

D.D.G.M. COMMUNIQUE

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From the Grand Master . . .

At this mid-point in your term of office, I hope that you have come to realize the truth expressed by Jack Smith: “*God created time so everything wouldn’t happen at once.*” If your experience parallels mine, you may have had good reason to doubt that some days. Early in the New Year, on Saturday, 9 January, I look forward to meeting with all our D.D.G.M.s to share your experiences with the Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Custodian of the Work and the Chairman of the Committee on the Condition of Masonry, and to receive your mid-term reports. You will be sent further directions in mid-December.

During the last month it has been a privilege to visit several Districts for a Reception – Western District in Fort Frances, St. Thomas District in Shedden, and Erie District in Essex. These District receptions for the Grand Master provide an opportunity to meet with the Brethren of the Lodges in the District. It is always an enjoyable and rewarding experience. I look forward to further such occasions in the early spring and summer months.

It has been my pleasure and honour, accompanied by the Deputy Grand Master, on behalf of the Awards Committee to present the prestigious William Mercer Wilson Medal to five distinguished and esteemed Brethren: Bro. Robert Gordon Bryson, Sudbury Lodge No. 658, Sudbury; Bro. Alexander Caird, Trinity Lodge No. 521, Windsor; Bro. William George Dodds, Richmond Lodge No. 23, Richmond Hill; Bro. William James Lewis, Hugh Murray Lodge No. 602, Hamilton; and Bro. Gerald Siddall, Shuniah Lodge No. 287, Thunder Bay. Since the medal was instituted in 1945, there have been only 234 recipients. Lodges wishing to nominate a worthy and deserving Brother for this unique honour recognizing service to his Lodge and community, and who has never been or ever expects to be a Worshipful Master, should obtain the guidelines for making application from the Grand Secretary’s office.

Once again, I return to what I consider the most important aspect of our Masonic activities at this time: the mentoring of the candidates we are initiating. Many Lodges are experiencing an increasing number of petitions. Most meetings are given over to the conferring of degrees, and many Lodges are again holding emergent meetings and conferring degrees on multiple candidates. For this renaissance we must be grateful. However, bringing a man into Masonry and making him a member through initiation is only the first and easiest step. How do we make him a Mason for life? The challenge facing every Worshipful Master is how to attract and engage each and every candidate by fulfilling his expectations and satisfying his quest. It is often proposed that ‘education’ is the key to maintaining interest. There is a difference between ‘education’ and ‘learning’ – one is passive, the other active. There should be a ‘learning opportunity’ provided as a regular agenda item at every meeting.

The Worshipful Master must ‘make time’ for it – whether 3 minutes or 30 minutes. Encourage questions, analyse the meaning of the ritual in each degree, have informal discussion, provide a resource library of current titles, form an out-of-lodge study group for the eager students. It takes serious time and effort, but every Past Master has a responsibility to support, encourage and nurture the young Mason in his journey of discovery.

Earlier this year, I asked that Lodges keep in mind any Brethren serving in the Canadian Armed Forces on active duty abroad, especially in Afghanistan. At this family-oriented holiday season, I ask that we keep them in our thoughts and prayers, and if possible, communicate with them and their families.

As we approach the Winter Solstice, which Freemasons traditionally observe as the Festival of St. John in Winter on December 27th, the symbolism of Light is the basis of the all the celebrations of the season: Pagan Yule, Jewish Hanukah, Christian Christmas. As Freemasons, initiation takes us from darkness to light, and henceforth, our lives and actions are directed and guided by the three Great Lights.

Henry van Dyke wrote an essay entitled ‘Keeping Christmas’ which has a message that might well be shared with our Brethren: “*Are you willing to forget what you have done for other people, and remember what other people have done for you; to ignore what the world owes you, and to think what you owe the world; to put your rights in the background, and your duties in the middle distance, and your chances to do a little more than your duty in the foreground; to see that your fellow-men are just as real as you are, and try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy; to own that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give to life; to close your book of complaints against the management of the universe, and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness – are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.*”

The General Charge reminds us that ‘*the chief point in Masonry*’ is attained when we ‘*endeavour to be happy ourselves and communicate that happiness to others.*’ May you and your family experience true happiness this holiday season and good health throughout the coming year. Brenda joins me in sending these best wishes.

Raymond S. J. Daniels

Grand Master’s full itinerary at –
www.grandlodge.on.ca UNDER EVENTS CALENDAR

From the Deputy Grand Master. . .

R.W. Sirs, The festive season is upon us. Many of our Brethren celebrate this season in a variety of ways, at different times during December and January. Our fraternity sets a leading example in recognizing a host of faiths and encouraging our Brethren to celebrate as is their own particular custom. May this festive season be one that brings you fellowship and good times in the company of family and friends.

Blood Donors: Last month I made mention of the “**Provincial Masonic Blood Donor Week**”, to be held December 27–31, 2010. By now your District Chairmen should have received advertising and instructions. As time is short, please support them in getting the word out in your travels. This is a joint effort between our Grand Lodge and the Prince Hall Grand Lodge in Ontario and the December week was chosen because it is a particularly low ‘giving’ period.

The initiative is designed to have us work with District Blood Donor Chairmen to host or support clinics in as many Districts as possible. The challenge issued by the Grand Lodge Blood Donors Committee is to **recruit at least 5 new donors in each District** during the week. During this busy time of Installations and holiday well wishing, please spread the word about the project. If you have any questions, please contact:

R.W. Bro. Lloyd Hammell: lloyd_hammell@hotmail.com

R.W. Bro. Barry Hutton: bjhutton@ezlink.ca

R.W. Bro. Tom Forbes: ts4b@mountaincable.net

D.D.G.M. Correspondence Course: Enrolment statistics presented to me, for the D.D.G.M. Correspondence Course show that some Districts are still struggling with getting their ‘next in line’ aspirants to sign up. No one likes being constantly reminded, but the impact of the constitutional change on these Districts is significant. Come next July, a District with a candidate who has not completed the course will put the Grand Master and the District in a very tough position.

The Grand Master **will not confirm** any of the new D.D.G.M.s (or Grand Registrar) next July unless they have been issued a certificate of course completion by the Masonic Education, College of Freemasonry Committee. Please help us avoid embarrassment to all. If you have any questions about enrollment, course content or effort required, please contact either:

V.W. Bro. Iain Wates: idwates@sympatico.ca

R.W. Bro. Tom Siemiernik: tom.siemiernik@sympatico.ca

From the desk of the Grand Secretary. . .

Semi-annual Returns are due **January 8, 2011**. Please have lodges note the provisions of Section 152 (p) B. of C. Should your return indicate this section and a \$100 fee, then you failed to have the last Return submitted by July 8th and unable to take advantage of a waived fee. I urge Lodge Secretaries to take advantage of this cost reduction, for the benefit of all members.

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

Grand Lodge Technology: Our Grand Lodge Technology team has started work on plans for the development of several applications to benefit the jurisdiction. One of these is to initiate a pilot project related to the address database used for the mailing of the Ontario Mason magazine. We will build a new ‘address’ database based on the acquisition of member mailing addresses directly from the lodges. The key to the success of the project will be the participation of the Lodges themselves. The Lodges selected for the initial pilot will be contacted shortly by the team under the direction of R.W. Bro. Bill Thompson.

Tidbits: Canada Lodge U.D., at last count had six applications for initiation. The fall issue of Reflections has been delivered to all subscribers. The Ontario Mason magazine will be in the mail in December. All Certificates for successful completion of the Cornerstone Project last year have been presented to the Lodges. The Grand Lodge Publishing Policy has been successfully applied to a number of new or revised Lodge and District websites. Heritage Lodge has generously supported our project to digitize all our Grand Lodge Proceedings. The incorporation process for MasoniChIP is well underway.

Reminder: With the festive season and its opportunities for many Kodak moments, comes a reminder that pictures are not to be taken while Lodge is open. D.D.G.M.s and Lodge Masters are encouraged to help arrange for photo opportunities to be available after Lodge is closed. As we should be declaring every Lodge a ‘cell free’ environment, the Brethren are reminded to turn them off before Lodge begins. That special moment in a degree or installation, spoiled by ‘a jolly little phone ditty’ cannot be recreated.

‘Tis the Season: Our Masonic year approaches the half way mark. We trust that you are now comfortable in your Districts and that your Districts are now comfortable with you and your leadership teams. As stated by Hugh Prather in Notes on Love and Courage, “There is a time to let things happen and a time to make things happen”. **If you want to make it happen, now would be a good time to start!**

Wendy and I would like to extend the very best of the festive season to you and your families. Hopefully, you can find a quiet moment to reflect upon what a great fraternity we are privileged to serve, what a great country we live in and how thankful we are for the sacrifices made by our men and women serving overseas.

D. Garry Dowling

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