

**Official Visit to Westmount Lodge No 671**  
**April 22nd, 2014**

"My Sincere Thanks"

Brethren, as you are no doubt already aware, this is my last official visit. If you feel the need for applause, I can only hope your hands are together with an expression of accolade and not a big sigh of relief. Although my term is not yet over, I feel the need at this juncture to express my sincere thanks to the brethren of Hamilton District 'C'. I am so grateful for the support you have shown to me personally, but also to the initiatives and projects of our great district.

Support can be measured on so many terms, attitude, co-operation, attendance, physical effort and above all, the inexhaustible generosity that comes from a good heart that typifies all Masons. You my brethren have exemplified these traits. I am just a mere cog in the vast engine of our great fraternity. You my brethren are the ones that make it all happen. If I have provided a glimmer of guiding light along the way and motivated you to take a journey with me, then I feel I have accomplished much.

Every 'well-oiled' machine' is only effective if every part works in harmony with minimal friction. I am so pleased to say that 'piques and quarrels' are virtually non-existent in our District. Believe me, this is a credit to the excellent disposition of our members. As I listen to some of the other District Deputy Grand Masters throughout the province, I count my blessing that we find ourselves at peace.

It would naturally be my desire that this continue in perpetuity. It is apparent that we all take to heart the Apron Charge in the First Degree.

When I was elected to this position, I heard many variations of the theme that this was *'my year'*. That may be true in so far as there is only one DDGM for each of the 44 districts, but I say that this was *'our year'*. If you recall from reading the opening paragraph in my Trestle Board, I said "my goal is to look back at the end of my term with great pride on all that 'we' have accomplished together". Of our accomplishments, I believe we are all taking a closer look at the quality of our Ritual Work and making improvement wherever possible. I believe we have engaged more of the programs of our Grand Lodge with greater diligence and attention. I know we had one of the best attendance records at both our Fall District Meeting and DDGM Reception and Dance. And, by all accounts thus far, the brethren of District 'C' account for more than 60 percent of all those attending the Grand Master's Reception this coming Friday.

If I may be selfish for a moment, we have had attendance at Official Visits, on average of more than 50 brethren. Do you know how fantastic that expression of support means to the Master of the Lodge being visited? It brings an air of vitality and enthusiasm that borders on an unparalleled spiritual experience of brotherly love.

After each Official Visit, I along with the District Secretary are required to submit a report to Grand Lodge on the condition of Masonry in each lodge that I visit. I am sure that not every word penned by my hand on Official Visit reports was received with jubilation.

Actually, I don't have to wonder...I know this to be true. I never viewed this position of DDGM to be some patronage appointment, or an opportunity to play dress-up. I took the responsibilities very seriously. My role in the grand scheme of things is to be the Grand Master's representative in this District. The job entails observing the Condition of Masonry in the District and reporting an accurate account of the same for the perusal and attention of the Grand Lodge Committee of the same name. Any comments I have made that are contrary to exuberant expectations were intended to open a dialogue amongst the brethren that they might address certain issues and make a further step towards excellence. My comments and addresses have tried to reach for this ideal also. The desire of my heart has been nothing short of contributing to the long-term prosperity of our great fraternity. At the risk of paraphrasing a well-known musical artist, Pink Floyd, I believe together we have added "another brick in the wall". We have taken one more step forward towards building on, and adding to an already strong foundation.

During the summer months after Grand Lodge last year, I spent considerable time contemplating the theme and content of my Official Visit Addresses. I thought to my self that lodges have generally been doing an excellent job at presenting Masonic Education.

I decided I would not duplicate those efforts. Instead I chose to write from the heart. I chose to write about subjects that were personal and would give others a reason to pause and contemplate the message being communicated; all the time, drawing parallels to Masonic ideals and principles. Brethren, your attention, feedback and support were invaluable and further validated that I was on the right track with this approach.

Of the well-oiled machine I spoke of earlier, I had to rely on so many brethren to make things run smoothly and overcome obstacles. I had a vision, I made a plan and I then pushed the 'Go' button. What happened next was truly remarkable. Rather than wrenches dropping into the gears, Committee Chairmen stepped up to the plate and hit home runs. For some, this was their first foray into District affairs and they have performed very admirably. For others, their previous experience has put them in good stead to deal with the challenges and demands of their committee. I am so pleased with their overall performance and accomplishments. I am grateful these brethren have approached their duties not as 'another day at the office', but rather with creativity, ingenuity and perseverance. Their results are obvious and apparent.

Our District Charity this year, the Neighbour-to-Neighbour Centre, has been the beneficiary of your extreme generosity. You have consistently brought food to your regular lodge meetings and these donations are dropped off at the Centre at regular intervals.

To you my brethren, it may be just a can of soup, but to the one who has gone to bed on an empty stomach on more than one occasion, it is a gift from God. Thank you! Financially, donations are now in excess of \$10,000 and we are not yet at the end of our year. Again...thank you!

I think I used in one of my Official Visit Addresses the expression, "to know and not to do is still not to know". It is one of the many mantras I cherish that holds such great wisdom in so few words. I had a pretty good idea of what to expect this year and I thought I was fully equipped for my duties, but you can never be fully prepared for the reality until you are actually doing it. Although I laid out my proposed itinerary on a calendar which I share with my wife Christina, I thought it would have been better to answer her inquiry about my absence from home by saying "I will be out at meetings as often as the square root of infinity multiplied by 4", ie: Fraternal Visits, Official Visits, Installations, Committee Planning Meetings, District meetings, Grand Lodge meetings and training sessions, Past Masters' Association and the like. I am by no means a martyr. I have enjoyed every minute of it because the results are tangible and worthwhile.

As hard as you try not to err, I have made my share of faux pas, least of which was bringing greetings from Grand Lodge and referring to our Grand Master by the name of the Deputy Grand Master.

My Advisors were quick to point out that I had more opportunities to get it right, second chances if you will, and at no time did they compare me to Rob Ford.

It is generally accepted that you reap what you sow or in other words, you get what you give. If these statements imply a reciprocal proportion or equality, then they are, in my opinion, false. It's no secret that I have exerted a lot of time and energy into my responsibilities this year. But what is truly incredible, I have received that back ten fold. The brethren of this district have stood behind me and have given much of themselves beyond what was ever expected. There are so many examples I have recorded in my diary over the past year that I run the risk of leaving out someone's accomplishments if I tried to highlight the entire list.

Of course, one of the sad but necessary duties has been to attend and participate in quite a few Masonic Memorial Services. We have all experienced sorrow this year with the loss of several beloved brethren. We will mourn their passing and cherish their memory.

At the same time, we have celebrated with joy the birth of children to some of our brethren and their families. This circle of life should remind us all to make the most of our day while it is yet bright.

You my brethren have expanded my knowledge and understanding of passion, humility, discretion, commitment, and above all, Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. I am the better person for this experience and I have many of you to thank.

Before I conclude, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of an individual who has worked quietly and modestly in the background. He has performed his task with great competence and diligence and his enthusiasm has been an inspiration; my friend and brother, our District Secretary, W. Bro. Jordan Slade.

Brethren, to those who have preceded me, I thank you for all you have accomplished and to those who will follow, I trust the future holds bright prospects for our continued success.

Thank you for your kind attention.

R.W. Bro. Geoffrey S. Allan  
District Deputy Grand Master, Hamilton District 'C'.