

# THE COMMUNIQUE

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

March is now upon us, Brethren, when we are again introduced to the Spring season. It seems that Spring commenced in February this year but don't get too comfortable yet. We still could be challenged with a lot of winter situations.

March is the month when the highest number of Official Visits take place. I would sincerely ask you to consider attending the Lodges in your respective District to support the Worshipful Masters and Officers of those Lodges. They deserve your friendship and support. It also demonstrates comradery and fellowship that builds stronger bonds within the District. The building of friendships and understanding Masonry, from another point of view, often assists in developing your own thoughts about our gentle craft.

March is also the month when Brethren consider allowing their name to stand for an elected Grand Lodge office. Nominations are to be submitted to the Grand Secretary at Grand Lodge Office on or before the deadline date of April 1, 2017. The following Grand Lodge elected positions for 2017 are: DEPUTY GRAND MASTER; GRAND SENIOR WARDEN; GRAND JUNIOR WARDEN and GRAND REGISTRAR.

Another valuable and interesting event in March is the annual Sankey Lecture at Brock University campus in St. Catharines on March 26 at 3:00 pm in the Sean O'Sullivan Theatre. Our lecturer this year is Aimee E. Newell, Executive Director of Luzerne County Historical Society in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Her presentation will be "THE BADGE of a FREEMASON: NEW STORIES from OLD APRONS". I can assure you this will be a Masonic history lesson having significant information tweaking the interest of many Masons who have a genuine desire to gain further knowledge about Freemasonry in the last couple of centuries. The tickets can be reserved online at <http://sankeylectures.ca/> and click the TICKETS link. This is an opportunity to receive some great Masonic history. The tickets are free of charge and the only cost is your time.

I also want to draw every member's attention that Grand Lodge is presenting a large number of seminars this spring in various areas of Ontario. I would encourage

everyone to consider participating in some of these informative sessions. To my knowledge there are eight workshops this spring as well as four DDGM Orientation seminars in specified regional areas. Taking the opportunity to gain Masonic information to benefit your personal Masonic learning is a tribute to your genuine interest in Freemasonry.

Brethren, according to the Grand Master's itinerary, I will be attending 16 Grand Master Receptions in the months of March, April and May. I have also agreed to attend Lodge events in Districts who are not hosting receptions. I am very thankful for the effort these respective Districts are planning in order that I may have the opportunity to meet and greet as many Brethren as possible. I look forward to seeing many of you in my travels.

The Lodge's events that have already occurred have been a wonderful experience for my wife Barb and me. Your hospitality exemplifies the true spirit of Freemasonry and the kindness shown sincerely demonstrates the brotherly love that exists throughout our Grand Jurisdiction. We also appreciate the time taken by those Grand Lodge officers who support us, by attending events, in various areas of the province.

My final paragraph this month, Brethren, demonstrates the quality of some of the members of our craft. These two individuals served with dignity in World War II and fought for the liberation of France. I know there many who participated to see freedom prevail. These two have made further contributions in their communities and to Masonry. In the last year Brother Dennis William Garrod of Peterborough and Worshipful Brother Donald Sutherland of Guelph have been recognized by the French Government with the distinction of being awarded: ***"KNIGHT of THE FRENCH NATIONAL ORDER OF THE LEGION of HONOUR"***.

Proud Canadians contributing to peace at that time in our history.

***John C. Green***  
***Grand Master***

## ***From the Deputy ...***

Brethren, the Annual Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America was held in Omaha, Nebraska this February and I was fortunate enough to attend this Conference for a second time.

The Conference membership consisted of the Grand Lodges of the Provinces of Canada; the States of the United States of America, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico; the Grand Lodge of York, Mexico and the American-Canadian Grand Lodge of Germany. These Grand Masters represent some 2 million Freemasons in North America. Grand Masters from countries throughout the world also attended the Annual Conference to join in fellowship. The Annual Conference is the **largest gathering** of Grand Masters in the world, until such time as October 2017, when Grand Masters will gather, in London U.K., to attend the United Grand Lodge of England's 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Freemasonry.

Since many Grand Lodges in America work on appointed lines of succession, there were many Grand Junior and Senior Wardens in attendance at the Conference which made them three year veterans compared to many of the Deputy Grand Masters.

All in attendance can attend the business meetings but only the Grand Masters can participate in the discussion and vote. However, if the Grand Master leaves the Conference table, the Deputy Grand Master can assume his role.

A luncheon was held for the Deputy Grand Masters which provided an opportunity to meet those "*who will undoubtedly become Grand Masters*" in years to come. The only caveat was that many who are in one year terms.

Beginning on Saturday and concluding on Tuesday, this year's Conference had many changes compared to previous years (change sounds familiar to Ontario Masons). We were involved in many more breakout and/or discussion groups. Each breakout was done separately and in such a way as to encourage interaction with the audience. The highlight of the Conference, for me, was the breakout sessions. They began on Sunday with the following subjects: *Discovering Best Practices in Grand Lodge Leadership; Guarding the West Gate; Identifying & Assisting Lodges in Distress.*

Monday morning sessions were also very interesting: *Building Masonic Leaders; The Business of the Fraternity; Improving the Lodge Experience* and after coffee: *Youth Organizations; Improving the Lodge Experience; Lodge Development & Rejuvenation.* Monday afternoon our choices were: *Building Masonic Leaders; Masonic Charities Beyond Bricks* and a repeat of *Improving the Lodge Experience.*

On Tuesday, the last day and before the concluding the business meeting, the following breakout subjects were discussed: *Building Masonic Leaders* (a repeat); *The Business*

*of the Fraternity* and *Rethinking the Stated Meeting* - best one of the conference.

A very interesting exercise under the Civility Program was held with five chairs in a semi-circle. The first chair was designated "Totally Agree"; the second chair was labeled "Somewhat Agree"; the third indicated "Neutral", the fourth chair read "Somewhat Disagree" and the final chair was entitled "Totally Disagree".

The call for volunteers had only a few participants until the statement, "***We should eliminate the Electoral College***" was announced. Almost instantly the Chairs were filled. The Moderator, P.G.M Russ Charvonja, from California skillfully navigated the Brethren through their responses using the art of Civility.

In conclusion, it was a very informative Conference with many varied opinions on a large range of subjects. However, during casual talk, with many American Deputies, the topic of concealed weapons in Lodge was most prominent.

Recently, the Book Sales Team led by Team Leader R.W. Bro. George Warner made the Masons of Ontario aware, via their District Deputy Grand Masters, that the updated Book of Constitution of the Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario and the Book of the Work were available. This of course is a Team Leader taking the **Responsibility** to do his assign task. Several Brethren took exception to this news and suggested that the Constitution should only be printed every **five years** and the Book of the Work should only be printed when there are **significant** changes.

In one case, a Lodge bought ten books at a time, even though they haven't had ten candidates in the last five years. Why is that?

We are aware that the Custodian of the Work submits any changes to the Ritual Committee. It is then and only then, with the Ritual Committee's agreement, an updated version is printed.

I have written this year how the Constitution is a "living" document which can, from time to time, be amended by following the steps outlined with in its pages. The amendments for this year have been submitted and I wonder if there will be any suggesting, the Constitution be printed every five years.

If there are no proposed changes regarding the five years, is this an example of no one taking **Responsibility?** Why is that?

In the words of Patrick Ness, Author, Journalist and Lecturer, "***To say you have no choice is to relieve yourself of Responsibility.***"

***Paul E. Todd***  
***Deputy Grand Master***