

The District Light

The information bulletin
of Niagara B District

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Happenings

The new masonic year is progressing well. Several lodges have shown initiative in hosting or creating events for their members and for the community.

The following list is likely incomplete – add your lodge to the tally by informing the editor about your plans.

Education:

At least two lodges (Palmer and Macnab) have made concrete commitments to having masonic education at each meeting.

At Macnab's next meeting the topic will be the Masonic Funeral Service.

Masonic education should be a more regular occurrence throughout the district.

Enhanced Degree Work:

Palmer Lodge conducted a third degree in the Fort Erie.

From the Master's message by Clark Stickland: "A big 'congratulations' goes out to Bro. Stark for not only doing a very a good job proving himself for his Third Degree, but also supplying the education on the Old Fort and the war of 1812; seldom do you see the candidate giving the education! For those of you that couldn't make the Fort Degree you missed a great night. The weather was clear and the almost full moon gave us just the right light."

Reaching Out:

Several of our lodges have formed partnerships with other lodges – mostly in New York State.

Palmer Lodge has sistered with Harmonie Lodge in Buffalo. Copestone Lodge has inter-visitations with Transportation Lodge. Adoniram Lodge has been partnered with Wester Star for many years.

We can visit American lodges as welcome guests. Perhaps your lodge could arrange such a visitation. It would be enlightening.

Communication:

Our summonses encourage members to come to the meetings. But what about the district?

Martin Van der Kant, the secretary of Dominion Lodge, has asked other secretaries to send our their summonses in PDF format so that all brethren can open the files. He then intends to send each of the summonses to each of the members of his lodge. His explanation is, "I hope that being able to browse the different summonses at their leisure may promote more visitation as well as keeping the brethren more informed."

Visiting:

W.Bro. Clark Stickland wrote in his summons: "October is a month for visiting. I will be attending both Official Visits as well the Past Masters' and Officers' Dinner. I would like to see a great turn out at these events. So come with me and support your Lodge, your District, and as always, enjoy the fellowship."

Food:

Many lodges serve a nourishing meal for their social time.

Macnab Lodge had a fish fry after their first meeting in September.

King Edward VII members meet for a dinner at a local restaurant before each of their regular meetings.

Socials:

Beyond the regular meeting, it is good to involve the brethren in social events.

Macnab Lodge will be having a gathering which will include an elimination draw.

W.Bro. Sean Alderdice asked the Phoenix brethren to come to the October meeting "prepared to discuss some thoughts on how to improve our Lodge. That may be Fraternal events (like golfing or trips), Masonic education topics, fund-raising for our Lodge, and worthy charities or community events."

MasoniCHIP Program

Myrtle Lodge No. 337 and Wilson Chapter No. 7 co-sponsored the Chip Program at the Welland Fair in September. The volunteer support was good from the District and we processed approximately 135 children through the program.

Our next one is scheduled for Wednesday, October 9, at the Port Robinson Fire Hall during their Annual Open House. The children not only get to be identified but they also learn Fire Safety.

The area Girl Guides have shown interest in having us process their girls.

So the program is successful, but this raises an important question: How can the district share in the effort and costs?



W. Bro. George Sider had this to say:

“I’ve have visions of the program being supported as a district in both the volunteer and financial aspects.

“Putting an event together can be perceived as overwhelming for a single

lodge. If we were to have a group of individuals wanting to participate and a district fund, we would be able to actively participate within the district as a team.”

Communication

Two constant drivers to our thinking are: first, how best to communicate with our members so that they are both informed and feel included; second, how best to communicate with the non-Masonic community so that we combat the myths and put correct information about us out there.

We have the means to do both.

We are the means to do both.

There is a time to let things happen
and a time to make things happen.

If you want something to happen,
you have to do something to make it so.

Insight by M.W. Bro. Donald A. Campbell



The best communication tool in Freemasonry is the membership. We are the ambassadors of our Craft. Our actions, attitude, and the first impressions we project will influence a man who is considering joining us

The way we portray ourselves in our community: being a good citizen in our everyday life,

demonstrating our kindness, being honest, being courteous towards others, but more importantly, being proud to say that we are a Mason, is what will have the most effect.

We, with that one-on-one contact, can be a better advertisement for Freemasonry than all the brochures, open houses, mall display booths or other programs currently in use.

Masonic Ritual by MW. Bro. David C. Bradley

Ritual is the performance of a ceremony to illustrate a mystery. We need the visual because we learn by example and by direct experience. There are limits to the adequacy of verbal instruction.

The ritual is a path to greater understanding. In essence, the ritual is a play and each man must attend to his part. It must exude life energy.

The ritual is neither literal nor historical, but a dramatic allegory to explain the tenets and principals of the Craft.

Rituals reveal values at their deepest level. Men express in ritual what moves them most.

Effective ritualists have empathy with what they are saying, giving life to the performance. When done properly, the degrees provide more light to a candidate than his eyes can see.

The result of such teaching will be a candidate who remains an active, interested member, who understands Masonry and who ultimately becomes a more mature individual.

What Do We Want?

Something within each of us yearns to find meaning in our lives, and to discover the reason we are here in this time and place. The search for purpose is age-old, and it compels us to move forward, to learn and to grow.

[taken from the cover of a self-help book]

Where do we Find It?

We all strive for a life of respectability built upon a sound foundation that can cope with the problems man has always faced. Masonry offers a path to that goal. The truest role of Freemasonry is to be of service to God, country and mankind. This is our role yesterday, today and in the future, for Freemasonry does not change. Outside of the church, Masonry has more to offer the younger generation than any other organization.

Freemasonry is a fraternal organization that meets for mutual help and fellowship. The men call themselves Free and Accepted Masons because they base their organization on traditions and rituals, using traditional stonemasons' tools, implements, and craft in a symbolic manner to illustrate a meaning or a message that explains a system of morality.

For many it offers a plan, a method, a way of living by which one may build one's days and years into a character so strong and true that nothing, not even death, can destroy it.

Harry S. Truman, an American President and a Mason, said, "We represent a fraternity which believes in justice and truth and honorable action in your community...men who are endeavoring to be better citizens... [and] to make a great country greater. This is the only institution in the world where we can meet on the level all sorts of people who want to live rightly."

Freemasonry is a moral, not a religious or political order.

We accept good men into our fraternity, and together, we become better.

D.D.G.M.'s Farewell

Looking back on the last year, I sincerely and deeply appreciate all the support that I received from the Brethren of Niagara 'B' District. At times it was truly overwhelming.



I thank you for the warm response to my little talks on Masonry and what it means to me. I believe that as Masons we are to be Builders. We are meant to support and build up each other.

Let's not be the man who looks for the fault in a Brother, for if we are honest, we all have faults. Let's be the Brother who inspires and motivates our Brothers with our kindness and understanding.

Let's make our Lodges better places by our being there. Let's be welcoming and encouraging so that we all move ahead together. A Lodge can be destroyed by critical, fault-finding men but can be energized and uplifted by Brethren who look for the good, see the good and Build on that.

During my year I have met many great Masons and have gained wonderful friendships that I treasure and that I wouldn't have experienced without being a Brother in this Great Order.

Thank you to all the Brethren of Niagara 'B' District for making my year as D.D.G.M. incredible and unforgettable and something that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

[R.W.Bro. Tom McClellan]

Positive Thoughts:

A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.

In the long run, the pessimist may be proved right, but the optimist has had a better time on the trip.

No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit. [Helen Keller]

A pessimist is a man who thinks all women are bad; an optimist is a man who hopes they are.