PRESENTATION TO RICHMOND LODGE #142

March 25, 2015

Worshipful Master, Distinquished East, Brethren, Brothers and Sisters and guests. Thank you Worshipful Master for making this presentation possible.

There comes a time in every family when one member has to turn to another member for support. For Richmond Chapter that time is now. We need your support. We do not want or need your financial help. We need you! The number of active Master Masons is declining considerably and without your support Richmond Chapter will cease to be in 3 years. You may not realize it but it does not matter how many women are active in a chapter, if there is not a Master Mason sitting in the East the chapter cannot continue and it has to affiliate with another chapter. Some of you may be asking yourself why you would want to join us and why should you if you know little or nothing about us so I would like to give a brief description of our history and our activities.

The seeds that would be responsible for our Order were planted over 170 years ago in Mississippi by Dr. Rob Morris who was a lawyer, successful lecturer and educator in Free Masonry. Dr. Morris traveled extensively and had many accomplishments. One being the organization of the first Masonic Temple in Jerusalem, Royal Solomon #1 and he became its first Worshipful Master. He wrote many works on Free Masonry and his best known poem is “The Level and the Square”. He also composed music, a lot of which were hymns. He was Most Worshipful Grand Master of Kentucky in 1858-1859. He was an active member in the Craft Lodge, Royal Arch and several others. He was considered to be one of the most versatile and learned Masons of his time.

The highlight of his Masonic life was in 1884 when he was crowned with the laurel wreath symbolizing Poet Laureate of Masonry. He was only the second Master Mason to receive this honour, Robert Burns, as you know, being the first 100 years previously.

Dr. Morris felt the female relatives of Master Masons should have the opportunity to share in some of the benefits and privileges offered to Master Masons and so the Order of the Eastern Star, as it became known, was born. Master Masons and their female relatives make up our Order and it is one of the largest in the world for men and women. Our purpose is to care for the widow and orphan and those less fortunate than ourselves. To do that in this jurisdiction (British Columbia and Yukon) we support the BC Cancer Agency by purchasing equipment and supporting research. We also have a special project each year which is determined by the Worthy Grand Matron. We fund several bursaries, one for medical students, one for academic students and one for students of theology as well as one for music students. We have several medical equipment depots. We also support the Erma Boyce Library at the Cancer Centre in Vancouver. We collect used stamps which are trimmed, sorted and sold and the money from the sales coupled with donations is used to purchase rolls of gauze which are then made into dressings for cancer patients once they return home. These dressings are free of charge. Volunteers spend thousands of hours making over 100,000 dressings per year. Since 1945 we have made over 20 million dressings.

There are 48 chapters in this jurisdiction with approximately 3,000 members. We are governed by the Grand Chapter of British Columbia and Yukon which is the counterpart of your Grand Lodge. There is also General Grand Chapter but we can talk about it another time. We are governed by a set of Rules and Regulations and we have a Constitution and Laws. We salute the senior officers of Grand Chapter and General Grand Chapter with Grand Honours.

I have referred to us as the Order but we also call ourselves Star. We believe in the existence of a Supreme Being and to be a member one must attest to this belief and have a Masonic relationship. For a man he has to be a Master Mason. People of all faiths are welcome in our Order. We have an obligation by which we are all expected to pattern our lives and it i in effect for our life time. Although we are based on Masonic principles we are an independent body, however, we do need you as members so in reality we really are not entirely independent of you. We must have a Master Mason sitting in the East beside the Worthy Matron. His responsibilities include presiding over the conferring of degrees to initiates, acting as an advisor to the Worthy Matron, seeing the officers are proficient in their work and exercising a general supervision over the affairs of the chapter.

A chapter must have 18 officers, 5 of whom are the floral centerpiece of our Order. The first is Adah, who represents the daughter. Adah as the daughter of Jephthah was willing to die to preserve her father’s honour. Ruth represents the widow. As the widowed daughter-in-law of Naomi she toiled in the fields of Boaz to provide for her aged mother-in-law. Esther represents the wife. Esther, unknown to her husband, the king, was a Jewess and she was prepared to lose royal favour and her life to protect her people from extermination. Martha represents the sister. As the sister of Lazarus she mourned his death but she had faith in the powers of Christ for immortal life. And, lastly there is Electa who represents the mother. Electa was a lady of generous and loving spirit who refused the Roman soldiers’ demand that she denounce her Christian faith.

There is much about Eastern Star and Masons that it is very much alike. We too have a secret handshake, secret signs and passes. After all Star was founded by a Master Mason. We are alike and yet in some ways we are different. The differences, however, are minimal. We both believe that the best way to prove our love of mankind is to do for those less fortunate. We believe in the existence of a Supreme Being who guides us on our way. We believe in Brotherly love, relief and truth, honour, loyalty and devotion to principles and ideals.

We are proud of our Masonic ties and we strive to promulgate its wonderful principles.

There is one other thing I’d like you to consider. When a Mason and his lady, his daughter, his granddaughter, whatever the familial relationship, belong to Eastern Star a stronger bond develops between them. It is something very special and it is difficult to describe but experienced by all who have been fortunate enough to share the connection. I think it definitely gives the wife a better understanding and appreciation of her husband’s devotion to Free Masonry.

There is one little secret I’ll tell you. We have an inside joke. OES not only stands for Order of the Eastern Star, it also stands for Over Eating Sisters because after all our meetings we socialize over refreshments.

BEFORE I END I WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU AND YOUR FEMALE RELATIVES TO RICHMOND CHAPTER’S OPEN INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS ON MARCH 29TH AT 2:00 IN THIS HALL. IF YOU ARE ATTENDING PLEASE GIVE US YOUR NAMES FOR THE GUEST LIST.

Are there any questions? Please feel free to ask any question you may have.

Thank you for your courteous attention and once again I’d like to thank Worshipful Master Walrund for making this possible.