

THE COMMUNIQUE

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From the Grand Master

Well Friends, spring is now upon us for sure. A time of year when all plant life outside is starting to flourish and turn green. The trees and perennials will bud and open to signify warmer weather and the rain will stimulate the beginning of another growing season that beautifies our surroundings and produces food products for nourishment. As comes spring so do our minds and attitudes become enthusiastic anticipating what is about to blossom before us.

I am excited to inform everyone that the last month has been very exciting. After a number of days reviewing many applications we have hired a Chief Operating Officer to manage activities at the Grand Lodge Office. We had many highly qualified applicants, many of them Masons which is a tribute to our membership and the capable people within the craft.

It is my pleasure to officially announce V.W. Bro. Evan Woodhead has accepted this new position in Grand Lodge. Evan will begin his duties approximately May 1st. We look forward to this new direction of administration. Evan will be working closely with M.W. Bro. Terence Shand, the Grand Secretary, to become familiar with the various procedures and protocols which are involved in the daily workings of Grand Lodge Office. While working under the Grand Secretary's tutelage, M.W. Bro. Shand will bring Bro. Woodhead's attention to four primary areas, the Constitution, Lodges, Membership and our Rites and Ceremonies.

I am sure you will find Evan to be helpful and friendly in serving whatever needs are required in your future with Freemasonry. We wish Evan every success in his new duties. His experience in previous career endeavours will truly benefit our Grand Jurisdiction.

Brethren, as we are now entering the last quarter of the traditional Masonic year, before our Annual Communication, we will experience a large number

of Official Visits and Installations. I ask you try and find time to attend and support lodges during this busy season. Your attendance as a visitor will be greatly appreciated to say nothing about the enjoyable time you will experience with fellow Masons.

As mentioned, on a number of occasions, I and others have announced our hope that every Lodge in Ontario will commemorate the 300th anniversary of Freemasonry by hosting functions open to the general population of your respective community. It could be an Open House, a Friend to Friend Event, a meal with activities for young and old. Some Lodges are having various activities throughout the entire day including meals, parades and games for children. I would remind every District Deputy Grand Master to inform their various Lodges to make every effort to open their doors by hosting some type of activity June 3rd. This is an opportunity for Freemasonry in Ontario to demonstrate the philosophies and practices of Masons in their community.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention again our Grand Lodge charity, PROSTATE HOPE. There are many opportunities to participate in this worthwhile project either by a District, a Lodge or as an individual. Many of the Brethren are making personal donations of \$200 or more to receive an attractive certificate to place in prominent place in your home or office. Anything we can do, Brethren, to assist funding the research that can affect any possible cure or comfort for this dreaded threat to our society.

*"If the Masons Do Not Have Any Secrets,
They Have Done a Good Job of Keeping It a Secret"*

~ a famous quote from Oscar Wilde

***John C. Green
Grand Master***

From the Deputy ...

Brethren, the month of April is a very busy month as it relates to the Committees of Grand Lodge. Many of the objectives, outlined at the August Chairmen & Team Leaders' meeting, are either completed or near completion.

The Committee Chairmen and Team Leaders are now working on their budgets for the upcoming Masonic year and their Preliminary Reports for the Proceedings.

Twenty six Chairmen & Team Leaders along with the Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master and Grand Treasurer recently attended the bi-annual "Think Tank" retreat which ran for two days and held at the Crieff Hill Retreat in rural Ontario just north of Hamilton.

Poor internet service, rural setting and make-your-own-bed Church camp mentality made for clear heads with little or no distractions.

Sign in was at two o'clock on Monday with opening comments at 15:00hrs by the Grand Master and Deputy Grand Master.

Work began immediately and the group was divided into four Teams. All participants were given a pad of sticky notes, assigned a "wall" for four questions The Deputy Grand Master put before the group.

Questions a) What works well at Grand Lodge? b) What doesn't work well at Grand Lodge? c) What works well with the present Committee structure? d) What doesn't work well with the present committee structure?

The questions were presented one at a time with approximately twenty minutes between questions. Multiple answers were allowed and we ended up with four walls covered with sticky notes. There was much enthusiasm for certain questions.

Before breaking for dinner, the four Team Leaders (each a member of the Management Committee) were instructed to meet after dinner with their Teams and come up for two themes from their assigned "answer wall".

The next morning, after a good hearty country breakfast, the four Team Leaders presented their themes to the entire group. The two themes, for each question, would form a basis of the day's discussions.

Each question and its themes were assigned a room and the four Teams travelled from room to room in 45-60 mins, to debate & discuss the themes found in the room.

A scribe was assigned to each question room and kept notes created by each Team as they passed through.

After lunch, discussions continued until three o'clock when all participants returned to the main room where the four scribes and/or Team Leaders presented their conclusions from all the discussions on the four questions.

After each presentation, the floor was then open for discussion by the assembled Brethren. Some agreed, some disagreed, with the conclusions, but a good healthy discussion was held by all.

Two questions received much discussion. They were, as you might suspect b) & d) and a wide range of suggestions were freely given by all participants. It was a pleasant revelation to this writer, the ideas these Leaders of the Craft brought forth, will make our Grand Lodge more effective and efficient.

A lively discussion about d) ensued, which in all fairness, was received and understood by upper management and changes will be made this year.

The Deputy Grand Master then spent a few minutes discussing his thoughts on the future of our Grand Lodge and his thoughts on Committee make up.

After nearly eight hours of discussion, an excellent dinner was prepared and served by the Church. The participants gathered for a couple of hours of restraint hospitality consisting of card playing and joke telling. Some were good at both and others not so much.

On the morning of the last day, the session had excellent presentations. Steve Warren, Team Leader of Strategic Planning, spoke regarding the Strategic Plan in general and Tactical plans for next year in particular and the second presentation was by Brian Koivu, Team Leader on Lodge Finances in general and Charity status in particular. Remarks, tabulated later, showed an overwhelming enjoyment of the sessions, the location and the food and a wish for another retreat in two years.

After closing remarks by the Grand Master & Deputy Grand Master, the sticky notes came out for one last time to mark on the appropriate wall with "What worked well" and "What didn't work well". A report is being prepared using the sticky notes from the answer wall and the conclusions of the group.

"A goal without a plan is just a wish."

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
writer, poet, journalist, & pioneering aviator

Paul E. Todd
Deputy Grand Master