

Report on the Annual Communications of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts

From Dec 26-28, I was privileged to represent the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario at the above named Annual Communication. Following is a short report on my visit.

1 Grand Lodge of Massachusetts – Dec 26-28 2012:

Held at the Marriott Hotel and Conference Centre, Newton Mass and the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts building in downtown Boston

Presiding Officer: M.W. Bro. Richard J. Stewart (87th Grand Master) . 279th Annual Communication

Deputy Grand Master: R.W. Bro. Robert V. Jolly Jr.

It is worthy of note that Massachusetts is the **third oldest Grand Lodge in the world**, behind England and Scotland. It was established in 1773. It has a history and culture consistent with its rank as one of the premier Grand Lodges in the World.

Massachusetts has approximately 35,000 Masons in 232 Lodges and 32 Districts throughout the State.

- The Grand Master of Massachusetts serves a three year term.
- The Deputy Grand Master is elected to a one year term. The Deputy Grand Master is selected by the Grand Master. The newly elected Deputy Grand Master is R.W. Bro. James Morse, a Mason since 2001.
- At the completion of his term his name is placed in a pool of potential candidates for the office of Grand Master.
- The new Grand Master is selected from the pool by a committee of Past Grand Masters.
- Thus, each Grand Master is served by three separate Deputy Grand Masters during his term.

Due to the three year term as Grand Master, Massachusetts has only five living Past Grand Masters.

The jurisdiction is also unique in that it has Lodges chartered and active in Panama. These Lodges are represented by a District Grand Master, appointed by the Grand Master (I believe for a 5 year term).

Massachusetts has 32 Districts, each governed by a District Deputy Grand Master, appointed by the Grand Master.

Massachusetts uses a system of Grand Lecturers, whose job is to ensure the performance of the Work is of the highest quality. Presently, there are eleven serving Grand Lecturers.

In his inaugural speech in 2010, M.W. Bro. Stewart outlined the duties of the Grand Master as follows:

The Grand Master has two distinct responsibilities. First, he serves as the fraternal leader of the society. In this capacity he ensures the activities taking place within the jurisdiction comply with the Constitutions and Regulations of the Grand Lodge as initially adopted in 1792 and amended through 2007. He also has numerous ceremonial privileges reserved for his position.

The second primary responsibility of the Grand Master is leading the business of the Grand Lodge, including:

- Chairman, Grand Lodge Board of Directors.
- President, Masonic Education & Charitable Trust (MECT). The MECT is a 501(c)3 overseeing the charitable activities of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.
- Chairman, Grand Lodge Library and Museum Board of Directors. A 501(c)3 responsible for Samuel Crocker Lawrence Library and the Grand Lodge Museum Collection, both of which are open to the public.
- Chairman, Masonic Health System (MHS) Board of Directors. Based in Charlton, MA, the MHS includes the Overlook Life Care Community featuring independent, enhanced, and skilled nursing, and a post-acute unit; and, the Overlook Visiting Nurses Association & Hospice Services, Inc, caring for more than 1,700 patients each day.

The Chairmanship of the MHS Board of Directors is a significant job as the Life Care Community is a huge investment for the Grand Lodge – both in terms of dollars and of time.

Grand Lodge Assessment:

In the fall of 2012, at the quarterly communication, the Grand Lodge members passed a motion to increase the annual assessment substantially to \$60 per member (I believe the old assessment was approximately \$30)

Administration Realignment:

The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts has just introduced a significantly new office administration environment. Major changes have been implemented in the offices of the Grand Secretary and Grand Treasurer. The Grand Lodge has defined anew position called Business Operations Manager.

These changes have been made to address the rising costs of administration.

Advertising:

The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts continues to make a significant investment in media advertising to attract new members. Of particular note to Brethren in our jurisdiction are the TV clips of Benjamin Franklin speaking on Freemasonry, which many of us have seen.

Respectfully submitted,
D. Garry Dowling
Grand Master,
Grand Lodge of Canada
In the Province of Ontario