

## **District Grand Master's Address.**

### **308<sup>th</sup> District Communication, Anguilla, 31st October 2009**

This is the third District Communication to be held in Anguilla since the consecration of Unity 9166 on the 8th July 1985. The question was again raised at a recent meeting of the DBGP on whether these meetings were becoming too expensive in time and money. The majority of the Board, however, agreed that District Communications continued to be well supported and that those who attended, and their wives, gained considerable satisfaction and enjoyment in so doing. I think this is borne out by the large attendance I see here to day, despite the difficulties in getting to Anguilla.

I welcome all of you, and trust that each of you will depart to-morrow in peace, with further shared experiences. It is after all those experiences, shared with your brethren, that to my mind is the essence of Freemasonry.

I am afraid I spent most of the summer in the UK. I had a bridge to repair amongst other things. I regret that I missed the installation meetings of Victoria 2196 and St. Ursula's 8952 as well as those of Union 7551, Mt Lebanon 492 and Zetland 356 Royal Arch Chapters. The Craft and Royal Arch Districts were, however, well supported at all, and I would particularly like you to note how well our DJGW, Brother Michael Georges, led the District delegation to the Installation Meeting of St. Ursula's.

I was very pleased that the motion to assist St. George 3072 with their building predicament was approved earlier to-day. I understand that some Lodges either have, or will shortly, assist with funds to the extent that they are able. I know that nearly all of our Lodges are similarly trying to find the finance for the completion or renovation of their own buildings, but if you can in anyway help 3072 the members of that lodge would be very grateful.

My absence from the jurisdiction precluded me from being present at the installation of Bro. Walter Scott as both District Grand Master and Royal Arch Grand Superintendent of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands last July. His installation was carried out by the Pro Grand Master, M W Bro. Peter Loundes. Bro Leroy Marchena as President of our DBGP attended both ceremonies accompanied by Lennie Carty DGSec and John Still DGDC. Furthermore, DGSec was the lone delegate from this District at the regional conference of DGMs in Jamaica over the same weekend. These conferences, by the way were initiated in 1999 by this District, although the first was held in Jamaica, the DGM of that District being the senior in the then pecking order.

Progress with a local Grand Lodge was an agenda item. Our DGSec responded well and answered those question put. The Pro Grand Master made the point that UGLE did not wish to loose any District. They were proud of them, but the policy is that they will support the brethren in whatever they want to do, provided the decision is taken by a significant majority after full consultation of the brethren of all ranks throughout the District. If UGLE is to loose a District. it should be after the proper consultation process has been completed, and then UGLE would hope that the Consecration Ceremony would be conducted by them, and that harmonious relations would continue for evermore.

Shortly DGSec will send the usual letter with regard to nominees for election to the DBGP, but the format will be different. The DBGP has 24 members, 8 ex-officio including myself, 8 appointed by me, and 8 elected by the lodges. All those 16 ex-officio and appointed members form the executive District, that is, those that look after the administration. This has led to an imbalance of representation. My own lodge, St Michael's 2253 has, and next year, will have, the ADGM, DGDC and the DGM as members of the board. Assuming that the three of us will always have the best interest of our own lodge at heart, it makes sense for St. Michael's to nominate one of us. The same should apply to other lodges that will similarly have a heavy presence on the Board. I suggest lodges in those circumstances refrain from nominating someone other than their executive members, so that lodges without an executive presence can be more fairly represented.

Meanwhile, a second draft of the constitution for a proposed local Grand Lodge is being examined by representatives of both our District and the Scots District, and hopefully a 3rd draft, preferably the final one, will be prepared shortly. At the same time Bro Robert Weeks and the DGTreas on the Scots side have come out with a budget suggesting that the proposed Grand Lodge could start with an anticipated income of \$194,000.00 USD, and this on the basis of annual dues of 50 USD, slightly more than the respective present dues to the Districts and the Grand Lodges. This is based on memberships on our side of 1400 and 375 on theirs or a total of 1775. So, as the majority agreed, the matter is being taken forward, although slowly. As the constitution and the budgetary analysis are both firmed up, they will be circulated for comment.

I noticed recently inquiries to the DGSec concerning the openness policy and dealing with the press as well as to what business may be conducted with non Masons present. I can best answer this by referring each of you to page 12 of the booklet 'Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft' 2008 addition. I add that it is common for Lodges in Scotland to have their meeting dates and agendas announced in the local press. The Lodge I visit, Thistle 127, does not post or e-mail summons to its membership. They can see it in the press.

The 2010 Annual Communication will be hosted by St Ursula's 8952 in Tortola on Saturday 24th April, along with the Royal Arch Convocation. I hope it proves possible to include the dedication of the extended building there. The autumn or fall Communication will be hosted by St. Michael's 2253 towards the end of October, or early November 2010. I thank the DGSec and his assistant as well as the DGDC and his assistant, for overseeing the smooth running of this Communication,

I also extend the Districts grateful thanks to the Masters, Wardens, Officers and Brethren of Unity 9166 and Anguilla Masters 9335 for being our hosts over this enjoyable weekend. You have worked hard and assiduously, and the shared events this weekend will remain in our memories for a long time. I look forward to talking to many of you and your wives later to-night.

Finally I extend fraternal greetings to Bro, Rudi Lord, Wor Past Depute DGM, District Grand Lodge of Barbados (SC) and Bro Dominic Vitucci, PM, Garibaldi Lodge 543, Grand Lodge of New York.