

D.D.G.M. COMMUNIQUE

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From the Grand Master . . .

As the first snowfalls demonstrate to us that it really is December we are reminded of how quickly the year is passing. Your term as District Deputy Grand Master is in mid stride and hopefully going well. The Summons' indicate that in most areas good things are happening in our Lodges and Districts. As many Lodges are now installing and investing new Officers, we might take the opportunity to inquire if any support is desired. Our Grand Lodge Programmes are many and varied, yet sometimes remain unknown to the Lodges. I encourage you and the District teams to pro act by discussing or referencing these programmes in your travels. The appropriate Grand Lodge Committees stand ready to assist whenever needed. Communication is our top priority and you, as the District Deputy Grand Masters are a critical cog in the wheel. Please do not let the Lodges in your District suffer because you became the bottleneck in the distribution of information.

I would like to offer a few words on two important topics this month.

Building Code Compliance:

Our Policy and Procedures manual for Building Code Compliance is nearing completion and will be distributed before the end of the year. Please note that you, as District Deputy Grand Masters, will have a major accountability in ensuring that the programme is effective. The material will be distributed to you, and it will then be your accountability to ensure that it gets into the hands of each and every Lodge in your District. Likewise, it will be your accountability to report to the Grand Lodge Buildings Chairman on the progress of achieving Compliance in each of your Lodges.

Achieving Building Compliance will consist of two major steps: scheduling and completing an Ontario Fire Code (OFC) Retrofit inspection and filing a Building Safety Plan. All these details of the what, the who, the how and the when, will be explained in the manual.

Brethren, we reiterate that the time has come to act on ensuring that the safety of our Brethren attending Lodge is foremost in our minds.

Adapting to Changing Circumstances while Guarding the West Gate:

While steadfastly defending our core values, we must also be aware that we operate in a different environment these days, especially in terms of the use of electronic media. I want to address you briefly about adapting to

our surroundings. More and more men are making their first contact with Masonry by means of our Grand Lodge, District and Lodge websites. In order for a Member to sponsor a man into our craft by signing his application, we state that the Brother must 'know' the applicant. Yet, we allow men to contact us via our websites, seeking information, when no one in the Lodge knows them. I understand that some Lodges are not even pursuing these inquiries and may therefore be missing out on acquiring a good man. Before we act hastily, consider how many times the Master or Secretary of the Lodge is asked to co-sign an application when neither of them knows the applicant directly.

Brethren, surely we can adapt our processes to handle such situations without letting our Guard down at the West Gate. Before the application is signed, we can arrange for a Member to visit the man to get to know him and his family; we can invite the man to a Committee of General Purposes meeting to get to know him and so that he can get to know us; we can invite him and his family to one or more social events of the Lodge. All this we can do prior to signing his application. Once that application is signed, then it is still the duty of the Investigating Committee to perform due diligence. While we need to get to know him, we must also let him get to know us and what we stand for. Our retention rate indicates that Masonry is not for everyone and the more we can do up front on both sides will go a long way to ensuring that we have a good match. More and more men will come knocking on our doors in this manner. We must remain vigilant at the West Gate, but we must also adapt to the circumstances.

'Tis The Season:

At this time of the year, our Lodge rooms offer a warm and friendly respite from the wind and the snow. What a great time to experience the joy of social gatherings with our Brethren and their families. In whatever manner you celebrate, please keep those who are less fortunate in your thoughts and prayers. Wendy and I wish you the very best of the season. Take time to celebrate the joy, and to pause and reflect on the blessings we share. What a great time to be a Mason!

M.W. Bro. D. Garry Dowling
Grand Master

Grand Master's full itinerary at –

www.grandlodge.on.ca UNDER EVENTS CALENDAR

From the Deputy Grand Master. . .

December, of course, is the big holiday Season of Giving. The family usually gets together, the food is fantastic, and we are reminded to count our blessings. I know we should be grateful throughout the year, and we try to be thankful on a daily basis. We know how lucky we are to live in Canada and to enjoy all the blessings given to us. Yet, with all the activities of day-to-day life, we tend to forget just how fortunate we are.

The greatest achievements aren't about individual recognition or accomplishments, but helping others. Giving does not have to break the bank, if you only have a little to give, just give a little; if all you can afford is a bit of your time then give that. The Season of Giving can start at home, with your extended family and in your community.

Blood Donors Committee: This committee is chaired by R.W. Bro. Leslie Armstrong. December brings the Season of Giving into full focus at the Canadian Blood Services when their blood donations normally drop over the holidays due to everyone's busy schedules and added travel plans. However, the need for blood donations never takes a holiday and may actually need more blood than normal. With fewer people donating blood over the holiday seasons some parts of Ontario run the risk of having critical blood shortages. Blood donations are essential for our hospital patients and other critically ill people in our community and we know of no better gift to give someone this holiday season than the Gift of Life.

Benevolence Committee: This Grand Lodge Committee is chaired by M.W. Bro. Gary L. Atkinson. The Benevolence Committee is separate and distinct from the Masonic Foundation of Ontario (M.F.O.). The Benevolence Committee works internally within our Fraternity, while the M.F.O. is our external charitable arm. Many financial requests for benevolence assistance either fail or are delayed because of lack of proper paperwork submitted to Grand Lodge. The brethren in your District, who are responsible to carry out the work of benevolence for their Lodge, are encouraged to contact the Grand Secretary, or Mrs. Stacey Birks, prior to submitting any written documents to the Grand Lodge office to prevent any undue delays.

From the desk of the Grand Secretary. . .

Semi-annual returns are due January 8, 2013. Please have lodges note the provisions of Section 152 (p) B. of C. Should your return indicate 152(p) and a \$100 fee, then you failed to have the last return submitted by July 8 and unable to take advantage of the waived fee incentive. I urge lodge Secretaries to take advantage of this cost reduction, for the financial benefit of all members.



On behalf of your office staff; Gail Nickerson, Stacey Birks, Rosalyn Siegel, Kathy White and myself, we thank those having Masonic business dealings throughout the year, for your cooperation. We extend our best wishes to all for a very happy, healthy and safe holiday season.

The Masonic Foundation of Ontario is not a committee of Grand Lodge. The President of the M.F.O. is, Mr. A. Douglas Nichols. It is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of three ex-officio Directors - being the Deputy Grand Master, the Custodian of the Work, and the Grand Lodge Chairman of Benevolence, five members of the Board of General Purposes, and seven Master Masons. The Foundation is registered as a public foundation with Canada Revenue Agency. Since it is a registered charity, it is able to issue income tax receipts for donations made. The Masonic Foundation of Ontario Act and its bylaws restrict its charitable activities to the Province of Ontario, and this is, of course, consistent with the jurisdiction of our Grand Lodge.

MASONICH.I.P. This program is not a Grand Lodge Committee and its makeup is very similar to the M.F.O. It has its own president, Mr. Ray Dobbs, and a Program Director, Mr. Rob Fleming. The program is based on parents allowing Masons to gather a dental impression, a DNA cheek swab, digital still photos, digital fingerprints and a video interview compiled into a kit that is given to the parent. If a child becomes missing, the parent can immediately have all the important information about their child ready in an Amber Alert compatible format, so authorities can help find them. When a child goes missing, trying to obtain a more detailed description of what their child looked like can make this impossible. The more time that passes in these types of cases typically the worse the ending is going to be. This is another example of giving something to a family with the hopes of never having to use it.

Your generosity has made a difference in the lives of so many and made their futures brighter. I ask you to continue to support these programs, especially during the Season of Giving.

On behalf of my family, I wish you all the pleasures of the holidays and look forward to another exiting year in Freemasonry in Ontario.

Donald A. Campbell
Deputy Grand Master

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