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Minnesota River Valley Lodge #6

**“Published under the authority of the Most Worshipful Grand
Lodge A. F. & A. M. of Minnesota”**

Plumbline December 2007

Plumb line – “a cord by which a weight is suspended to test the perpendicularity or depth of something, a sounding line.” I assume that this missive is the weight, and an attempt to determine perpendicularity, depth, and a sounding board with the leadership of the craft.

From the Grand Lodge of Minnesota, may this Holiday Season and the New Year be all that it should be for you and yours!

We are approaching the winter solstice and the many activities that make this time of year so special in our lives and so formative in our personal activities. This is a time of solitude, short days, cold, and snow. Yet below and within it all, the fire still burns, life adjusts, and in this creative and reflective time, the foundations for the coming year are laid, not only in nature, but in our lives as well.

This is the time of year for elections in most lodges, with Installation Ceremonies taking place in December or early January. The officers have been meeting and planning and the Senior Warden is prepared to implement the Trestle Board, which has been developed by the lodge and lodge leadership, building on the lodge vision and mission. The Master faces a bit of nostalgia knowing it is time to release his responsibilities and install his successor. It is a time of reflection for him, as he looks at successes, failures, and the work undone. The Lodge benefits from the new energy and fire that burns each year with the changes in leadership and redefinition of direction and activities, and the excitement of new challenges and leadership.

In our organization, which contains so much tradition, the yearly cycles do function as a heart infusing new energy and excitement in fellowship as well as the philosophical and ritualistic components of the lodge. New leadership is evolving and the skills of the craft are being transmitted and transferred. Senior Wardens, as you “signify your assent to those Ancient Charges and Regulations which point out the duty of a Master of a Lodge,” reflect carefully on what you are assenting to. I would even suggest that you preview your obligation and reflect upon it before assuming your station. Your duty as Master is very carefully spelled out, and non-compliance has serious ramifications for you and your lodge. Remember that you need to be familiar with and enforce the Minnesota Masonic Code as Master.

As I travel and have the opportunity to visit lodges and more importantly, meet brother Masons, I am reminded of the “franchise” nature of Masonry and the importance of “branding.” It is interesting to note that Masonry was one of the first franchises. If we look at the many franchises in our society today, we become aware of the branding and consistency that make these enterprises the same the world over. So it is with Masonry. It is the responsibility of each of us to make certain that any change that takes place in our product and franchise is well thought out and reflected upon. Write resolutions if you feel change is needed!!

This is a good time of year to submit resolutions for the Grand Lodge Annual Communication in Duluth. Remember that we are not empowered to make change individually, but only by resolution through the Grand Lodge. This process applies to proposed changes in ritual, timing, degrees, and components of degrees, officers, and other components of the Code.

As Grand Master, one of the duties of office, as it is for Presidents, Chief Executive Officers, and other chief leadership positions, requires articulation of the **vision** for the organization. This is also a responsibility of the Master and Officers of the Lodge. I continue to struggle with this responsibility, as does the Grand Lodge Corporate Board.

vi-sion n

- 1. an image or concept in the imagination**
- 2. the ability to anticipate possible future events and developments**
- 3. a beautiful or pleasing sight**

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As I pass the half way point in my term as your Grand Master, “**To keep Masonry, its Vision, Mission, and Values current, exciting, and accessible to like minded Minnesota men**” are the words that reflect my philosophical reflections.

We expect the announcements will soon be mailed to each lodge announcing the 2008 Minnesota Masonic Charities Matching Funds Scholarship program. Your lodge should receive the details by January 10th. It is anticipated that the program will again provide for a maximum of \$1,500 in matching funds per lodge and a maximum overall match of \$150,000. If your lodge’s scholarship committee is starting to think about the 2008 program, be sure that they have this information. The MMC Scholarship Committee is also finalizing the first offering of the new Minnesota Masonic Charities’ Signature Scholarships, which will provide for up to four years of funding, up to \$5,000 per year, for a select few recipients. Your recommendation of a student might be just the help that student will need to be considered for these Signature Scholarship awards. Children and grand children, neighbors, your newspaper carrier, the teenager who shovels your walks, all would be eligible to apply. Encourage your student to contact Sara Beddow (sara.beddow@mnmasonic.org) at Minnesota Masonic Charities to receive the application.

Lodge Secretaries, the Grand Secretary has asked me to remind you that Annual Report time is just around the corner. If you are gathering the necessary information to compile your report now, then it should be a simple matter to submit the report by the due date on January 15th. The

Grand Secretary invites your inquiries on what the Grand Lodge office can do to make this process work better for you. Feel free to contact him at grandlodge@qwest.net.

Our next One-Day-to-Masonry class will again be held at the Minneapolis Scottish Rite, on the third Saturday of January, January 19th to be exact. It is not too late to submit petitions but don't wait too long! The petitions and the fees (\$250.00) must be submitted to the Grand Lodge office by January 11th so that all of the candidates can be sent the the information packets and to allow time for other last minute event details. Work with your candidates to get those petitions submitted soon so that arrangements for a quality experience for you and the candidate might be guaranteed. Check your recent Minnesota Mason Newspaper or call the Grand Lodge office (952-948-6700) for further details.

The 59th Annual Midwest Conference on Masonic Education will be held 25-27 April 2008 in Omaha, Nebraska. S. Brent Morris will be the keynote speaker. If you are interested you can register to attend at www.midwestmasoniceducation.com.