

D.D.G.M. COMMUNIQUE

2011 / 2012 – 4

April 2012

Published by
Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario

From the Grand Master . . .

Spring Fever! Brethren, it is not only the golfers that look forward to the sunny warm days of April. As we move from the inside to the outdoors we, as Masons, seem to be invigorated, gain a renewed sense of excitement and a desire to become more active once more.

In many of the Lodge Summons, I see this same invigoration and excitement. Lodge educational activities seem to be on the increase, Lodge and District social events are prevalent and we continue to see a flurry of degree activity across the jurisdiction.

April is also the month when some of our members will offer their skills and talents in the service of Grand Lodge. Our candidate list will be available in the next few weeks and I encourage you to become acquainted with the candidates during those exciting Lodge and District activities over the next few months. Determine for yourself, which ones you think will bring exciting new ideas forward, contribute with energy and enthusiasm to our plans for the future and bring their skills and talents to bear in providing the services that you expect. See what makes them tick!

Look for those future leaders who will embrace the same kind of excitement and enthusiasm found in your Lodges and Districts to move this Grand Lodge ahead. You have a definitive say in selecting those who will “Ensure the Timeless Vitality of Freemasonry in Ontario.”

Housekeeping Items:

- 1. Masonic Education Conference** – Ottawa June 02, 2012, Ottawa. Please see April Issue of Education Monthly for details.
- 2. D.D.G.M. Attendance at Grand Lodge:** District Deputy Grand Masters are reminded that they must attend at the Royal York Hotel for the meeting of the Board of General Purposes on Monday and Tuesday July 16-17 as well as for the Annual Communication on Wednesday and Thursday July 18-19.
- 3. Dress Code Annual Communication** – Please pass along to all Brethren in your Districts that the dress code for attendance at our Annual Communication is Jacket, Shirt and Tie.
- 4. Summons Font Size** – I am always amazed at the size of some of the fonts that I see in many of our Lodge Summons. Please encourage the Worshipful Masters and Lodge Secretaries to consider the age of some of the members who must read the summons. It is a shame to see a lot of empty white space and a font size that requires a magnifying glass to read.

- 5. Candidate Biographies:** Please see the note from the Grand Secretary regarding the upcoming availability of Candidate Biographies – a pilot project to provide more information to those voting at Grand Lodge.

Looking Ahead:

Last month, we shared with you the summarized results of the province wide survey that so many of you participated in last spring. I hope you have had a chance to look over those findings. Allow me to briefly explain what will be done with those survey results. They form the primary input to the planning process that creates our operational (tactical) plan for 2012–2013. The Long Range Planning Committee and the Management Committee are charged with reviewing the survey results and merging them with the Strategic Plan. The Deputy Grand Master then adds the tracking results of our current 2011–2012 projects to that mix. We then are able to see what we started this year, what we will complete and what will remain incomplete. The two committees then evaluate our resources (both people and dollars) and apply all this information to the selection and prioritization of a set of projects for 2012–2013. That results in the first draft of the operational plan for next year. All members of the Board of General Purposes have the opportunity to review that draft and offer any comments and suggestions they may have.

The final Plan is presented to the Board of General Purposes at the Board Meeting in July for approval. If approved, this determines our key initiatives for 2012–2013. Once approved, the operational plan will be made available for all to view on the Grand Lodge Website.

Looking into the not too distant future, it will again be important for us to survey the membership once more, in order to ascertain if the projects and initiatives undertaken as a result of the planning process are delivering the expected results and meeting the needs of the Brethren.

I quote from our strategic plan, “The offering that Freemasonry renders to Ontario society equates to that of an *essential service*, and, as such, should be *safeguarded* for future generations.” Our planning is the activity that provides the safeguard.

Part of Believing in Freemasonry means enjoying it today and planning for its greatness tomorrow!

D. Garry Dowling
Grand Master

From the Deputy Grand Master. . .

Masonic Hall Corporations are subject to regulation, observation and comment from a wide variety of interested constituencies. Once you have accepted the position of a director and/or officer of a corporation, you cannot take the position that you were ignorant or not compensated for your time and trouble and should therefore be exempt from liability. To reduce your risk and to demonstrate that you take your responsibilities as a director seriously you should prepare for, attend and participate constructively at board meetings. Colossal failures in various other organizations have resulted in greater scrutiny that has led to increased accountability and a heightened focus on corporate leadership and transparency in decision-making and the financial reporting processes.

By the summons I receive, visitors and perspective candidates are visiting lodge buildings and lodge rooms in an increasing number. Most active lodges, after several years of declining membership, are experiencing new, younger and better educated men joining Freemasonry. These same people are coming over to your lodge building, your Masonic home, only to find a building and/or its property in disrepair. It has been said that Masons are the worlds greatest fundraisers. Are we, or have we been more concerned trying to outdo the previous D.D.G.M. charity project rather than looking after our own home? To me first impressions are lasting impressions. Is your house in order before our guest come knocking on the door? If not, why not?

In our Grand Jurisdiction, we recently conducted a province wide survey asking a number of questions. We asked our membership why they joined Masonry. The top three responses were: Brotherhood, Self Improvement, and Knowledge. The results do, however, indicate that charity is low on the totem pole as a reason for joining. Most brethren seem to feel satisfied with their lodge level of charitable activity and community involvement.

From the desk of the Grand Secretary. . .

A pilot project will be introduced to provide detailed information regarding those nominated to office at the Annual Communication of Grand Lodge in July 2012. It is intended to provide our electorate with comprehensive background information of each member seeking election to better enable ones self to select from amongst his peers those he believes is best suited to represent him. Further information will be made available in the April mailing from Grand Lodge.

The use of academic distinctions, following ones name, has recently created questions necessitating clarification. The distinction FCF (Fellow, College of Freemasonry), while an academic achievement a Mason is undoubtedly most proud of, its use should be restricted to one's own personal correspondence. It is not a term mandated to others obligating its use in their correspondence or communications.

Would the D.D.G.M.s of the following lodges ensure the noted Semi-Annual Return is completed and submitted to the Grand Lodge office expeditiously.

| | | | | |
|--------------|----------------|-----|------------|--------------|
| 31 Jerusalem | 72 Alma | 174 | Walsingham | 483 Granton |
| 65 Rehoboam | 98 True Blue | 446 | Granite | 530 Cochrane |
| 66 Durham | 103 Maple Leaf | 467 | Tottenham | 676 Kroy |

Terence Shand

Did you ever go to a lodge and ask yourself why certain members, who were "always there," and all of sudden stopped attending lodge, especially on those special nights, such as the D.D.G.M. Official Visit, installations, or special nights to honour a worthy brother? Rather than increasing dues, Lodges are seeking other ways to raise money to augment their operating costs, or raise money for a Lodge, District or Grand Lodge charity. How many times have we seen members, some very persistent members selling raffle tickets for a 'prize' or conduct a 50/50 draw? Such activities are probably illegal.

Many of our regular attendees are on fixed incomes, or recently widowed and the only enjoyment they have is sharing a few hours with the brethren, especially during the festive board. Are they staying away because they can't afford the added costs? Are they too embarrassed to say "no"? Unfortunately, the collateral damage being that they stop coming to lodge. If that's the case, then that's wrong.

Charity is part of Freemasonry. When is the last time you saw a member pull-out his cheque book and pay for a brother's dues when the brother is having a financial problem? Social clubs are important and as a community member, I appreciate the work they do. Freemasonry is about education, knowledge, brotherhood and self improvement. We need to get our house in order, assist our brethren who are experiencing hardships and making sure every member enjoys a sense of ownership in his lodge.

Just a Reminder: All D.D.G.M. and District Committee Chairmen started the current Masonic year last July; it doesn't end until July 2012. Your duties are not completed once your report has been submitted, or your successor has been named. There is still important work to be done in your District.

Donald A. Campbell
Deputy Grand Master