

Coffee With The GM

Week 7: Grand Lodge Communication

Announcements:

- Create a 1-2 page report on the brother you have selected for a Legend of Iowa Masonry. As mentioned in our first Coffee With The GM, this should be a brother who has made a difference in your lodge and/or your community through his actions. The brother need not be still living... in fact; it is likely that he will not be. There is no award for this – it isn't a competition. Instead, it is a way to show off and document the contributions of your legendary member. For more information on this, go back to the GM's web site at www.iagrandmaster.org, click on the Coffee With The GM tab and listen to Week No. 1 and download the documentation, located to the right of the audio player on the page.
- Review your progress on having your "Best Year Ever" some of which has been featured on preceding Coffee With The GM segments.
- License plate applications.

Recap of Last Week: Best Year Ever

During the Grand Master's Area Meetings in October and November of last year, I challenged each brother present to make 2010 the Best Year Ever for their lodge. The criteria were announced in the following Grand Lodge Bulletin and I think now would be an exceptionally good time to follow up on your progress.

The idea behind Best Year Ever is not a competition between lodges; rather it is a measurable way (complete with ideas) for your lodge to steadily improve from year to year. As leaders in your lodges, it is up to you to set the bar for success and then strive to achieve it. The Best Year Ever Chart provides a method to see where you want to go. However, before we can set our sights on the future, it is crucial that we identify where we stand at the beginning.

If you can't lay your hands on the chart at this time, don't worry; it will be posted to the Grand Master's web site at www.iagrandmaster.org under the Coffee With The GM tab.

The 4 classes include: Chartered Lodge, Bronze, Silver and Gold Lodge, and are measured by increasing difficulty and effort across a range of categories. This range is actually quite varied and goes from the number of actual stated meetings your lodge is able to conduct to how active an Internet presence your lodge has including things such as social networking sites Facebook and Twitter, as well as many categories along this continuum.

IMPORTANT: Do NOT be discouraged if your present situation isn't where you would like it to be. There is nothing wrong with that. In fact, it makes it just that much easier to create forward motion and progress, and there is still time to get things done. The Best Year Ever campaign goes by the calendar year, not Grand Lodge year, so you have from now through December.

On the other hand, now is no time to be complacent. Looking at the chart, you should realize that the column in blue – that designated as a Chartered Lodge, really is the bare minimum that any lodge should be doing. If you are currently falling short of that point, call us, we'll be more than happy to help in any way we can. But before we can do anything to help, we have to be informed that assistance is needed.

Main Topic: Grand Lodge Communication 2010

This is going to be a relatively short Coffee With The GM, but it is nonetheless important. In just two short weeks, Masons from all over the state will be descending upon Sioux City to conduct the business of the Grand Lodge, make new friends, renew old friendships and

when all is said and done, I hope you'll agree that it was one of the best Annual Communications ever.

If you are a delegate, you have already received an Agenda and Book of Preliminary Reports, which lays out a schedule of everything that will occur, from the rather mundane items of business to the delightful banquets and entertainment that we have planned.

Grand Lodge officially opens at 8:30 Friday morning, September 17, but there are important activities taking place on Thursday the 16th. The Board of Custodians will be holding their annual Grand Lodge School of Instruction beginning at 8:00 a.m. in Gallery A, with a Memorial Service taking place at 3:00 p.m. to honor those Masonic Instructors and District Lecturers who have laid down their working tools this past year. There has long been confusion among the Craft that this School is only for MI's or DL's, but such is not the case. There will also be a Craft School held especially for those brothers who are not MI's or DL's.

Thursday night, it will be my pleasure, along with my lady Lisa, to host The Grand Master's Fellowship Banquet and I assure you, the meal will be delicious. Following the banquet – from 8:00 to midnight, our entertainment will be a rock n' roll show and dance featuring the Velaires – members of the Iowa Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame. Tight harmony and great stage presence make The Velaires the finest nostalgia band in the Siouxland area.

Friday, we will be opening and conducting the business of Grand Lodge, hearing some fabulous speakers and electing next year's officers. At the end of the day, we will have the All-Masonic Banquet which will be followed by the Public Installation of Craig Davis and his officers.

I am very excited about the programs in store for you on Friday. We will have Brother and author Michael Halleran on hand to discuss his book, "The Better Angels of Our Nature: Freemasonry in the American Civil War." We are selling copies of this book, with proceeds going toward the Iowa Masonic Model Student Assistance Program. Brother Mike has generously offered to stay and sign the books. I was fortunate enough to pick up a signed copy at the Grand Lodge of Kansas this spring and it is a great read.

Later in the afternoon, we will be hearing from M.W. Brother Johnny Onkst, who is a Past Grand Master from Oklahoma... he will be bringing us an inspirational message about leadership.

After we call off for the day, we will be having some concurrent breakout sessions on a variety of topics important to you and your lodge.

Saturday morning from 6:30 to 8:30 is the All-Masonic Breakfast at the Sioux City Scottish Rite, located at 801 Douglas St.

I would like to say a few words about the legislation that has been proposed this year and about the legislative process in general. The reasons for drafting a proposal to change the Iowa Masonic Code or Constitution are varied, but are best known to the author(s) of that proposal. Ideally, the reasoning behind a particular proposal is described in sufficient detail in the Explanation given. Unfortunately, there always seem to be some brothers who take it upon themselves to twist that meaning in order to defeat the proposal. Let me be perfectly clear: if you have a question about the motive behind the proposal or the change it will create, ask only the proposer. If, for example, my name is on the proposal as an author, do NOT contact the Grand Lodge Office to ask for information or further explanation... no one there wrote it. Conversely, if someone in the office wrote the legislation, do not contact me to ask for an explanation – instead, contact the proposer directly.

One example would be the Masonic Code Competency Course. Please do not assume you know the reason it was created. I have heard some rumblings about “Oh this is just the Grand Lodge telling us what to do. On the contrary, it was created for a very specific reason and that is to make sure the leaders in our lodges are as knowledgeable as can be when it comes to leading the lodge. This is necessary because of the number of young Masons put in leadership positions without having a lot of time to learn about Masonry and leadership in a lodge. The proposed course will be available on the GM’s web site in the very near future.

Action List:

1. Go to the Grand Masters web site, download the call and listen again.
2. Send me an email to let me know of any insights or observations this call or the information provided has given you
3. Join me next week for Coffee With The GM