



March 2018

The Belmont Albion Lodge No.45 Newsletter

Vision Statement:

To prosper into the future.

Mission Statement:

The Belmont Albion Lodge No 45 shall practice the principles of freemasonry in all ways, to enhance education, knowledge and care for its members, attracting men of high quality, personal development and participation in our community.

REMINDER



Communication and Lodge Attendance



Drawing by Bro R Ward

Next Issue

Deadline:

15 April 2018

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In this issue:

Views from the East 3

Master’s Calendar..... 3

From the Editor..... 4

Notes from the Director of Ceremonies 5

Interview with our new brother..... 7

Job vacancy..... 9

45 Ways To Improve Lodge Attendance..... 9



"I will strive to live with love and care,
Upon the level and by the square"

Views from the East

Brethren

As the festive season looms large in the calendar, it is often a time to reflect briefly on the year that has been and give thanks for the opportunity to share these past twelve months with those nearest and dearest to us.

Thank you for the opportunity of being your Master in 2017. It has been a true privilege to lead the Lodge, and to represent the Lodge and our Brethren when visiting. During the course of the year we have had growth and interest expressed in joining BA45, which is pleasing to note. Those that have joined or are waiting to join, been raised or passed are our future and our support of them is critical to our longevity. Please make yourselves available to help them when they ask for assistance and guide them gently when necessary.

It is also a time to take stock and look forward to 2018 and the challenges that the New Year will present to each of us.

The challenge of numbers and competing interests for people's time continues to offset the enthusiasm of those attending regularly. The "Speak up for Freemasonry" campaign is assisting in getting the message out to the wider public, but it still remains the personal commitment that each of us make that drives the level of energy we see so well demonstrated in our Lodge meetings and activities.

May your time over this period be safe, laughter filled and relaxing and I look forward to your company in 2018, starting with the Icebreaker bbq on 17th February. Wishing you and your loved ones all the very best for the festive season.

Fraternally

Fraternally
WM Sean Neely



Master's Calendar

3rd April BA45 Installation rehearsal- Installing team will be in attendance

10th April BA45 Installation of Bro Russel M Ward and officers of the lodge

From the Editor

Commitment or communication?

One blink of an eye and we're already three months into the new year of 2018. I hope you all have had a fantastic time over the summer. It's amazing how busy life can get when you get back to work after a long holiday! Despite all, we have had a great start to our masonic year already with the icebreaker function and Ranjit's initiation ceremony, both very memorable occasions.

This issue presents the usual variety of news in and out of the lodge and some thought-provoking articles on the importance of commitment, communication and lodge attendance.

Every time we have a general meeting or even at the district and national level, lodge attendance and retention are hot topics. I find most those discussions pointless because they do not offer a solution. Maybe there is no solution. I have been thinking about it for a while and have come to a conclusion for myself that it is not the communication but the lack of commitment which is the problem. Surely, everyone knows there is something planned for every Tuesday and we get constant email reminders about important events. We complain about lack of time and family/work demands all the time but I believe men in old days had higher demands on their time, the world worked much slower, they did physically demanding jobs and had no cars or public transports to get to their lodges. But, they did and they attended in masses because it mattered and they were committed.

Personal issues, work/family demands and life in general can affect lodge attendance and that's ok, we all face it every now and then but despite all life throws at us, we can learn to adopt and commit to our ancient order of free and accepted masons. It doesn't have to be every week but attend whenever we can.

Our new master elect promises a fulfilling schedule for his upcoming year with a mix of

ceremonies, education evenings and some interesting social events such as the delicious Filipino night and a Whiskey tasting evening. This should encourage more attendance.

Luckily in BA45, we have great mentors and highly ranked grand lodge officers who know the in and out of Freemasonry. Our lodge is famous for providing mentorship programmes, membership retention and delivering perfect rituals. The senior members in our lodge are 100% committed to ensure smooth operation of the lodge, its events and rituals. That's 80% of the job already done. It is up to other members, younger and new members to ask for or arrange for special functions, events or gatherings. Wouldn't it be great to have a few social events outside the lodge to help and engage with the community?

This is also true about the Newsletter. Your contributions are always appreciated. Photos, news, thoughts and articles in any form or format are accepted.

That said, I invite you to read this issue and please pay a special attention to the article on ways to improve lodge attendance. I'd be delighted to facilitate some of your ideas in the newsletter and I am sure your ideas regarding any special event will be well received by our incoming master as well.

**Better to be slapped with
the truth than kissed with
a lie.**

-Russian Proverb

Editor
Ali S.

Notes from the Director of Ceremonies

1) First Degree: Congratulations to those Brethren taking part in the First Degree for our newest member **Ranjit MENON**.



One of our strengths in Belmont Albion is our ceremonial - and long may it continue.

Congratulations to **Ali** for his ``charge`` and being awarded the ``**Douglas Rapley Memorial Trophy**``. Well done Ali.

*Our next ``working`` will likely be **May**?*

Our **Installation** is on the 10th April Brethren. Our Master Elect **Russell WARD** is well underway with his planning for a busy year. Our support for Russell is essential. He devotes a large proportion of his busy life to Freemasonry - every member must accept personal responsibility in supporting him.

Great to see **Sonny and Floyd** representing the Lodge at the annual ``**Round the Bays**`` run. Both came in remarkably refreshed may I say? The event drew a large contingent of Freemasons (over 150) - Plans are underway to have an even larger group next year. This was a great experience Brethren and I commend it to you.



Candidates: We have two candidates in the pipeline Brethren. One you would have met at the ``**Ice Breaker**`` hosted by Richard and Marcia LUMSDEN. Thanks to Richard and Marcia for opening up there magnificent property for our Lodge.

The **Divisional Conference** is fast approaching brethren - **Saturday 21 April**. Among other things, it's the place where you find out what's happening in the Division. All round it's a good day and well worth attending. The lunch is not too bad either?



RW Bro Murray Morrissey

Interview with our new brother

234 years ago one of the greatest musicians of all times, Hayden, wrote a letter of request to be admitted to the True Unity Lodge of Freemasons in Vienna. Here is what he wrote:

*To Franz Philip von Weber,
Dear Lodge Secretary and Master of Ceremonies at the Masonic Lodge of True Unity, The highly advantageous impression which Freemasonry has made on me has long awakened in my breast the sincerest wish to become a member the Order, with its humanitarian and wise principles. I turn to you, Sir, with the most urgent request that you have the great kindness to intervene on my behalf with the lodge, in order to implement this position. I have the honour to remain, with professional esteem, your obedient servant.
Joseph Hayden Director of Music to Prince Esterhazy Vienna Dec 29th, 1784*

Wouldn't RV Bro Murray Morrissey, BA45 DC, love receiving a letter light that?

On our first official meeting in 2018, Mr Ranjit Menon was initiated into Freemasonry. I interviewed Ranjit to see how he is holding up after his initiation!

Ranjit, would you please introduce yourself?

I am a 49 year old husband to my wife Anita and father of two delightful children Maya and Sidharth. I'm also the Managing director of my own business called Menon Mortgages which is a Mortgage brokerage on the North Shore. I've lived on Auckland's North shore for 18 years. I moved here from Nairobi, Kenya in 2000. My father was an aircraft engineer and my grandfather was a photographer.

What is your profession?

I am a Registered Financial Adviser. I am the Senior Mortgage Adviser at Menon Mortgages. I provide advice and brokerage services for home

loans, business loans, asset finance and risk insurance.

What got you interested in freemasonry?

In the late 1990s I was living with a family friend Mr Luther in Nairobi who was a Freemason & he told me about the craft, which sparked my interest.

What made you join Freemasonry?

I wanted to join an organisation that sees their members as equals and genuinely cares about their members. The ritual aspect of Masonry has a certain mystique that interested me. I also wanted to be part of an organisation that made tangible contributions towards the wellbeing & betterment of society as a whole.

What do you expect from joining Freemasonry?

I expect to be able to develop myself to be the best person I can be. I hope to be able to contribute to society and make a positive difference to people's lives. I also expect to develop strong friendships and camaraderie with my fellow brothers in the craft.

It's never too late to be a freemason. Join now.

What is your advice for men of like yourself?

It's never too late to be a freemason. Join now.

Before candidates join Freemasonry, there are a lot of questions in their mind. What were you concerns or questions?

No concerns really. I had no idea what was involved in joining. When I asked to join I was contacted by Murray Morrissey & Sean Neely. After speaking to them I was impressed by their candour & friendly accepting attitude. They both made a really positive impression on me. Before my initiation ceremony I was well briefed and prepared by Russell Ward and was given an idea of what to expect and an understanding that all masons have passed through this stage. Russell calmed my nerves before my initiation and I am grateful to him for that.

It was like nothing I had ever experienced before. It was something completely new and fascinating to me. I was struck by the degree of preparation that my brothers had gone through for the occasion and the supportive environment in which it was carried out. My brother Allan held my hand and guided me throughout which I found very reassuring. It was obviously an ancient ritual and I feel privileged to have taken part. I will always be grateful to my brothers at Lodge BA 45 for making it a really special ceremony for me.

Tell me about your initiation ceremony. Did you like it? How was your first masonic experience?



Job vacancy

You may have noticed that our lodge is deathly quiet so we need a willing volunteer.

All tuition provided. Can be done via iPad or smartphone with masonic music files. Hardware and software provided.

Please contact Russel if interested.



45 Ways To Improve Lodge Attendance

The key to good attendance is simple: You must give your members a reason to WANT to come to your lodge.

Boring meetings is the single greatest reason 85% of the Masons don't attend lodge regularly. Look around the lodge tonight. How many members are present? How many total members are in the lodge? If those present represent 45% - 50% or more of your membership CONGRATULATIONS! Your lodge is doing something right! If not, a little work may be in order.

The following suggestions may help bring a few members back to the lodge, but none of them will work if it's kept a secret. You've got to let your members know what you're doing. And, don't be shy - let them know why you're doing it. Put what you're doing in your newsletter. If you don't have a newsletter you've just discovered your First Way to Improve Attendance In Your Lodge.

You can't operate in a vacuum. Your members WANT to know what is going on in the lodge. If you don't have a REGULAR newsletter the only time many members will hear from you is when you want money either for dues or for your annual campaign. Oooh ... that's not very welcoming.

1. Make information about new members available to everyone who regularly attend lodge. Include his occupation, hobbies, interests, and reasons for joining. Record this information in a file and make it accessible to members of the lodge so when he visits they will have something to talk about.
2. Assign an Officer to greet each member as he enters the lodge. Make certain that he understands that it is his job to make each person feel welcome.
3. The Worshipful Master and officers should be the "welcoming committee." and be sure to shake

hands with each member of the lodge. If you don't know a new member's name now is a good time to learn it.

4. Make introductions during lodge warm and personal. Every man likes to hear his name and every man wants to think people care about him and what he does.

5. Include the names of new members in the newsletter. You might also consider a "Bio" of an occasional older member. Include something about him, his interests, his family and other information.

6. Insist that those who regularly attend lodge share ideas of things they would like to do, programs they would like to see, and items they would like to include. Tonight is a good night to begin asking about those things. Do it and don't take "I can't think of anything" for an answer.

7. Begin meetings on time and increase the overall pace. There is no reason that the questions asked by the Worshipful Master to the Junior and Senior Warden should be dragged out. If someone doesn't know their part it's past time to learn it. A crisp well-done opening and closing take less time and tends to be very impressive.

8. The Secretary has much to do with the pace of the meeting. If there are no petitions the Worshipful Master should be informed before the meeting and shouldn't ask if there are any to be read. If there is to be no voting, it shouldn't be asked.

9. People do like to know what is going on in their fraternity. Reporting Grand Lodge Communications are imperative.

10. There is absolutely no substitution for planning. A good leader and good officer cares more about his lodge than to be satisfied with an informal gathering just before the meeting. He has planned a good meeting. Possibly he has invited a speaker or at least prepared a program and a presenter. To him, each night is special and

he knows attendance only comes from offering your members a good "product."

11. Older members and younger members have different expectations. Programs should satisfy both. While a program about retirement planning may be more enjoyable to the older member, the younger member will benefit also. Likewise, a program about vacation planning may not be as interesting to the older member, but older members take vacations too.

12. Whatever kind of program you present, make it the best it can possibly be. Absolutely nothing works better than quality programs to increase attendance. Every man likes to think the time he has invested in going to the lodge is worthwhile.

13. "Planning for a Perfect Evening" suggests every lodge make something special happen at stated communications at least six times each year. These meetings should be planned at least six months in advance so you can have your choice of speakers or guests.

14. Your lodge and your community is a goldmine of interesting speakers. People love to talk about what they do for a living and this can be a source of excellent speakers. But, don't surprise them. Give them time to prepare a presentation. If the person doesn't like public speaking have someone else in the lodge work with them to prepare something. A ten or fifteen minute presentation is plenty.

15. Don't forget about your District Deputy Grand Master or the Grand Lodge officers. Most can give you an interesting presentation and would enjoy visiting with the people in your lodge.

16. Almost every lodge is there at the death of a brother, but are they there when the brother gets sick or loses a relative. These can be very trying times for a brother and a card or a phone call can mean a world of difference.

17. Have you ever seen a large picture of an ostrich egg or something in the paper that made

you ask why it was there? I was there to fill space because there was no news or advertising to fill the space. Take advantage of this opportunity. Whenever you have a special event either invite the newspaper or send in a picture. Let the paper decide whether to use it or not.

18. Compete with another lodge for the best percentage growth in attendance. Make the contest fun, let the losing lodge serve a meal to the winner or put on a special degree.

19. Calling every new Mason who has been raised within the past few years reminds that Mason that his lodge and his brothers are interested in him. If he hasn't attended in a while this is a good time to find out why. If there is a problem now is an ideal time to handle it.

20. Don't be shy. Tell them you are calling and will be calling with the intent to increase interest in the lodge. If you are sincere most brothers will tell you why they have quit attending and will want to see that you are successful in your efforts. Some may offer to help and call a few of their friends. In any event, you will have contacted a brother.

21. Take the time to look through the minutes and see when was the last time the member attended lodge. Time slips by quickly for all of us. It's not unusual for a brother to think it's only been a few months and it's really been several years since he attended.

22. Ask questions during your conversation to find out what has happened to his interest in Masonry. Ask open ended questions like "If there were one thing we could do to get you back interested in the lodge what would it be?" Most of the time there will be no complaints except that the meetings are boring or something to that effect. Assure him you are working on making the meetings something he will find interesting.

23. If there has been illness or a problem in the family you and your brothers need to know. It is not unusual for a brother to leave Masonry simply because his brothers ignored him during a

sickness or a hospital stay and they knew nothing about it! But, is there an excuse for not knowing your brother is in the hospital?

24. Above all, don't sound like a telemarketer when you call. You are a brother who is concerned about your brother. If you are in a hurry make your calls another time. When you are finished make a notecard about the call with information you can use later or on the next call.

25. Don't scrimp on the meal. Although people will always complain about the price of a meal, most would rather pay a dollar or so more for a good one. Would you pay a dollar more for a nice cut of beef instead of a hamburger? People do it every day. The quality of the meal should come first.

26. Most of our members are more health conscious in their eating today. Heavy gravies, fat beef and lots of mashed potatoes are not as healthy as chicken and fish. Fresh vegetables are lower in sodium than canned ones. Some members have to watch what they eat and will avoid meals with items they aren't supposed to eat.

27. Ask some of the younger members to suggest some meals. They may even want to help prepare them. This is a good way to get a brother involved in the activities of the lodge. Try new foods. Every meal doesn't need to be the same.

28. Invite the wives in for the meal. You can also give a program for the ladies while the men "retire to the lodge room".

29. A lodge picnic can be a fun outing. Invite the wives, the kids, and even the neighbours. The family spirit is good for the lodge and allows the brothers to learn more about each other. Plan activities during the picnic that encourages people to work and play together. The rewards are numerous.

30. Lodge "field trips" inspire the members. Join together on a Saturday and visit points of interest throughout the state. The locations don't

necessarily have to be Masonic, but it does add something extra.

31. Everyone has skills. Everyone has talents. Everyone has interests. Try to find out the skills, talents and interests of the members. Make them feel like their involvement is expected. Create a list of these items and use it in your planning. The more you can direct your lodge programs toward member interests, the more attendance you will have.

32. Be sure to listen to the members, don't just act like you are listening. Follow some of the suggestions. They may just work. If they don't, what have you lost? Remember, the lodge belongs to ALL the members and there is no such thing as an unimportant member.

33. When you develop your plan... follow it! Don't put it off. DO IT! Lodges suffer from indecision and inactivity. They thrive on planning and activity, but even the best plan is no good until it is implemented.

34. Two or three people offer to help the Secretary review the minutes for the last ten years and make a list of who attended the lodge and when. From these lists isolate the members who haven't attended in the past 10 years, 5 years, and 1 year. You will be surprised. And, it may jump-start your planning.

35. Do you seriously have regular programs in your lodge or is it just hit or miss? Is there something scheduled for your first meeting night in September? What about next meeting night? What was planned for tonight other than opening, reading the minutes, this program and closing? Do you believe it's really enough to keep all your members interested?

36. Answer this question honestly. Are you doing everything you can do to make your lodge the best it can be?

37. Streamline the necessary business portion of the meeting and use the extra time for Masonic Education.

38. Encourage brothers to prepare and present programs that are interesting.

39. Find ways to involve the entire family in your events. Why not host a Super Bowl party and invite Brethren and their wives?

40. Organize a "Pick-up Service" for those brothers within a specified radius who may be uncomfortable driving.

41. Hold a Ritual School of Instruction.

42. Implement an Internet Committee to oversee a website, or at least a Lodge Facebook page. Assign someone to post upcoming events, news, etc.

43. Have your Lodge host a Father/Daughter/Son camp out. What better way for our children to witness the comrade between us.

44. Host a Family Day. This could include a Lodge sponsored Easter Egg Hunt or a bbq cook out with bouncy houses for the kids. Make Masonry fun!

45. Don't over extend yourself or get burned out. Focus on what you love about the Craft and stick with it.

Source: Grand Lodge of North Carolina/Blake Bowden