

St. Catharines, Ontario

The

# Brock Broadcaster



***A newsletter for the Brethren of Brock Daylight Lodge No. 745, Niagara "A" District, All Members of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario and Beyond.***

**May 2021**

***A beautiful system of morality...  
Veiled in allegory...  
And illustrated by symbols, but***

## **WHAT IS FREEMASONRY?**

"Freemasonry is the world's oldest fraternal organization. Masonic principles insist that each member show tolerance, respect and kindness towards others. A Mason should practice charity and show the utmost care for his community and country while striving to achieve high moral standards in his own life."

"Freemasonry offers a brotherhood of man from diverse backgrounds, race, creed or color. His greatness is measured by his character, his deeds and his feelings of admiration and respect towards his fellow man – not by his wealth, his fame or his status in society."

"Freemasonry is the most ancient and respectable institution. A belief in a Supreme Being, an unblemished character and virtuous conduct are the only qualifications for admission into the Craft. Freemasonry embraces individuals of every nation, of every religion and of every condition of life. Wealth, power and talents are not necessary as prerequisites for membership." *EFD*

.....

## **THE ANCIENT LANDMARKS**

The most often asked question in the mind of a Freemason is – "What are the Ancient Landmarks which I have been charged to 'preserve sacred and inviolable', and which every Worshipful Master before being placed in the chair solemnly pledges himself to "preserve"?"

The question of what these Ancient Landmarks are and how they came into being has always been a mystery. But one thing is certain; they are the unwritten laws, the principles and guidelines or framework within which the Masonic system of morality has been created. It is interesting to note that the word appears in Deuteronomy 19, v 14 and Chapter 27, v 17; Proverbs 22, v 28. Landmarks can be likened to the unwritten laws and principles of common acceptance in our daily lives. Probably the first mention of Landmarks in Masonic literature occurs in the General Regulations compiled by George Fayne, the antiquary, in 1720, when he was Grand Master, and approved by the Grand Lodge in 1721. William Preston in 1775 maintained that the term Landmarks was synonymous with "The Ancient Usages and Customs of the Order" which came into being after the advent of Free and Speculative Masons or those previously obtaining amongst purely Operative Masons.

Two essential points recur again and again in definitions.

1.A Landmark must have existed from the ‘time where of the memory of man runneth not to the contrary’.

2.A Landmark is an element in the form or essence of the Society of such importance that Freemasonry would not be Freemasonry if it were removed.

Applying these two limitations it is evident that many so-called Landmarks are but tenets, principles, customs or regulations which have been adopted and may be subject to change by Grand Lodge rulings.

Thus, while some quote the seven specified in the Constitution of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts – the oldest on this continent – other Grand Lodges in the USA have listed many more, even twenty five but the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario has never made any explicit pronouncement on the precise number and nature of the Landmarks, however, it is generally held in our Grand jurisdiction that they include the beliefs which every candidate must confirm before he can be initiated.

On page 162 in the XXIV volume of the proceedings of Quatuor Coronati we find: “What is a Landmark?” Webster gives the figurative meaning of the word ‘Any event, characteristic, or modification which makes a turning point or a stage’. Everything that is a landmark of Freemasonry, which is admitted cannot be altered must be part and parcel of ‘the peculiar system of morality’ and not the allegory and symbols that veil or illustrate it. If Landmarks were enunciated in the Book of Constitution, Freemasonry would not be Freemasonry vii. “A peculiar system veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.” Every tenet, of the Craft is a landmark – but no allegory or symbol teaching or indicating such a tenet is one”.

*Reflections Newsletter – Volume 1, Issue 1*

.....



## STANLEY JOHN SHELDRAKE HOT AIR BALLOONIST... AND A MASON

Stanley John “Stan” Sheldrake was the first licensed hot air balloonist in Canada and built many hot air balloons in his pastime.



Fascinated by aviation since childhood, Sheldrake began to fly at the ripe age of 17. Indeed, Sheldrake earned a private pilot license in 1954, after taking classes at the Calgary Flying Club. As exhilarating as piloting a light/private aircraft could be, Stan Sheldrake soon became intrigued by the idea of jumping out of a perfectly good aircraft to see how it felt like. In other words, he developed a passion for skydiving/parachuting. An active member of the St. Catharines Parachute Club, one of the oldest in Canada, he made three hundred and fifty or so jumps.

As many Canadians from sea to shining sea prepared to celebrate the centennial of Confederation, in 1967, a few adventurous ones were envisioning the possibility of bringing balloons to the party. Big ones. One of these flying enthusiasts was, you guessed it, Sheldrake who, at the time, was a thirty- or so-year old father and an insurance salesman.

Modern hot air ballooning was still in diapers, figuratively speaking, when Sheldrake and a fellow skydiver and childhood friend, Ken Merritt, developed an interest in this endeavour in 1964, after coming across some of the earliest

magazine accounts of the pioneering work done in the United States by Paul Edward "Ed" Yost. Thoroughly fascinated, Sheldrake and Merritt decided to build their own balloon. It is possible that the idea of buying one never occurred to them.

Sheldrake and Merritt's first tasks were to find information. They contacted engineers, balloon clubs and various companies in five countries. Even though the latter preferred to sell rather than talk, an engineer at Goodyear Aerospace Corporation put our friends in contact with the Aerostat Society of Australia. This organization gave them a balloon design formula and a source for a type of polyester fabric normally used to make boat sails.

By October 1966, the balloon was slowly taking shape, at Sheldrake's home in Smithville, Ontario. Using the \$2000 that had been borrowed from a bank, they gradually brought in the required materials. As the days turned into weeks, Wilfred Jussen, Douglas "Doug" Hysert and Frank Dunlop joined the team.

Very much aware that their balloon would have to be looked at by inspectors from the organization with powers to regulate all aspects of civilian aviation in Canada before it would be allowed to fly, they duly contacted the Department of Transportation (DOT) at some point in late 1966 or early 1967. Ironically enough, this department had no standard or procedure whatsoever relating to balloons or ballooning. As the weeks turned into months, its inspectors visited Sheldrake's basement balloon factory on five occasions.

In January 1967, the five men attended the fifth annual Saint Paul Winter Carnival Hot Air Balloon Race, in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Would you believe that none of them had seen a balloon from up close before that time? While in Minnesota, the team met popular pioneer astronauts/balloonists like Donald Louis "Don" Piccard and Deke Sonnichsen. They learned a great deal about the subtle art of balloon

inflation and flight. The team also heard about plans for an exciting competition proposed by Sonnichsen, the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway International Balloon Race, to be held in Palm Springs, California, as part of a long-standing event known as Desert Circus Week.

Bubbling with enthusiasm, the team completed its balloon, *Spirit of Canada*, as it was called, was ready to fly in early April 1967. It was successfully inflated on April 9<sup>th</sup> but did not fly. There was too much wind. The people and journalists present that day were somewhat disappointed.

Sheldrake test flew *Spirit of Canada* on April 11<sup>th</sup>. Like his fellow team members, he had no training or experience. The flight lasted only eight minutes. After climbing to 150 meters (500 feet), Sheldrake sideswiped a huge oak tree as he tried to land. The envelopes of the balloon were seriously damaged. As repairs took place, the DOT issued a registration certificate for *Spirit of Canada*. The flight permit issued at the time stated it could fly only during daylight hours, in visual flight rules weather conditions, outside controlled airspace. As was the case with homebuilt aircraft, the balloon could not carry passengers, at least initially.

The restriction was pretty much superfluous since Sheldrake did not have a balloon pilot license and could not carry passengers until he got one. The DOT only had draft regulations for licensing balloon pilots. Furthermore, the DOT did not have a qualified balloon flight instructor. As a result, the department concluded that Sheldrake would have to meet its requirements by doing sixteen hours of solo flight.

Sheldrake made his second and third flights with *Spirit of Canada* in the Palm Springs area. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) did not expect aspiring pilots to complete a specific number of flights lasting an equally specific amount of time in order to obtain a balloon pilot license. Because of this,

Sheldrake's friend, Don Piccard, who was an FAA examiner, was able to issue an American balloon pilot license to Sheldrake. In one of the events, Sheldrake would pilot *Spirit of Canada* near the top of San Jacinto Peak, at an altitude of about 2500 metres (8200 feet). Sheldrake came in fourth place, having covered a distance of more than nineteen kilometres in about forty-nine minutes.



Sheldrake and *Spirit of Canada* made their fourth flight in Hamilton on May 14, 1967, at the Centennial International Air Show. A crowd of about sixty thousand people cheered as Sheldrake soared into the sky. The landing did not go as planned. It was a windy day and the balloon hit the ground hard. Sheldrake broke his nose when he hit a fuel tank. He was rushed to a nearby hospital and underwent surgery. The Hamilton flight is worthy of note because Canada Post recognised it as the first during which a balloon carried mail in Canada.

All in all, Sheldrake made more than twenty-four flights during the summer of 1967, many of them at Centennial events. By April 1968, he had the sixteen hours of flight experience required by DOT. By then, the DOT had a written exam ready for use. Sheldrake passed it with flying colors. He was the first person to write an exam for a balloon pilot license in Canada. The date of issue was June 13, 1968.

Given that his license granted him the privilege to train aspiring balloon pilots, Sheldrake lost no time in providing training to the other members of the team. This unusual privilege, which may have been revoked some years later, played a significant role in the rapid increase in the number of balloon pilots in Canada.



Stan Sheldrake (left) and Ken Merritt (right) wearing their infamous motorcycle helmets for safety.

Like many before and after him, Sheldrake believed he could make money with a balloon. In 1968, he put aside demonstration flights in favour of a full-time commercial ballooning operation with several prominent contracts. Indeed, he built two more balloons, for the Canadian brewing giant, Labatt Brewing Company, as part of this endeavour.

The first, the so-called *Blue Balloon*, was registered in June 1969. The second one, which may have been unnamed, followed in 1970. Sheldrake flew *Blue Balloon* and *Spirit of Canada* on several occasions during the summer of 1969. He flew the former on behalf of Labatt Brewing, while the latter was flown on behalf of an American company, Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company, a firm better known as 3M. It so happened that 3M was promoting its Scotchgard fabric protector with the catch phrase, "Fearless Fashions". Sheldrake was soon billed as "Captain Fearless". Marketing people at Labatt Brewing also liked this name, although they preferred "Capt'n Fearless". Even though Sheldrake readily admitted he was not fearless, both monikers stuck.

Sheldrake's ballooning activities involved a lot of brief tethered flights at shopping malls and fairs. On two occasions he flew as a helicopter carrying a film crew for Labatt Brewing commercials filmed *Blue Balloon* on a bright sunny day. The second flight took place in the Rocky Mountains, west of Calgary, in late May 1970. An unforeseen change in wind direction took Sheldrake west rather than east. As soon as the film crew got the footage it needed, he dropped down to tree top level. The nacelle of the balloon got caught between three trees sticking out from a ledge. A rescue mountain team from Calgary spent eight or so hours getting Sheldrake and the balloon down.

Stan Sheldrake retired from ballooning in 1975. He could certainly be proud of his accomplishments. He played a crucial role in introducing Canadians to hot air ballooning. He convinced DOT that ballooning was a legitimate form of flight and proved that balloons could be a remarkably effective advertising and promotion tool.

Stan Sheldrake was initiated into Craft Freemasonry at Coronation Lodge No. 502, Smithville, on Monday, November 8, 1987. He was passed to the Fellowcraft Degree on January 4, 1988 and raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason on March 7, 1988. Bro. Sheldrake began advancing through the officer's chairs and following the footsteps of his father, W Bro. Jack Sheldrake, and his brother, W Bro. Jim Sheldrake. Bro. Sheldrake dropped out of the officer lineup as a Senior Deacon due to ongoing health issues. He passed to the Grand Lodge Above on Wednesday, November 19, 2008 at the McNally House Hospice in Grimsby. He was in his seventy second year.

[www.ingeniumcanada.org/channel/articles/this-magnificent-man-in-his-flying-machine](http://www.ingeniumcanada.org/channel/articles/this-magnificent-man-in-his-flying-machine)  
[www.merritt-fh.com](http://www.merritt-fh.com)  
Coronation Lodge No. 502 - members register  
West Lincoln Historical Society archive photos

.....

## OUR DUTY TO THE CANDIDATE

When a man joins a new company there is always a period of indoctrination; he is never left to blunder around the office or the factory on his own. Consider the length of time required to train a lawyer, a doctor or an engineer. A simple ordinary BA course takes three to four years. And yet, in Masonry, we say we take good men and make them better, but only allow three rather brief ceremonial evenings for this lofty project.

We extend fraternity and brotherly love to our new Masons for a brief moment and then turn towards our older friends. The effort must be made to embrace everyone in our companionship; to bring every member into the magical circle of Masonry, whereby each one of us may be encouraged to seek more and become an active part of Masonic brotherhood. The work on the temple must never be suspended. We initiate a person to make him a Mason and never stop doing this. A few minutes at the end of the each degree could be devoted to some very basic information being given to the candidate. As soon as he has completed the three degrees a system of education should be devised to involve the new member in the work of the degrees and in the administrative structure of the Lodge.

The Lodge altar is the hearth of Freemasonry around which we gather in the warmth of brotherly love and fellowship. All our candidates have taken Masonic vows at that same altar and, as a result, we ourselves have assumed a great obligation. We have assured the candidate that he has the right to make far reaching claims upon us that affect time, fraternity and education. We have a collective duty to that individual to make him better, and help him seek the light of truth, the way of honour, the will to work for men.



Time must be devoted for this purpose in a conscious effort and not just to fill a vacant space in our schedule. Our availability must be organized effectively to provide the opportunity for a continuing and planned effort on behalf of the candidate. The decision must be made as to which activities will occupy one's mind and then plans made accordingly. Do not become involved and hope that time may become available, make sure that it is available.

Intellectual sustenance must be provided for our members. The main aim in Masonry is to advance among ourselves the great Masonic principles and display them in our communities by our example. Masonry is not a reform institution. It takes only those who already hold some of the basic beliefs of Masonry and carries them further along the road to real brotherhood with mutual regard and esteem and allowances for our faults and failings. Remember that Masonry has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried.

*Reflections Newsletter...Volume 4, Issue 2*

.....

## MEMBERSHIP PILLAR LODGE SECRETARY WORKSHOPS

Good day Brethren,

Well, we completed the last of our Lodge Secretary workshops and I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to each of you for your involvement over the past six months. The success this workshop has achieved is directly a result of your commitment and dedication to this project.

We have welcomed one hundred and seventy-seven Brethren, representing thirty-eight Districts, to our virtual workshop home. What I am most pleased with is that sixty five per cent of the attendees were either Lodge Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries, with the feedback being extremely positive. Even those

who have been Lodge Secretaries for many years, indicated they gained additional knowledge that will assist them in the performance of their duties.

What has been extremely gratifying is that the presentation group was comprised of Brethren from throughout our jurisdiction; Algoma, Algoma East, Frontenac, Niagara A, Ontario, Ottawa 2, St. Lawrence and Victoria. Each working together as a cohesive team in each workshop.

Last and certainly not least, is the leadership provided by RW Bro. John Hay, the Membership Pillar chairman. John has provided valuable guidance throughout these workshops as he has been by our side every step of the way and he is to be commended for his dedication to our Craft.

Brethren, it has been my distinct pleasure to work with each of you and you can be certain that I will be calling on you as we once again prepare to host many more brethren to these workshops, beginning in the Fall.

Fraternally,

RW Bro. Iain D Wates,

Membership Pillar – Workshop Facilitator

### Team Members

RW Bro. James Broomhead, Algoma East District

RW Bro. Edward "Ted" Dunsmore, Niagara A

RW Bro. Jeff Gatcke, Frontenac District

RW Bro. Peter Harbert, Ottawa 2 District

RW Bro. Ron Janes, Victoria District

RW Bro. Jack Smith, St. Lawrence District

VW Bro. Sean Pere, Frontenac District

W Bro. Glenn Jess, Ontario District

W Bro. Tim King, Algoma District



WHATEVER ROUTE YOUR TRAVELS  
TAKE YOU...  
YOU ARE NEVER FAR FROM  
THE SQUARE AND THE COMPASSES



*Groh Avenue, Cambridge*



*High Street, Sutton*



*Crosby Avenue, Richmond Hill*



*Arkona Road, Arkona*



*Rubidge Street, Peterborough*



*Major Mackenzie Drive, Maple (Vaughan)*



*Thomas Street, Mississauga (Streetsville)*

Do hope you have enjoyed the read as much as I have enjoyed researching the articles. Thanks again. As always, take care and stay safe.

*RW Bro. Edward F "Ted" Dunsmore, PDDGM*

