

THE COMMUNIQUE

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

Issue 2

October 2022

From the Grand Master ...

After I re-read my Communique last month when it landed in my email in-box, I thought it seemed quite incomplete as I didn't ever want to give the impression I was like my grade thirteen English Literature teacher, Mr. Hank Onstein (doesn't take a lot of imagination to guess his nickname), who could only see things his way. For we must be honest with ourselves and accept that we all have varying styles of leadership. Some of you are idea men, capable of thinking up innovative new programs to aid in increasing membership or solving our financial challenges. Your specialty lies in 'thinking outside the box' and for that you are to be commended and encouraged. However, many of us, myself included, find strength in finding a need and learning what needs to be done to fill it.

If this is the camp that you find yourself in, never underestimate the power of your contribution to our great work. Often, the most seemingly insignificant efforts have the most far-reaching effects. This is enhanced by the fact that those who perform such deeds are often men who on the surface appear to be insignificant. Within our Lodges and the Fraternity, we have our fair share of Brethren with great ideas, but let's be honest, most of us belong to a group whose greatest virtue lies in perseverance and devotion to building up the Lodges we belong to. Without the efforts of all members of our Lodges, we would be at a standstill. If you don't believe me ask any of our great leaders and they will be the first to tell you they couldn't do what they do for us by themselves – it is a team effort. Success takes the effort of all members in many ways and areas.

For example, you may not know how to host an open house, but you do know how to talk and be friendly. You may not be comfortable in organizing a Lodge cookout but I'm pretty sure you can call and invite Brethren to attend or work a spatula. The point is to make yourself

useful by expanding your horizons and discovering what you are capable of.

One of the great things about our Fraternity is that it continually gives us as individuals the opportunity to step outside our personal boundaries and achieve our full potential as the Great Architect's Craftsmen. We are continually given the chance to rise to the occasion and learn on the fly, as it were.

I thank the Great Architect of the Universe every single day for this wonderful privilege of serving you and our Grand Lodge. To lose ourselves in the service of something greater than we, as individuals are, is indeed a great honour. I am inspired by all that I see accomplished by you, year in and year out in the name of Brotherly love.

But your importance to our beloved Craft is not determined by brilliance near as much as your hard work, performed with likeminded individuals. Your Lodges and your Grand Lodge need your skills and talents to prosper and grow. Even if you feel you are nothing more than the 'average Hiram,' you are an important labourer in this great work. Without you, we are nothing. It is important to remember that history is made by the labours of those who seek to serve, not those who seek to drape themselves in glory.

The next time you are called upon to do something that you feel is above your abilities, just remember that we are all part of the big picture, and we all have a part to play for us to be successful. Even your most seemingly insignificant efforts have far reaching consequences for good or evil. Therefore, we must choose our actions wisely for the benefit of those who will most assuredly follow in our footsteps.

Never forget that you and your fellow members are the future of Freemasonry in the

Province of Ontario. Continue to persevere. Continue to serve. And above all else, continue to lead by example and push the great work of Ontario Freemasonry forward into the future!

Thank you for the support and hospitality you have shown me during my Masonic career and in particular over the last twenty-five years that I have served on your Board of General Purposes. Thank you for all that you do for this great Fraternity and for me in particular.

'Be careful how you live your life. You may be the only Mason some people will ever meet.'

Thomas W. Hogeboom
Grand Master

If you would like to join the Grand Master in celebrating Masonry in Ontario this October, he will be in:

Thunder Bay – to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Kaministiquia Lodge with the Silver to Gold Ceremony and Shuniah Lodge will celebrate their 150th anniversary the following two days with a Lodge meeting, Grand Lodge regalia presentation, banquet, dance and a District Divine Service starting on September 30.

Hamilton – Amalgamation of Dundurn and Beach Lodges on October 3.

Burlington – Amalgamation of Burlington and Brant Lodges on October 15.

East York – Ceremony of Rededication of St. Andrew's Lodge on their 200th anniversary on October 18.

Peterborough – Amalgamation of Corinthian, Royal Arthur and William James Dunlop Lodges on October 19.

Thornhill – Ceremony of Silver to Gold as apart of the 100th anniversary of Mosaic Lodge on October 26.

Ottawa – Ceremony of Silver to Gold as apart of the 100th anniversary of Defenders Lodge on October 29.

From the Deputy ...

My Brethren:

Hope all is going well for everyone so far. The Lodge meetings are in full swing again, the banquets and the fraternal visits are going great, the Installations are taking place so what's next ? The Official visits will be taking place soon. Brethren, let's talk about Official visits for a moment. The District Deputy Grand Master will notify the Lodge that the Official visit is approaching. He will hopefully send a checklist of the things that he would like to see when he arrives, for example the current Grand Lodge Publications that every Lodge should have, he is looking for a clean and tidy building and Lodge room, he wants to see great ritual being done and he wants the "L forms" to be completed honestly and before he arrives at the Lodge meeting. Then after the Official visit is completed the District Deputy and the District Secretary will collaborate and fill out their forms. Now the Condition of Masonry Committee takes those "L forms" and examines them to see how healthy that particular Lodge is. Recommendations are made and the Report Card is sent to the Lodge for their reflection. It is important to note that this is for the Lodge's use. It is to help them see where they are in comparison to other Lodge's and as an arbitrary benchmark, so they can reflect and improve how they conduct their meetings and activities. If the Lodge does not agree with the assessment, fine, the point is self-reflection. If they want they can contact the Chairman of the Condition of Masonry Committee and he will explain how they arrived at that rating. In my Lodge we always looked at this Report Card as a part of Masonic Education. We always discussed what the Report Card stated and we tried to improve and learn from it. We used it as a positive teachable moment instead of a negative. We used it to make us a better Lodge and I hope you will too.

Brethren, since we are still at the beginning of the Masonic year, I am asking the Districts to please keep their websites current. This was raised at the regional meetings that the District Deputy is responsible for all District and Lodge websites. Please take the time to search the web for anything pertaining to your District; old, new, unused and forgotten. Nothing gives

the wrong impression of an organization more than an old and neglected website. It may not be your current website but it may come up on a District or Lodge search. Please work with your District Web Master and Lodges to assure that there is only one website for each body and that the material on it is current. If not, track down the owner and have it taken down. If you can't find someone in the District or Lodge who will keep the material on their site current, shut it down. Nothing is worse than old and/or incorrect information when people are searching for dates, contacts and addresses. Many District websites have Lodge sites linked to them, please check that as well when doing your investigating.

Brethren, please check out the Grand Lodge Website, there you will find Masonic Education for every meeting, every month. You will find the "L forms" and you will find the many Grand Lodge Policies, especially the one dealing with Websites. Also on the website you will find the schedule for the District Deputy Grand Master Preparation Presentation which is heading back out onto the road again. The pandemic stopped this Committee in it's tracks, they were headed to Brockville and were called back due to the pandemic. Well, once again they are on the move. R.W. Bro. Victor Tavares and his team will be in Harriston on October 29th, Paris on November 5th, Ridgetown on November 19th and Oshawa on December 3rd. Please mark your calendars and attend if you are aspiring to the high office of a DDGM, Grand Registrar or District Secretary. The Spring schedule will be available in the very near future. I would highly recommend that anyone aspiring to hold one of these offices would take both paths, the other being the Past Masters Course from the College.

Thank you for now Brethren and we'll continue this talk in November.

Jamie R. Ireland
Deputy Grand Master

From the Grand Secretary ...

Brethren,

Several reminders this month:

COVID-19 Temporary Business Policies:

With a few exceptions, most of our lodges have resumed normal operations and public health restrictions related to the pandemic continue to subside. We are expecting that all lodges will be back to pre-COVID-19 operations by the end of 2022.

Therefore, Grand Lodge is eliminating the temporary business policies implemented during the pandemic. That includes the option to further postpone elections and Installations or to have the current lodge officers remain in their positions for another year.

If there are special considerations that need to be addressed, Grand Lodge will consider them on a one-off basis.

2022 Lodge Officer Information:

As mentioned last month, many of our lodges have not submitted a Return of Officers form since 2019. This will continue to cause us issues going ahead, particularly in the area of communications, if we do not get the records updated. Please ensure that your lodge has submitted a Return of Officers form for any elections and installations held since we returned to labours.

Outstanding dues:

Lodges are reminded that the Book of Constitution, sections 199 -202, must be followed with respect to the payment of lodge dues.

Summons:

Now that most lodges are meeting again, a reminder to lodge Secretaries that a copy of the monthly summons must be sent via hard copy or digitally to every member of the lodge and the District Deputy Grand Master. As well, three hard copies are to be submitted (in one envelope) to the Grand Lodge office.

Fraternally, Garry

*D. Garry Dowling
Grand Secretary*

From the Grand Chaplain ...

Brethren,

The role of Chaplain in a Lodge or that of Grand Chaplain is, indeed, a curious one. Since Freemasonry is NOT a religion, as we profess it is not, why then do we need such a religious title for an Officer of the Lodge or Grand Lodge? What is the key function of the Chaplain? Need he be a 'man of the cloth', an ordained minister of his religion? Or can he be a man who is conversant within his own religion and can understand the requirements of our invocations, our calling out to the Great Architect of the Universe, a plea for some assistance, as it were, in the work in which we are about to engage.

Brethren, permit me to introduce myself. I am R.W. Bro. Michael Litvak, a Mason hailing from Mount Sinai-Pillars Lodge No. 522 for nearly the past 35 years. I have had the very great honour of serving my Lodge as WM (1998, 1999, 2009), my District as DDGM of Toronto Don Valley (2010) and now Grand Lodge as Grand Chaplain, an honour for which I am extremely grateful to our GM, M.W. Bro. Hogeboom. I am not ordained in my faith but I have been a respected Lay Leader in my synagogue of 1500 families for as long as I have been a Mason; a coincidence, I think not! I chant from the Torah scroll (Old Testament) regularly (which requires significant skill and ability), lead various services including those at a house of mourning (Shiva) during the seven days after the interment of a deceased person as well as conducting services when we unveil a headstone at a cemetery several months after a burial. The last Jewish person to hold this role was R.W. Bro. Rabbi Harold Lerner who served in 1986 under the only Jewish Grand Master, M.W. Bro. Copeland. Rabbi Lerner was my Rabbi; he officiated at my Bar Mitzvah (coming of age ceremony) 56 years ago and we maintained a friendship over the years until his untimely passing in 1998. It is my distinct honour to fill his shoes.

I have described myself as being the Chief Spiritual Officer of Grand Lodge. My goal during these ensuing 12 months is to assist our Brethren to gain a better understanding of who we are as Masons from an esoteric or deeper import than simply the words of a blessing. It is easy simply to ask that the Supreme Ruler of the World bless the food we are about to receive but what have we imparted to our Brethren with such an unsophisticated impeachment. Our Invocations should have meaning and abound with learning. While an Invocation typically will last no longer than one to two minutes, it may contain such information as to cause the Brethren to give pause and perhaps experience an "aha!" moment.

Thus, how may I assist you to create an "aha!" moment in your Lodge, at your banquet hour? I look forward to our DDGMs reaching out and enquiring how this may be done in their respective Districts and constituent Lodges. Invocations need to be respectful and they need to be fully non-denominational. As the words imparted to the Lodge Chaplain at his investiture say, "practice your duties in a spirit of universal tolerance, which distinguishes our institution". Whether a Chaplain is an ordained or lay person, the objective must be the same. Be mindful of the diversity in our Lodges and respectful to include only those words that describe our Great Architect of the Universe in the most secular manner. Like any good orator, know your audience!

With sincere fraternal regards,

Michael A. Litvak
Grand Chaplain