

D.D.G.M. COMMUNIQUE

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From the Grand Master . . .

Resolutions, resolutions...

Well, how are we doing with those New Year's resolutions? Those promises made to be a more regular attendee, to help out on the Sick & Visiting committee, to offer support and ideas to the Worshipful Master and the officers, to further educate myself so I can be a good mentor, to be accountable in the leadership role I have assumed... and so on.

Perhaps your Jan meeting didn't go as well as you might have liked. Are you contributing in a positive way to making this month's better? It's all a matter of self discipline and self development... the Masonic way of life!

February - Masons hold a high regard for our loved ones and Valentine's Day affords us a wonderful opportunity to say a simple and heartfelt thanks for all their support.

Our continuing emphasis...

Last month we took a look down the road at the positive future of Freemasonry in Ontario. We spoke of the vitality returning to our Lodge rooms and the real benefits in practising face-to-face Masonry. If indeed, Masonry happens on the floor of the Lodge room, then most of our Lodges have 10 regular meetings a year to make it happen. Thus, each and every one of those meetings must contain something for at least some of our Brethren to make them want to come back the next month. Not one of those opportunities can be missed. Imagine the possibilities if all members of the Lodge contribute to face-to-face Masonry. Are you doing your part?

At Grand Lodge we continue to emphasize Communication and Education and we hope that these priorities are reflected in your District and Lodge activities as well. It is a real pleasure to read in the Lodge Summons about so many Masonic education initiatives taking place across the jurisdiction. We encourage as many of the Brethren as possible to participate in these activities.

Housekeeping Items:

I have added the Housekeeping Items section back into this month's Communique as there are several important items to draw to your attention

1) DDGM Mid Term Meeting and Building Compliance

Back on Jan 12, we shared a day with the DDGMs from across the province. Among other things, we had a thorough discussion on the Building Compliance Policy. A number of concerns were raised and addressed. Our

DDGMs felt that additional explanation and communication of a couple of points was needed.

First, the present initiative on Lodge Buildings deals with conformance to Fire Code Regulations ONLY. It has nothing to do with accessibility legislation or health standards.

Second, the Grand Lodge Building Compliance Policy does NOT contain any fire code rules or regulations. Those requirements are all contained in the Ontario Fire Code. What is required is that all Lodge premises must be inspected by a representative of the local Fire Marshalls office.

As a result of our discussions, our DDGMs now understand the details of this initiative, are supportive of it, and can address any questions locally. If they cannot provide the answers to your questions, please do not hesitate to address R.W. Bro. Perry McConnell or myself.

We appreciate that, as individual Lodges and Temple Corporations, you have not had the benefit of such a discussion nor can all questions be effectively addressed in a single document. We trust that your DDGM can assist, but we are certainly prepared to respond to all queries and concerns. Uppermost in our minds must remain the safety of our members.

2) DDGM Appointment Requests

R.W. Sirs, you are reminded that should you wish to request consideration of an appointment for the District Secretary, you must do so in writing to the Office of the Grand Secretary, clearly stating the name of the District, the name of the Brother to be considered and any personal comments you wish to include. Anytime now would be a good time!

The Path...

Brethren, for us to follow the path to "Ensuring The Timeless Vitality of Freemasonry" we must have vitality and we must have viability. Our **vitality** depends on the motivation we have as individuals. Our **viability** depends in part on the attention we pay to our Masonic homes. We need to pay attention to both.

Our Leaders, Lodge, District and Grand Lodge, must exhibit the enthusiasm and vitality that will rub off on all our members. That enthusiasm and vitality will determine the Masonic future of the men we are initiating today. Believe it!

Spread the word – it is a great time to be a Mason in Ontario!

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

From the Deputy Grand Master. . .

Masonry is sometimes described as a secret society; however we certainly don't make secret the fact that we are members of the fraternity. We wear rings and lapel pins with Masonic emblems such as the square & compasses to identify ourselves as Masons. Our buildings are clearly marked and are usually listed in the telephone book.

The greatest part of Freemasonry is that we can make a difference. There aren't many places where you can get the practical training that our fraternity has to offer. We all remember our initiation and at the end of the evening, we received a membership card. It is a priceless possession that confirms your acceptance of Masonic principles and values. It is proof that you entered into a brotherhood with honourable Masons who practice charity in both word and deed. This card means that no matter where you may travel in the world, you are welcomed to visit any place where good fellowship prevails among his brethren and friends.

Brock University Partnership: The public perception of Freemasonry is largely formed by fiction rather than fact. Best-selling novels, block-buster movies, sensational television 'documentaries' and anti-Masonic websites all create a false impression of the world's oldest and largest fraternity.

The Brock University Partnership, chaired by R.W. Bro. Gareth Taylor, will encourage professional historians and sociologists to study the positive impact Freemasonry has made on the history of this country over the last three centuries. To gain academic credibility would do much to enhance the image of Freemasonry in the public perception and restore it to the place of respect it once enjoyed in society. If we do not take affirmative action to set the record straight, no one else will. This partnership between two great educational institutions will provide for the inspiration for future generations to take Freemasonry seriously.

The International Conference on the History of Freemasonry (ICHF) was first held in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 2007, the purpose of this biennial conference is to illustrate and exemplify the wide range of scholarly work being undertaken on the history of Freemasonry, thereby establishing the history of Freemasonry as a distinctive field of a historical research in its own right. Subsequent ICHF conferences have been held in Edinburgh (2009) and

Alexandria, Virginia (2011). The 4th Annual Conference will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland on

May 24 - 26, 2013. The 2015 Conference has been awarded to Brock University and the Grand Lodge of

Canada as joint sponsors. To properly prepare to host the 2015 ICHF, R.W. Bro. Taylor will be representing our Grand Lodge at the 2013 ICHF.

The overarching purpose of the conference is to provide an overview of recent work done by those studying Freemasonry. As an example, at the 2013 ICHF conference, several papers and discussions will take place on the history of Freemasonry as a distinctive field of historical research. Plenary speakers will include Dr. Jim Daniel, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society; Bro. John Belton, author of the English Masonic Union of 1890; Dr. Jan Snoek who specialized in researching the history and development of Masonic rituals and Rites; and Dr. Cecile Revauger who has devoted her doctoral thesis to Freemasonry in Britain and the United States in the 18th century.

Sankey Lecture: The fourth annual Charles A. Sankey Lecture will take place on March 24, 2013. Brock University has confirmed that Professor Joy Porter, formally from Swansea University in Wales and now with University of Hull, will be the guest lecturer. Dr. Porter is particularly interested in Native American Indian Freemasonry and has recently written a book on the subject. Her Specialist Subjects are: Native American Indian History & Literature; Indigenous Studies; Modernity; and U.S. Freemasonry & Associationalism. Remember, this lecture is open to all Masons, their families and friends.

The 200th anniversary of M.W. Bro. William Mercer Wilson birth will take place this August 2013. Our Public Awareness Committee, chaired by R.W. Bro. David Sheen and committee member, R.W. Bro. Rob Foote, are looking into ways to celebrate our first Grand Master's 200th birthday, such as, erecting a historical plaque at his gravesite. R.W. Bro Foote has been in contact with the Ontario Heritage Trust Corporation and St. John's Woodhouse Church in Simcoe. Both are keen to assist us with in this endeavour.

As we learn from our historical research, Masons played an extraordinary role in the creation and development of Ontario (Upper Canada) and Canada as a country.

Donald A. Campbell
Deputy Grand Master