

Masonic Library & Museum Association

Annual Meeting – October 20-23, 2016

The Lee Lockwood Scottish Rite Library & Museum
Waco, Texas

In Attendance:

Eric Trosdahl	Minnesota
Val Korzsniak	New Jersey
Glenn Visher (phone)	New Jersey
Casey Stanislaw	Texas
Sam Moody	Texas
Richard Lynch	Rhode Island
Mark Eddleston	Rhode Island
Mark Tabbert	Virginia
Cathy Giaimo	Pennsylvania
Aimee Newell	Massachusetts
Ymelda Rivera Laxton	Massachusetts
Helge Bjorn Horrisland	Norway
Hugh Young	Alberta, Canada

Regrets:

Brian Rountree	Manitoba, Canada
Glenys Waldman	Pennsylvania
Bill Kreuger	Iowa
Albert Martin	Georgia
Cristiano Franceschini	Italy

President Aimee Newell opened the meeting with greetings and we introduced ourselves.

A motion was made and seconded by Rich Lynch and Mark Eddleston to approve the 2015 Minutes as circulated. Motion carried.

OFFICERS' REPORTS:

A) Secretary's report:

As of Oct. 1, 2016	2016	2015
Institutional members	89	83
Personal members including Past Presidents	52 8	48 7
Affiliate members	28	28
Removal (death, request)	-2	0
TOTAL	175	166

MLMA gained four *Institutional Members* and six *Personal Members* during 2016. Renewal notices were sent out and as of Oct. 1, 2016, 32 members have paid their 2016 dues. We do have a few members who have paid their dues in advance.

A motion was made and seconded by Rich Lynch and Val Korzsniak to approve the report. Motion carried

B) Treasurer's report:

See Appendix 1

C) Vice President's report:

Since our last meeting I have worked with Cathy to ensure that our Yahoo mailing list is up to date and adding members when requested to do so.

I promoted the MSA/MLMA Library book project at the annual All Canada Conference at the start of April 2016 in Winnipeg. This is a gathering of representatives from the ten Canadian Grand Lodges and the District Grand Lodge of Scotland in Newfoundland and Labrador. I handed out a folder that included a copy of the questionnaire and our MLMA pamphlet and requested that it be given to the librarian of their jurisdictions. Perhaps in the update from Aimee we shall hear how many of them did submit their information.

In August 2016 I made a brief presentation about the value of libraries to the representatives attending the Mid-West Conference of Grand Lodges held in Winnipeg.

This annual meeting rotates among the membership of 10 American and 1 Canadian Grand Lodges. At that meeting I discussed the benefits of MLMA and handed out the pamphlet.

I am sorry to be absent as I do enjoy our gatherings. I look forward to being with you next year.

Yours truly,

Brian Rountree, Vice President

A motion was made and seconded by Mark Tabbert and Ymelda Rivera Laxton to approve the report. Motion carried

D) Web Master's report:

Everyone is SO busy these days that it's difficult to get these 'love to do sometime' projects to the top of the to-do list. Not a month goes by that we don't think, "Wouldn't it be great if we had a section/page about..." and yet there's never the chance to present the idea knowing just how busy you (and we) are! There are dozens of opportunities for enhancing the information offered online by MLMA and it'd be just great if it could be done but when and how? <HEAVY SIGH>

Every year, there are those who have questions about how to set things up, how to modernize, and/or are just wondering where they could ideas about improving their facilities in some way. The membership runs the gamut from the smallest organization managed by a sole part-time volunteer to mature and well-funded collecting institutions with a multitude degreed paid employees. In my professional life, we have 'colleague competitors' and there's a certain point at which sharing can wind up hurting your organization causing the loss of patients/income. That scenario doesn't really apply to Masonic Libraries and Museums so the opportunity to help others here is essentially limitless.

But when is there time to sit down and write out what's going on with you and your organization? It's nigh unto impossible. Hopefully, though, you'll think about the possibilities of leaving a legacy for those who'll follow us and take a little bit of time to contribute.

On another note: Brandy and I have made the decision that we're going to be closing down what has been our part-time web design and maintenance 'business'. Brandy has struggled through some severe shoulder problems for the past couple of

years which has impacted on her overall mobility but now that she's on the upward slope, we've decided we should spend more time doing the things we've been postponing. A couple of months ago, we advised the Grand Lodges of Maine and Vermont as well as the MSANA that we would like to wrap up things with them by the end of the year and now we've letting the smaller organizations know that they should start looking for a replacement for us as well. We recognize that some of the very small webs we've worked with for a decade or more may have difficulty finding a replacement so we're not setting any 'drop dead' dates and we'll keep the lights on and the updates posted. Maintaining a website is, with the exception of the initial design/redesign, a tedious slug and, as the Grand Lodge of Vermont learned before we came along, it's frustrating when that initial interest is lost. Choose wisely: it's a major decision and a lot of work each time it is repeated.

Finally, each year we've thought long and hard about venturing to the Annual Meeting to be with you all but work (we both still keep full-time jobs, darn it!) as well as Brandy's recent health issues have kept us from doing that. Keep your fingers crossed that we'll win the lottery and be with you next year. (Aw, come on: you really don't want it for yourself instead, do you?)

Enjoy your time together. It's been great to be a part of this super group, even if only in a very peripheral way!

Warm fraternal regards,

Ed & Brandy King Your Webmasters

A motion was made and seconded by multiples and approved.

E) President's report:

One of the things that I like the most about MLMA is its ability to adapt to its members. As officers – and members – come and go, the organization continues to exist, and to flex and bend to the needs of the membership. We are still completely volunteer-run; it is the passion and dedication of these volunteers that define the organization and keep it going. First and foremost, I want to thank all of the MLMA's members for their participation and interest in the organization.

We had a good year. I have received positive feedback about the (roughly) monthly president's messages that I have sent out via our Yahoo group. I plan to continue to send those during the second year of my term. And, I am always encouraged by the questions that are asked in that group – most of the inquiries this year received multiple responses! We also have a Facebook page, which has about 2,500 "likes." If you are active on Facebook and haven't yet liked the MLMA page, please do so.

I was fortunate to be able to attend the 2016 AMMLA meeting in Paris in July. The French Grand Lodges and Grand Orient were the hosts and provided us with excellent food and wine. I really enjoyed the champagne toasts before each meal. We had a guided tour of the Masonic exhibit at the Bibliotheque Nationale de France with Pierre Mollier. It was wonderful to see so many Masonic books, documents and objects brought together. We also had a number of short presentations on the activities of many of the European Masonic museums and libraries, who struggle with the same issues that we have – lots to do, not enough resources. One of the longer discussions revolved around the idea of creating a database of European Masonic objects online. They are considering an approach of having all of the different museums and libraries submit images and records to an established European database, but it was clear from the discussion that there is a lot of preparatory work to be done before this can be achieved. On the way home, I stopped in London for a couple of days and was able to visit the new exhibition on 300 Years of Freemasonry in England at the Library and Museum of Freemasonry. This will be up through 2017 and for several years following. If you will be in London, I highly recommend a visit to the exhibition and to the Library and Museum. [Helge – comments?]

With the help of our webmaster, Ed King, I was able to make some updates to our website (www.masoniclibraries.org). We changed the contact information on several pages so that questions will go to the right people and we added information about some of our recent annual meetings. Ed is also excellent at taking information straight from the monthly Yahoo messages and adding it to the appropriate places on the website. I want to thank him for his volunteer efforts on behalf of MLMA. Over the next year, I am hoping to make some updates and changes to the “Mission Statement” page and to the “How to” pages – I will be in touch as that process moves along in order to collect feedback.

While several projects made progress, or were even completed, this year – more to come on those in our “Old” and “New Business” sections – I implemented one new idea that was not successful – the President’s Challenge. I invited people (whether current members or not) to suggest an idea for an MLMA initiative – something we could do to help members and add more value to MLMA membership. The person who submitted the winning idea would have their 2017 dues (organization or individual) paid for by me, personally. Unfortunately, no ideas were submitted. I will give this a try again in 2017. Please don’t be shy! It can be a big idea or a small idea – how could MLMA better help you and your Masonic library and museum?

I am looking forward to the second year of my term as President. In response to some of the feedback that I have received about MLMA, I would like to pursue the idea of instituting an annual scholarship for one MLMA member to attend our annual meeting. My idea is to offer a \$500 scholarship to help defray the costs of attending. I would like to establish a scholarship fund of approximately \$10,000, with the annual interest going to the annual scholarship. There would be an application process and a small committee to evaluate the applications and make the award decision. While we could use some of our existing funds toward this program, I would also like to seek donations to add to the scholarship fund. I will be sending more information about this proposal in the coming months and I welcome any questions, comments or feedback, as well as any donations toward this endeavor!

This is NOT an MLMA election year – but next year will be, so if you have any interest in getting more involved, please let me know.

A huge thank you to my fellow officers – Vice President Brian Rountree, Secretary Cathy Giaimo and Treasurer Eric Trosdahl – your time and efforts are appreciated. A big thank you also to our host this year, Casey Stanislaw and his colleagues at the Lee Lockwood Masonic Library and Museum – they have put together a wonderful program for us and I look forward to this taste of Texas culture! And, once more, thank you to all of the MLMA members – please do not hesitate to chime in on the Facebook page or the Yahoo group, or to call or email me – or any of the officers – with questions, comments and ideas.

Aimee E. Newell, Ph.D.

Aimee also announced her resignation from the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library in Lexington, MA and her new position as Executive Director of The Luzerne County Historical Society as of Nov. 8, 2016. She will complete her term as MLMA President.

A motion was made and seconded by multiples and approved.

F) Overseas report:
See Appendix 2

OLD BUSINESS:

A motion to hold the 2017 MLMA meeting at the Grand Lodge of Rhode Island was made and seconded by Hugh Young and Mark Tabbert and approved.

The Grand Lodge of Washington is still interested in hosting MLMA in 2018.

The MLMA table-top display has finally been completed! The project began with Val Korzsniak volunteering to create a display and was brought to fruition by Aimee Newell and creative company. After much discussion on how and where to store the display, Mark Tabbert volunteered to store it at the George Washington Masonic Memorial and ship it where needed. This display is available for all MLMA members to use.

The updated MSA booklet of Masonic Libraries is almost complete and should be finished by the end of 2016 and sent in for printing.

NEW BUSINESS:

The revisions of the MLMA bylaws were discussed at length and the changes were made. A motion was made and seconded by Hugh Young and Helge Horrisland and approved.

(Bylaws will be attached but who makes the official changes?)

Member news:

- Hugh Young: The building where the Grand Lodge of Alberta library is housed is being sold.
- Rich Lynch: The Grand Lodge of Rhode Island membership cards are now computerized and the 225th anniversary of the Grand Lodge is coming soon.
- Mark Tabbert: GWMM will be hosting a conference in 2018 on 18th Century Freemasonry in the Transatlantic area, also they are pursuing AAM accreditation.
- Glenn Visscher: Busy fundraising and looking to replace display cases in the museum.
- Ymelda Rivera Laxton: Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library (SRMML) museum is making its presence felt online with photos, prints, engravings available digitally and online exhibitions
- Eric Troisdahl: St. Paul Lodge continues with its restoration with new windows installed and the library being cataloged.
- Cathy Giaimo: The Grand Lodge banquet hall was redecorated with four new stained glass windows and 15 ft. statue of Benjamin Franklin; the library staff provided the artists with pictures and research for the correct Masonic information.

Aimee adjourned the meeting.

APPENDIX 1:

2016 TREASURER'S REPORT

[waiting for file]

APPENDIX 2:

OVERSEAS REPORT TO MLMA 2016

THE LIBRARY AND MUSEUM OF FREEMASONRY, LONDON

This report is sent with our usual best wishes for a successful and productive annual meeting.

The Library and Museum team has spent much of the last couple of years developing and installing a new gallery, with an exhibition called Three Centuries of English Freemasonry. This is one of the Library and Museum's contributions to the celebrations of the tercentenary of Grand Lodge. The gallery opened in April and is scheduled to be officially opened by the Grand Master on 29th September 2016.

Everyone working in the Library and Museum had appreciated for some time that we needed to do more to explain the concept and history of freemasonry, both to the public and to members, than we had been able to do either via our existing displays, temporary exhibitions or regular public tours of this building.

In 2012 we worked an exhibition design firm on a feasibility study for upgrading the existing museum space and the displays there. This caught the imagination of the Library and Museum Council, and the Board of General Purposes, and we were instead allocated an additional 200 square metres of space near the Library and Museum to develop the scheme.

We were determined that the exhibition should seek to explain Freemasonry's values of sociability, inclusivity, charity and integrity as well as its history and development. We believe that explaining the principles of freemasonry in an exhibition format breaks new ground and we hope that it provides another mechanism by which members can explain to friends, contacts and potential new members what freemasonry is all about and we can give our general visitors a better insight.

The exhibition is, appropriately enough, in three sections. This approach was retained from the feasibility stage. At the beginning, visitors walk underneath the sign for the Goose and Gridiron tavern just as those first freemasons attending Grand Lodge did on 24th June 1717. The first section explores the values of freemasonry as well as its symbolism and ritual and includes a timeline tracing its history up to 1813. The second section looks at what a lodge room looks like, how a lodge works, and the social side of freemasonry. Displays also show the three craft degrees and masonic hierarchy and the Royal Arch, the only other order explored in any detail. Here we also cover the

contribution of provincial, district and metropolitan grand lodges both in a case display and also in a short film about freemasonry and public life. Freemasonry abroad is covered in the third section which brings the story up to date with the challenges that freemasonry has had to face in the twentieth century. Visitors also get the chance here to look into one of the twenty or so lodge rooms in this building.

For the first time the new gallery has enabled us to use more technology in the displays. There is a second short film about the history of this Great Queen Street site and the various Freemasons' Halls.

Another challenge which I am sure many of you have faced is to try to explain symbolism and for this we created an interactive game which you can try either in the gallery or on our website. There aren't any prizes because there aren't any "right" answers. What we have tried to do is to convey the idea that symbols often have a multiplicity of meanings of which the masonic is just one.

There are pictures of the new space on our revamped website at www.freemasonry.london.museum.

There is an audioguide to go with the exhibition in English and various languages. A guidebook will be available in October/November this year. A soft toy Goose and Gridiron is now also available in the Shop- a novel raffle prize!

We are now opening the exhibition and the Library and Museum on Saturdays from 10am to 5pm.

We are anticipating more than 30,000 visitors this year – from more than 100 countries.

As anticipated in my report to the MLMA last year our partnership with Ancestry went live in November 2015 with the publication of digitised membership records for 1.7 m English Constitution freemasons initiated between 1750 and 1921. This has proved to be popular and well used not least by staff

A project to cataloguing the archives of the Royal Masonic Hospital has enabled us to prepare a new temporary exhibition on its history- the Hospital was opened 100 years ago this year.

A number of the English provinces are planning exhibitions and displays for the tercentenary next year and we are assisting with advice and support and probably some loan material.

We launched on social media in November 2015 and now have more than 2000 followers on Twitter. Hashtag @libmus

Diane Clements/ Martin Cherry
26th September 2016