



Education Monthly

July 2013

Our Grand Master steps down later this month. We have greatly enjoyed his leadership and his inspiring oratory. In his honour we publish this month a condensed version of a speech he made in Sault Ste. Marie on March 23rd this year at the reception for him by Algoma District

Bread, Golf & Parenting. M.W.Bro. D.Garry Dowling: Algoma East – Grand Master’s Reception Mar 23, 2013

This talk is about what may appear to be three unrelated topics which, with a little imagination, can be woven together to convey a message.

First: bread. You have all heard the expression “It’s the greatest thing since sliced bread”. Well, has anyone noticed a difference in sliced bread lately? First there was 3 grain, then five. Someone then upped the ante and we had the 7 grain – obviously a Masonic baker looking for the ‘perfect’ loaf. We went from standard, always the same size & thickness, to the large Texas style slices to make us consume more. Where we once had white, brown and rye, now we have everything under the sun. Sometimes you just want to go to the bakery manager and say – where is the chemical laden, fluffy, soft, delicious, no-good for me, plain white bread that I can smother with peanut butter and just sit back and drool.

So... bread is bread is bread... or is it? Same core ingredients, different loaf! The point is, we still use the expression, “it’s the greatest thing since sliced bread”, but sliced bread has changed.

If Masonry is the greatest thing since sliced bread, maybe with the core ingredients remaining the same, Masonry needs to change too!

Second: Golf.

A ball, a stick, a flag, a hole and a set of gentlemen’s rules. Golf is defined in the Rules of Golf as "playing a ball with a club from the teeing ground into the hole by a stroke or successive strokes in accordance with the Rules."

Golf’s rules’ are internationally standardized: they derive from the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews founded in 1754, and the United States Golf Association founded in 1894 (not that long after the start of modern Masonry in England in 1717). The underlying principle of the rules of golf is fairness. As stated on the back cover of the official rule book: “Play the ball as it lies, play the course as you find it, and if you cannot do either, do what is fair”. There may not be any other sporting event where the participants themselves identify infractions of the rules. The officials are there just to apply the penalties.

Has golf changed since the early 1900’s? The object, the rules, the penalties haven’t changed much. But the game has indeed changed. Think about the Jones era, the Palmer era, the Nicklaus era, and the changes in the last decade alone.

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Tiger Woods took golf to another level in terms of physical fitness and endurance. In his dominant era, the players all increased the length of their drives so significantly that courses had to be reengineered to accommodate. There were only a few at the top of the game who could compete at that level of fitness. Same game, same rules, but what a difference!

We could say that Golf hasn't changed much in a hundred years. The same core values and fundamental principles, but what a change in the players! I venture to say that Masonry retains the same core values and principles on which it was founded. But look around Brethren, the players have changed.

Third: the art of raising children:

Let's take a quick look at the process of raising children. By and large, it's the same as it was when our great grandparents did it, when our grandparents did it and when we did it – right? We all read the current books (remember Dt. Spock?), we all bought the current toys, clothes, dolls, etc. Remember Cabbage Patch dolls? Sailor suits? Easter bonnets? Red Ryder BB guns, PF Flyer bicycles. Remember all the rules about what age they are supposed to be crawling, teething, walking, speaking. Remember how you felt when your son or daughter wasn't falling within preset parameters? And of course all the toys, cribs, walkers, high chairs and so on that you kept in the basement waiting for that grandchild to arrive... only to be told that none of them are now CSA approved. And what about those car seats? Remember chucking the kids in the back seat untethered until they would fit the seatbelt... not so much any more – and those car seats are now engineering marvels.

How many of you have bitten your tongues when your sons and daughters weren't doing what you would have done in a given situation? But our grandparents survived, our parents survived, we survived, our children survived and I expect our grandchildren will eventually survive despite their grandparents. Raising children... same basic principles, same core values throughout the decades. But parents adapt to the times, the locations and the culture.

I suggest that Masonry retains the same core values and principles, but we need to adapt to the times, the location and the culture. Maybe as Past Masters we need to bite our tongues on occasion.

Well, there we have it... **bread, golf and parenting**: three separate and distinct topics woven together by a (perhaps hidden) common theme –stated thus... “the ongoing existence of things that evolve from a core set of underlying, yet unvarying principles, the implementation of which has to be tempered by change to adapt to current conditions.”

In summary, Freemasonry is indeed as good as sliced bread. Freemasonry can be enjoyed like a good round of golf and Freemasonry, while never a match for the joy of watching our children and grandchildren grow, can be rewarding in its own way as we mentor our new Masons. But, my Brethren, the moral of the story... in order to be all of these, Freemasonry must change. Not the core values and the principles on which it is founded, but in the way it is practiced in today's world.

Masonry is as relevant today as it ever was. But, to become current in the 21st Century the practice of Masonry must change. The catalysts for such change are among us like hidden gemstones. They are the progressive Worshipful Masters, they are the venerable Past Masters that see the promise of the future and know that they must pass the torch. They are the members in our Lodges that will return in force if interest is shown in them.

M.W.Bro. D. Garry Dowling, Grand Master

IMPORTANT NOTE: The date of the London Conference has been changed. It will now take place on:

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9th

LONDON MASONIC CONFERENCE

Saturday September 7, 2013
Dufferin Masonic Hall
453 Dufferin Avenue
London, Ontario



Come out and enjoy a variety of distinguished and accomplished speakers including our Keynote Speaker:

Brother 2nd Lieutenant Joseph F. Curry
Member of Beaches Lodge #473 Toronto
and Canada Lodge Under Dispensation
Kandahar, Afghanistan
Author of The Rifle and the Apron
And
The Craft at Work in Kandahar

Tickets \$25.00, including lunch, are available to Masons and guests

For tickets or further information, contact:
Randy Hearn
66 Stephen Moore Drive
R.R.#5 Komoka Ontario N0L 1R0

Please make cheques payable to: **London West Masonic Event**

As usual I'd ask that you pass this edition on to as many masons as you can.

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