



MASONRY IN MANITOBA

www.grandlodge.mb.ca

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THE GRAND MASTER'S MESSAGE

Greetings Brethren and a Happy New Year to one and all. Wow what a December we have had both Masonically as well as weather wise. As we can all attest it didn't take us long to have a quick reminder we live in Manitoba and its winter once more. A quick recap of the month. On the 2nd we held the 2006 Wardens Workshop which saw the most significant turnout of brethren ever. The choice of venue the Holiday Inn South and the usage of the theatre were big reasons why this was a success along with the costs being totally undertaken by Grand Lodge for the first time ever. I was most gratified not only with the turnout of brethren especially our rural lodges but with the program ably coordinated on my behalf by Junior Grand Warden RW Bro. David Love and assisted by the Education & Training Committee members. I had a vision of what I wished to see delivered and it came off splendidly well. Please accept my sincere thanks for a great day for the Craft in Manitoba. Between the facility being top notch, the catered hot lunch buffet, endless refreshments and the overall excellent relationship Grand Lodge enjoys with this facility made for a very productive day. On the 3rd I chaired, accompanied by my officers a forward planning session with the new officers of Charleswood Red River 184 and enjoyed some open dialogue about the future of the lodge. On the 4th the Grand Line attended the Installation of Officers at Charleswood Red River and lent our support to the upcoming years business plan and the lodge itself. It was very enjoyable seeing W Bro. Garth Blagden installed in King Solomon's chair and he will now carry on the family tradition his father RW Bro. Richard Blagden started as a second generation Worshipful Master, the proud Brother and Father is serving the year as the Senior Deacon. Brethren it doesn't get any better than that. We were treated to a most

excellent portrayal of the Final Charge by W Bro. Bill Oakley, a part of our work I consider to be one of the most inspiring and insightful addresses we have Freemasonry and the most enjoyable to listen too. Congratulations Bill on a wonderful portrayal, it was truly good to see you again.

On the 9th the Grand Lodge officers traveled to Grandview to perform the amalgamation of Hiram 94 and Roblin 122. The lodge will carry out combined activities in the Grandview location. I thank all for taking up my encouragement to amalgamate rather than Roblin 122 surrendering its charter. I thank all the brethren for the work they have put into the process coming to fruition and we all wish the Lodge much success in the future and for keeping the light of Freemasonry aglow in the Parklands region. On the 12th we attended an EA degree at Keystone Lodge 185 in Winnipeg. The 14th I attended the First Masonic District annual dinner and meeting as this is my Mother District and I have made an exception, Grand Masters prerogative, to support my DDGM RW Bro. Kevin Davis who has had several issues to deal with and has been a busy brother.

On the 18th we attended the Installation of Officers at Ancient Landmark Lodge 3. This was especially enjoyable for me as an old Sturgeon Creek 145 alumnae was installed as Worshipful Master, W Bro. Gordon Greasley PM has completed the duties and chairs in the Ancient York ritual and has now worked his way up to the Masters chair through both rituals authorized by the Grand Lodge of Manitoba. It was made more enjoyable by having his Father and Brother, W Bro. Gervin Greasley PM as the Installing Master. Brethren once more Father and Son. This ceremony was an open installation with family, wives, ladies

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welcome, it was an excellent evening and the lodge is in very capable hands under the stewardship of Gordon. To you my friend we wish you all the best with your trestleboard, I look forward to visiting once more sometime in April.

Grand Master visits are now posted on the Website and are updated once a week, I am most pleased if any brother wishes to accompany us on our Official Visits please feel free to do so. My Lady Marie and I plan on attending the New Years Gala at MMC and encourage anyone else to join with our Masonic Family if you are looking for a function to enjoy yourself.

As I start my final half of my Grand Masters term I see change in our organization taking place in slow measured steps for change just for change sake doesn't accomplish anything unless it can be held up to scrutiny. It has been several years since we had an in depth look at the way our Ritual is carried out, perhaps the time has come to incorporate new delivery methods and provide alternative delivery models when rote memorization cannot be conveyed in a dignified manner. In the end the degree work we are conferring is for the candidate or brothers sake not ourselves and the goal should be the delivery of same in a manner most befitting those whom receive

it. As the Grand Master I see merits in both approaches however I respect and will uphold the Constitution upon which I took my obligation. Freemasonry provides a method and forum for promoting and effecting change and the process needs only to be recognized and respected. Change is happening and will continue to do so.

As a final note may I congratulate all the new Worshipful Masters, their wardens and officers as they embark on their trestleboards, lay lines and conduct the affairs of their lodges in the upcoming year. May your year as the leaders be blessed with many fond memories and rewarding experiences within the Grand Lodge of Manitoba. Best wishes to all.

GM'S THOUGHTS

Respect another as you wish to be respected

Treat each other as you wish to be treated

Tolerance, Patience and Understanding overcome all

Fraternally,

MW Bro. Brian J. Bailie
Grand Master

GRAND MASTER'S OFFICIAL ITINERARY

JANUARY 2006

24 Acacia Lodge No. 111

EK Temple 7:30 pm OV

Any Master Mason may accompany the Grand Master on his Official Visits.

SHORT TALK COMPETITION

Once again, the Masonic Training, Resource & Archives Committee is holding the Annual Short Talk Competition. You don't actually have to give a talk, just write one. It is open to all Masons of this jurisdiction.

You may select any Masonic subject you wish and prepare your short talk. It should be no more than 5 pages in length, typed and double-spaced with a one inch left margin. On a **separate sheet of paper** indicate your name, address and Lodge name. Deadline for submissions is April 30, 2007 so there is lots of time for creativity. The Masonic Library is open daily from 10am-1pm and on Saturday afternoon for research and reference.

Judging will be based on topic, content, style and presentation. A \$75 first prize gift certificate to the Grand Lodge "Store" will be awarded to the winner. If more than 5 talks are received, a second prize of a \$50 gift certificate will be awarded. Entries should be submitted to the Masonic Training, Resource & Archives Committee, 420 Corydon Ave, Winnipeg, R3L 0N8.



ARE WE READING THE SIGNS?

by Tim Bryce, PM, MPS
Palm Harbor, FL, USA

"If there is anything constant in life, it is change."

- Bryce's Law

It is no secret that membership in Freemasonry is either stagnating or in decline in most jurisdictions. Some Grand Lodges pay attention to our membership numbers, others do not. But I contend there are other important indicators we should be paying attention to; namely, membership and participation in the allied and appendant bodies of Freemasonry.

Attendance in our youth organizations (DeMolay, Rainbow, Job's Daughters) are deteriorating. In Florida for example, just 30 years ago we had vibrant youth organizations; today they are few and far between. The Order of the Eastern Star and clubs like the High Twelve are also diminishing. Their members are getting older, grayer, and are not being replaced by new people. The Scottish and York Rite bodies are still reeling from the Shrine's decision a few years ago to bypass these groups in order to join the Shrine. True, they have organized many one-day classes, but their numbers continue to drop. And even the Shrine is still experiencing membership problems; so much so, there are whisperings to negate the prerequisite of being a Mason to join the Shrine.

We could look at the decline of these fine organizations and blame it on bad management, and perhaps we would be right, but I believe the problem is more fundamental than this; that the real problem is our failure to adapt to changing times. Following World War II, Masonic institutions experienced considerable growth during the 1950's and 1960's, our "go-go" years. But our growth was arrested in the 1980's and began to decline thereafter. The "go-go" years may have been great for membership but I feel this is when the fraternity began to stagnate. We had our way so long that we didn't see any need for change and developed an attitude that nothing was wrong. In short, we became complacent. This attitude is probably the single biggest reason for the declining state of the fraternity today.

The reality is that the interests of people today have changed; they are not the same as back in the 1950's and 1960's. For example, I can't begin to tell you how many people have observed the dress and ceremonies of groups like DeMolay, Job's Daughters, Eastern Star, etc. and told me it was "old fashioned" and "cornball." They giggle and say the costumes and dress are something out of the 1940's, certainly not something they want to be associated with. Their activities appear trivial if not totally meaningless. The point is, regardless of the noble intentions of these fine organizations, people perceive them as archaic. What is needed is a face lift. There is nothing wrong with the purpose and lessons inculcated by these institutions, but rather, it is the façade that needs to be updated. For example, are the capes worn by some of our youth organizations really necessary? Couldn't something more contemporary be devised?

Advertisers have long understood the need for maintaining a contemporary image to sell products. This is why we have seen subtle changes over the years in familiar icons such as Aunt Jemimah, Betty Crocker, and the woman in the Columbia Pictures logo. Either get with the times or fall into obscurity. Unfortunately, this is what is happening to our allied and appendant bodies; they need to either reinvent their image or fall behind. And Blue Lodges, representing the bedrock of Freemasonry, better be paying attention to all of this as well, less they face the same fate.

I don't know why, but the old-guard of the fraternity resists any form of change. Perhaps it is a sign of senility. Nonetheless, changes are in the offing if the fraternity and its satellite organizations are to survive. But the younger members are growing weary of fighting with the old-guard over changes. So much so, there is a clever movement underfoot not to even try to change existing lodges but, instead, to create totally new Lodges who are unencumbered by change and chart a new and imaginative course for Freemasonry.

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Understandably, these new Lodges are attracting the younger members. So much so, that the older Lodges are withering and dying on the vine. It is unfortunate that such an approach is necessary, but the reality is that our older members tend to resist any form of change, leaving no other choice for our younger members. Frankly, I cannot argue with the logic of this move.

Bottom-line: We either evolve or face extinction.

Keep the Faith.

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Volunteer Drivers For the Masons Care Program Are Still Needed!

I, like you, stood in the N.E. Angle and heard the words "by making such a claim upon his charity as his circumstances in life may fairly warrant." As time would have, I realized that my circumstances in life had changed, which permitted me to honour that claim by donating my time to our Masonic Drivers Program. Little did I know how such a small amount has been thankfully received and faithfully applied by those in need.

- Submitted by a Brother Masons Care Driver -

In order to meet the demand for our Masons Care service we ask all Worshipful Masters to read out the letter printed in Volume 64, No. 4, December 2006 at your next regular meeting.

- ♦ ***Can you and a lodge brother (or friend) split a day and help out?***
- ♦ ***Can you ask your partner if they would be interested in helping out?***
- ♦ ***Can we all consider our circumstances, and spare those few hours so much appreciated by others who are less fortunate?***

Please contact one of the brethren listed below:

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MW Bro. Steve Kane - Editor Emeritus

MW Bro. Brian Bailie (ex officio)

RW Bro. Scott Howarth - Editor