

THE COMMUNIQUE

Issue 6

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From the Grand Master ...

"Sometimes the worst thing that happens to you, the thing you think you can't survive... it's the thing that makes you better than you used to be." — Jennifer Weiner, *Fly Away Home*

Our lodges have now been shuttered for ten months and will be for several more. We miss our brethren. We miss our lodge outings. Some feel we have no chance of recovering from this enforced hiatus. But let us look at history.

Lodges were closed in Germany from 1935 to 1945. After the war, they restarted and now enjoy such a popularity that they are planning on hosting the World Conference of Regular Grand Lodges this fall. Masonry had been banned in the area that is now the Czech Republic for over a hundred years when it was revived in 1919, only to be suppressed by the Nazis and then the Communists; after a 50 year hiatus they restarted in 1989. Freemasonry was banned in Russia on four separate occasions for a total of 171 years between 1785 and 1992, but they are going strong again. Who remembers that video of the Russian brethren singing *Auld Lang Syne*?

After the Influenza pandemic of 1918-20 the Craft saw a period of great growth. This has traditionally been attributed to the desire of soldiers returning from the Great War to continue the fellowship they had experienced in the forces, but was there also an effect from forced isolation?

Last Spring, when I was reading old Proceedings in preparation for my report to our Annual Communication, I was amazed to find that there was almost no mention of the Spanish Flu. What the writers of the day seemed worried about was that we not let

ourselves be overrun by the number of new candidates. The Grand Secretary of Indiana wrote "Masonry, not only in Indiana, but throughout the entire country, had become enormously popular. Indiana Lodges had always been careful as to the quality of the material; but, he said, 'a note of warning may not be out of place that extraordinary care be observed when floods of petitions are pouring in.'" I didn't understand why this was their concern, but as our lockdown drags on and we collect quite a number of seekers waiting to join, it is making more and more sense.

A man who joins the Craft and is rushed through his degrees without being instructed in our philosophy and without having the ability to bond with several of our members, will not stay. Just as happened in the past after a rash of initiations, those men who, dare I say, are made members but not Masons, will drift away. And even those who do stay, having not been properly instructed, will not be able to pass on to the next generation the lessons that they never learned.

With vaccines now available, we can hope for the time when we will be able to safely gather again. While patiently waiting, let us think about how we will proceed with that comeback. Will we be able to pace ourselves and focus on the quintessence of Freemasonry, or will we rush into signing up as many bodies as possible? I hope we can take the time to think through our plans, to adequately brush up on our ritual, and, above all, to properly mentor our new brothers.

**David J. Cameron
Grand Master**

From the Deputy ...

My Brethren:

With a new year comes all the preparations for the next Annual Communication in July. But this year it will be different for reasons of which you are aware – for the last ten plus months.

My assignment over the next few months leading up to the Annual Communication is to socialize the many Constitutional amendments that we will be voting on at that time. You will remember that we did not cover off this agenda item last year during our abbreviated pandemic videoconference Annual Communication, not unlike the annual election of Grand Lodge Officers. Though of necessity of the time, it turns out that there are now many amendments to deal with – from two years of not addressing them.

And I have help. The Grand Secretary will be addressing all the new amendments from this year that deal with the proposed revisions to the Annual Communication including the electronic voting on the proposed Constitutional amendments and the election of Grand Lodge Officers that will enfranchise every eligible voting Mason and not just those who can physically attend the Annual Communication. The Grand Treasurer will also be communicating the very important amendment to increase the Grand Lodge assessment. That leaves me with what would have been the 2020 proposed amendments.

I will break these proposed amendments into sizable related chunks as best as possible.

We will classify the first category of amendments under Grand Lodge Officer Powers and Duties:

One proposal, as submitted by our Grand Master, deals with the Powers and Duties of the District Deputy Grand Master to assure that the Lodge Master's/Treasurer's Report is submitted along with the other L forms as part of their report to Grand Lodge on the completion of a Lodge Official Visit. It is simply

adding the name of the Form L4 to the end of the current version in section 104 (b) along with the other three L Forms.

Another proposal, also in section 104, relates to monitoring to assure the constituent lodges are providing for the safety and welfare of their members and maintaining their meeting facilities in accordance with the minimum provincial statutes and municipal by-laws and was submitted by R.W. Bro. Darren Byrne as the Chairman of the Grand Lodge Buildings Advisory Committee. The proposal would add two new sub-sections to the Powers and Duties of the District Deputy Grand Master in section 104 of the Constitution. Proposed Section (c) would suspend a Lodge Warrant if they failed to submit their Official Visit L Forms to the DDGM within forty-five days of the Visit until such time as the Lodge complied. And proposed Section (d) would allow for the Grand Master to extend the grace period for another forty-five days if so petitioned by the Lodge.

Another proposal relates to the Grand Librarian and Grand Archivist and would relax the qualifications for these two positions if we should ever be in a position where we don't have Brethren with 'academic training and professional experience in Library or Curatorial Science.'

Next month we will continue with a short description of the rationale for the remaining proposals for Constitutional amendments as submitted for the 2020 Annual Communication categorized as Regalia and Awards; Lodge; and Grand Lodge changes.

Until then, stay safe and we'll see you soon on 'Lodge Squares' at a Zoom or GoToMeeting from the comfort of your own home!

***Thomas W. Hogeboom
Deputy Grand Master***

From the Grand Secretary ...

Grand Lodge Electronic Voting 2021

Brethren,

As announced by the Grand Master, we will be conducting electronic elections and voting in 2021.

This communication provides an overview of the two elections that will take place. More details will follow later.

Election of the District Deputy Grand Master 2021:

Summary

- The voting for DDGMs will take place electronically simultaneously in all 41 Districts during an election period in June 2021 determined by Grand Lodge
- The election will be run under the auspices of Grand Lodge using software provided by Grand Lodge
- Candidates MUST submit nomination forms in advance (**no** write in names)
- The DDGM will validate the eligibility of the nominee prior to submission of the nomination form
- Electronic voter registration (using Grand Lodge Certificate Number) will be required to obtain access to an electronic ballot. No paper ballots will be used
- A registered voter will only see the electronic ballot applicable to his District
- Grand Lodge will appoint the election Scrutineer
- Should a tie vote result, the Grand Master will cast the deciding ballot

Election of Grand Lodge Officers 2021:

Summary

- The voting for Grand Lodge officers (including the Board of General Purposes) will take place electronically across the province during an election period in July 2021 determined by Grand Lodge

- The election will be run under the auspices of Grand Lodge using software provided by Grand Lodge
- Candidates MUST submit nomination forms as per the current Book of Constitution
- Electronic voter registration (using Grand Lodge Certificate Number) will be required to obtain a ballot
- Grand Lodge will appoint the election Scrutineer
- Voters who have registered in the first election (for the office of DDGM) will be automatically registered for the second election (Grand Lodge officers)

Ballot on Proposed Constitutional Amendments 2021:

Summary

- All proposed amendments to the Constitution of Grand Lodge deemed 'regular' will be added to the ballot for the election of Grand Lodge officers described above
- Registered Voters will vote on each amendment or amendment package separately

Lastly, as mentioned above, further details on both elections will be communicated in the coming months. Questions are welcome. Please submit in writing and they will be answered in a subsequent communication.

***D. Garry Dowling,
Grand Secretary***

***Lou Domjan,
COO***

From the Grand Treasurer ...

My Brethren:

I am pleased to be afforded this opportunity to address the membership at large via the Communiqué with this very important message to open the dialogue and assure no questions go unanswered.

I know all of you are concerned with the financial well-being of our Grand Lodge not just for today but looking forward for many years to come.

The Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Management Committee, Audit and Finance Committee and Grand Treasurer have considered all options from no increase in the assessment to spreading the increase over several years. They all have unanimously concluded that we need to increase the assessment from \$20.00 to \$40.00 at this time.

Major expenses are needed for maintenance on our Grand Lodge building, which is now over 50 years old. This maintenance can no longer be deferred if we want our building to continue to serve us for many years to come. It is the head office for Freemasonry in Ontario.

There is a pressing need to upgrade the technology at Grand Lodge to meet the needs of Masons, Lodges and Grand Lodge in the 21st century. We need Masons, Lodges and Grand Lodge to be able to communicate and interact remotely with our Brethren. The upgrade will eliminate the need to travel to Toronto to cast your ballot as you will be able to vote from your home for Grand Lodge Officers, members of the Board of General Purpose and for your District Deputy Grand Master in your District. Many other benefits for our fraternity will come as this new technology is integrated into the way we will operate going forward.

The Grand Lodge assessment was last increased in 2011. The proposed Constitutional amendment will increase the Grand Lodge assessment from \$20.00 to \$40.00 effective January 1, 2022. Even with this increase your Grand Lodge will still have the lowest assessment of all the Grand Lodges in North America.

The Cost of Living for households, Lodges and Districts have all increased as have those of Grand Lodge in the last ten years. We can no longer afford to put off this assessment increase.

All of this being said, during the voting for our next line-up of Grand Lodge Officers, you will be asked to vote on the list of proposed Constitutional amendments that have been submitted over the last two years due to the short-form Annual Communication we had in July 2020. One of these amendments that has been developed during this period by the Masons of the two Grand Lodge Committees listed below right to our Grand Master and confirmed as 'Regular' by the Constitution and Jurisprudence Committee of your Grand Lodge reads as follows:

"Current Version"

152 (m) Twenty dollars per annum payable January 2012 for every member of each lodge whose fees have not been commuted to Grand Lodge, including honorary and charter members. (2011)

Proposed Version

152 (m) Forty dollars per annum payable semi-annually commencing January 2022 for every member of each lodge whose fees have not been commuted to Grand Lodge, including honorary and charter members."

The Brethren listed below look forward to answering every question that any Mason may have regarding this proposed amendment. Please do not hesitate to reach out to any of us with your questions or concerns.

Thank you for your support for this increase in our per capita levy.

**H. Edward Standish, Grand Treasurer
(hesmes@ rogers.com)**

James C. Sutherland, Chairman of Audit & Finance (jim@sutherlandelliott.ca)

Sydney T. Schatzker, Chairman of Lodge Finance Advisory (schatzker@rogers.com)