

THE COMMUNIQUE

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From the Grand Master ...

Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world. For, indeed, that's all who ever have.

- Margaret Mead

Brethren,

Included in this Communiqué is a letter from the Grand Treasurer about the effect of a shrinking demographic on the finances of Grand Lodge. I would like to deal with the effect of membership numbers on individual lodges.

Of course, a shrinking membership will impinge on lodge finances in the same way as it does for Grand Lodge. And that effect can be generalized to buildings housing multiple lodges as well. The pandemic has shown us that we cannot depend on hosting events to raise funds to meet our basic needs. A few lucky lodges will have commercial tenants; great as long as they stay! But the bottom line for most of us is that we need to fund our organization from our own pockets. And if we want a classy organization we will have to pay for it.

When we return to meeting, at least at first, we will have smaller numbers coming out to lodge. Due to the isolation we have endured, we may swell our numbers (and coffers) with new initiates, but we must be cautious because taking in more men than we can adequately mentor will just result in a revolving door.

But small is not necessarily bad. In fact it has many advantages.

We now realize what we miss the most – ritual, fellowship, doing things with our brethren.

In a small lodge we know every one of our brethren. In a large lodge, there may be many whom we do not know. In my visits I have noticed that no matter how many members a lodge has on its books, there tend to be twenty to forty who come to a meeting. Why is that? Some postulate that it is because that is how many jobs there are. If one is neither an officer nor

has a part in the evening's activities, one is tempted not to come. They recognize this in England. There the usual size of a lodge is thirty to forty members. If a lodge gets to sixty, it splits into two lodges. Most of the new observant lodges here limit their membership to a small number on purpose.

Other advantages of this size are that people notice if someone is missing, and they contact him to see if he is alright; they notice the new Master Mason who is sitting in the corner by himself, and go talk to him; and they all feel the obligation to attend every meeting they possibly can.

In 1973 E.F. Schumacher published a book called *Small Is Beautiful: A Study of Economics As If People Mattered* and while it was mostly about large scale industry (and predicted the ecological crisis we are now experiencing), I especially love the last phrase "As If People Mattered".

Let us look at lodges "As If People Mattered", not at the economics of running a building, a fund-raising machine, or a political hierarchy.

What is it that lodges provide for their members?

A sense of belonging, a moral compass, a group of like-minded men to support us in that quest? You may think of many more. Are these at risk?

We have been given an incredible gift – the ability to remake ourselves. When we return to meeting we can blithely initiate a huge number of men and go back to doing the same things that haven't been working for the past thirty years, or we can thoughtfully chart a course that will ensure the success of our time-honoured craft.

David J. Cameron
Grand Master

From the Deputy ...

My Brethren:

The final proposed amendment for this year that your Deputy was charged with communicating is to approve the new Ontario Masons Brand that would be added as a new Section 3.2 of the Constitution. The Branding Team of the Community Outreach Pillar has put together a Brand Standards Manual with guidelines for the use of our name and symbols for which we stand, and we are excited to introduce them to you here.

The Brand Standards govern the intended use of the Name, Logo, Symbol, Wordmark and styles of the Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario, its Districts and Lodges, their Officers and members as well as the Square and Compasses within our Grand Jurisdiction.

The Standard Logo remains the official logo of the Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario and is defined in the Book of Constitution under section 3.1, that being the ornate Square and Compasses. This Logo is a registered trademark of the Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario and shall not be modified or embellished in any manner whatsoever.

The new Ontario Masons Brand that would be added as a new Section 3.2 of the Constitution, is not replacing the current 3.1 standard formal logo of Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario. The new Ontario Masons Brand consists of two distinct elements – the Symbol and the Wordmark as below and will be communicated in the revised Communications Strategy Policy and Standards publication.



The Symbol consists of an adapted version of the trademarked 3.1 Square and Compasses from the Book of Constitution. The Square and Compasses has now been optimized and simplified with a Canadian maple leaf as its background. The Wordmark quickly identifies who we are without the

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

Branding with Symbol and Wordmark (maple leaf and Ontario Masons) would be used for any public facing documents, whereas the Logo should be used where the Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario is being mentioned.

The idea behind this amendment is to have a bold, forward-looking image in materials that non-Masons will see and over time we will build consistent messaging.

We are continuing to take this opportunity to socialize the proposed Constitutional amendments now before voting day when you have them all in front of you at once for your decision. We want to ease this stress and make sure everyone has every question answered long before the vote. Your responsibility is to be a well-informed voter.

If you have any questions related to these proposed amendments, please send me an e-mail at office@grandlodge.on.ca and I will endeavour to make you more comfortable with the amendments and the process going forward.

Thomas W. Hogeboom
Deputy Grand Master

From the Grand Secretary ...

Brethren,

Annual Communication of Grand Lodge:

The virtual Annual meeting of the Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario will be held on Wednesday July 21, 2021. Details of the timing and the process for logging in will be communicated as they become known. A limited number of brethren will be able to join the meeting on a first registered basis and the remainder will be able to listen in to a live streamed version of the meeting.

Brethren who join the meeting will be able to cast a vote on any business brought to the floor during the meeting. You are therefore encouraged to register as early as possible since brethren watching and listening to the live stream will be unable to vote. Registration details will be communicated when available.

Installation of Grand Lodge Officers July 2021:

As our Grand Lodge is not permitting the use of any ritual in an online (virtual) environment the Installation and Investiture of Grand Lodge officers, including the District Deputy Grand Masters, normally conducted as part of the Annual Communication of Grand lodge will not take place at that meeting this year.

A number of options are being considered, but the constant evolution of the health regulations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic make it impossible to announce a solution at this time. As soon as we are in a position to make a decision we will communicate when and how the Installations and Investitures will take place.

We appreciate your patience in this matter.

Annual Meeting of the Board of General Purposes:

The annual meeting of the Board of General Purposes normally held the two days prior to the Annual meeting will be held in virtual format on **Tuesday June 22, 2021 from 09:00AM EDT – 14:00PM EDT.**

This meeting is a must for all Members of the Board of General Purposes including the current District Deputy Grand Masters. Log in details and timings will be communicated as soon as they are available. Non-Board members used to attending as part of the Gallery, will be permitted to attend the virtual meeting as observers only.

Election of District Deputy Grand Masters:

A reminder that the election of all District Deputy Grand Masters will take place on June 18 and June 19 2021. A document titled "Electronic Voting Grand Lodge 2021 Member Letter Mar 01 2021.PDF" was

distributed in the last Resources Digest indicating the procedures to be followed for an eligible individual member to cast his ballot. Advance registration is a MUST.

Nominations for District Deputy Grand Master:

All current DDGMs are reminded that candidates in your District must complete and sign the **2021 Nomination Form** as provided to you earlier and return it to their current DDGM. All current DDGMs must complete the **2021 Eligible Candidates Form** and submit to Grand Lodge as a **fillable PDF form** (NOT printed and scanned), together with the copies of the 2021 Nomination Forms.

Virtual Meeting Protocol - Introductions:

The brethren organizing virtual meetings should be aware that even though the meetings may be considered informal, some Masonic protocol need still apply. Please ensure that if our Grand Master or Deputy Grand Master or your own District Deputy Grand Master are in attendance that they are recognized given the last word.

Scheduling and Rescheduling of Masonic Events: Lodge Anniversaries and Grand Master's Receptions:

As our Grand Master has indicated, once we are able to resume in-person Masonic gatherings, either in the lodge or at social events, there are going to be many requests to reschedule cancelled or postponed events as well as requests for new events. Regrettably we are unable to commit to any future events (especially large social gatherings) definitively until we can resume labours in a safe and healthy manner. That time appears to be a ways off yet.

While we appreciate the dilemma of having to book in advance, we cannot ask lodges and Districts to commit to rental and catering contracts for events that may not be able to be complete as planned. Cancellation clauses can be expensive.

Therefore, we are asking brethren of lodges that have had a major anniversary last year or will be celebrating one this year to think about joining together with other lodges in your District as well as with the District itself to schedule one single event to which the Grand Master would be invited.

As soon as we can re-open for business we will notify you when to submit requests for dates.

Stay safe. Keep vigilant.
Fraternally, Garry

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

From the Grand Treasurer ...

THE PER CAPITA ASSESSMENT AND OUR DECLINING MEMBERSHIP.

Our active membership on December 31, 2020 was at the 33,000 level.

Status of our membership:

Over age 70 - 52% or 17,000 members including 2,000 over the age of 90.

The average annual change in our membership for the last 9 years approximates:

Initiations	1,100 per year
Deaths	1,200 per year
Demits	1,100 per year
Suspensions	900 per year

The deaths are beyond our control and are offset by the number of initiations. The present rate of decline is about 2,000 annually. This is a cause for concern when we look at the age of our members and the projection for membership to a level of about 23,000 by the year 2025.

New and or expanded programs for mentorship, lodge speakers and other areas of interest to encourage participation in our virtual meetings during the pandemic has improved attendance at these meetings by about 50% or more over the number we were experiencing before COVID-19.

Keeping our members interested and participating leads to retention.

This begs the question about the post pandemic period when we return to lodge. Despite the best forecasts, we cannot accurately gage the impact on retention at this time.

While virtual meetings are interesting and could possibly be continued, they are not a substitute for the personal and social aspect of our lodge meetings. If we could hold our membership at the 30,000 level, the proposed increase of \$20.00 per year would balance our budget, pay for the upgrades in technology and the improvements to our building.

I trust that this message will awaken each of us to the need to revisit or prepare our long-range plans and financial forecasts for the continuing longevity of our lodges.

We can succeed if we all work together with success as our common goal.

H. Edward Standish
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