

D.D.G.M. COMMUNIQUE

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From the Grand Master . . .

Our ancient and honourable fraternity has been described as a gentleman's philosophical society. This apt definition implies a certain standard of courtesy and conduct that goes beyond mere civility and is characterized by respect, honour, and integrity in all interpersonal relations, both within and without the lodge. The Charges of a Freemason specifically forbid "*doing or saying anything offensive that would forbid an easy and free conversation, for that would blast our harmony and defeat our laudable purposes.*" We are admonished in the General Charge: *May kindness and brotherly love distinguish your conduct as men and as Masons.*

The twenty-first century is an age of instant global communication through sophisticated Information Technology. Email and electronic texting devices allow us to exchange information with the click of a key. Every tool created and invention known to man can be perverted and put to sinister use. So it is with our communication tools. While the efficiency and expediency of communication has been of great benefit to us, it has also created many serious issues in the jurisdiction. Private piques and quarrels, instead of being kept 'in house' and settled amicably in a gentlemanly fashion, are fuelled and escalated when emails written with a full head of steam are circulated to anyone and everyone in the address book. When differences arise between brethren, it is all too easy to fire off a scathing note before cooling off, and allowing common sense and reason to prevail. Many of the issues that come before the Grand Master and Grand Secretary for mediation stem from this misuse of the electronic communication media.

During the last three years, emails critical of Grand Lodge in general, and recently, the Grand Master in particular, have been circulated by an anonymous writer. The source being unidentified,

these letters are considered unworthy of acknowledgment or response by Grand Lodge. Every democratic institution benefits from positive criticism and a loyal opposition. However, unfounded allegations and slanderous accusations circulated indiscriminately with malicious intent create disunity and are unworthy of anyone who claims to be a Mason. Each one of us could benefit from a careful reading and contemplative study of the General Charge where the Ideal of a Freemason is portrayed. We ought to ask ourselves, do we really mean what we say on the floor of the Lodge? More importantly, do we actively practise what we preach? It is our bounden duty to press toward the mark of our high calling.

Be careful of your thoughts, for your thoughts become your words.

Be careful of your words, for your words become your actions.

Be careful of your actions because your actions become your habits.

Be careful of your habits, for your habits become your character.

Be careful of your character, for your character becomes your destiny.

(The Friendship Book 2010)

This is the season of Installations in many of our Lodges. Best wishes to all those new Worshipful Masters and Officers assuming leadership roles responsible for the government of the Lodge. In your hands rests the future success of the Lodge.

Grand Master's full itinerary at –
(www.grandlodge.on.ca) UNDER EVENTS CALENDAR.

From the Deputy Grand Master. . .

April showers brought with them another 82 Official Visits by our D.D.G.M.s. It is hoped that the D.D.G.M.s have risen to the occasion and that the Brethren have responded with their attendance. The Official Visit of the D.D.G.M. is an important milestone in the life of every Lodge. It is an opportunity for the Lodge to 'strut it's stuff', a special occasion to welcome visitors from near and far and a chance to add on a couple of extra pounds at the banquet hour.

Honorary and Life Memberships:

We still see references to making Brethren Honorary and Life Members or to changing By-Laws with respect to Life Members in the Summons we read. I would ask the D.D.G.M.s to keep an eye out for such situations in the Lodges in your District and encourage the Brethren to be certain that they conform to the requirements of Sections 185 and 187 of the Book of Constitution. In the Condition of Masonry reports we continue to find Lodges that have Life Memberships yet do not have a separate Life Membership Fund. Consult the Grand Secretary if you have any questions.

Strategic Plan Projects:

Our Grand Lodge Vision: "To ensure the timeless vitality of Freemasonry in Ontario."

Last month we reported on the 9 strategic projects that had been started March 1. Initial work continues on these projects, but as they are still in the initial stages, not all have updates at this time. We can report the following:

- Project 2010-04: Ontario Mason Address Database – 11 Lodges have volunteered to participate in the pilot and we are now in the process of creating the technology sandbox in which to conduct the pilot
- Project 2010-05: Information Systems Strategy for Grand Lodge Committee Shared Computer Resources – A strategy for configuring the Sharepoint software to manage the pilot has been created. Server hardware will shortly be purchased to support this pilot and the pilot for project 2010-04.
- Project 2010-07: Establishment of Publishing Review Committee – members of the Publishing Review

Committee have been identified and we hope to have this group in operation soon

- Project 2010-08: Proposal for Masonic.h.I.P. Business Model – the details of the proposal continue to be put in place and the final proposal will be made to Grand Lodge in July

In addition to the above, several new initiatives have started: A new taskforce has been assembled to define a short term strategy for our Grand Lodge Website. This group has had its first meeting, reviewed its mandate, generated some good discussion and will begin documentation of the strategy and action plans in the near future.

A proposal is in the initial stages to deal with digitization of the Grand Lodge Proceedings in order to make them available to all our Brethren via a website connection.

Grand Lodge Committee Budgets:

The Management Committee is reviewing the budget requests for next year as submitted by your Grand Lodge committee chairmen and will make its recommendations to the Audit & Finance Committee this month.

Grand Lodge Committee Chairmen Reports:

Just to let the D.D.G.M.s know that they are not the only ones with reporting deadlines, all your Grand Lodge Chairmen have been under the gun to submit their Committee reports on time for the Preliminary Proceedings. And yes, we do have a number of delinquents that we are chasing.

D.D.G.M. Notes:

1. Have you booked your rooms for Grand Lodge, Monday July 19 – Thursday July 22?
2. Have you made the information regarding the Grand Master's Banquet tickets (Wednesday, July 21) available in your Districts?
3. Note that the meeting of the Board of General Purposes starts at 9:00 AM Monday, July 19, 2010.

D. Garry Dowling

From the desk of the Grand Secretary. . .

As summer approaches, several of our members choose to vacation in Europe and/or visit with family members of their ethnic origin. With the advent of internet, many are inappropriately using email to lodges/districts/Grand Lodges, overseas, in order to affect a visit. Subsequently, your Grand Lodge office is receiving numerous complaints regarding this break in protocol which necessitates this message being circulated to our membership via your office as D.D.G.M.

A Masonic protocol exists between Grand Lodges that, quote, "**correspondence outside of one's own jurisdiction MUST be made through the two respective Grand Lodge offices.**" Some jurisdictions reply with the information requested directly to this office (with reminders of the protocol) while others ignore the request in its entirety.

A related issue is that of accompanying documentation to the visiting lodge/jurisdiction. Suggested is: a current dues card, together with, a letter of introduction and good standing, on lodge letterhead, under lodge seal, with signature of the Worshipful Master and Lodge Secretary. Only the lodge has the most recent up-to-date information of a member's status.

Terence Shand