

**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 PENNSYLVANIA

Annual Communication, Hershey, Pennsylvania, December, 2011.

431 Lodges

111,661 Members

“What can I do as your Grand Master to make this Fraternity flourish for future generations?”

With this question, R.W Grand Master Jay W. Smith opened his Inaugural Address.

“We cannot watch the Fraternity dwindle to nothing while standing silent. Freemasonry should not be practiced in the dark. It should be practiced in the brilliant sunlight for all to see so that it can be said of us: “What an ideal way of life for all to follow!” At **no time in history** has there been a **greater** need for **what we stand for** than today. Throughout our history we have been challenged time and time again. When we respond to those challenges successfully, we flourish. Let us be guided by those who have preceded us, build upon past success, and begin today to prepare for the task ahead.

The **changes** introduced by my predecessor, R.W. Grand Master Thomas K. Sturgeon, **stirred controversy**, but increased the **quality** of the knowledge and performance of the Ritual, and also resulted in an increase of over 8000 new members joining our Craft. This was a vital factor in balancing our losses through Suspensions, Demits and Deaths. In the **next two years** we are going to **introduce new programs** as well as enhance existing ones. We have been given the tools to increase our membership, but many times I have heard that we are a group of uneducated and ill-informed Brothers when it comes to Freemasonry.

We need to better prepare ourselves to communicate effectively with Masons and non-Masons. To this end I am preparing the tools for educating and maintaining our membership by **proposing the following** programs:

“Believe in Freemasonry”

1. I am establishing a **Masonic Internet Education Program** for new Master Masons and existing members. The first on-line educational lessons will be on: The History of Freemasonry, How Freemasonry and Appendant Bodies Were Established in Pennsylvania, and Masonic Law. Additional lessons will follow throughout the next two years.
2. I am proposing that throughout 2012 and 2013, the **Grand Lodge Fee** of one hundred dollars and **Grand Lodge Dues** be excused for all **full-time students**, ages 18 through 23, attending a full two or four-year institution, who join the Fraternity. I encourage the Lodges to reduce the Initiation Fee and Lodge dues to attract the younger men who attend these institutions.
3. I am establishing a **Master Builders Award** for new candidates who complete a specified set of requirements.
4. I will continue with the **Grand Master's Award** program, established by Past Grand Master Sturgeon, for Lodges that complete a specified set of requirements.
5. I am proposing the **elimination of new Life and Honorary Memberships**. Existing memberships will be honored. This will require a change to the AHIMAN REZON, the Book of Laws or Constitution. In today's **economic climate**, the income from the principal does not cover the member's Lodge dues for the year. The Lodges **should not be burdened** with subsidizing these dues.
6. I am asking every Lodge to establish the **Grand Lodge Mentoring Program** for new candidates. I am asking that a Brother be assigned as a mentor for one year. This will help our new Brothers to become more involved in the working of the Lodge and its activities.
7. I would like to see **more day-time Lodges** formed for our senior members and those who work night shift who cannot attend Lodge meetings in the evening. This could be done by taking a Lodge that is struggling and making it into a day-time Lodge, or by forming a new Lodge entirely.
8. I am asking that each Lodge have **one Open House a year** during 2012 and 2013, and that it be done as a District wide initiative. I also encourage the use of a Friend to Friend program as part of the Open House.
9. **Each District** will be **required to have a One-Day Class** in the fall of 2012 and 2013 to welcome new candidates in this expedited fashion. By accommodating their busy lifestyle, we hope to attract men of good quality to our ranks.
10. We will **expand the new Ritual Manual** by adding the rest of our Ritualistic work to make it complete. We will add: Business of the Lodge: Examination of a Visitor: the Table Lodge: Procedures for the Election and Installation of Officers. For the first time, all of the work will be in one place. There will be no more questions with regard to the Ritual.
11. The **Committee on Masonic Temples, Halls and Lodge Rooms** worked this past year with Lodges that are **struggling to finance buildings** that have not been well maintained, that require **major repairs**, and have had difficulty paying real estate **taxes**. Necessary repairs should be made and taxes kept current. All Lodges should prepare a realistic budget addressing the financial and safety requirements together with the essential operating funds required to keep the Lodge solvent. Keeping the budget realistic and obtainable will require

the Lodge to use all the sound financial advice and management that we can muster. Lodges must always be conscious of escalating costs and inflation.

As you can see, we have a lot of work ahead of us. **My theme** for the next two years is **“Freemasonry, Master Builders-Building for our Future.”** I have designed a medallion reflecting this theme. It shows a circle of stones held together with a keystone in each quadrant. The circle of stones represents the foundation of Freemasonry. The keystones represent the members and Masonic leaders in Pennsylvania who hold this Fraternity together. It also has the Working Tools of the Master Builders in each keystone. In the middle, with the Square and Compasses, is the great light of Freemasonry. Prior leaders established these foundations and made available many tools and programs for our benefit. We must accept the responsibility to build on them in the next two years. As we go forward into the 21st Century we must all be Master Builders. I look forward to serving you as Grand Master. I know that with all of your support, we will have a successful journey.”