

Good evening, Illustrious Companions,

One of my goals as MPGM is to shake the hand of every Cryptic Mason in Pennsylvania. Question- What color do you get when you mix red & blue? PURPLE; which is Councils color.

I want to share a few thoughts with all the IC's even though I may not be with you this evening.

During my predecessor's term, MPC Richard W. Fesler, Jr, MPPGM had commissioned a survey for all the Councils to list how we can improve our Grand Council. Many Councils responded with a variety of suggestions & recommendations ranging from better programs being offered at the Council Assemblies, fewer meetings, Zoom meetings, business meeting with a dinner or other activity, Councils meeting together to improve attendance, Open Table Councils with the ladies & guests, growing membership, and suggestions on some Grand council events. We have already initiated many of them into place. Your Recorder has been emailed all the Edicts & Decisions as they were approved and distributed.

- 2024 Edict to allow Councils to meet 6 times instead of 10 (with stipulations)
- 2024 continuing edict to permit some social meetings, zoom meetings & joint meetings with other Councils
- The 2025 Grand Assembly will be a special 1-day event (specific information, schedule & forms will be distributed in January to all Councils and posted on the GC website)
- Conferral of the SEMM Degree at a Grand Assembly
- Conferral of the Degree of TIM at the Region C Regional Assembly in March (upon request)

### Special Olympics

Special Olympics is our charity of choice and I am very adamant that all Councils have a Special Olympic program, hold a Special Olympic event like a "Polar Plunge", hosting a dinner where are proceeds would benefit your local SO area, or participate in a local or State level Special Olympic event each year. Your Council is also encouraged to donate (as our financial conscience permits) to Special Olympics either thru the Grand Council Charity Fund or by donating directly to your local Special Olympics area.

When I was installed as MPGM on April 29, 2024, I asked each Cryptic mason to consider pledging a \$1.00 donation to our charity of choice "Special Olympics". If every member would donate that amount, we could realize a \$2,500.00 total donation; just think if each member donated \$10.00 that would be a \$25,000.00 total donation! We have an anonymous contributor who will match our total SO contribution this year up to \$10,000.00. Wouldn't that be a special boost to all those athletes competing in the Special Olympic programs?

We can foster lasting memories with these athletes and their advisors as we work together to help improve their experience with their great organization. They just need a helping hand to show that someone cares!

### Council Requirements

Remember, the following items are still required by every Council to be performed each year in order to be compliant with the Grand Council Constitution.

- Conferring or exemplifying the 2 Council Degrees (Royal & Select)
- Table Council (Open or Closed)
- Special Olympic Program
- Council of Sorrow

### Cryptic Mason of the Year Award

This award is presented each year to a District nomination which comes from the submissions of each Council to their PDDGM. He selects one to represent the district and submits it to the MPGM. The MPGM then selects from the submittals (or selects one of his own) as the CMOTY for the state which is presented every year at the Grand Assembly. The newly updated form has been distributed to your Recorders and is to

be completed by the DIM and turned into the PDDGM by Dec. 27<sup>th</sup>. This ward was initially created to recognize the “behind the scenes workers” who labor for the love of Council, however as our membership continues to shrink, all of us are now working diligently for multiple York Rite Bodies and therefore I feel they needed to be included not excluded. I have revised the new CMOTY form to now include Appointed State Officers (DDGM’s, DDGHP’s, Div. Commanders and other Pa. Grand Body appointed Officers). When I visit every Council, I always ask any CMOTY present to stand and be recognized.

As I have traveled to many out of State Jurisdictions, this award is considered very special and is held in great esteem & regard.

### Thrice Illustrious Master of the Year

This special award is presented each year to a nomination which comes from the submissions of each PDDGM. He selects one to represent the district and submits it to the MPGM. The MPGM then selects from the submittals (or selects one of his own) as the TIM for the state which is also presented every year at the Grand Assembly.

Membership is an important part of our Councils direction; we need new members to keep our Cryptic Masonry alive & growing in the Commonwealth. Please promote any program or event you may be able to hold to encourage possible new candidates which will also strengthen our York Rite Unity.

Several years ago, MPC Charles C. Hoover crafted a wood triangle for each District which was to be presented to the Council in each District who attained the largest increase in membership for that Cryptic year. They were to be re-assigned to a new Council each year. I would like to re-energize that program with a new directive, so I am asking that any Council that has that wood triangle to return it to your PDDGM so we can have them updated. Please stay tuned for this new award which will be named for our departed MPC Gerald B. Cobb.

### Vision & Mission Statement

We are also working on finalizing a Vision & Mission statement for our Grand Council, many suggestions have been submitted and we will be selecting one at our February PDDGM meeting. Thank you all for your interest and submittals on this effort.

### Cryptic Master Award

The award will be for those members who want to seek more light, knowledge & awareness for Cryptic Masonry. We are working with a group of outstanding Cryptic Masons who are crafting this education program for us. They created the “CARE” program for Grand Chapter. More information on this exciting program will be coming out shortly and we look to get this underway starting next year after Grand Assembly.

### DIM & PCW meetings

We are looking to revive the DIM-PCW meeting that were held to benefit the DIM’s & PCWs of the Councils as to what is required of them during their term as an Officers and also to discuss, review, advise, share information & answer questions & concerns with their own Councils. This is to be held in each of the 9 Districts at a time & place which will be coordinated by the PDDGM of your district. The information shared at these meeting was an invaluable guide to those going thru the line of their Council.

### Membership Awards

The Grand Council has several awards available to an IC who is the first line signer on a petition.

- First line signer on 3 petitions in one year- name badge
- First line signer on 9 petitions in one year- neck jewel
- First line signer on 18 petitions in one year- plaque
- First line signer on 27 petitions in 3 years- Grand Masters Membership apron

Please see your Recorder and PDDGM on the specific requirements for these membership awards.

### Subordinate Council Degree Casts

There was an email sent out to each Council asking them if they have any of their members who would be able to take any part in any Council Degree to please complete the form with the contact information and forward to the Grand Recorder. The Grand Recorder is putting together a "state wide" Degree Cast contact Sheet for all Councils to use when they are putting together a degree cast.

### Penn Ohio Day

After recently talking to the MIGM of the GC of Ohio, he stated that during the winter months will not work for them and maybe a later date could be discussed. A Tri-State Degree Conferral could also be looked into for the future. A joint Degree Conferral was held in the past with Maryland.

### Recent Out of State Visits

Lady Carol and I have experienced a great amount of respect and fellowship everywhere I have visited out of State. Many of the honors given in some jurisdictions are very different than what we use in Pa. We had a great time at the Pa. Prince Hall Grand Council Grand Assembly. The ladies auxiliary is a very active part of their Grand Council.

### Grand Lodge of Pa.

Our RW Grand Master, Larry A. Derr wants us to acknowledge & show support for our various Masonic Youth groups as was covered in our recent Grand Masters Congress in April of this year.

### Public Perception

We need to dispel the common misconceptions about our Masonic Fraternity whenever we can. Be active in talking about the good our Fraternity does within & without our community's. The internet is no friend to our craft with many untrue stories being repeated for all to see. I want all IC's to be excited for and have a passion for Cryptic Masonry. Ignite that light from within, have fun and be a part of the vision that is larger than any one of us.

### Important Dates to remember

- March 22, 2025- Region C Regional Assembly- Allentown, Pa. Information is posted on our website.
- April 5, 2025- Grand Assembly- Harrisburg, Pa. This Grand Assembly will be different than any before. Information will be available to all Councils in January.

### In Closing

I have been blessed to have PC Lewis P. Trexler, Jr., PDDGM District #6 accompany me to all my Council visits. When I close the Councils, he has been delivering the closing charge which was co-written by our own MPC Charles C. Hoover, MPPGM & IC Bernard Golubiewski, PTIM.

A little Trivia; who was the shortest and the tallest Freemason? Think about it. Let me know the answer next time you see me.

Grand Council Rocks!

Sincerely & Fraternaly,

Mark D. Gall, MPPGM