

**GRAND LODGE A.F. & A.M. OF CANADA
IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO**

Fraternal Correspondence Committee

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Fraternal Review

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GRAND LODGE of LOUISIANA

201st Annual Grand Communication, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, February, 2012.

214 Lodges

21,154 Members

The Membership Committee reported that it has struggled to come up with viable ideas to increase membership, since the Grand Lodge of Louisiana does not permit members to directly ask men of quality to join the Fraternity. Increasing average age, decreasing numbers of truly active working Masons, and escalating numbers of Lodge closures all indicate that it must take immediate if not dramatic action to perpetuate the Fraternity into the future.

Prior to 1717, little was known of Masonry as it truly was a “secret society.” Men who had been persecuted for membership in prior organizations, new religious beliefs, or the adoption and promotion of challenging new ideas of science, found a place of refuge in Freemasonry. In this environment, a Master Mason would ask a person in a like persecuted situation to join and inform him that their very lives depended on absolute secrecy. Research has shown that there was a period in Louisiana history when men were invited into the Craft.

The **active membership** in the Jurisdiction **now** stands at approximately **20,000**. The last average reported age was 63. Most Lodges drape the altar [*not in Ontario*] 8 to 12 times for a deceased Brother while they are lucky to raise 2 or 3 to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason during the same year. **Math** at the grade school level **indicates** that our beloved Fraternity is headed for **serious trouble**. The Committee **recommends that we change the rules at this Grand Lodge session.**

ALL LOUISIANA MASONS SHOULD CONSIDER FOR THE FUTURE THE THINGS WE CAN NOW DO TO IMPROVE MEMBERSHIP:

1. **Talk about Freemasonry** to people who are not Masons. Read your Monitors and your Reference Editions of the Holy Bible. You will be surprised at what you can talk about.
2. Search your Lodge records and make a concerted effort to **raise every past Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft Mason** to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason.
3. Create programs designed to draw men who may be eligible for Masonry, such as breakfast meetings for policemen, firemen, military men and the sons and grandsons of members.
4. Ask every Mason to have a Petition in his car or truck so that we can immediately sign up an interested party and not lose a prospective member.
5. Hold **Friend to Friend nights** early in the year and consider doing two a year for the Master's Achievement Award.
6. Once you put a man in line, even if he needs help, keep him. Don't do anything that would discourage him. Let the Past Masters help and guide him.

These are a few ideas that may help. One thing that is abundantly clear is that we need to advertize our Masonry. Wear your pins, hats, jackets and buckles daily. Most people in their 20's and 30's know nothing about us. Many get their information from the Internet, and that scares us as well as them.

BE PROUD OF MASONRY AND BE PREPARED TO TALK ABOUT IT!

The Goals and Objectives Committee mentioned **two major areas** that are the most important and **need to be implemented** as part of the Long Range Plan introduced in 2007; **Masonic Education and Financial Stability**. The education of the Brethren is lacking and more and more Lodges fail to utilize the tools supplied to assist, such as the monthly Masonic Quiz, supplied by the Committee on Masonic Education and which is mailed to every Lodge. This one page quiz can be used in a meeting to explain portions of Masonic Law, traditions and practices. Every Lodge needs to have a functioning Education Officer.

Our own members must be better educated, especially since non-Masons have easy access to the Internet and can source almost anything concerning our Craft. Every Mason needs to be better prepared to answer inquiries from members of the public. An added program deals with the **multigenerational Lodge**, combining the interests of a wide age group, from the members in their 20's with those in their 70's and 80's, into a cohesive team working for the improvement of the Lodge.

The Permanent Committee on Work, with the assistance of 19 District Grand Lecturers, continues to promote the improvement of the performance of the esoteric work throughout the Jurisdiction. Certificates recognizing improvement and proficiency are awarded to Masons following examinations and must be completed or renewed every 2 years, until 13 examinations are completed (called Gold Level), after which examinations are optional. Coded teaching aids for Instructors are provided for all three Degrees, containing the catechisms all candidates are required to commit to memory and recite in Lodge. The Fraternity is well served by proper instruction and the promotion of beautiful esoteric ritual in conjunction with proper floor work. **Standard Work Books** are not permitted to be used in a

tyled **Lodge** of Masons. *This program has been highly successful, ensuring quality work is being performed by new and experienced members in a uniform manner across the State.*

The **gradual increase** in the Per-Capita of **\$10 per member by 2018** will assist in the finances of this Grand Lodge. However, the **reduced** number of **members** will mostly **off-set the increase** in revenues. **Sound financial oversight is essential.** This Committee reminds all of the Brethren that this is inevitable – progress and improvement are optional. We are in the Brotherhood business and having **educated members** and a **well financed operation** will help insure that we are a successful business!

The Information Technology Committee reported that the Grand Lodge Web Site has been completely rebuilt and is constantly being upgraded. By **expanding the Lodge Secretaries on-line reporting functions it continues to improve service to the Constituent Lodges.** A professional Web developer has been contracted to perform continuing maintenance and updates.

M.W. Frank N. du Triel Jr., Grand Master, vowed to continue the successful programs, the great strides being made in Public Relations, the Masonic Charities and all endeavors that promote the Fraternity.

“We need to get outside of the four walls that keep us in our Lodges and show the world that we are not a secret society.” This next year will travel so fast as to appear to be the blink of an eye. It is a new day in Freemasonry. Let us move on.”