

## **Deputy Grand Master Message**

Brethren;

By now all of the Lodges are back at work. I hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable summer. In the following months we will be having our Inspirational Meetings at our Lodges, and hopefully we will invite our family and friends, some who are not Masons. I have often been asked by some of my friends and co-worker why did I become a Mason and also what is a Mason and what do they do? I usually tell them what a great fraternity it is and why I became a Mason . I am sure each of us have our different reasons.

I would like to share with you what I found in some of the material that I had been reading. It is about Masonry in the Blue Lodge. The symbolic Blue Lodge is the foundation and corner stone of Freemasonry. This is the local unit which has the daily responsibility for implementing the programs and policies of the fraternity. The primary mission of a Lodge is to create Master Masons. This activity should extend beyond the conferral of degrees and continue to provide general Masonic education for all members. These Lodges have been termed " Blue Lodges, " because " Blue is emblematic of friendship, a peculiar characteristic of ancient craft Masonry. " The color for borders of aprons, collars, and other regalia of the Symbolic Lodge is Blue.

From " Time Immemorial " it has been the custom and practice of Masonic Lodges to relieve human distress wherever it existed. the principle tenets of Freemasonry are: Love Relief and Truth. Some may consider that Relief means to extend Charity. However, when relief is extended to a worthy individual it is an act of Brotherly Love rather than Charity.

Freemasonry endeavors to impress this fact upon the members. There are many ways to extend Relief rather than financial... a friendly word in time of distress, a visit , a sounding board for problems, etc. Masonic Lodges are dedicated to St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist. St. John the Baptist has been the patron of Freemasonry since the very earliest writings of the craft.

The personal attributes and teaching of St.'s John exemplify Masonic teaching and practices. St John the Baptist is well known for his personal integrity which induced him under the most adverse circumstances, to adhere to the obligation he felt he owed to God and to his fellowman. St. John the Evangelist continually admonished his followers and readers to the cultivation of brotherly love. The entire thread of his Gospel and Epistles is that of the need for brotherly love.

Brethren it is a great honor to serve each and every one of you as your Deputy Grand Master, but more especially to be able to call you my brother. May the God of love and peace delight to dwell with and bless you.

Fraternally

***David J. DeChant Sr., Deputy Grand Master***

September 2011

## **From the South** Are You Listening?

The five human senses of hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling and tasting are common to all humans, but sometimes go unnoticed by those of us who have good command of each sense. For example, there is much effort and preparation done by most speakers in order to make a convincing presentation. Where do speakers go for preparation? Research and experience go a long way but most will use highly developed listening skills, sometimes unknowingly, as a large part of their base for knowledge.

Our listening skills can be developed to the point where we can demonstrate to others we are in fact listening and insure the other person their needs have been heard. Active listening is a skill that can be learned, it just takes practice.

The technique of active listening is really an extension of the Golden Rule. To know how to listen to someone else, think about how you would want to be listened to. Can you see a good use of this practice in some of our lodge discussions?

There are several things all good listeners know. Sit up straight or lean forward slightly to show your attentiveness through body language. Make it a point to maintain eye contact. Have you ever tried to talk to people about a serious matter and they would not put away their cell phone or continue looking at the computer screen? Respond appropriately to show that you understand. Say words such as 'really', 'interesting' or ask a question if it clarifies something.

Another good rule is to focus solely on what the speaker is saying, reserving your answer preparation for later. Refrain from giving advice unless asked for it. Even if the speaker is launching a complaint against you, wait until he finishes to defending yourself. The speaker has made his point without interruption and won't feel the need to repeat it and you will know the whole argument before you respond. This method will take practice and self-control.

After the speaker has finished, engage yourself by paraphrasing and/or asking questions such as, "So you are saying". Don't let natural pauses in the conversation panic you. Learn to use them to better understand all points of view.

This skill of active listening was vividly demonstrated to me while an instructor for the U.S. military. A class room had been established in a clearing in the woods complete with bleachers for a company size unit. A public address system powered by a generator was utilized so the speaker could be heard. My assistant would always listen and tell me the generator needed refueling. Most of the time, he would be correct and add fuel just before the engine stopped. After some time of observing this action, I became curious and asked him, "How can you tell when the generator is about to run out of fuel?" His reply was, "Bill, I have those attentive ears, you know about those attentive ears, don't you?"

As your listening skills improve, so will your aptitude for conversation. Many of our Masonic discussions call for a moderator. Good listening skills are a must for this position as well as telling when the generator is about to run out of fuel.

Fraternally,

**William R. Logan, Junior Grand Warden**  
September 2011