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Office of the Grand Master
Thomas E. Pulkkinen

November 7, 2016

MASONIC EXCELLENCE AWARD – 2017

To the Masters, Wardens and Secretaries of all Maine Lodges

Dear Brethren:

Thirty-four Lodges are pursuing the Masonic Excellence Award this year, and hopefully they will be joined by many more Lodges next year. Not only are these Lodges pursuing how they might best **exemplify our Masonic tenets** and **add value** to their Brethren and communities – so are their Masonic Districts, our Grand Lodge and the Maine Masonic Charitable Foundation.

The efforts of the Lodge and District officers became readily apparent during our District meetings this fall. The District Deputy Grand Masters designed interesting and informative events and they worked hard to attract many Brethren and guests to the meetings; everyone heard about the exciting works being undertaken by the Lodges, and experienced special events and interesting presentations.

During the District #3 meeting at the Wreaths Across America (WAA) museum, we presented the prestigious Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain Award to WAA founder Morrill Worcester. During the District #12 meeting we were entertained by authors Bro. John Ford (retired game warden) and Mark Nickerson (retired state trooper) who kept everyone laughing. The District 18 meeting featured America Unearthed researcher Bro. Scott Wolter. MW Walter Macdougall said the District #5 meeting was the best he has ever attended...and that says a lot. What made the difference in these meetings? Our District leaders planned the events, pursued excellence in programming and effectively communicated with the participating Lodges. Congratulations to all involved in these events and those in other Districts.

These events serve as great examples for each of us to follow in our own Lodges. What do we want to be known for as Lodges? What **value** do we hope to and actually realize by attending Lodge? How do we attract more Brethren (and guests) and get them involved? How do we make our meetings exciting, memorable and likely to **add value** to being a Mason?

These questions are the foundation stones for the Masonic Excellence Award that urges Brethren to ask how they might add value to being a Maine Mason and a member of their Lodges...how they might better “enrich lives through education, charity and spiritual growth.” While pursuing the award is not required of any Lodge, it certainly would benefit every Lodge.

I urge you to discuss this self-improvement initiative during upcoming Lodge meetings. Information on the Masonic Excellence Award is available on the Grand Lodge website (www.MaineMason.org). Letters of commitment to participate in the Masonic Excellence Program are due by December 31, 2016. Grand Lodge stands ready to facilitate your discussions and to identify initiatives that might enhance your Lodge, and make Masonry and your Lodge **the place to be in your community**.

May God ever continue to bless our great fraternity!

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas E. Pulkkinen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'T'.

Distribution: Hard copy to Lodge Secretaries; Email copy to Lodge Masters, Wardens and Secretaries, and to all Grand Lodge officers and Past Grand Masters