

THE COMMUNIQUE

Published By

Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario

2015-2016 Issue 7

March 2016

From the Grand Master ...

Brethren, we are now only 21 days from our Spring season. A time when the temperature warms and grasses and plants regenerate themselves to bring a variety of colours to our surroundings. Perhaps we as Masons could consider some regenerating by sponsoring Open Houses and Friend to Friend events. It is not that we shouldn't hold these types of functions anytime but as I mentioned many Lodges have Spring cleanup inside and outside their properties when the flowers gardens and lawns look fresh and green. This is a very appropriate opportunity to showcase our buildings and demonstrate to our communities that Freemasonry is an important aspect of our respective communities. Showing how proud we are of our great fraternity is a very positive public relations exercise that will enhance our image.

The Deputy Grand Master, the Grand Secretary and I recently attended the conference of Grand Masters in Madison, Wisconsin. We also enjoyed the company of R.W. Bros. Steven Warren and David Cameron from Ontario. David presented a paper there and Steven was attending as an observer from Scottish Rite. There were 58 of 64 Grand Lodges in attendance as well as a number of observers from Grand Jurisdictions in other corners of the globe. We had the opportunity to meet and converse with Masons from other Grand Lodges. It is interesting to find that while we share a lot of common philosophy, many aspects of Masonry are conducted somewhat differently because of geography, religion, and government rules and regulations. In general there is typically common ground but there are some issues that we, from Ontario, might not find acceptable to our membership and conversely they may not find our traditions fit their regulatory constitutions. We recognize the lifestyle of Mexico and Alaska might not be exactly the same.

Last year this conference was held in Vancouver and because of weather patterns it took 23 hours to travel from Drayton to Vancouver. I was not pleased but survived. Returning home this year I left the hotel in Madison and arrived home 25 hours later. Last year I was in the company of M.W. Bro. Don Campbell. This year I was with R. W. Bro. Paul Todd.

The only common travelers were M.W. Bro. Terence Shand and I. I am not taking any blame, after all I am Grand Master, so it must be the Grand Secretary who is at fault. Of course I am kidding but there has been discussion that February is not the best time of the year. Hopefully that will change in the future.

Brethren, the months of March, April and May are the three busiest months of the Masonic year with many Official Visits and Installations that carry into June. I encourage you to dedicate yourselves to performing ritual to the best of your ability to inspire pride and dignity in the respective Lodges. I also ask you to consider visiting other Lodges for their celebrations. Visiting can build a bond of relationships that can be an integral portion of fellowship that makes Masonry enjoyable. This brings Lodges and their members closer together so the entire body of Masonry benefits the experience of camaraderie and then conveys that brotherly fellowship to others in our fraternity. Masonry, my Brethren, is a wonderful institution that can display leadership in society and the world at large. Grand Lodge leaders cannot implement standards that ensure members will participate in Masonic activities but Grand Lodge can ask you to consider the pleasures enjoyed by being involved in as many events as your path in life allows. No matter how involved we might wish to be, we should always remember Masonry is a way of life but it also an extracurricular that should be secondary to you family, your job and your church.

For the second month now we have lost a Grand Lodge Officer. R.W. Bro. Alex Wilson past away in late February after being diagnosed with cancer shortly after I appointed him Grand Director of Ceremonies. I had the pleasure of knowing him for over forty years. His dedication to his family, his friends, his community and his love of Masonry was evident by the large numbers who attended the memorial service and the funeral. The family thanks all those who supported them during their difficult time.

By this time next month I hope everyone will telling stories about their great conquests on the golf course and fishing excursions.

*John C. Green
Grand Master*

From the desk of the Grand Secretary ...

A new 2016 Nomination package has been developed. It contains; guidelines, nomination form, and a nominee information form, Those seeking Grand Lodge office in 2016; as Grand Senior Warden, Grand Junior Warden, Grand Registrar, Grand Treasurer, Grand Secretary, or as a member of the Board of General Purposes, can obtain the package from: office@grandlodge.on.ca

NOTE: Section 38 (a) "All nominations must be received by the Grand Secretary on or before the 1st day of April prior to the annual meeting of Grand Lodge at which the voting shall take place; provided, however, that when the 1st day of April falls on a Sunday or holiday, then on or before the following day."

*Terence Shand
Grand Secretary*

From the Deputy ...

The month of February has been a weather cycle of four seasons and it would appear that March will come in like a Lion but with daylight savings time beginning on the thirteenth of March perhaps the worst is over.

This February the Annual North American Conference of Grand Masters was held in Madison, Wisconsin and your Deputy was fortunate enough to attend for the first time.

The Conference membership consists of the Grand Lodges of the Provinces of Canada; the States of the United States of America, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico; the State of York, Mexico; and the American-Canadian Grand Lodge of Germany. These Grand Masters represent some 2 million Freemasons in North America. Grand Masters from countries throughout the world also attend the annual Conference to join in fellowship. The Annual Conference is the ***largest gathering of Grand Masters in the world!***

Since many Grand Lodges in America work on appointed lines of succession, there were many Grand Junior and Senior Wardens in attendance at the Conference which made them three year veterans as Deputy Grand Masters.

All attendees can attend the business meetings but only the Grand Masters can participate in the discussion and vote.

A luncheon was held for the Deputy Grand Masters. This provided an opportunity to meet those who undoubtedly will become Grand Master with the only caveat being many are one year terms.

Beginning on Sunday and concluding on Tuesday, this year's Conference had many changes from previous years (change sounds familiar to Ontario Masons). The most important change of the Conference was the added breakout sessions which began on Sunday with the following subjects: *Membership; Lodge and Grand Lodge Buildings and Successful Lodge Events*. Each breakout was done separately and in such a way as to encourage interaction with the audience.

Monday's session also held very interesting subjects: *Background Checks; Social Media Uses & Abuses; Grand Lodge vs Local Lodges; Cost vs Value Freemasonry* and in the afternoon the following subjects were: *Integrating Younger Masons; Youth Organizations and Masonic Renewal*.

Tuesday was the last day and, before the concluding business meeting, the following breakout subjects were discussed: *Unrelated Income & Reporting; Outreach & Marketing and Grand Secretary vs Office Manager*.

In conclusion, this was a very informative Conference with a wide range of opinions on a good variety of subjects however during casual talk with many American Deputies the topic of concealed weapons in Lodge was most prominent.

The month of February was very busy for all Grand Lodge Committees however several Committees had other projects in addition to the work done under their mandates.

Your Grand Lodge works under a Strategic Plan called Rebuilding the West Gate 2010-2016 which is now under review by an Ad Hoc Committee under the leadership of R.W. Bro. Thomas W. Hogeboom

The Project Committee is part of the Strategic Planning Committee. Chairman R.W. Bro. Steve E. Warren sewarren@cogeco.ca and his Team are charged with the responsibility for planning and implementing the Tactical Plans for 2015-16.

First: A Project Outline is provided at Grand Lodge immediately after the Grand Lodge Committee formation of several committees. In 2015-16 there are eight Grand Lodge Tactical Initiatives.

Second: The Project Plan is provided to the Deputy Grand Master and the Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee by September 30th

Third: The Project Status Update is provided to the Deputy Grand Master and the Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee on November 30th and January 31st

Fourth: The Project Close-Out Report is provided to the Deputy Grand Master and the Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee by April 15th with a projection of the final project status expected to be accurate at the end of the Masonic year. A revised version may be provided in July for inclusion in the final Proceedings of Grand Lodge if there have been material changes from the project version prepared in April.

I am pleased to report steps one to three have been completed and we look forward to the upcoming Close-Out Report.

R.W. Bro. Warren and his committee, it should be noted, also took on the task of having each Grand Lodge Committee (Standing or Special) review and make suggested changes to their committee mandates, this report will be reviewed by the Management Committee in April. If approved by the Management Committee, the report will then be presented to the Grand Master for approval. Any changes to Special Committees will be immediate however any changes to Standing Committees will require a Constitutional amendment.

The Chairmen, Team Leaders and Team members of all Grand Lodge Committees continue their work in the Quarries of Masonry for the Good of Your Craft in Ontario.

Now, about that landing at O'Hare Airport

***R.W. Bro. Paul E. Todd
Deputy Grand Master***