



THE DEPUTY'S NEWSLETTER

September 2009

Dear Sublime Princes of the Royal Secret:

The Annual Meeting of our Supreme Council is now history. Held in Boston at the end of last month, approximately 1800 Thirty-thirds and their wives, together with a few Thirty-second degree Masons, came together for three days of interesting events and fun. At the general session sections of the new DVD of the 4° were shown. It is not too different from what we see in our Valleys when the work is well done, but it is made with high production values and is a sharp product. The Commander says it will be distributed to the Valleys at the beginning of next year. You will have the option of using it instead of a live conferral of the degree, but if your Valley would prefer to continue doing it "live" then that is fine too. The idea is to add flexibility. The DVD can be shown in front of other degree work or on its own. Candidly speaking, I think this is a concession to those who feel it is not a "real" degree. As a DVD it can continue to be used, but without the expenditure of time and effort a floor production involves. It is possible that more of our degrees will become available in DVD format, but much depends upon how this first venture goes.

A really unique feature of the general session was the work of a very talented ventriloquist whose amazing puppet work was interspersed among the reports and announcements of the meeting. His act was hilarious, and did a lot to illustrate the Commander's insistence that our meetings be enjoyable. My favorite line was when the puppet asked Judy McNaughton if her underwear had holes in it. She shook her head no and the puppet fired back "Then how do you get your legs in it?" It was great fun but the intent was serious: the Commander was saying by example that we must lighten up and relax in our work. All too often we become so bound up with our protocol and dignity we forget we are just humans who wear funny hats and jewels and call ourselves Masons.

Important for me was the announcement of two of my Vermont brothers as nominees for the 33° in Philadelphia next August. These are William "Sandy" Karstens of the Valley of Burlington and Douglas White of the Valley of Montpelier. Both of these men have displayed the very highest dedication to our Rite and have skillfully and cheerfully accepted the many tasks and offices pressed upon them. Their focus on working hard for Masonry

makes it plain that it means a lot to them, and this nomination is intended to demonstrate to them that they mean a lot to us. I will be proud to welcome them into the ranks of Sovereign Grand Inspectors General.

Equally important was the retirement of Fred Jackson as an Active member of the Council and the installation of Donald Duquette to take his place as an Active member of the Supreme Council from Vermont. Don is a successful businessman and a tireless Masonic worker. Besides heading all of our Bodies except the Consistory, he is a past Valley Treasurer and Secretary. This means he understands the operations of our Valleys thoroughly. Don is also a down to earth guy and someone you can talk to. He has a big job ahead of him, and I would encourage you to welcome him when you see him and get to know Don.

Everyone agrees that the degree work we saw in Boston was the best that has been done for many years. One hundred eleven new 33rds received their rings. Our Vermont recipient was Grand Master Thomas Johnston IV, who was lucky enough to be among the small group brought up on the stage and had his ring placed on his hand by SGC McNaughton himself. I know this must have been very meaningful to Tom. I received my ring from the hand of Richard Hildebrand, which has always been a meaningful memory for me. There must have been some mix up in the seating this time, because I was placed center in the front row. Luckily I didn't need to be worried about dozing because the power of the work being done a few feet from me was just amazing.

We had the largest group of Vermonters in several years at the concluding "Vermont Supper" and I am very thankful for all who traveled down for a long or short time to visit the meeting and share in the events. It really is an overwhelming experience, brotherhood on a vast scale.

SCOTTISH RITE HAS A NEW WEB SITE

By now I hope you all have had a chance to visit our new, still being developed website, www.vermontscottishrite.com. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to brother Mason Pratt who has selflessly contributed his extraordinary design and graphic talents together with large amounts of time to its creation. But, the chief job of a web site is communication, and while the site is packed with information about the Rite in a general way, only YOU can fill in the blanks concerning your own Valley or Body. There is a calendar any brother can add to so we will all know the facts about your event. And very importantly there are news pages for each of our Valleys. I urge our members to post their newsletters, announcements, event flyers, photographs and whatever else you would like in these areas. Simply put what you have in a common electronic format and send it to Mason at mpratt@madscape.com.

The website is only a first step in the work of the new IT committee of our Council of Deliberation, and is one example of "your tax dollars at work." I am committed to bringing our Rite into the 21st Century by making modern forms of communication the way we do business. You will find a large graphics area on the site. Please use these for your publications, programs, etc.

WHERE HAVE THEY GONE?

Any salesman will tell you that it is far easier and more cost effective to sell to one who has been a customer in the past than it is to develop a new customer. Well, our “customers in the past” are our own members, who are trying to tell us something by sending in those Demit requests or, more usually, just not sending in anything at all until they become suspended, joining the ranks of our SNPDs. Sometimes it seems like we are all at the front door working to bring in Master Masons and behind our backs far too many men are slipping out the back door, never to return. My friends, they are voting with their feet. Perhaps we painted in glowing and imaginary terms what we had to offer, and the excited new member found disappointment rather quickly. In fact, we lose most of our SNPDs in the first three years after their joining. Perhaps we should keep an eye on that back door too.

Of course, men join for many reasons, and leave for many reasons too. Yet I think there is one outstanding reason men join any Masonic group: brotherhood. We offer a sense of belonging to a group with shared values and shared experiences. We know the Scottish Rite is a collection of some of the odder and more interesting members of society. Generally speaking, they are men seeking beyond the mere material qualities of life, seeking to bond and feel accepted by men of like quality. I think it is foolish to look to material things to interest these members. A flashier degree presentation is nice, pins and jewels help, interesting programs go a long ways; but in the end it is a simple hand shake, a thoughtful word, considerate listening, sharing of the experiences of life that really matter. We claim we seek the brotherhood of all men- but are we really practicing it? All those guys going out the back door have a message for us, one we may not be willing to hear.

So I would urge our Valleys not to be quick about giving up on our past customers. I think only the Valley of Burlington under Bob Gockel did a really outstanding job with this. A simple letter is not enough. Call them up. Find a brother who knows them and have him visit. PGM Jack Campbell expressed it well when he used to say “Masonry is a one on one thing.” And the time to begin this is not when they stop coming to the meetings, but on the very first night they attend. Open up your heart to them, and they will open to you. That is what Masonry is really all about.

One of my favorite quotes from the Boston meeting is Commander McNaughton saying “Here at the Supreme Council we have \$25,000 in our almoner’s fund, and we spend millions on our charities. A small sum for our own brothers, but millions for the profane world, most of whom neither know nor care about us. Isn’t this saying something about what Masonry has become?”

If we expect to have brothers in our lodges, at our meetings, then we must be brothers. I think it really is that simple.

**Eric Ginette
Deputy Inspector VT**

AN INVITATION:



**TO ALL MASTER MASONS TO JOIN THE FIRST CLASS OF 2009
ANCIENT ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE**

SEPTEMBER LODGE OF PERFECTION WORK
MONTPELIER 9/12 14° 9AM
BURLINGTON 9/17 4° 7:30PM
BRATTLEBORO 9/19 AT SPRINGFIELD 4° 10AM

COUNCIL & CHAPTER WORK
MONTPELIER 10/17 15° & 18° 10AM

VERMONT CONSISTORY SPRS
MONTPELIER 11/14 31° & 32° 10AM

INSPIRATION

CONVENIENCE

ENJOYMENT

FOR DETAILS CHECK

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