

# THE COMMUNIQUE

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## ***From the Grand Master ...***

Brethren,

You may have heard me say that I believe we need to stop trying to be everything to everyone. Focus on what is quintessential about Masonry and drop the rest.

I think that means we concentrate on:

- the Ritual
- explaining and discussing the meaning of the Ritual – that's education
- and mentoring our brethren and that's it, really.

All the rest falls out from that naturally

- charity
- community involvement
- fellowship

If you live the teachings in the Ritual you will do those things.

First is our Ritual. It is our Ritual that separates us from all the Service Clubs and other community organizations out there. It is what makes us different; what makes us, us. It is what has been passed down from generation to generation. It is what our ancient brethren guarded steadfastly.

Since the Ritual teaches everything we need to know to be a Mason, we need to impart it in a way a candidate will absorb it. It needs to be done well. First and foremost, is to present the words in an impressive way.

Clear, flowing and with expression.

What about Memorization? Many complain about having to memorize things – and not just the candidates. Why can't we just read the Ritual? Wouldn't it be smoother if we did? Well, maybe, but maybe not. To read something well, one must familiarize oneself with the passage in advance. Would most people do that? And how do you do the floor work with a book in your hand?

But more importantly, memorization has to do with understanding. Not so much for the candidate as for the brother giving the work. In every guide to memorizing Ritual one of the first things they say to do is look up the words you don't understand in a dictionary. Once you understand the words and what the sentence is trying to say, you can then phrase it properly and put the

emphasis in the right place. If one is just reading it, most will just gloss over the words they don't understand and forget to go back and look them up. To memorize something you must repeat it many times. You must get to know it. That helps you absorb it personally.

Next is the floor work. Most of that is explained in the rubrics in new version of the Book of the Work, but the "red book" is also valuable. And attending a Lodge of Instruction trumps all. The Masonic experience is a group effort. While the words may be able to be learned on one's own (and that is open to debate!), co-ordinating the movements and actions on the floor of the Lodge involves knowing what each other is doing. Practices are essential.

I have always thought practices were the most fun part of Masonry. The performance pressure is not there. The social benefits are. You can joke around during rehearsal. If another officer is unavoidably absent you can try out his part. A great learning experience. Even if you have only one line, going to the rehearsal lets you see your brethren at work, hear their interpretation of the cadence of the Ritual. Often questions come up about why certain things are done in a certain way and you learn more about the Craft.

The role of Past Masters is to mentor and guide the more junior Brethren. Past Masters at a practice is paramount to success. How can the new officers perform their work in a time honoured tradition if those that know the tradition aren't there to guide them?

Many Lodges regularly have a time of fellowship after rehearsal, getting some of the benefits of a festive board without the regimentation. Informal discussion of ideas for future projects comes up, problems get solved, and we learn more about our Brethren, their lives, and their families.

With rehearsal experience under your belt you can confidently work like a well-oiled machine on Lodge night, giving the candidate an experience that he will remember with awe.

And that is the main point, isn't it? Giving an impressive experience to the candidate. We get three chances to do that, and so we must put our all into it.

***David J. Cameron  
Grand Master***

## ***From the Deputy ...***

My Brethren:

Thank-you for tuning back in for an update of the third chapter on the renewal of your Board of General Purposes and the Grand Lodge programs.

We left off last month with a narrative prior to Saturday, September 7, when our team of Grand Lodge Committee Chairmen and the working Board of General Purposes members all met in Ajax to detail how the work of their respective Committees supported the Strategic Plan of our Grand Lodge and present their objectives.

To be frank, this meeting didn't go quite as well as expected. Rather than all of the attendees focusing in on the Grand Lodge mission to promote Masonic education through our ritual and history and the mentoring of our members, whether they be Grand Lodge Officers all the way to the newest Entered Apprentice Mason, many of the reports we heard were completely unrelated but rather about special projects of their own design to promote Freemasonry in general.

Now, don't get me wrong, the latter is a laudable pursuit – to coin a phrase – but as our Grand Master says, 'not every Grand Lodge Officer needs to make their own special mark through their own special project.' We have limited resources and we need to focus our attention on the immediate and most pressing Masonic needs – to educate and prepare Masons at every step of their development to keep our membership excited about our Craft and able to perform their allotted task with excellence whether it be as a Grand Lodge Committee Chairman, a new Lodge Deacon, a new Entered Apprentice Mason or a prospective member attending your festive board.

I love the old adage – 'how do you eat an elephant?' I agree that we have a lot to do, but success is built on small victories. We need to get some wins and built momentum to go forward!

As President of the Board of General Purpose, I take full responsibilities for not having communicated successfully to the Pillar Chairman of where our Grand Master, and Deputy, want to take our Grand Lodge over the next four years. But our September Board meeting was the first time

that the whole Board was able to hear it for themselves. At the conclusion of this meeting, all were sent back to their Committees to develop the action plans necessary to implement the objectives that were communicated and approved at this meeting. There was an Action Plan Register created from this meeting to track the twenty-five action items for the various Pillars and Committees which we will be using to follow our progress over the year and upon which we will be able to measure our success at the end of the Masonic year. I will be expanding and communicating, over the next several Communiques, these action plans and the progress we are making.

A few weeks after this meeting of the Pillar and Grand Lodge Committee Chairmen, we had a meeting of the Management Committee to get a progress report on the Committee activity and verify that we were now all in the same canoe and paddling in the same direction. We still have some opportunities to synergize our efforts, but we are making progress every day.

We are now in the planning stages of organizing the next Board of General Purposes to be held on Saturday, November 2 at the Scottish Rite Club in Hamilton, where we will be getting a progress report on each of the Grand Lodge initiatives for this year from the respective Committee Chairmen.

The week after, the Management Committee will be meeting via video conferencing to measure our successes to date, revise directives where needed and execute the next steps to meet our goals.

Although this last contribution to the Communique was not so informative, I know you will want to tune in next month, when your Deputy and President of the Board of General Purposes will begin to communicate the details of where your Grand Lodge Committees are directing their efforts to improve the services provided to our membership.

***Thomas W. Hogeboom  
Deputy Grand Master***

## ***From the Grand Secretary ...***

### **Sending Email to Grand Lodge**

Brethren,

Your Grand Lodge office uses two email addresses which are: [office@grandlodge.on.ca](mailto:office@grandlodge.on.ca) and [grandsecretary@grandlodge.on.ca](mailto:grandsecretary@grandlodge.on.ca).

You may ask, what is the difference?

If you need to communicate with the Office on a purely administrative matter, it is better that you use the [office@grandlodge.on.ca](mailto:office@grandlodge.on.ca) address. This will allow your request to be managed effectively and efficiently by the Grand Lodge staff.

This would include things like dispensation requests, response to instructions for Grand Master's receptions, etc.

If you need to direct a matter to the Grand Secretary, you would use the [grandsecretary@grandlodge.on.ca](mailto:grandsecretary@grandlodge.on.ca) address. This would include questions regarding the Constitution, questions regarding Masonic complaints, questions regarding Amalgamations or Voluntary Surrender of Warrants, requests for the attendance of the Grand Master or Deputy Grand Master.

Most importantly – in any communication with Grand Lodge, please use the Subject line of the email to your advantage. In the subject line it will expedite matters significantly if you specify the nature of the subject matter, the Lodge or District you hail from and a date if appropriate.

For example:

- Lodge 888: Dispensation request for Nov 01 2019
- ABC District: Grand Master's Reception: program details for Nov 15 2019
- Lodge 999: Constitutional question
- Lodge 123: Application for Initiation for Mr. Xxxx XXXXXXXXX
- Lodge 123: Book order
- Lodge 123: Pin request for Bro. Xxxx XXXXXXXXX
- Lodge 123: Suspension notice
- Lodge 123: Change in Secretary contact information
- Lodge 123: Deceased brother report

***D. Garry Dowling, PGM  
Grand Secretary***