

# The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Ohio

C. MICHAEL WATSON, PGM  
GRAND SECRETARY



1 MASONIC DR.  
SPRINGFIELD, OHIO 45504  
PHONE (614) 885-5318  
TOLL FREE (800) 292-6092  
EMAIL: [mwatson@freemason.com](mailto:mwatson@freemason.com)

## Grand Secretary's Newsletter

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### Documents Sent via USPS

Several items have been mailed to each Secretary via U.S. postal service. They will be discussed in a little more detail later, but they include:

1. Review of proposed legislation to be considered at Grand Lodge.
2. Proxies for the Worshipful Master, Senior and Junior Wardens.
3. Program for Grand Lodge.

### Program For Grand Lodge

A copy of the Program for Grand Lodge was mailed. It should go to the Worshipful Master or his proxy. The specific schedule, list of officers, special events, and various procedures and rules are all detailed in the program. A few highlights which should be emphasized to delegates:

- Bring your apron.
- Bring your dues card. To enter the Annual Communication, a current dues card must be shown.

### Proxies For Delegates

If the Worshipful Master, Senior or Junior Warden of any Lodge is unable to attend Grand Lodge he should sign the proxy for his station and give the proxy to another elected officer or Past Master of the Lodge to serve as his substitute, with voting rights.

With the possibility of Plural Members the use of proxies changed a few years ago. By Code, no member can exercise more than three proxies from his "primary" Lodge. If an Ohio Mason holds an elected office as a Plural Member in one or more other Lodges, he may carry an additional proxy — but only one proxy from each "plural" Lodge. If a Plural Member is serving as WM, SW, or JW of a "plural" Lodge, he can be a delegate for that position, and carry just one additional proxy for the "plural" Lodge.

If you have any questions please check with the Credentials Committee when you register at Grand Lodge.

### Proposed Legislation

In compliance with the Code, a booklet that contains the text of proposed legislation which has been received by the Grand Lodge for consideration at the Annual Communication in October, has been mailed.

There are 14 pieces of legislation printed in the booklet. Items designated with numerals (2016-1 through 2016-10) have laid over the required one year and will be voted on at this annual session.

The items designated with letters (2016-A through 2016-D) were received after last year's Grand Lodge. Several are seeking "immediate consideration" from Grand Lodge.

The goal of this booklet is to allow Lodges to discuss these various items in advance. Delegates should take this book to Grand Lodge to assist them during the deliberations.

Remember, delegates should retain the right to vote by their own conscience, after listening to debate. They are not to be bound by directions from the Lodge or other brethren, given to them before Grand Lodge.

### **Submitting Your Lodge Election Results in November**

***Immediately*** following your Lodge Annual Meeting in November you will need to enter your election results in MORI. You will enter your Certificate of Election in MORI for your **2017** Officers. Please remember, the year of your entry will be 2017 and not 2016.

We publish and distribute the annual Grand Lodge of Ohio Masonic Directory from the information that you have entered into MORI. The quicker you enter this information following your Annual Meeting, the sooner we can get this annual directory published and sent to you.

### **Must Have Your Correct Email Address**

When entering your 2017 officers please double-check that we have your, i.e. Lodge Secretary, current email address. It is essential that we have current, correct email and contact information for the Master, Secretary, and the Treasurer.

Please enter updated contact information for your officers throughout the year. It is crucial that we have the correct, current address of the Lodge Secretary for our standalone mailing system. This system does not update from MORI. We have to make the updates manually ourselves. Please notify the Grand Lodge Office when the Lodge Secretary has a new address.

### **207th Grand Lodge Session Planned**

The 207th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Ohio will be held at the Kallahari Resort & Convention Center, 7000 Kallahari Drive, Sandusky, OH, on October 14 & 15, 2016.

Full information on hotel, meal, and special event reservations was sent to each Lodge in May.

Details for Grand Lodge Annual Communication events are on the Grand Lodge Web page, [www.freemason.com](http://www.freemason.com).

### **Tax Exempt Status Explained**

There continues to be a misunderstanding about the tax status of Lodges in Ohio.

All Lodges are “non profit” organizations, according to the IRS. They are NOT “charitable” organizations. Lodges are classified as 501 ( c ) (10) groups, while a “charitable” group is listed as a 501 ( c ) (3).

A “non profit” organization, such as a Lodge, is not charged income taxes, but it must pay sales and property taxes (unless an exemption has been granted). If an individual gives a cash gift to a “non profit,” that donation CANNOT be deducted from the individual’s personal income taxes.

A “charitable” organization, such as the Ohio Masonic Home, or the Grand Lodge Charitable Foundation, as 501 (c) (3) organizations, can be exempt from income, sales and property taxes.

An individual making a cash donation to a “charitable” group can deduct that gift from his income taxes.

All Lodges and Temple Companies MUST file an annual IRS 990 form to retain their non-profit status.

### **Lodge Mergers**

If you are contemplating a merger with another Lodge, please let our office know. We can help explain the process and what steps need to be followed in order to achieve a smooth consolidation.

### **Sister Jurisdiction Service Awards**

If you are asked to present an out-of-state service award, please remember to follow-up by notifying our Office that the presentation

was made. We then can close the loop by letting the Sister Grand Jurisdiction know.

### **Deaths Since our Last Issue**

- George J. Christopher, Harbor Light #746; Past Grand Tyler; passed 8/3/16
- Richard A. Fromson, University Heights #738; PDDGM 22nd District; passed 9/7/15
- Jack E. Gang, Star #187; PDDGM 21st District; passed 9/15/15
- Ira M. Willett, Golden Rule #562; PDDGM 16th District; passed 10/18/15

### **Endowed Membership Fund Distribution**

Endowed Membership distribution was calculated in July by the Grand Lodge Investment Committee and approved by the Grand Lodge Advisory Committee. Owing to the volatility of the stock market, returns on the Endowed Member Fund this year were flat.

Distribution for \$600 and \$800 Endowed Members will be \$21 and \$28 respectively.

Endowed Member checks will be disbursed to lodges the first week of November.

### **MORI “Request Dues Card” Button**

Anytime you press the “Request Dues Card” button it buffers up the card as a requested card, which is where the charge on your invoice comes from. We have noticed that some Secretaries will initiate the card by clicking that button when it is not necessary. When you enter an event to Raise, Affiliate, or Reinstate this automatically queues up a message for us to send you a card at no cost.

This button should be pressed only when it is a true request for a lost or damaged replacement card. With the new plastic cards, there will be a \$2.00 charge for a replacement card. Many lodges are passing this charge to the member as it was his action that resulted in the request for a replacement.

### **MORI Member Verification Checker**

There is a MORI member status checker on the MORI login screen, <https://oh.moriapp.com/mori/>. This is a web based application that allows you to enter a person’s numerical membership number and MORI will return his current membership status. This will allow you to check a person’s membership status from any intelligent device from the internet. You do not need a MORI account to get to this web site.

### **Note on Dispensation Requests**

When requesting a Dispensation through your DDGM, please allow time for the process to work. Submit your request at least two weeks prior to the event.

If your Lodge is planning to perform some type of degree work outside Ohio, i.e. a “Foreign Jurisdiction”, you need a Dispensation, and so does the foreign jurisdiction. The same holds true if a foreign jurisdiction comes into Ohio—the non-Ohio Lodge needs a Dispensation from their Grand Master, and so do you.

Be thorough in your request. For example, for an outdoor degree, what is your “Plan B” in the event of inclement weather? How securely will the event be tiled?

Please know that no foreign lodge can come into Ohio to participate in degree work without our Grand Master’s knowledge and approval.

Dispensations are requested for an exception to a Grand Lodge Code provision, not for an exception to a Lodge’s By-laws, such as a Stated Meeting.

### **“Unfinished Candidates”**

If you have Entered Apprentices or Fellow Crafts in your membership who have not completed their initiation, do not “Withdraw” them from membership. There is no reason to withdraw them from MORI on your membership roster. There is no fee, per capita, or oth-

er charges or penalty for these EAs or FCs to remain in MORI as your members.

They are members and are entitled to sit in Lodge as an EA or FC. They should also be a focus for you in your communications encouraging their completion of their initiation journey.

Unless they individually, in writing, request to drop their Masonic membership, they are not to be withdrawn in MORI.

### **Arrearages—Not In Ohio!**

In Ohio, a member either pays his annual Lodge dues, the Lodge remits his per capita dues, or the Lodge suspends him for nonpayment of dues. An Ohio Mason does not accumulate multiple years of delinquent dues (arrearages).

If he is SNPD and later wishes to reaffiliate, he only owes the current year's annual dues amount.

If you use the MORI system to process annual dues, MORI is set up to allow arrearages because other Grand Jurisdictions charge delinquent dues in this manner. You need to zero-out dues in arrears each year and only charge our members the current year annual dues.

### **MORI Training Videos**

There are a number of tutorial videos to help you in mastering the MORI membership program.

They are 2 to 5 minutes in length.

The videos can be accessed by logging into MORI as you normally do. Then look at the left column and you will see "MORI Users Guide," and "MORI Training Videos." A click of your mouse will connect you to the videos.

They are great aids in learning, among other things, how to prepare your program for reporting and computing dues received.

### **Facebook Campaign Generates Immediate Interest**

One of the goals of the Grand Lodge Committee on Public Relations this year was to roll out an ongoing statewide campaign on Facebook to gain the attention of young, prospective members and encourage them to contact the Grand Lodge for information about the fraternity and membership.

The Facebook campaign involves a series of ads that are targeted to particular demographics within the state of Ohio. Three ad sets have been deployed to date, each with a specific theme: camaraderie, ceremony, and charity. Each ad set contains multiple display-ad iterations.

The ad sets address the social facet of the fraternity, ceremonies and community service. Clicking-on an ad in any of the three ad sets takes the user to a dedicated landing page that offers more information about the respective theme and contains a form he can complete, should he wish to obtain more information about Ohio Freemasonry.

This lead-generation strategy has been successful, with numerous completed forms submitted. Worshipful Brother Chad Simpson reviews each form and contacts the respondent personally to engage him in a meaningful discussion about Freemasonry.

During the first few days, the campaign reached more than 50,000 people in a highly targeted audience, generated 2,000 clicks and 20 leads, representing a 1% conversion, which is good, considering this is our first attempt at presenting our brand to the public in a paid ad campaign on Facebook. Prospective members will be directed to a local Lodge for follow-on correspondence.

### **Use Proper Punctuation When Entering New Members**

When entering new members in MORI, be sure to use proper case format. Capitalize the first letter of the first name and the first letter of the last name. This is important because this is how the member's name will appear on his membership card.

### **Enter First and Last Name in the Preferred Name Field**

When completing the Preferred Name field in MORI, be sure to enter both the member's first and last names. If this field has data entered, it is picked up as the preferred name in generating mailing labels. So, if you enter just "Jim" as the preferred name, that is all that is printed on his mailing label.

### **Service Award Policy**

When MORI prints your Service Award Eligibility form, it lists all members of your Lodge who are eligible for their award regardless if he is a Plural or Primary member.

An individual should only receive his Service Award one time, and that should be from his Primary, home Lodge. He should not receive a Service Award from his Plural Lodges where he holds membership.

When receiving your order form, the Grand Lodge Office has no way of knowing if the named recipient is a Primary or Plural member of your Lodge. Only, you, the Lodge Secretary knows your Plural Members.

**When submitting your Service Award Order Form, mark-out or do not order a certificate and pin for your Plural members, only your Primary members.**

Service awards are permitted to be presented any time following the Annual Communication. This means you can hold your 2017 Awards Night at any time after October 15, 2016. Please don't forget to honor your senior members.

### **"Communicator" Application Available**

To assist in communicating with your members and throughout the district, a "Communicator" application is now available at: <https://www.ohglportal.com>. Access this web site to get you started by creating your account. One of the options at this log-in screen is a user's help document. Review this document to learn the available features and functions of the Communicator.

Once you have created your user account, you can now search, browse, send text messages, emails, create events and announcements.

### **Quote of the Day**

"Change is the law of life and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." - John F. Kennedy

*See you in Sandusky!*

*C. Michael Watson,  
Grand Secretary*