

## *From the Grand Master ...*

### **Lodge Buildings Vs Charity:**

What does the word charity mean to you? Do you simply switch off when there is yet another call for donations to a charity? No matter where you are in the world, there will always be something or someone whom you can support and help if you wished to make it a better world all around. One can support umpteen causes, most of which are worthy and deserving.

Where does one begin with supporting a cause or a charity, and just as importantly, where does one stop?

There is this well-known saying that charity begins at home. This really means that you should try to help your family and friends before you help other people. Charity certainly begins at home and it is key to understand and accept this. Once you accept that charity begins at home, you can then consciously look for opportunities in and around your home. Of course, charity at home is much more than giving donations and giving your unwanted clutter to others.

I remind you if you ever seen a brother in distress, you are obligated to come to his assistance.

It has been said that Masons are the world's greatest fund raisers. Are we, or have we been more concerned trying to outdo the previous leaders charity project, rather than looking after our own home and our own members? Is your house in order before our guest come knocking on the door? If not, why not?

When is the last time you saw a member pull-out his cheque book and pay for a brother's dues when the brother is having a financial problem? Social clubs are important and as a community member, I appreciate the work they do. Freemasonry is about education, knowledge, brotherhood and self-improvement. We must assist our brethren who are experiencing hardship, making sure every member belongs to a lodge and that our lodge building is a safe place for our members to come and enjoy an evening of friendship and brotherly love. Charity is part of Freemasonry, but charity starts at home.

President Abraham Lincoln once said: "I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him!"

If a lodge building is in disrepair, does that mean a brother is in distress? I think so.

Look at the formation of any new lodge in Ontario. The membership had two goals: Receiving dispensation from Grand Lodge and building a home.

A good example of this is Elk Lake Lodge No. 507. Elk Lake Lodge recently celebrated their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. A hundred years ago, the members of Elk Lake Lodge received dispensation and they started to build their home. Their first home didn't have running water. For many years the lodge was supported by stumps and cut logs and as they rotted or had fallen over, caused a distinct wobble in the lodge during perambulations. Marching in step caused problems, so the brethren were asked to basically shuffle around the lodge.

Elk Lake Lodge is known for riding out the difficult times and there were many improvements over the years. The roof was fixed, cables brought the walls together, and concrete blocks replaced log supports. A basement build on solid foundation. Next came a furnace, hot and cold water and even a washroom. All was great for several years until the building burnt down. The only thing saved was the determination of the brethren to continue and rebuild. And now they have a modern facility, shared with the new town library.

Have we lost focus on maintaining, not only our lodge building, but lodge buildings within our District? Is the District more concerned in giving our money away to other organizations than repairing our lodge buildings? Is your lodge or district charitable project the highlight of your Masonic meeting, or your District meeting? If so, we have lost our purpose.

The 2013 Annual Report of the Masonic Foundation of Ontario (MFO) District Projects that were registered with the MFO, raised and donated \$348,742 for outside charities (April 2012 to March 2013). The year before, the amount was \$373,769.

At your next district meeting, ask your DDGM, or better yet, ask the man who wants to be the next year DDGM, what is more important to him? Raise money for an outside organization or repair a lodge roof? Ask yourself, what is more important? Maintaining a superstructure or letting it crumble to the ground.

What should be important to all Masons is to ensure their "home" or their "neighbour's" home" receives the necessary repairs. A lodge building must always be safe. Let us start thinking in the future to ensure our lodge buildings are accessible to all brethren, young or old. These are the type of questions and discussions that need to take place in your district.

Now is the time for Lodges to come together to prioritize what is important in your District to ensure every Mason has a home. If raising money for an outside organization is your priority, so be it, remembering your charity of choice should be registered with the MFO.

Yes these are tough questions, but they need to be answered and addressed. It is too easy to point the finger at Grand Lodge and say that we aren't doing enough. But I ask you to refocus your priorities and make sure your lodge has a home. Charity starts at home.

By the summons I receive, visitors and perspective candidates are visiting lodge buildings and lodge rooms in an increasing number. Most active lodges, after several years of declining membership, are experiencing new, younger and better-educated men joining Freemasonry. So these same people are coming over to your lodge building, your home, only find a lodge building and or the property in disrepair. First impressions are lasting impressions. Think about it!

Donald A. Campbell

## *From the Deputy*

Well brethren here we are in February and yes Wiarton Willie has appeared and apparently we are going to have six more weeks of winter, now every other fury creature has predicted an early spring. I can only pray that our Willie was wrong as I could get my golf clubs polished quickly if necessary.

Brethren we are now about to embark on the busy time of year when the majority of OFFICIAL VISITS will take place. This makes your year as District Deputy Grand Master exciting and also requiring a lot of time on the road and away from home. There will be a great number of masons traveling with you visiting other lodges. Let me just give a small suggestion to perhaps treat your loved one some private time on or about Valentine's Day. I am sure they will appreciate the dinners, chocolates and other tributes to remind that as the GRAND MASTER has encouraged us "family comes first". It is great to be a mason but more important to be a good husband and parent.

February is also significant in FREEMASONRY in Ontario, as February 17th - 23rd is known as Masonic Blood Donor week. I know giving blood is a year around ritual for those dedicated people who are regular contributors. I just want to encourage everyone who is eligible to take a little time to reflect on how a simple blood transfusion has affected you, a friend or relative and provided the gift of life. No greater act of giving could be realized for anyone who has required such a need. I also want to remind even if you are not allowed to give blood, and there are a lot of us, you can always volunteer at a clinic. The unique situation about donating blood is it just takes time and involves no financial burden. "TO GIVE WITH YOUR HEART IS A GOOD PART OF LIVING" This is a saying that was used in another organization I have been active in, and certainly applies in this situation.

Brethren although we are still a month away I remind you of SANKEY LECTURE on MARCH 30<sup>th</sup> at Brock University. Our guest lecturer will be Dr. Renee Lafferty, Associate Professor, Department of History at Brock University. Renee has been an important promoter of the SANKEY LECTURES at Brock and has also given presentations to Masonic gatherings. I find her to be an excellent and entertaining speaker. Dr. Lafferty also has strong connections to Freemasonry as a number of her family members were active members of the craft. Brethren if you have attended a Sankey Lecture I would suggest marking Mar. 30<sup>th</sup> on your calendar. It has become very apparent to me that Freemasonry has become an important part of history to be proud of.

Brethren I am also very pleased to review hundreds of lodge notices each and every month. I am quite excited to find a large number of lodges that have six or more master masons sitting in the chairs. As this is my first exposure to so many notices I cannot relate how this year compares to previous years but it is refreshing for me to see brethren advancing in their respective lodges. It is interesting to note how many lodges have many new members who are progressing through the three degrees. This is the future of our craft brethren and we will be measured in future times by the manner in which we mentor those who have recently joined our fraternity.

The duties of Sponsors and Mentors is not just something one does when welcoming a new member but a duty that becomes part of your Masonic journey to ensure that a new member is properly educated and informed in every step of Masonry. His continued interest and involvement in our craft is strongly dependent on the influence you bestow upon that brother.

**BE PROUD OF WHO YOU ARE - BE PROUD OF WHAT YOU DO - BE PROUD TO BE A MASON - HAPPY VALENTINES**

John C. Green

## *From the desk of the Grand Secretary*

### NOTICE OF CONGRATULATIONS AND SUPPORT

It is with the utmost of admiration that the Masons of Ontario extend their very best wishes to our Bro. Brad Jacobs, Inner Guard, Keystone Lodge No. 412, Sault Ste Marie, Ontario, Skip of the Curling Team, representing Canada at the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics in Russia. Our heartiest congratulations on achieving this significant milestone in Canadian curling.

Support and well wishes in the team's quest for Olympic Gold can be extended via the Keystone Lodge Secretary at [sjkoivis@shaw.com](mailto:sjkoivis@shaw.com).

Terence Shand