

# THE COMMUNIQUE

Published by

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

Issue 4

December 2019

## *From the Grand Master ...*

'Twas in the moon of winter-time  
When all the birds had fled,

Those familiar lines, from the Huron Carol, were not written by Fr. Jean de Brébeuf in 1642 as I had thought, but rather by J.E. Middleton in 1926, and have little to do with the original Wendat lyrics. They are a fanciful and stereotypical portrait of indigenous life. But they so eloquently evoke this season of long, cold nights.

I often envisage our forefathers sitting in their homes in the bleak mid-winter, trying to read by candlelight or oil-lamp. I picture them in front of a roaring wood fire, wearing frock-coats and peering through pince-nez glasses. How difficult it must have been to read in such dim conditions. And what else would they be doing during the long dark nights. It would certainly give ample time for thinking, time to just sit and ponder the wonders of this life. Do we lack that today with the ever-present distractions of T.V. and twitter?

And what a joy it must have been to hitch up the horses to the cutter and head out to lodge, where one could enjoy the company of the brethren, and discuss some of those deep philosophical issues one had been contemplating. We still see this occasionally today, for instance, in Templum Fidelis lodge, where all cell-phones are left in the anteroom and one enters a lodge gloriously lit with candlelight. Some beautiful music and a time of contemplation ensue. Followed by excellent ritual and meaningful education. And then a full festive board. Is that what our forefathers would have craved?

Many lodges, my own mother lodge included, once met on or near the full moon. Was that just so there was enough light to see their way home? Or was there some deeper significance? My mother lodge wasn't even a country lodge.

Many religions hold festivals of light at this time of year. Millions of lights shine across India, and indeed the world, during the festival of Diwali. For Hanukkah candles are lit each evening. Candles are lit for Kwanzaa too. Bonfires abound in the Punjab for Lohri and in Scandiavia for Juul. And of course, houses, malls and trees in North American are festooned with Christmas lights.

None of these are put up just to light our path, at least not physically. Or why would they be taken down in January to plunge us into darkness for the next few months? No, they are there to remind us of our quest for enlightenment.

“What do you seek?”

“Light”

Freemasonry, although not a religion, abounds with symbols of light – from that question at the altar to the sun in splendour on the Grand Master's apron.

In this season of darkness, may your life be brightened by your family, your brethren, and your faith community.

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

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

My Brethren:

Chapter Four on the renewal of your Board of General Purposes and the Grand Lodge programs – welcome back!

My progress report left off with the last Committee meeting of the Board of General Purposes held on Saturday, November 2 at the Scottish Rite Club in Hamilton. Prior to receiving a progress report on each of the Grand Lodge initiatives for this year from the respective Committee Chairmen, the Grand Master detailed the three key initiatives that we will be focusing on for at least the next four years. I want to emphasize the word 'key' because there are several Grand Lodge Committees that will continue to support the work of our Grand Lodge that won't necessarily be reformed to support these three key initiatives, but will continue the fine work they do under the umbrella of Grand Lodge administration systems – essential work that must be done to keep the wheels of Grand Lodge rolling. These administrative Committees are Constitution and Jurisprudence, Condition of Masonry, Library, Museum and Archives, Audit and Finance, Benevolence and unfortunately, Discipline.

The three key initiatives introduced by the Grand Master were Ritual, Education and Mentoring.

The focus on Ritual is not only the need to take pride in our delivery of the Ritual but the explanations of our Ritual to our members and how they can use those lessons to make themselves better men. We fail our candidates, and indeed all our fellow members when we are unprepared to deliver perfect Ritual with an explanation of how our Ritual fits into our daily lives.

The latter part of that initiative ties in very neatly with the drive for Masonic Education at every meeting, of every aspect of our Ritual and the many esoteric aspects found in the same, the many physical components that make up a Lodge Room and the history of our Lodges and Freemasonry in general. Our Grand Lodge predecessors have been encouraging Masonic Education at our Lodge meetings for years - perhaps it is now time to take it to the next level and make it mandatory before Lodge balloting and Degree Work begins?

The third key initiative for the efforts of our Grand Lodge Committees is Mentoring. This is another topic that has been in our lexicon for many years' past, but we need to be doing more. Mentoring is not to be confused with Sponsoring a candidate into a Lodge and thinking your duty is complete. Mentoring is a lifetime commitment

that doesn't end when a Brother becomes a Master Mason. And mentoring a Brother doesn't just mean while in Lodge and solely about Lodge matters. A true mentor will guide the new Entered Apprentice Mason from day one until he becomes Grand Master, if that is his wish. A true mentor will also provide support and encouragement outside of the Lodge Room with life lessons of assistance.

Grand Lodge owes it to the membership to assist in these initiatives and that is why we are focusing the attention of your Grand Lodge Committees to this end. The Custodian, M.W. Bro. Don Mumby, had his Lodge of Instruction team on the road for the first time in a few years to full houses at every stop in the Fall and communicated the proper techniques for the Floor Work. These lessons are the basis that are essential in communicating our Ritual. When combined with your flawless presentation of the words of the Work, you will undoubtedly make a lasting impression on every candidate.

Wouldn't it be great to have a member in every Lodge as prepared as the Lodge of Instruction team to assure that each Degree Team had perfect footwork to go with their perfect Ritual delivery?

Wouldn't it be great if you had a Grand Lodge web site library where you could source a new piece of Masonic Education for every Lodge meeting on a huge variety of related topics?

Wouldn't it be great if every Mason had a trained mentor to assist them with every step of their Masonic journey?

Our Grand Master is a smart man, but he had help in deciding we needed to re-focus our efforts. Every survey conducted on 'new' Masons around the world says this is what is missing in Masonry today and this is where we need to focus our attention to create new lifetime members.

It seems I have run out of space again without communicating the details of where your Grand Lodge Committees are directing their efforts to improve the services provided to our membership. So, I guess you will have to tune back in next month.

And finally, I want to take this opportunity to wish each of you and your loved one's all the best of the Holiday Season. May the peace and happiness we enjoy during this time be spread throughout the coming year!

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

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

Brethren,

Holiday Operating Hours:

A separate attachment in the December resources Digest details the Holiday Season Operating hours for your Grand Lodge Office. Should you have reason to contact us over the holidays, please be aware of those hours.

Holiday Wishes:

I, along with our COO, R.W. Bro. Lou Domjan, and our office staff Mrs. Stacey Birks, Mrs. Gail Nickerson, Mrs. Kathy White and Mrs. Barb Lee, wish you and your families a wonderful Holiday Season and a great start to the New Year.

We look forward to serving you throughout 2020.

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