

ANNUAL COMMUNICATION ADDRESS

Most Worshipful Brother Reo J. Matthews; Grand Master of Masons in Nova Scotia 2012 - 2013



My Brothers, Distinguished East, Ladies and Gentlemen, Special Guests:

I stand before you today as a very humble person; a person who has learned the true meaning of humility. I must thank you for the faith and trust you have placed in me this day. When I joined this wonderful Fraternity over 30 years ago, I had no thoughts of ever being its leader. The person who got me involved, V. Wors. Bro. A. Alex S.M. Davidson, was like a father to me and I saw how much he enjoyed the Fraternity. I thought, someday I'll join that organization. To his delight and happiness, I asked to join and he raised me as a MM. A new bond grew between us; I now know the meaning of "Brotherly Love". Alex, I know you are here with me today and proud of my accomplishment.

What does being GM mean to me?

It means leadership – Robert E. Lee said "A leader's primary responsibility is to think of others; however, "To lead others one must master oneself." I hope I will be able to provide leadership, team work and acceptance of the responsibility to move our great Fraternity forward. A good leader is a facilitator not a dictator, and uses consensus, compassion and understanding to achieve his goals. One person cannot do this alone, it requires all the Brethren. We must work as a team, put aside petty differences, personal agendas and work for the benefit of this wonderful fraternity. "The great duty of life is the promotion of happiness and welfare of our fellow man" said Robert E. Lee. It is my duty as Grand Master to see that this goal is achieved in a manner befitting our great brotherhood.

President Reagan had a plaque on his desk which read: "There is no limit to what a man can do or where he can go if he does not mind who gets the credit." Remember, we are a fraternity – all for one, one for all. We all benefit from the success of others. Nobody gets to the top without the assistance of others; no one!! Success is earned.

Our Fraternity needs to return to the basics – the three pillars – Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth; which are the mortar that binds us as one. It is a positive approach which must be strengthened at every opportunity. However, it has to begin with me! "If it's going to be, it's up to me" said Robert Schuller. By that I mean with each of us. You cannot love until you love yourself; you cannot be truthful until you are truthful to yourself; and you cannot give relief until you give relief to yourself. Once we are capable of achieving this, we are on the road to becoming closer to the "perfect ashlar". Perfection is an absolute and being an absolute, it is unattainable by man. However, you do not stop attempting to achieve that perfection. All things in life are transitory and in a constant state of change, and change is the most difficult circumstance to accept. You

cannot grow if you cannot change. We must be open to change and move forward with confidence that we will be successful. It may not always be easy, however, a smooth seas does not make a good sailor. "Man may fail many times; however, he is not a failure until he begins to blame someone else" said John Burroughs.

So today, we begin a journey of renewal, development and growth through sharing of ideas and hard work. All must participate in order for success to become a reality, our work has to be inclusive; permitting all to offer what talents they have. You will notice the extensive use of the word "We". One person cannot do it all. There has to be commitment on the part of all Brothers to see our Fraternity grow. It is incumbent on each of us to use our talents to better our fraternity by taking the responsibility to move forward. We all have something to offer.

In my research, there are **three major areas of concern worldwide** in the Masonic Fraternity – **Leadership, Education, and Retention**. We have work to do together. I issue you a challenge – work with me to make Masonry stronger. Together we can make a difference with a better understanding of Masonic concepts and practices. I wish to tell you a story about a man's perception of making a difference. Those who have heard me give addresses; know how much I like the "Starfish Story" "It Makes a Difference" will be my goal this year.

A man is walking along a beach and off in the distance he sees a figure. He cannot make out what the figure is doing. As he gets closer, he realizes it is another man and he appears to be bending down. When he is able to get a full view, he sees the man bend down pick up a starfish and throw it in the water. He does this several times which makes the "other man" ask; "what are you doing?" "What does it look like; I am bending down and picking up a starfish to throw back in the water". The "other man" looks around and sees hundreds of starfish on the beach and retorts "What difference is that going to make, there are thousands of starfish!" The man bends down, picks up a starfish and throws it in the water saying "It makes a difference to that one!" He does it several more times saying "It makes a difference to that one!"

My Brothers, my point is this:

- It makes a difference to say thank you to a Brother
- It makes a difference to say I am wrong
- It makes a difference to accept a Brother for who his is not for what you want him to be
- It makes a difference to discuss issues in Lodge
- It makes a difference to listen to a Brother when he speaks
- It makes a difference to maintain contact with all Lodge Brothers
- It makes a difference to be asked It makes a difference to care
- It makes a difference to be positive It makes a difference to help
- It makes a difference to say "I love you!" - The three most important words in any language because it does not matter how old you are, how young you are, or your station in life, LOVE is the fuel of happiness, which everyone seeks and wants. To belong, accepted and understood that is to be loved!

My Brothers, it makes a difference to see the beauty of our Fraternity and all the positive things associated with it. It makes a difference to me that you are a part of, and active in, a vibrant Masonry. Remember, every time we attend Lodge, we give the greatest gift we can to each other – TIME – a precious commodity because it is limited. "Sometimes, when we are searching for something and cannot find it, chances are we already have it!" – Dr. M.E. Matthews, LLB,

PhD. Let us not become blinded by the search; let us not fix things that are not broken; let us begin the search within and realize our success as a person and as a mason.

Masonry cannot be successful if that success is based upon the individual alone. We are a Fraternity – we work together in Love and Brotherhood and that means always putting our best foot forward for the benefit of all. The only person we have some degree of control over is ourselves. Who we are and what we are becomes the image we convey to those around us.

Remember, we are suppose to be practising FAITH – in a superior power; HOPE – in our future world; LOVE – for each other. All of these together create happiness and success for all. Wayne Dyer said; you can be a “Host to your CREATOR or a hostage to your EGO!” The choice is yours.

The Grand Lodge Elected Officers have already had a meeting to discuss possible areas for development and growth in the Fraternity.

The **Report on the Condition of the Order**, June 4, 2011 mentioned five recommendations. Some of those recommendations are in the process of becoming a reality.

1. **DDGM's will have a workshop on how to write reports.**
2. **Assistance will be given to Lodges to set up a workshop for outlining the duties and responsibility of each Lodge office.**
3. **Educational Officers are in the process of being established in each Lodge and District.**
4. **A workshop will be held dealing with District Association development.**
5. **District Associations are very important and in many jurisdictions, are integral components in their Grand Lodge governance.**

The newly elected officers have discussed following areas and they strongly believe that this should be an ongoing plan and carried on by the elected officers until completed.

- **Job descriptions for Grand Lodge Officers (being done now) other than what is outlined in the Installation Ritual for Grand Lodge Officers.**
- **Grand Lodge Officers will meet monthly to oversee our renewal process. This is important in order to know what issues there are and to be able to use the talents of all officers as well, it keeps all informed and on the same page.**
- **Grand Lodge Officers and BOGP will work together for the benefit of all so there is consistency and a sharing of information. Communication is so very important in our organization. We should all be on the same page, working toward the same goals.**

- **Grand Lodge Officers are to attend District meetings and assist in any manner requested by the District. Each elected officer has been assigned Districts to oversee and assist the DDGM's.**
- **Grand Master will attend District Meetings and assist in any manner requested. It is incumbent upon me as Grand Master to lead and look after my Grand Lodge Jurisdiction.**
- **Grand Lodge Officers will travel with the Grand Master whenever possible so that all officers get exposed to the brethren. It also returns some of the pomp and ceremony we have lost. All Brothers are invited to travel as well. It fosters a feeling of pride and interest in our Lodges and the Brethren; a key to our success.**
- **Closer co-ordination and work with Concordant Bodies to showcase Masonry as a fraternity and what each has to offer to the other for Masonic growth.**
- **“Masonic Think Tank” with input from Master Masons that would give an opportunity to all masons to share their feelings and ideas about the fraternity and how Masonry can move forward in the 21st Century.**
- **Town Hall Meetings to discuss issues in each District. These meetings will be conducted by the DDGM's and assisted by Grand Lodge Officers. This is an opportunity for DDGM's to know how their District feels and gives the opportunity to vent which is very important to success.**
- **Review past Constitutions as a means to determine the omissions in our present document, which lacks direction and content. So as we begin this journey of renewal... I want you to know I am your GM and I am approachable. I will be in my office at Grand Lodge Offices five days a week and you are free to visit for coffee and a chat.**

Together, I know in my heart, we will be successful because you care. Work with me my Brothers to rekindle the enthusiasm needed to make our Fraternity strong. Thank you for the honour you have bestowed upon me. I will do my best to meet your expectations and hopes. May the Supreme Architect bless each and every one of you with the bounties of life He so freely gives each day and may we always be blessed with love that we can give freely to others.

God Bless you All.