

## ***From the Grand Master***

This past year, lodge buildings have been a particular focus of our Grand Lodge, from a fire safety perspective. For many, many years, we wrestled with the increasingly poor conditions of our lodge meeting places. Financial, safety and liability concerns among others have been causing increased headaches not only within our Lodges, but also within our Grand Lodge.

Historically, specific data regarding these and other building issues have not been tracked by our Grand Lodge. The lodge reporting forms are modified this year to include questions such as: premises ownership, whether there is a building or temple corporation, the degree to which the building is maintained, the degree to which building upgrades are required, does a building reserve fund exist? is the building accessible to all and other such areas as fire and liability insurance?

Notable facts from this building data request suggest: (a) The percentage of lodges that own their building is almost equal in number to those renting space; (b) The percentage of buildings that require major upgrades is relatively small; (c) Accessibility is an issue in 60% of our buildings; (d) Between 5% and 11% of our lodges do not carry fire and/or liability insurance; and (e) Importantly, Temple Corporations have not filed their annual corporate returns. This is too serious to be overlooked since failure to file the return within the prescribed time frame can expose the Masonic Hall Corporation to penalties and interest and even forfeiture of the corporate charter to the Crown.

**W. Bro. Nick Andras:** One member is trying to make a difference to make his Masonic Home a better and safer place to meet. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Adoniram Lodge No. 573, Niagara B District and W. Bro. Nick Andras who has written and published a hard covered book containing Masonic Poetry, titled: ***Through the Eyes of a Brother***. Being a proud Freemason, his passion for the Craft has been expressed in this collection of poems. Each poem was written throughout his Masonic journey and is an honest glimpse of how Masonry has touched his life. His works have also been featured on many websites and his poem entitled

***Being a Mason*** was printed in the fall 2009 issue of the Ontario Masonic Magazine.

W. Bro. Nick Andras has dedicated this book of Masonic Poetry to the restoration and repair of Van Alstyne Place, Niagara Falls, a building in which his lodge meets in addition to two other Masonic Lodges, a Scottish Rite and a Cryptic Rite. He is donating 100% of the proceeds of all book sales to this cause. If one member can make a difference, just think what we can do, collectively. President Abraham Lincoln once said: "I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him!"

**Membership Private Data:** Just a reminder to all lodge members, especially lodge secretaries, you have a duty and obligation to keep your membership personal information confidential unless the lodge has received explicit instructions from the member to release such information. A member's email address should not disclose his personal and or private data.

**Civility:** A 2013 nationwide survey found that Americans encounter various acts of incivility an average of 17 times during the course of a week. Half of it in their real life interactions, the other half in online encounters. I don't think this is solely an American phenomenon.

We tolerate being talked at instead of talking with each other. Listening has become an endangered skill. We have allowed divisions to grow into an abyss so deep that simply getting people into the same room to talk has become difficult, and at times impossible. We have allowed intolerance to evolve into self-righteousness, condemnation and, ultimately, persecution — and we all know that's wrong.

My brethren, civil dialogue is the cornerstone that allows us to see things from a more enlightened perspective. This is not about avoiding difficult and complex topics. It is not about just "being nice" and keeping the dialogue on a superficial level. It does not silence those who wish to be heard. Instead, civil dialogue allows all voices to be valued, including those that may be of a perceived minority view.

Donald A. Campbell

## ***From the Deputy Grand Master***

For the third and final month I am saying WELCOME to SPRING. If I have to say that again in June I will not use the weather as an introduction to that monthly issue.

This month I want to remind all lodges that have not yet replied to your DDGM about Lodge Building Compliance to do so as soon as possible. We just want our buildings and members to be safe and comply to fire regulations. It is not intended to be an irritant but an effort to practice safety, to prevent any loss of buildings and, above all, any loss or injury of our members. I am sure we all want the same result so your cooperation would be greatly appreciated.

I would like to address Masonic Education as the lodge program of the month. Brethren there are several aspects of education in our fraternity.

1. We all wish to take pride in performing our ritual to the best of our ability. The indication that an individual has shown their best effort exemplifies the genuine interest in Freemasonry. It is important to understand the work you are presenting not just recite it without meaning. The valuable part of our ritual is not only knowing the work but understanding the meaning of the presentation. This requires considerable education from the senior members of each lodge to explain their interpretation that has been passed down from generations.

2. We also have a variety of programs such the College of Freemasonry that offers studies to improve your knowledge through courses available. The FCF course includes a wide number of issues to better inform the member on a more in depth study of our fraternity which you can share with other members and thus make Masonry stronger and more knowledgeable in general. The Past Masters Course which entitles you to be eligible to be nominated for District Deputy Grand Master or Grand Registrar. I am aware that there has been controversy over this program in last number of years but

I like to inform you that while meeting with a number of current DDGMs recently, they related to me, looking back, that they were glad they took the course whether or not they had become DDGM, because they were now better informed masons. So brethren, whether you plan to attain a Grand Lodge Office, or just become a more informed brother, you will find the Past Master's course valuable to your masonic interests.

3 Brethren the other aspect of education is our historic information that is made available in a number of venues. Our Masonic Library at Grand Lodge in Hamilton has endless varieties of books available to any mason. We are also hoping to introduce a new manner to access their information with a new electronic capability that would be a possible link to the website for your convenience. The Sankey Lectures are now an annual event that takes place at Brock University each spring and is open to masons and students. There have been a variety of speakers who have shared their masonic knowledge and that will continue in future years. This fall Grand Lodge will be embarking on the third annual Masonic conference in the Toronto area after successful events in Ottawa and London. This is a full Saturday that offers different presentations of masonic subjects of general interest. If you are interested in increasing your knowledge of the craft I believe you would enjoy attending such an event

Brethren, look at what information is available by attending masonic education conferences. Take advantage of courses from the College as well attending workshops and seminars provided by our Grand Lodge, presentations by the Custodian of the Work and our Protocol & Etiquette committee. There is great deal information for masons. ALL THAT IS NEEDED IS YOU.

BRETHREN AS I WILL BE REMINDING YOU NEXT MONTH PLEASE CONSIDER FINDING THE TIME TO ATTEND GRAND LODGE IN JULY. YOU WILL FIND THE EXPERIENCE ENJOYABLE AND ENLIGHTENING.

John C. Green

## ***From the Grand Secretary***

Just a reminder that the annual communication of Grand Lodge will be at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel July 12 to 18, 2014. Direct on line reservations can be made via <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/grandlodge2014>

Terence Shand