correspondent for the Allaha-bad Pioneer and was publishing a successful series of books and short stories, among them *The Man Who Would Be King*.

It was in the 1880's that Kipling also began his Masonic career, becoming Initiated, Passed and Raised in Hope and Perseverance Lodge No. 782 (English Constitution) in Lahore, India. He joined the Masonic research body, Sociata Rosecruciana in Anglia in 1909. As well as being an honorary member of Author's

Lodge No. 3456 and Motherland Lodge No. 3861, he was one of the founding members of the Builders of the Silent Cities Lodge No. 12 in St. Omer, France.

The spirit and story of Freemasonry permeated much of Kipling's work. He was distinguished with the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907. He died in London in 1936 and was buried in Poet's Corner at Westminster Abby.

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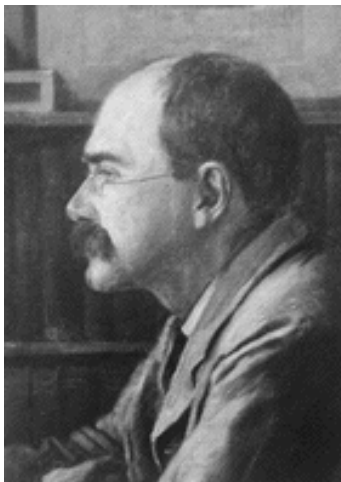
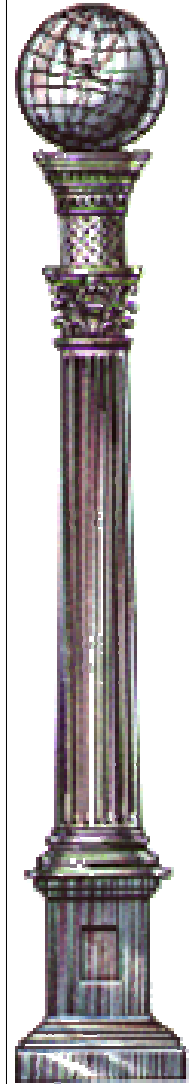
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The Man Who Would Be King

Rudyard Kipling's story tells of two ex-British soldiers in Imperial India, Daniel Dravot and Peachy Carnahan who decide to head off to remote Kafiristan to become kings in their own right. Kipling himself appears as a character at

The beginning and the end of the story. Made into a film in 1975, it stars Sean Connery (himself a Mason) and Michael Cane in the lead roles. The film is filled with Masonic references and is widely regarded as one of Director John Huston's best efforts, rivaling even his famous *African Queen*.

