



FREEMASONS
South Australia and the
Northern Territory Inc

FREEMASONS SA & NT

Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons
of South Australia and the Northern Territory Inc.
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Our core values are:

- High Moral standards
- Commitment to family charity and community care
- Courtesy, honesty, and fairness in all dealings

Communication Address

19 April 2017

Preamble:

Dear Brethren,

I would like to welcome each and every one of you to this Communication. For those of you who are attending for the first time, I extend an especially warm welcome to you.

For those brethren in particular I would like to give you some context about these Communications.

Historically, when the first Provincial Grand Lodge was established in South Australia in 1836, we had two Half Yearly Communications. For roughly the first 50 years, these Communications did *not* happen in April and October as they do now. They occurred on 24th June and the 27th December.

These dates were respectively the Feast Days of St John the Baptist in June and St John the Evangelist in December. Traditionally these days also marked the Winter and Summer Solstices – the shortest and longest days of the year.

Shortly after establishing the Grand Lodge of South Australia (as it was known then), we marked the dates of the Half Yearly Communications, not by reference to Christian Feast Days but by the anniversary of the consecration of this Grand Lodge which occurred on the Third Wednesday in April in 1884. For this reason, we meet on the Third Wednesday in April each year to mark the beginning of the new Masonic Year.

So, I would like to take this opportunity to wish us all a very happy new Masonic Year!

The last 6 months in particular have evidenced some circumstances that have for many brethren been *confusing*. For those brethren (in particular), I would like to give some context.

The sale of Masonic Homes

As we are all aware, the sale of Masonic Homes did not happen in a vacuum. It was a process that as VWBro. Grand Treasurer (Todd Cavender) explained at our Public Meeting on 23rd March, had developed over the *best part of a decade*.

During this time a number of Grand Masters together with various compositions of Boards of Management have been involved in the process. Similarly – we have communicated updates over this period of time.

Could we have communicated things differently? Could we have communicated things in a better way?

I believe that we could have. Having learned lessons from this, we will do better in the future.

As one brother to another, I understand that there will always be differences in approach to things of this magnitude. This is natural and part of our make-up as members of the human race. As humans we have a natural tendency to challenge what is different to our viewpoint.

- This is both good and bad.

It's good when it refines our thinking...when it helps us to think and arrive at a solution with *greater clarity*.

It's bad when the approach that we put forward doesn't address the argument, but attacks the man making the argument.

In my view, it's bad when a brother (like me) who wants to communicate with his brethren on a *privileged* basis finds his privileged communication exposed on media to the whole world.

For those of you who may be unaware, some...*individual* contacted The Advertiser and on Wed evening 5th April, an article appeared on Adelaide Now attacking me and the letter that I had sent to you, (my brethren) explaining my position on things that had taken place. This was then followed up by a *printed article* on page 5 of the Advertiser on Thurs morning 6th April.

It's bad when the result of this individual's action has brought our Order into *disrepute*. If you haven't done so, read the Comments section following the article on Adelaide Now.

Those who have not been initiated have been scathing...*scathing* in their attacks on you and me and the values that we hold dear. These scathing remarks are wholly a result of this individual's actions.

This individual has with conscious, cool calculation, *betrayed* you and me.

Brethren – I invite you to read the article and make your own judgement: (See Link Attached to this Article.)

The Challenge for the next Grand Master's Candidature

As a Jurisdiction, we are not used to the concept of a challenge. But again, it's important that we put this into context.

First and foremost, it is important to understand that RWBro. Neil Jensen has acted in a manner that is in full accord with our Constitution and our Regulations...in *full* accord.

Next, I have known RWBro. Neil Jensen for a number of years.

He and I were members of United Service Lodge. After that, I invited Neil to take on the office of SGW and subsequently AGM.

I invited Neil to these positions understanding that Neil was eminently qualified to take on these roles.

From the heart, I thank him for the very distinguished service that he has offered our Jurisdiction in these positions.

Neil has now offered his services to us as our next Grand Master. Should he be elected, it will be because that is the will of our brethren and in my position as your current Grand Master, whoever succeeds to the position, will receive my homage as my first act following his Installation.

The Election Process:

At this point in time Brethren, you and I are subject to the terms and conditions of our Constitution and Regulations in relation to what we can and can't do regarding any election process.

Our current regulations state that in order to vote, you and I need to be *physically* present at the October Communication.

The DGM and I have a real problem with that concept. The problem is that it doesn't appear to us to be something that is *inclusive*.

Brethren, this is a *defining moment* in our Jurisdiction's history and we all need to step up to the occasion. (You and I included).

On behalf of us all, I would like to express our thanks to VWBro. Marcus La Vincente (Grand Registrar), who has pointed out that to conduct a postal vote to enable all members to have a say in the election of the next GM would require the passing of an amendment to our current Regulations and that, (given timing issues), the calling of an Extraordinary Communication would be necessary to achieve this. VWBro. La Vincente together with the assistance of members of the BoM and RWBro. Andrew Charlton have prepared a draft amendment providing for the election of the GM by *postal vote* and I will be announcing the date for an Extraordinary Communication shortly.

When we vote on this proposition, only those who are present will have their vote counted. *We can't get around this.*

Assuming that the vote is successful (and I would be personally horrified if it wasn't), it will pave the way for a new generation of applying our principles of *loving* brotherhood.

One last thing on this matter...in the article that appeared on Adelaide Now and The Advertiser, the individual remarked that the process of election of a Grand Master is one of "mates supporting mates". The way that I read this seemed to indicate that this individual's personal (but *mistaken* belief shared with the whole world), is that the process of a Grand Master selecting his Deputy in our Jurisdiction is a simple one... just choose a mate of yours.

Brethren – nothing could be further from the truth.

The process is one that takes a few months to work through and is done in consultation with a distinguished Selection Panel.

I have been fortunate. RWBros. Daminato and Merrill have been brethren with whom I have developed strong friendships. Historically, this hasn't always been the case. Personally - in this regard I have been *very* fortunate.

Review of our Regulations

The process of reviewing our Regulations has been completed. This review took place because we feel it is important that the language used makes the Regulations easy to understand and further, that we clarify areas that are currently unclear in their application.

Shortly, we will invite all brethren in our jurisdiction to consider the revision in preparation for that revision to be passed at the October Communication.

We are in the process of re-birth

Most of us here have been present with our wives when they have given birth to our sons and daughters. That moment in our lives was memorable to each of us for the level of its painful intensity – one filled with watching our partners experience the most excruciating physical event that people can go through while we went through emotions that (to this day) we remember in vivid detail.

Brethren, I ask you to share with me – *hope*.

I am personally filled with *hope*. Hope that the experience that we are working through now will *enliven* our Order, bring us unity (but not at a cost of not being able to express contrary (but always *respectful*) differences of opinion.

Hope that we will learn positive lessons from this experience and that these lessons will enable us to put into practice the teachings that we learn in our Degrees.

I wish you and everyone that you hold dear to your heart, the warmest blessings that life can bring to you.

May your God go with you.



Stephen Michalak
Grand Master