



FREEMASONS

New Zealand

Grand Secretary Newsletter

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For Grand Lodge contact information, please see the bottom of this newsletter.

In this Issue

- * A Personal View from the Grand Secretary...
- * Open Day and Art Exhibition



A Personal View from the Grand Secretary...

I just wanted to thank **Lodge Awatea No. 258** for allowing us to use their web page as the model for other Lodges and to explain a little about why I feel this is so important. (<http://www.lodgeawatea.org.nz/>)

Anecdotal reports from Grand Lodges overseas are indicating that a web presence is vital to the success of Freemasonry in the future and our own experience is confirming this as I get membership enquiries via the web site every week.

The following is a quote from the Los Angeles Times.

"For a time it looked as if Masonry was going into a sharp decline, if not the death throes," said UCLA history professor Margaret C. Jacob, who has written extensively about the fraternal order. "But it looks like it may be making a comeback."

That's **because the Freemasons**, whose tenets forbid soliciting or recruiting members, **have enthusiastically embraced the Internet** as a way to leverage curiosity about an organization with its roots in Europe's medieval stonemasons guilds. Freemasonry today sees itself as a thinking man's salon, a learned society with a philanthropic bent.

"We had a record number of new members last year," said Allan Casalou, grand secretary of the Grand Lodge of California. "We added 2,000 men, which is the most since 1999 and a sign that the right time for membership is now." (Freemasonry)

secretary of the Grand Lodge of California. "We added 2,000 men, which is the most since 1998 and our seventh straight year of membership increases." (Emphasis added)

The current generations are very computer savvy and expect to get all of their information from the Internet. It would be very difficult to communicate with them if we avoid their main area of interest. The same article goes on to say:

"THE INTERNET hasn't only made it easier to learn about the Freemasons, Casalou says, it's changed the type of men coming forward. "There is so much information on the Internet that by the time someone comes to a lodge to seek membership, they already know a lot about Masonry," he said. "Which is a big departure from previous generations. And it means they are more likely to be active participants."

There is no doubt that if Freemasonry is to survive in New Zealand then we need all our Lodges to have modern up-to-date web sites, we need the older members of the Lodges to stand back and to allow the younger members to have a say, we need to listen to what they are saying and we need to take action on it. I should however add that all this must be done whilst maintaining our traditional ritual and the allegory and symbolism etc that it retains. We can however modernise our refectory and social proceedings. Freemasonry must become a modern organisation that appeals to the 21st Century man.

Unfortunately this is something that only a few of our Lodges have accepted as yet. Too often our current membership stands in the way of progress and hinders attempts to modernise. This is either because those controlling the Lodge fear losing their authority in the Lodge or begrudge the increases in cost that this inevitably entails. By those controlling the Lodge I don't mean the Lodge officers or executive but I refer to the members who are influencing the Lodge be they Grand Lodge Officers, Past Masters or just older and respected brethren.

Our membership figures are such at the moment that we stand at a crossroads: we can either modernise and grow or resist change and die. I know which road I want to take. I therefore look forward to the day that all of our Lodges have a modern up-to-date web site and run their Lodge meetings in a way that appeals to the current generations and encourages their membership and continued participation. If this means relinquishing some control to younger members and increased costs for all then so be it.

The Board of General Purposes has set up a number of National Committees to assist your Lodge to modernise including the National Planning Committee and the Education Committee and Grand Lodge Office is only too happy to assist with web sites, including hosting. All you have to do to get assistance is to ask.

Once again thanks to Lodge Awatea for taking this step towards becoming a modern Lodge. I wish them well for the future.

Open Day and Art Exhibition

The **North Shore Masonic Centre** in William Laurie Place, Albany will be open to the general public on Friday 18th July and Saturday 19th July from 10.30am to 4.30pm daily.

All visitors are welcome. This is the first time these modern well appointed Lodge premises have been opened for general viewing.

Entry is free and will include a tour round the lodge rooms and an exhibition by local artists. All proceeds donated to CanTeen - supporting young people living with cancer.

For further Information and Enquires please contact: C.Burrows –P.O.Box 35541 Browns Bay, Auckland – Telephone 09/ 473 8607 – email: upperwarren@yahoo.co.nz



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