**Community Engagement**

**Manoah Lodge N0.141**

The two, tiny and remote communities of Tofino and Ucluelet have undergone a great deal of demographic change in the past 40 years (and our Lodge is only 67 years old). The local economy is no longer based on resource extraction (logging and fishing), but on tourism, the labour force for which tends to be highly transient. Local service clubs are a thing of the past. As a consequence, the members of our fraternity see ourselves as capable and lasting agents for the promotion of the good of the communities in which we live and work. Some of that promotion comes in the form of our significant local charitable efforts, but it also comes from our membership taking an active part in the community. That means engaging with local charitable efforts as well as being a part of the volunteer force that is so vital to community efforts. Volunteers support school breakfast programs, senior’s residences, literacy campaigns, emergency preparedness, mobility assistance, assistance to widows, and assistance to Scouts Canada at the local level.

It may well be that the same small community size that sees Manoah Lodge relying on the support of a district-wide membership from less transient communities is the feature that gives the Brethren the opportunity to become more readily aware of and involved in the work of the community. Volunteerism is, proportionately, quite high in our small communities. And community-mindedness among our Brethren is nowhere more evident than in our last, province-wide, municipal elections, during which two of our Brethren sought election in municipal government.

It has been said that the greatest challenge in life is discovering who you are, and the second greatest challenge in life is being happy with what you find. I believe that our Grand Master wants us to find out through the recent Membership Survey and Lodge Health Assessment who we are and to be happy in what we know we can do to improve our Lodge health. Even if your Lodge does not have a strong reserve of funds to draw on for charitable purposes, every one of your Lodges (which are all larger than Manoah Lodge in size) has a rich fund of Brethren with a wide variety of capabilities, interests and connections to your communities. The biggest strength of a Masonic Lodge is in its members, every one of them. Find out what those capabilities, interests and connections are, and capitalize on them.

Freemasons DO care. It is up to us to let our communities know that.

**Cariboo Lodge No. 4**

Cariboo Lodge #4 have a high profile in the communities of Barkerville and Wells, The Lodge building is the only privately owned building in the whole community, In the summer, the building is loaned out to community organizations such as the Quilters, which attracts a large number of visitors. Once the visitors see the quilters, if there are any Lodge Members present, they take those visitors upstairs to view the Lodge.

The Summer Reunion in mid August draws many brethren from our jurisdiction. The Church Parade gathers a huge amount of visibility and interest from the public visiting the townsite. A very impressive sight.

The Victorian Christmas has become the largest yearly gathering for the community. The fifty or so members walking down to the Lodge attracts a great deal of attention for Freemasonry and promotes interest to visit and tour the Lodge.

The Harold Turner Bursary Fund is a great community engagement for the Lodge. School students graduating Grade 7 are each given a Bursary from the Lodge to continue their studies in Quesnel. These three events are huge profile events that put Freemasonry in a great light within the Community.

**Goldstream Lodge No. 161 - WB Bruce Simpson**

With community involvement, we are always looking at ways that we can give back, get involved and promote what we do to help.  One of our members is a City Councillor with Colwood, another one just finished being a City Councillor with View Royal and continues to work with Mayor Stu Young in Langford.  Me, the Worshipful Master of the Lodge is a Director on the Westshore Chamber of Commerce.  We constantly have our ear to the ground on how we can get involved and put our Masonic name forward.  Many of our members are part of the Shrine, and /or help with the DeMolay or the Jobies….who constantly run fundraisers and events to promote their name and cause.  Many Brothers are going to Royals game on December 15 to help sell 50/50 tickets for the Shrine Club.  Goldstream gives annual bursaries to high school students to help their education and our Hall donates its space for a neighborhood Food Bank.  We are working with city officials, offering our location for parking during special events, and our tree for the city of Langford’s Christmas light up.

**Vanderhoof Lodge No. 119**

The Lodge informs inform the community that Vanderhoof Freemasons are available to assist as volunteers during community events. Rarely will the community organizations contact them so they have to take the initiative to contact the organizations.

During the Fall Fair as well as the Vanderhoof Air Show plus a couple of other community events, the members of Vanderhoof Lodge wear Masonic hats and tee shirts when they are volunteering at these events.

The Worshipful Master and Lodge secretary informed me that the they would encounter up to 30 thousand people during the course of the year at these combined events.

In a small community like Vanderhoof, they members who live and work in this community know most of the people in the community which would make it easier to get the word out that they are Masons and are willing to help out. Bottom line is to let the community know you are there.

**Victoria Columbia**

Music for Youth initiative.- W Bro. Michel Bourassa

The lodge asks for donations of musical instruments from the community. We refurbish them, engrave them with the square and compasses and the Lodge name. They are then donated to a school that is in need of instruments. We work with the school board to identify a need.

In return the students give an annual concert at the Masonic Hall.  It is open to the public.  It is well attended and well received by the community. The upside is tremendous.  Very much a win/win.  Dare I say if the cancer car becomes too difficult, supporting music and youth is very rewarding.

Our Lodge leader and contact person is WBro. Michel Bourassa  rmbourassa@gmail.com

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**Peace Lodge No. 126**

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