

THE WATERMARK

It is the job of thinking people not to be on the side of the executioners – Albert Camus



Welcome back. I sure hope your summer weather was a pleasant as mine. As we begin a new season of activity recharged from a couple of months of leisure, we all look forward to a rewarding year of philately and Masonic exchange. This issue of the Watermark promises to enlighten, challenge and possibly even offend, but those are the risks one takes when trying to create a newsletter that is both entertaining and thought provoking. So fasten your seatbelts and put your tables in the upright position and let's blow the sands of summer from our minds.

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"Mauris non erat. Integer dolor metus, hendrerit a, convallis vel, vehicula in, enim."

Tommy Douglas Gets A Second Stamp

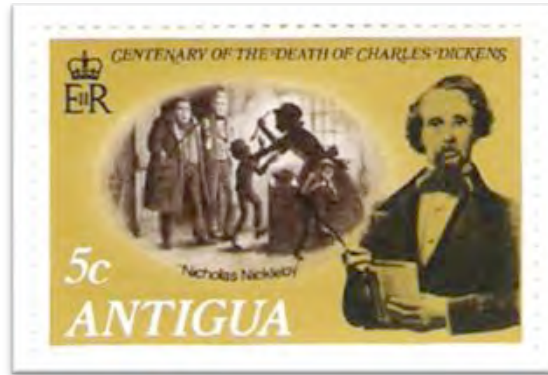
On June 29th, 2012 Canada Post released a second stamp featuring Bro. Tommy Douglas. This stamp was issued to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Medicare in Canada. Canadian Broadcast Corporation (CBC) viewers chose Tommy Douglas as "The Greatest Canadian," in 2004, primarily for his role in creating the country's public health care system. His first stamp was issued in 1977 (Scott 744) and featured in the March 2012 Watermark.



Anti- Mason of the Month – Charles Dickens?

When one thinks of anti-masons one could be forgiven for not thinking of the world famous English novelist Charles Dickens (1812-1870). After all he was not a mass murderer or oppressor of civil rights such as Hitler or General Franco. But one of the world's greatest writers apparently didn't think much of the Craft.

Dickens writing was greatly influenced by his own childhood that included poverty and hardship and his books often reflected a disdain for aspects of high society. Actually many people assumed that he was a Freemason and several publications referred to him as a "brother". In the realm of Masonic Lodges there were at least two lodges named



after him. The first; a lodge at Chigwell, Essex, England (#2757) was named after him in 1899 but later changed its name in 1925. In 1974 a second Lodge (No. 8597) at the author's birthplace in Portsmouth was named after him.

Several researchers have claimed that Dickens distain for the fraternity is believed to stem from the fact that he felt that the Fraternity did not live up to its own standards and as such were therefore hypocrites.

Some of his writing exemplified his feeling of disdain by ridiculing Masonic ceremonies and writing the word "Freemasonry" by spelling it with a small "f."

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Canadian Mason of the Month - Sir Mackenzie Bowell



Sir Mackenzie Bowell (1823-1917) was Canada's 5th Prime Minister. In 1832 he immigrated to Canada with his parents from their home in Rickingham, Suffolk, England. Settling in Belleville, Ontario he apprenticed with the printer at the town newspaper and though he had no post-secondary schooling he eventually became the editor of the Belleville Intelligencer. He was first elected to Parliament in 1867 and after serving as a minister in several portfolios he was appointed to the Senate in 1892. When Prime Minister Sir John Thomson died in office in 1894, the Governor-General appointed him Prime Minister; making him the second Senator in Canadian history to become Prime Minister as a

1954 Scott #350 member of the Senate instead of the House of Commons. His two-year term as Prime Minister was plagued with problems and most of his cabinet stepped down, but he managed to promoted the completion of an Australia-North America submarine link and introduced legislation supporting Roman Catholic rights in Manitoba schools. He was knighted in 1895 and stayed on in the Senate until his death at the age of 93 in 1917. He was initiated in 1864 at *St. Lawrence Lodge No, 640, E.R. Montreal* and affiliated in 1897 with *Belleville Lodge No. 123, Belleville, Ontario*.

Love Brought Down The Twin Towers – Compassion Brought Down United Flight 93!



It has been eleven years since that terrible day and the world still has not recovered. Hundreds of millions of people are still searching for answers to why this senseless tragedy occurred. I too have pondered this event and I have come to the conclusion that it was love that brought down the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001.

Before you throw this article across the room and rush to unfriend me or worse, please take a deep breathe and read on.

For most of us the concept of love cannot include mass murder. But for the 911 terrorists who flew those jets into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon on that terrible day, the love of God was the only thing on their minds as they uttered "Allah Akbar" ("God is Great!") when they slammed into those buildings. Their love for the God of their understanding was the greatest motivation they had in killing themselves and thousands of others. The fact that it was their love of God that inspired them, does not in any way, justify mass murder or the actions of terrorists around the world. But it was still a form of love that motivated them.

For the passengers of United Flight 93, their motivation to take on the terrorist hijackers and sacrifice their lives to prevent the plane from reaching its intended objective was also an act of love. The difference was, their love was motivated by compassion! They knew they might die in the process but it was their compassion for others that motivated them to rush the cockpit and take on the terrorists. That act of compassion, which motivated them to overcome their fear and confront the terrorist's misguided love of God, cost them their lives. It was not a passive form of loving compassion that motivated them to fight back, for compassion does not always equate to passivity and non-violence.

In today's society, we toss around the word "love" much too freely to describe the things we like. We have puppy love, love of music, we love life and food. We love our cars our homes our country and yes our concept of God. We overuse the word love and consequently we undermine the concept of love to describe nearly everything we like.

But like is different than love. You can have a passionate, all consuming love for something

Continued...

Compassion**Cont...**

that is fundamentally and unequivocally wrong. That kind of love can convince you that your passion for it is right, when it is not. For one can love someone or something and still be capable of inflicting pain and cruelty, as regularly witnessed in acts of spousal abuse, war and greed.

A few years ago, the Nobel Peace Prize recipient, the Dalai Lama was giving a talk on "Cultivating Happiness" and I had the opportunity to attend. I can't say if I was motivated by curiosity or emptiness or for no other reason than I just wanted to experience being in a room with 14,000 people who were just happy to be there.

At the end of the lecture, the Dalai Lama took the time to answer some questions. One of the questioners wanted to know what one measurable thing she could do on a daily basis to create more world peace and how she would know if what she was doing was actually making a positive difference? To the surprise of everyone in the building he burst in to laughter and after he stopped laughing he told the crowd that he was just a simple monk and not a miracle worker! He then noted that there are nearly six billion people in the world today, many of whom regularly pray for peace, and that despite their efforts the world is no closer to achieving peace.

He then reflected on the fact that humanity to no avail, has been praying for peace for thousands of years and then he startled the crowd by stating that peace can not be achieved through prayer alone! He then suggested that that real peace could only be achieved by a lot of hard work and effort, and that if ordinary people wanted to make a real difference, then they should start by first learning to become more compassionate. Then they should teach their children about compassion. He proposed that if compassionate thinking was developed on an individual basis it would eventually become a way of life and spread first to the local community and eventually on up to the international level.

Essentially the Dalai Lama was saying to everyone in the building that good intentions alone are useless, whereas lives infused with compassion, would manifest into positive action.

Compassion is a powerful thing. It was compassion that motivated the police, fire and emergency personnel to run into the Twin Towers when others were fleeing for their lives. It was compassion that motivated nearly 2.9 billion viewers, who simultaneously witnessed the towers collapse, to collectively gasp over the horror of this terrible event.

THIS MONTH'S RANT!

I don't know about you, but I am growing frustrated with online dealers who are listing Masonic stamps at unbelievably high prices. I understand the law of supply and demand but there is a limit. The only thing one can do is to refuse to buy any stamps from those dealers if they are going to persist in ripping off the consumer.

Most stamp collectors are quite capable of researching the suggested value of a stamp and don't mind pay a small premium for a hard to get stamp. But when the value is inflated over 1000% it time to say enough is enough!

Tell Me What You Think

I would love to hear from you and let me know that the Watermark is being read. Tell me what you think, your likes and dislikes. I am especially thrilled when readers submit articles to be published.

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Compassion continued...

It was compassion that compelled millions of people to open their homes, their hearts and their wallets in an effort to confront the suffering that the terrible events of that day inflicted on society.

It is compassion that causes us to reflect on the inhumanity of the terrible events that are regularly perpetrated in the so-called name of love.

Regardless of religious persuasion, politics or nationality, each one of us can make a difference in dealing with the horrors of the world in which we all live, by simply becoming more compassionate instead of more loving!

We cannot create a better world by wishing for others to treat us with compassion without being compassionate ourselves. Collectively we need to find ways to deal with the hurt and anger we feel over acts of hatred, war and terrorism by identifying meaningful ways that we can create a more compassionate global community.

Freemasonry has and continues to be an organization that has lead the way in addressing issues that lead to poverty, despair and hatred. Those historical acts of compassion have brought the fraternity into conflict with totalitarian regimes, religious intolerance and tyranny. But if organizations like our are not willing to show compassion and tolerance, society as we know it is doomed to suffer from more acts of misguided love that perpetuates an atmosphere of hatred.



"Courage is what pushes you to perform acts of compassionate when all others can only experience fear " – the Watermark



Some observers have noted that in the following books: *Barnaby Rudge*: a tale of the riots of 'eighty published by Chapman and Hall in 1841, Dickens pokes fun at Masonic ritual when the rituals of the Society of Prentice Knights is exposed in its silliness. In *Sketches by Boz* (1835) he wrote about a charity dinner given on behalf of the 'Indigent Orphans' Friends' Benevolent Institution' at the old Freemasons' Hall. There he penned '*the first thing that strikes you... is the astonishing importance of the committee*'. Dickens never became a Freemason and part of the confusion likely relates to the fact that his eldest son, also named Charles, joined Maybury Lodge in 1871, a year after his father's died.

Some critics would classify Dickens as an anti-mason. I for one would not. The fact the man thought that many in the fraternity were hypocrites does not bother me. The Fraternity would be perfect if it didn't have humans in it.

Unlike real anti-masons who continue to demonize and spread lies or have tortured and murdered men for simply belonging to an organization that at its core promotes peace, tolerance and charity, a little well place indignation is fine by me.

Announcing The Watermark Collection

There comes a time in every stamp collectors life when they have to organize their collection and put their stamps into an album. The only problem is what do you do when you're a very specialized collector and you can find any album pages that you either like or don't suit your needs. Seeing as I fit that bill, I decided to create my own album that would not only provide a place to put my Masonic stamps but would really be a Masonic Album. So that's what I did over the summer months and in stage 1 which is nearly completed I have designed album pages for every country that has produced official pure Masonic stamps. Each country page includes the national crest, and flag and when available the recognized seal of that country's grand jurisdiction. Each stamp has a slightly smaller fuller colour scan of the stamp with the year and catalogue number. In addition each country's title page includes a short write-up about the country's history its history of Freemasonry. The second

stage of this project will be individual pages on Freemasons from those countries. Those pages will provide a write-up about the individual and scans and basic data about the stamps that have been issued for him. I intend to make the Watermark Collection album pages available to anyone who would like to purchase a set and proceeds will be donated to my lodge's renovation fund. Stay tuned.



New Release Down Under



On July 3, 2012 Australia Post released a block of four stamps commemorating four famous Australian explorers. Two of who were Freemasons; John McDouall Stuart and William Charles Wentworth. Both men have been featured on or had stamps created to recognize their contribution to Australia's history. The 2012 stamps mark the 150th anniversary of Stuarts return from his overland crossing of Australia, and the 1813 expedition of, Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth to establish a route across the Blue Mountains to open up the western plains of New South Wales for farming and settlement.