



MASONIC MENTOR

Ideas and Information for the Grand Lodge of Alberta's Masonic Leaders
September 2009

BROTHER SECRETARIES

Please distribute/circulate to the WM, SW & JW for their use

Grand Lodge Highlights

Many of you were there (and some were not!) but you may have forgotten some of the highlights of our 104th Annual Communication. The following may help refresh your memory. The 2010 Grand Lodge budget was approved and there will be no change in per capita.

Masonic Funeral rights were extended to Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft Masons in this jurisdiction
Recognition of Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina was granted
Charters for Portage No. 200 in Lac La Biche and Aurora Borealis No. 201 in Fort McMurray were granted

The Strategic Plan for the Grand Lodge was endorsed. The Strategic Plan is presented on page 2 and is also available on the Grand Lodge website.

RWBro. David Roth was elected Junior Grand Warden and RWBro Peter Dunlop was elected Senior Grand Warden. RWBro Gerld Waldern was elected Deputy Grand Master by acclamation.

The new Grand Master outlined his "Strengthening our Foundation" action plan. This action plan is the first step towards achieving our Strategic Plan goals. His Inaugural Address is available on the Grand Lodge website.



"Strengthening our Foundation" Action Plan

- Revised DDGM checklist to help understand what needs to be done at the Lodge level to achieve the strategic plan goals
- An information package that can be used to properly explain Freemasonry to interested non-Masons and Lodges can use to engage in "proper solicitation" will be prepared
- DDGMs to ensure District Meetings are exciting and interesting to the "meeting standard"
- Lodge leadership training will be developed and delivered
- Revised Investigation Committee forms and guidelines to ensure "quality investigations" will be developed
- Revised Constitution & Regulations will be issued to eliminate confusion
- Lodge of Excellence Awards will be awarded to recognize the Lodges most advanced in achieving Strategic Plan goals

Decorum please!

Our Degrees are meant to make a lasting positive and solemn impression on our Candidates. Joking, laughter, chitchatting during the conferring of the Degree detracts from the solemnity of the event and should not be tolerated in Lodges in our jurisdiction. How can we expect our Candidates to take our Degrees and their important moral lessons seriously if some members of the Lodge give a contrary impression?

There is a time and place for "social mirth" in our Lodges but it is definitely not during the conferring of Degrees.

It would be helpful if the Worshipful Master or the Director of Ceremonies reminded the Brethren of the need for decorum prior to the Degree ceremony.



Protocols and such

Grand Lodge Officers are always invited to seats in the East.

Those visitors who are entitled to take over the chair of Worshipful Master – the GM, PGMs, DGM or DDGM of the District – should be invited to assume the gavel. The gavel should be assumed in proper form.

The Grand Master is the highest ranking Officer and is usually received on his Fraternal Visits "in form". (Grand Honours 9 times)

The District Deputy Grand Master "outranks" the Deputy Grand Master **on the DDGM's Official Visit** and should be received "in form". (Grand Honours 7 times)

However, if the Deputy Grand Master is paying a Fraternal Visit and **it is not** the DDGM's Official Visit, the Deputy Grand Master "outranks" the DDGM and may be received "in form". (Grand Honours 7 times) The Worshipful Master or Director of Ceremonies should always ask the DGM how he desires to be received. The Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master or DDGM should be invited to address the Brethren just before closing the Lodge. Nobody speaks after him, except the Worshipful Master with his expression of appreciation

(from "Mason Etiquettes" by WBro. Harry J. Noble)

Strategic Plan - "Strengthening Our Lodges"

Freemasonry in Alberta has been very successful in attracting men interested in its mysteries and secrets. However, constituent Lodges have generally been challenged to retain members. Demits and suspensions for non-payment of dues have exceeded deaths over the last few years and, therefore, jurisdictional membership has stagnated and the proportion of the mature male population who are members of the Craft is at a historic low.

The responsibility for membership retention is clearly a Lodge responsibility. There is clear evidence that "strong Lodges" are better equipped to retain members by keeping them interested and excited by what Freemasonry has to offer. Unfortunately, "strong Lodges" are the exception in this jurisdiction and ALL Lodges must be encouraged to become stronger to ensure Freemasonry continues to contribute to the well-being of Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

The focus of this strategic plan is to strengthen ALL Lodges over a five to seven year period. In this regard, several targets and/or goals aimed at strengthening Lodges have been set in areas of Lodge leadership, Lodge management and operation and Membership management.

Improved Lodge Leadership

Lodge members look to their leaders for direction and motivation. Leaders must be well skilled in the duties of their office as well as leadership skills like planning, organizing, delegating and managing.

Goal: All Worshipful Masters shall have completed Senior Deacon, Junior Warden and Senior Warden Leadership Training Programs during their progression to the East.

Lodge leaders must be consistently looking for opportunities to continuously improve their leadership skills and observing other Lodge leaders and operation is an excellent means of achieving this.

Goal: All Worshipful Masters, senior Lodge Officers and Lodge members frequently visit Lodges (if within the length of their cable-tow)

Improved Lodge Management and Operation

The primary purpose of Masonic Lodges is to "cultivate and improve the mind" and provide "moral instruction". Lodge meetings need to focus on this purpose. Meetings need to include educational topics that are relevant to the day and also include the opportunity for discussion regarding the practical application of Masonic principles to the topic. Every Lodge meeting should end with attendees believing they are an improved person because of attending.

Goal: All Lodge meetings are exciting and interesting

Successful organizations have a continuous improvement culture and have longer term plans to achieve continuous improvement. The Doric Plan created by this Grand Lodge provides a plan aimed at continuous improvement

Goal: All Lodges are using the Doric Plan or equivalent to continuously improve

Successful organizations have succession plans ----->

for their key positions and generally update them annually
Goal: All Lodges have succession plans for the Offices of Senior Deacon and beyond

Successful organizations insist that senior management staff mentor new managers so they can benefit from their skill and knowledge

Goal: All Lodge Officers should be mentored by more experienced members of the Lodge

A key role in the operation of the Lodge is the office of the Secretary. The Secretary communicates with the members, other Lodges and the Grand Lodge Office on a regular basis. The Secretary prepares important reports and correspondence and ensures the administrative documentation of the Lodge is handled efficiently in a timely fashion.

Goal: All Secretaries, within their first year in office shall complete a "training school" provided by the Grand Secretary or his designate.

A Lodge has a responsibility to ensure all their widows are remembered and their "wanting" needs are handled. Regular contact is important to dealing with this duty.

Goal: Lodges are contacting their widows at least once per year

Improved Membership Management

Care and feeding of our members should be an ongoing process from petition to death. We need to ensure we attract the right men and continue to excite them throughout their Masonic journey. Proper management of our members should result in a significant reduction in demits and suspensions for non-payment of dues.

Goal: Significant reduction in demits/NPD from 328 per year to 25-50 per year (80%-90% reduction)

Membership management must begin at the Petition stage.

Goal: All candidate Investigation Committees are trained

Membership management must continue through their degrees

Goal: All Lodges are using the Grand Lodge of Alberta Mentor Plan

After their degrees, new members need to be encouraged to be involved

Goal: Find ways of including our newer/younger members in the work of the Lodge and not necessarily ritual or office holding

We need to stay in touch with Brethren who have become "non-attenders" and determine the causes

Goal: All Brethren who have not attended Lodge in over a year are contacted by a Lodge committee



The "Masonic Mentor" is prepared/compiled by the Grand Master. Please direct all feedback, ideas or contributions to the Grand Master *through the Grand Secretary*.