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The Grand Master's Message

One of the most important events on the calendar of a Masonic lodge is the annual election of officers. During the month of December, the 394 subordinate lodges in North Carolina will meet in stated communications and elect a slate of officers. These officers under the leadership of the newly elected Worshipful Master will guide the affairs of the lodge during the year 1989.

The election of officers is more than just a routine duty of a lodge. The selection of well qualified and dedicated Masons to serve as line officers and especially as Master provides each member an important voice in the destiny of one's lodge. The caliber of leadership selected determines in a large measure the future prosperity of our fraternity.



L. R. Thomas, Jr., Grand Master

The Grand Master's Committee on Masonic Research and Development is preparing a seminar-workshop on "Leadership for Lodge Officers." While it was announced at the District Meetings that the Leadership Seminars would be held in perhaps November of this year, they have been re-scheduled for the months of January and February. The new schedule is timely in that it will make the workshops available to the newly elected and installed lodge officers, who are urged to attend the one closest to them. At the seminars, the basics of lodge leadership will be presented by well qualified brethren and, as a lodge officer, you are invited and requested to take advantage of the training program.

As we approach the time for electing officers, I would like to share some thoughts on the ingredients of good leadership, from the perspective of the Worshipful Master who has the unique opportunity to make a difference in the direction of his lodge.

Why not begin with attendance? Does every brother present feel that you are interested in him and that you are truly glad to see him in lodge? He is much more likely to attend regularly if the Master shows a genuine concern for his welfare and a willingness to show compassion for his problems.

The Master, more than any other brother, is in a position to encourage and develop a spirit of friendship and brotherly love in the lodge. If it is genuine and from the heart, it will become a contagion that will spread throughout each meeting. If a friendly atmosphere prevails, many great and important things will be accomplished by your lodge that will long have a favorable effect on the future of Freemasonry.

Once these attributes are being practiced, take a look at the membership roster and begin to invite, by personal contact or newsletter, those who do not attend. Plan special and interesting programs that will encourage and stimulate interest in attending lodge. Some may need assistance in getting to the meetings.

Always maintain a high level of proficiency in the ritualistic work and in so doing convey the real spirit of Masonry. The result will be more knowledgeable and motivated newly raised Master Masons. These new members will constitute the source of future leadership in the lodge.

Better attendance and participation can also be achieved by utilizing the talents of every member possible. Involvement in the work of the lodge will stimulate greater interest in Masonry and the lodge will prosper as the result.

One of the first and most important duties of a newly elected Master is the appointment of an officer to start in the line. The selection of a well qualified and truly dedicated Mason to begin to climb the ladder that leads to the office of Worshipful Master is crucial to the future prosperity of the lodge.

It is a distinct honor to be elected by the brethren to serve as Master of one's lodge. Much careful preparation and planning will lead to a year of successful leadership over the affairs of the lodge. My brother, if you are aspiring to the office of Worshipful Master, you have before you, not only a year of great responsibility, but also a year of opportunity. May the fruits of your labors be a year filled with joy and happiness in the knowledge that under your leadership your lodge enjoyed a year of harmony in the accomplishment of many worthwhile things for the "good of Masonry."

Masonry Speaks

We seem to be in another of those periods when there are those who, for no reason that is easily understood, feel compelled to attack Freemasonry. Some of the attackers are former Masons who never understood what the Fraternity is all about, who have no more sense of honor and loyalty than to attack men who had never treated them with anything but kindness. Others of the attackers have never been Masons, know nothing of it, but are more than ready to seize upon any cause than even hints of a brief television or yellow sheet exposure.

We are taught in Masonry not to be led into argument with those who, through ignorance, may ridicule it, so the foregoing paragraph will not be expanded upon. But the unbiased members of the public that are hearing these various diatribes certainly deserve the opportunity to hear or read exactly what Masonry says of itself.

Perhaps no more accurate and comprehensive description of Freemasonry exists than that embodied in the Preamble to our Masonic Constitution. The Preamble is old; no Mason alive today remembers when it was last amended in any manner; it has therefore not been written to cope with just today's situations, but is designed to point the way for all members in all times. The non-Mason that reads it and studies it will know what Freemasonry is all about, and Masonry will have no quarrel with whatever opinion of it he then forms. The Preamble follows:

WHEREAS, The Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina is an absolute sovereign Masonic body with inherent power to form a Constitution as its fundamental law and to enact laws for its own government and that of its subordinate lodges, subject to the Ancient Landmarks of Freemasonry; THEREFORE, the Grand Lodge does hereby ordain, establish, and promulgate this CONSTITUTION, and every Mason within this Grand Jurisdiction is obligated to obey and to conform to the provisions thereof and the laws enacted pursuant thereto.

I. DECLARATION CONCERNING GOD AND RELIGION: The Grand Lodge acknowledges belief in God to be the great fundamental principle and landmark of Freemasonry upon which our Fraternity is erected. Without an avowal of such belief, no man shall be initiated in a lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons; and if a Freemason shall renounce or forsake his belief in God, or if he does not continue to entertain such belief, he shall not remain a member of any lodge [74-01 (3); 74-07; 75-07; 97-02 (2)]. A Mason is obliged, by his tenure, to obey the moral law, and if he rightly understands the art, he will never be a stupid atheist nor an irreligious libertine; but though in ancient times Masons were charged in every country to be of the religion of that country or nation, whatever it was, yet it is now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves; that is, to be good men and true, or men of honor and honesty, by whatever denominations or persuasions they may be distinguished, whereby Masonry becomes the center of union and the means of conciliating true friendship among persons that must otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance. (Appendix: The Charges of a Free Mason I).

II. DECLARATION CONCERNING THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE, SUPREME AND SUBORDINATE: A Mason is a peaceable subject to the civil powers, wherever he resides or works, and is never to be concerned in plots and conspiracies against the peace and welfare of the Nation nor to behave himself undutifully. (Appendix: The Charges of a Freemason II).

III. DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES: Pursuant to the settled policy of this Grand Lodge to define and reaffirm, from time to time, certain of the fundamental principles and rules of conduct governing the practice of Freemasonry in this Masonic jurisdiction, it is declared that:

1. The Grand Lodge of North Carolina is a sovereign and independent body practicing Freemasonry only within the three degrees commonly known amongst the Craft as the degrees of Symbolic Masonry, and only within the limits defined in its Constitution, and in the exercise of its sovereign power, this Grand Lodge further declares that it does not recognize or admit the existence of any superior Masonic authority anywhere in the world, however styled.
2. Freemasonry is a charitable society in that it is not organized for profit and none of its income inures to the benefit of any individual, but all is devoted to the promotion of the welfare and happiness of mankind. (4-08; 60-09).
3. It is benevolent in that it teaches and exemplifies altruism as a duty.
4. It is educational in that it teaches by prescribed ceremonials a system of morality and brotherhood based upon the Sacred Law.
5. It is religious in that it teaches monotheism, the Holy Bible is open upon its altars whenever a lodge is in session, reverence for God is ever present in its ceremonial, and to its brethren are constantly addressed lessons of morality; yet it is not sectarian or theological.
6. It is a social organization only so far as it furnishes additional inducement for men to foregather in numbers; more material is thereby provided for its primary work of education, of worship, and of charity.
7. Through improvement and strengthening of the character of the individual man, Freemasonry seeks to improve the community. Thus it impresses upon its members the principles of personal righteousness and personal responsibility, enlightens them as to those things which make for human welfare, and inspires them with that feeling of charity, or good will, toward all mankind which will move them to translate principle and conviction into action.
8. To that end, it teaches and stands for the worship of God; for truth and justice; for fraternity and philanthropy; and for enlightenment and orderly liberty, civil, religious, and intellectual. It charges each of its members to be true and loyal to the government of the country to which he owes allegiance, and to be obedient to the laws of any state in which he may be.
9. It believes that the attainment of these objectives is best accomplished by laying a broad basis of principle upon which men of various opinions may unite.
10. Consistently throughout the two centuries of Freemasonry in the United States, its members have exercised their inherent and absolute right of freedom of thought and action in all matters religious and civil, but solely as individuals and never as Masons. No member or officer of whatever grade has the right to speak or act for, or in the name of, or on behalf of, Freemasonry except as to matters definitely Masonic. Believing and practicing these things, this Grand Lodge affirms its continued adherence to those ancient and approved rules of Freemasonry which forbid the discussion in Masonic lodges or meetings of creeds, politics, or other topics likely to excite personal animosities or personal differences.

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Diamond Jubilee at Home To Be Observed January 7

Greensboro — The seventy-fifth anniversary (DIAMOND JUBILEE) celebration of the founding of the Masonic and Eastern Star Home will be held here Saturday, January 7, 1989.

The gala occasion is being sponsored under the auspices of the Grand Master of Masons of North Carolina, L. R. Thomas, Jr., and the Grand Matron of North Carolina Eastern Star, Viola Hardison.

Open house and guided tours of the Home will be held Saturday between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. to afford visitors an opportunity to observe first hand the facilities which provide excellent environmental and health care for Masons and members of their families.

The main event of the celebration will be a banquet to be held at 6:30 p.m. in the banquet hall of Holiday Inn, Four Seasons, located on I-40 at High Point Road, Greensboro. Tickets for the banquet are \$16.00 per person and can be obtained by sending a check (payable to Hilda S. Halliburton, P.G.M.) together with a self-

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Seminars Shaping Up

Raleigh — The Grand Master's Committee on Masonic Research and Development held its most recent meeting here September 30 and began finalizing plans for Masonic Seminars to be held across the state. The purpose of the seminars is to aid in developing Masonic leaders among the Masters and Wardens of our lodges.

It is now planned that the first series of meetings will be held during four Saturdays in early 1989. There will be seminars at three locations on each of those Saturdays, giving each Mason opportunity to select the date and location most convenient to him. The schedule follows:

January 21 — Waynesville, Charlotte, Rocky Mount
February 4 — Boone, Asheboro, Washington
February 11 — Winston-Salem, Raleigh, Ahoskie
February 18 — Morganton, Fayetteville, Jacksonville

Four subjects have been selected for presentation at this first series of seminars, as follows: Preparing for Master, THE CODE, Masonic Protocol and Etiquette, Public Relations. It is possible that a film will also be

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This gentleman appeared to enjoy the doings at the Home on October 20, he wore a broad smile all day long.

Masons and Stars Slice, Hook, Putt On Way to Pig

All Profits Go To Home

Greensboro — Some 1,500 Masons and members of the Eastern Star came here October 20 to play golf and to eat barbecue, and it was all to benefit the Masonic and Eastern Star Home.

Over 260 golfers set out at 9:00 a.m. in their assault on par at two local courses, Jamestown and Bel-Aire. Whatever damage was done to par, it was as nothing in comparison to the highly successful attacks waged against the unfortunate porkers that had made the supreme sacrifice to ensure that no one went home unfulfilled—or unfilled.

While the golfers were off pursuing wayward balls and elusive scores, the more sedentary were back at the

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