



Light Of The Great Land



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March 2009

Grand Master's Message

M.W.B. John R. "Bo" Cline
Grand Master, Free and Accepted Masons of Alaska

It is a great honor and privilege to represent the members of the Grand Lodge of Alaska as your Grand Master, and I wish to thank you for the trust and confidence you have reposed in me. I promise that I will work hard this year to earn that trust. I know that together we can work for the betterment of our Grand Lodge and achieve our vision that "Alaskan Freemasons are a respected fraternity comprised of men with high moral character who make a positive difference in their community and the lives of their fellowman."

I have chosen 'Unity' as my theme for this year and the 'TROWEL' as its symbol. My goal is to "spread the cement of brotherly love and affection, uniting us into one sacred band of friends and brothers – among whom no contention should ever exist, but that noble contention or rather emulation of who best can work and best agree." It is important that we work diligently to cement our relationships of brotherly love and friendship, remembering the Master's closing charge which admonishes each and every one of us to "do good unto all." Masonry is a kind and gentle craft, and Masons are called upon to assist their fellow brothers, striving to make them better men and aiding in their reformation, if ever they should go astray. Forgiveness, therefore, should be our watch word.

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FIGHTING LODGE APATHY

by W.: Tim Bryce, PM, MPS

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"A Foot Soldier for Freemasonry"

Not too long ago I attended a roundtable discussion of local Lodge officers from my district to discuss the state of our Lodges and what, if anything can be done to improve our current situation. Inevitably, the talks primarily focused on declining membership and rising operating costs of the Lodge. One question which caught my attention though was from a young Junior Warden who complained attendance at meetings was substantially down indicating apathy in the Craft. He claimed this was their Number One problem right now and was at a loss as to what was causing it. I looked at him incredulously and said, "You're kidding, right? You really don't know why they are not attending?"

He said no; the officers of his Lodge were baffled by what was going on.

I told him it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure it out. There are primarily three reasons for apathy in the Lodge:

1. Lodge activities have become boringly repetitive; the same old things are said over and over again, the same old pasta or rubber chicken is served, and nothing of substance is happening. Basically, the Lodge has fallen into a rut and is having trouble getting out of it. To do so, it is necessary to somehow stimulate the Craft. This can be done many different ways; perhaps a guest speaker or special topic,

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Deputy Grand Masters Message

This year, I will also strive to create a closer bond of friendship between the Grand Lodge of Alaska and our Appendant and Concordant bodies. Some of these relationships have been strained in recent years, and I will endeavor to strengthen the ties that the Grand Lodge of Alaska has with all Masonic bodies within our jurisdiction. We must remember that we are all members of the same family whose common parent is Freemasonry.

One final note, I recently learned that my Great Uncle Roger Ellis Williams was installed as the second Worshipful Master of Unity Lodge No.198 in North Bend, Washington in 1913. When contemplating this past event, it seems rather prophetic that I would choose Unity as my theme this year.

I look forward to an enjoyable and prosperous year for the Grand Lodge of Alaska and I urge all Alaskan Masons to join me in making this declaration a reality.∞

Senior Grand Warden's Message

My Brothers, I would like to thank you for electing me as your Sr. Grand Warden; this is a great honor.

Let's talk about what is Freemasonry. Freemasonry is perhaps the most misunderstood, yet popular, "secret society". It is also one of the most visible. Every state in the United States and almost every country in the world have a Grand Lodge of Freemasons. No simple, one line definition satisfactorily describes what freemasonry is. It is a philosophy and a system of morality and ethics – and a pretty basic one at that. The degrees are a progression and must take place in proper order. Each candidate takes an obligation. Depending on the Lodge, advancing from one degree to the next can take days, weeks, months and yes, even years. A member must prove his proficiency in each degree before he can move up. So please, my Brothers, study your parts and learn them so your candidates can learn from you.

Ron Ackerman, SGW

I want to thank you Brothers for your confidence in me, by electing me as your Deputy Grand Master.

Working with and for you this past two years has been a great pleasure. I have enjoyed traveling and meeting with all the Brothers in this great State. It has been our position to listen, learn and make changes as necessary to make this Grand Lodge the best. As a team we will continue to evaluate and make changes as necessary.

The Grand Lodge has put in place a Strategic plan which we continue to monitor and update, moving toward our goals. The Strategic plan can be found on our web site at www.alaska-mason.org, which has a new look. The web site also has an events calendar which will help everyone traveling find when meetings are held in the city you may be visiting. Remember all the Lodges would enjoy your visit, and you will also gain new friendships. **Make a goal for yourself this year Brother to attend your Lodge or visit another Lodge at least once.**

The elected officers have developed a Brain Book to help lead the elected officers by defining the duties/responsibilities and deadlines for each elected office. This book will help all in the future.

All that we do would not be possible if it were not for everyone being part of the team. A special Thanks goes to RW Jerry Wasson, RW Jim Grubbs, and VW Thomas Schram for all they do to keep the Grand Lodge office operating, providing information to all that call.

The Grand Lodge Communication in Kodiak was a huge success, business was conducted and a good time was had by all that attended. Congratulations to those elected and appointed to serve the Grand Lodge of Alaska for the ensuing year.

Fraternally;

RW Johnnie L. Wallace

“Masonry is one of the most sublime and perfect institutions that ever was formed for the advancement of happiness, and the general good of mankind, creating, in all its varieties, universal benevolence and brotherly love.”

Duke of Sussex

From Worshipful Brother Christopher Hodapp's Blog

My all-too-brief visit to Kodiak, Alaska and the annual communication of the [Grand Lodge of Alaska](#) was truly a once in a lifetime experience, and I owe a tremendous wealth of gratitude to Most Worshipful Brother Jared Decker, now the immediate Past Grand Master, and his lovely bride Suni, for their friendship and their hospitality. All of the brethren were great fun and made me feel at home. Kodiak is a remarkable place to visit.

Despite fears of the explosion of the Mount Redoubt volcano that never happened, and eight inches of snow that DID happen, the airport was opened in time Thursday morning for almost all of the attendees to at last make it in. GM Decker had counted on the local hotel's promise of the construction of a new convention center in time for this event, but when it became obvious that wasn't going to happen, the Kodiak American Legion Hall and the Elk's Lodge both came through with facilities to accommodate the grand lodge activities. In keeping with their promise to overfeed me, the opening night dinner at the Legion featured cod fresh off the boat and the biggest King Crab legs I've ever encountered.

BTW, anyone who thinks the American Bald Eagle is endangered hasn't been to Kodiak. Entire flocks of them fill the trees, line the roofs and stand on every light pole around town.

The Grand Lodge of Alaska is in the largest state of the union, yet is one of the smallest with just 19 lodges. Alaskan lodges were under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Washington until the Alaskan's voted to form their own in 1981. Nevertheless, close to a hundred brethren attended this year's event, with visitors from across the US and Canada. This despite historically discouraging weather almost every February ("Last year in Fairbanks it was 65 below zero! Ya shoulda been here!").

Again, my deepest thanks to everyone who made my trip to Kodiak a memorable one. And congratulations to Most Worshipful Brother Bo Cline, the newest Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Alaska. ∞

"Freemasonry is not a religion or a system of religion. It is the handmaid of all seeking truth, and light, and right. It is a centre of union of good and true men of every race and tongue, who believe in God and practise the sacred duties of morality. It has no politics; it knows no sect; no hierarch; no Caesar. Therein freedom reigns; therein the tyrant and the oppressor have no place; the intolerant are not; and the pessimist and the misanthrope are unknown."

"Freemasonry, The Conservator of Liberty and the Universal Brotherhood of Man"

By M W John Hamilton Graham LL.D.

Junior Grand Warden's Message

I had a wonderful time at the 28th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Alaska in Kodiak. I met several new friends and brethren from all over the state of Alaska and several representatives from other Grand Lodge Jurisdictions. I hope the fellowship continues for many years.

Most Worshipful Jared Decker and all of the brethren in Kodiak hosted a fantastic Grand Lodge Session with delicious food, friendship, and great Kodiak hospitality. The only exception was the horrible weather. Some of our brethren couldn't arrive on Wednesday because of this weather, but many braved the boredom of the delay and arrived successfully on Thursday.

Thanks to all of the Brethren for your vote of confidence by electing me Junior Grand Warden. I hope that my visits to your Lodges will renew old friendships for some and create new friendships for others.

The Grand Master, John "Bo" Cline has charged us with many challenges during the upcoming year and I plan to roll up my sleeves and get busier and I hope you will join me.

In Brotherly Love,

Jerry W. Pinion,
Junior Grand Warden

**Would you like to
have a picture of
your lodge
published here? If
so, send me a .jpg
image of it!**

OUT AND ABOUT

SPECIAL EVENTS

MARCH

GM RECEPTION STERLING LODGE #22 - 3/18

GM RECEPTION DISTRICT 2, KENAI #11, SEWARD #6 AT KENAI – 3/26

APRIL

ANCHORAGE 17 – LADIES NIGHT – TBA

GM VISIT PRINCE HALL GL OF ALASKA, ANCHORAGE – 4/18-21

GM RECEPTION DISTRICT 5, MATANUSKA #7, IDITAROD #20 AT PALMER – 4/21

GM RECEPTION EAGLE RIVER #13 – 4/27

GM RECEPTION DISTRICT 3, GLACIER 10, AURORA #15, ANCHORAGE #17, IN ANCHORAGE 4/29

MAY

GM RECEPTION VALDEZ #4 – 5/12

GM RECEPTION MT MCKINLEY #5 – 5/14

ANCHORAGE 17 – FELLOWSHIP NIGHT - 5/17

June

Anchorage 17 – Jr. Warden's Picnic - TBA

Aurora 16 – Jr. Warden's Picnic - TBA

Eagle River 13 – Scottish Highland Games Hamburger booth 6/20 & 6/21 -

LIGHT OF THE GREATLAND

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2. Perhaps a slight change in the format (hold refreshment before the meeting as opposed to afterwards or vice versa), serve meals on china as opposed to paper plates, perhaps a different kind of meal altogether (someday I'll have to tell you about my Deep Fried Turkey dinner or "Spamfest"), perhaps something as simple as a slight modification in dress, etc. Small changes add up over time and do not go unnoticed by the Craft. They should be viewed as positive, beneficial, and upbeat.
3. Attending Lodge has become very political in nature. Bickering and back biting is not conducive for attendance. Members experience enough of this during the day at work or in their personal lives, they don't want to listen to it in Lodge. I know too many Masons who stay away from Lodge for this reason alone. They want harmony in the Lodge, not contention; camaraderie, not competition. Petty political power struggles are costing Lodges a lot of sideliners.
4. It is perceived that attending Lodge does not add value to a person's life. Brothers will stop coming the moment they believe they are not getting anything out of attending Lodge. If they are not learning anything or enjoying some camaraderie, they will stop coming. Further, if they believe the Lodge is not accomplishing anything of merit, such as supporting a local charity or tackling some kind of project, that it is stagnant, they will lose interest quickly. If they believe the Lodge is apathetic, they will act as such in return. It is contagious.

Grief can take care of itself, but to get the full value of joy you must have somebody to divide it with. —
Brother Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain)

These three reasons do not necessarily pertain to Brothers who live far away from Lodge or who cannot attend due to health reasons. But then again, maybe they do. For example, for those

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Brothers who live far away, has the Lodge made an attempt to find out what the Brothers are doing and reported it in Lodge (or perhaps in a Trestleboard newsletter)? The names of Brothers may become obscure over time but are rarely forgotten. Further, they like to be remembered, be it a birthday or some important anniversary. As to Brothers who have difficulty attending Lodge due to health reasons, has there been an attempt to contact the Brother and provide some assistance for attending Lodge? If a Brother is remembered by a Lodge, the Brother will likely remember the Lodge when it is in need of something, such as a donation.

Combating apathy in the Lodge requires some proactive leadership by the Lodge officers, not reactive. It is necessary to plan meaningful Lodge events in advance, promote and execute accordingly, and follow-up to review what worked well and what didn't. Before you can get the Craft to perspire, you need to inspire them first.

You will not have any problems with apathy as long as the Craft believes the Lodge is fun and interesting; they will WANT to come to Lodge as opposed to feeling coerced into attending. But if Lodge is perceived as boringly repetitive, political, or lacks substance, your Lodge room will look more like a racquetball court as opposed to a Masonic Lodge.

Keep the Faith.

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"If you have knowledge, let others light their candles with it." — *Brother Winston Churchill*

News Article from District One

By R.W.B. John Johnson, DDGM

I would like to congratulate Tanana Lodge No 3 on winning the Buckley C. Hazen award for the largest increase in membership for 2008. That is one award that I never thought Tanana Lodge would win. I offer my sincerest congratulations to the Officers of Tanana Lodge on their hard work.

Some dates to mark on your calendar Saturday March 28, 2009 District 1 will be conducting Leadership Training at the Tanana Masonic Temple. Registration forms are at all the lodges. All Master Masons are invited and encouraged to attend. The Annual District Meeting will be Saturday April 11, 2009 will be at Tanana Masonic Temple at 1 p.m. we will be going over the Enter Apprentice degree this year.

Whitehorse Lodge No 46 and Tanana Lodge No3 are trying something different for International Days this year. They are going to be held in Dawson City during Labor Day weekend. It should be a fun weekend.



Some Great Picture of members of the Masonic Family having fun while attending Valdez Lodge #4's 100th Anniversary, August 2008

