

District Deputy Grand Master's Official Visit

Temple Lodge No. 324

Accompanying Lodge - Hugh Murray Lodge No. 602

Masonic Centre of Hamilton

Tuesday October 14, 2008

Brethren, if I asked what tradition happens on the 2nd Monday in October, I'm sure many if not all would answer, the Thanksgiving Holiday and you would be correct. Well, you could have not asked for any better weather than what we had this holiday weekend.

Normally, my wife and I and sometimes our daughter travel to Chicago and celebrate Canadian Thanksgiving with my other daughter and her family. However, this year was to be different. Since my daughter and her family would be coming this way in a few weeks to attend a function, we decided to stay home. My thought was that I was going to hook onto our 5th wheel travel trailer and go away for the weekend, but my wife and daughter had other plans. My daughter was cooking her turkey on Sunday and we would be there for dinner and then on Monday we would all go to the Balls Falls Festival for a family outing. Needless to say, you know who won. So Sunday afternoon I went to my daughters and while the women were inside getting everything ready I took a couple of drinks and a cigar and sat out on the deck, basking in the fall sunshine. It was there that I started thinking.

Instead of being annoyed about the fact that I didn't get to do what I wanted, I looked around and thought how lucky I was. Not taking the trailer out was not such a big deal.

There will be others times that I can use my trailer, and besides here I am relaxing in the

sun and about to enjoy a dinner with people that are important to me, my family. The point of Thanksgiving is to remember the things we have to be grateful for. It's our special time to give thanks... not just for the obvious, like food, but for the thousands of fortunate moments, the multitude of blessings that we receive each year. Isn't it wonderful that we don't have to worry where our next meal is coming from or where we will be sleeping tonight?

I'm sure we can recall those old grade school lessons about the Pilgrims and all their hardships. As a group they shared with each other, farming together on community property. They starved and suffered together too. But, they hung in there and worked together and eventually overcame the obstacles. Let's look at today. I hope everyone took the opportunity to vote today. Even though we may not agree with all the ideas of the various parties, we have the right to voice our opinion and vote. We should be thankful for this country we call home and even though it may not be utopia, it isn't all that bad. The freedoms that we enjoy, for example, speech and expression, to travel freely, to own our property, etc. are cornerstones of our democratic country. There are still places in this world that have not learned these fundamental truths. Yet we still think we have it rough. It is no wonder people that come from these other countries have trouble understanding our complaints.

Giving thanks is not always as easy as it sounds. We tend to remember the bad things much more easily than the good. Some times we have to think of the good things that happened because something bad happened first. For example, we all have been behind a slow driver and cursed him and then to find out around the corner was a policeman and it hadn't been for that slower driver I would have been speeding and got a ticket. It is

important not to focus on what you don't have but rather focus on what you have. As I said earlier, think about how fortunate you are to have food, a place to sleep, and a safe neighborhood to live with your family.

When I look around this room I see people that I can say I'm thankful are my friends.

The lodge has shown us what is important in life and I'm thankful the way that the craft gives to others. I am also thankful for those people who made life hard for me or challenged me to accomplish more. Because of them I may have achieved goals that I may have thought were unattainable. Even those people that were cruel may have made me vow never to treat someone that way. So take the negative and make it a positive.

Finally brethren, remember that hard times make good time sweeter. Also keep in mind that obstacles and challenges not only make you stronger, but they force you to explore outside of the comfortable routine that you've settled into. Without challenges, there can be no progress. Without obstacles there can be no achievement. Be thankful for the opportunities that they provide.

Thank you