



# Light from the Great Land

December 2013/January 2014

## Grand Masters Message

### Lodge Attendance

During my 4 years in the Grand Lodge line, the subject of "Lodge Attendance" has been talked about a lot. While there are some lodges that are doing OK with their attendance, many are not. I once read a study done by a group concerning attendance in clubs, groups etc. The study concluded that only about 10 to 12 percent of the membership participates in the regular meetings. The others are just card carrying members. The Masonic family is no different with a few exceptions.



Years ago the Masonic family, prior to television, computers, iPad, computer games and Monday night football, was a place to go and socialize. Today we can do that with Facebook, email, twitter and text. So what can we do to increase our lodge attendance? I don't believe there is just one answer but a combination of things to be considered. It is my opinion that we should start off with that

petition to become a Master Mason or to join one of the concordant bodies, Scottish Rite, York Rite, Shrine etc.

The investigating team should be asking the questions not only about the petitioner's background and character but *why* does he want to be a Mason, Scottish Rite, York Rite etc. He needs to be informed of his responsibilities and the importance of being at the stated meetings.

The top line signer should be held responsible for that brother for a minimum of at least one year. I know a brother who was asked on many different occasions to join one of these concordant bodies.

Since he joined, no one has called him to ask why he is not showing up at the meetings. Several other brothers I know were made Shriners on the spot and again never invited to attend the meetings or received the initiation others received.

That Brother honestly felt cheated. He was just a member. Someone was more interested in numbers.

We need to inform prospective members of the Blue Lodge requirement to memorize the posting lecture and what is expected of them. I am a firm believer that that is why every lodge has a substantial list of brothers who have not progressed past the first degree. I could write several pages about this topic alone but I think you get the idea.

As you may know- My theme this year has been: Ritual, Education and Communication. The reason I

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*"When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen."*

*- Ernest Hemingway*



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## Grand Masters Message *-Continued*

chose this theme is because I believe it to be a part of the key to improving lodge attendance. Let's start off with ritual. Ask yourself- Do you like to go to a lodge and watch the Worshipful Master read from the cypher to open his Lodge or to confer a degree? I can honestly say I have not found one brother that has said yes to that question.

Put yourself in this position. Let's just say you are a member of a lodge and a visitor shows up to attend your meeting. Whether he is a Master Mason or maybe a Grand Master from a visiting jurisdiction how would you feel if your lodge could not even open the meeting without reading it out of a book? The point here is if you are going to be in one of these leadership positions you need to know your stuff instead of reading it out of a cypher. The Scottish and York Rites are a little different.

Education is very important. Our younger members want to know *why*. *Why* do we do this and *why* do we do that? What is the history behind Masonry? Matanuska Lodge # 7, Anchorage Lodge #17 and Aurora Lodge #15 all have educational programs in place that include topics to discuss on a regular basis and their Lodge attendances are improving. If you want help starting an educational program just ask and I'm sure the Grand Lodge will point you in the right direction.

Communication has long been a topic of interest to me. I really don't know anyone that does not like the pat on the back for doing a good job. The other thing I think we forget is birthdays, wedding anniversary, birth of a child, retirement, or the death of a loved one. A card or a note on Facebook will let that individual know you care. My birthday was November 9<sup>th</sup> and I received many birthday wishes by way of Facebook. It made me feel good that my

brothers and friends took a moment out of their schedule to wish me a happy birthday. If a brother has not shown up at a meeting, call him and ask why. Is he sick? Did he get off work late? You will show that you care. I know a lady that went to church and became ill. No one called her from her own church. Needless to say, she doesn't go to that church any longer. Tell people that you are a Master Mason, Scottish Rite Mason, York Rite Mason etc. Brag about what we do in Scottish Rite Masonry for example. Tell people we spend millions of dollars every day to help a child with speech therapy. The Shrine spends a little over two million dollars a day to help children that have been burned or have orthopedic problems. My Deputy Grand Master, R W Dave Worel, calls it Masonic Awareness. We really need to do more of it. Some of our older members believe you should not ask anyone if they want to be a Mason. I honestly don't believe that, but I respect the tradition. I will however tell an individual that they would make a great Mason and when they finally get down to asking how they can become a Mason- I hand them a petition and tell them the just did.

The last topic I'd like to cover is: Have Fun. If you're not doing things in your lodge to have some fun then you're missing the boat. I've heard it said many times that a bad day of fishing is better than a good day at the office. We all like to have fun and that is one reason the Shrine is successful. They have fun while at the same time providing a program to help children. There are many things you can do. Hold a meeting on Monday night to watch a football game. Plan a fishing trip, etc. I can promise you that the first couple times you try this, you may not have many show up, but if you are having fun the word will get out and the attendance will improve not only at your fun meetings but also your stated



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## Grand Masters Message -Continued

meetings so they can find out what is planned next.

This may not fix every problem you have but I hope it will help. All I ask of you is to give it some thought. One of the most important suggestions I can give you is to have a meeting just about your lodge attendance and ask for suggestion on how to improve it. It is a tough battle to get someone back once you lose them but it *is possible*. The key however is not to lose them in the first place.

I want you all to know that I've really enjoyed my four years in the Grand Lodge Line. I want to thank each and every one of you for your support and votes of confidence in each of the four elections. I hope and pray that I have represented you as Grand Master of Alaska in a way you can be proud of. I have been extremely proud of each and every one of you. I plan to continue to help the Grand Lodge and any concordant body that needs my assistance. God Bless you and your family and I hope you had a very Merry Christmas.

M W James R. Herrington  
Grand Master



## From The South



Hi Brethren,

I hope that all of you had a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May all of you and your families have a Healthy, Happy and Prosperous New Year 2014.

What a Great Year (2013) has been. This is thanks to the Hospitality and Friendliness, and Brotherly love granted The Grand Lodge officers on our Grand Masters Official Visitations, also the food was great! Visitations, for me are invaluable, I get to see where you have your meetings, meet the Brethren and Ladies as well as see where you live. The meetings among the Brethren and The Grand Lodge officers help us to understand what problems you are facing- if any. Hopefully these meetings will encourage us all to work more closely together and find solutions if needed.

*REMEMBER- THE GRAND LODGE* is here to help and work for you.

In August I traveled to Evanston, Wyoming to attend The Grand Lodge A.F.& A.M. of Wyoming as the representative for our Grand Master.

The following are excerpts from The Scottish Rite Research Society annual meeting on membership.

*"The Challenges of Freemasonry in the 21st*



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## Junior Grand Warden's Message

### *Century"*

The current attitude towards Freemasonry that considers it little more than a civic club. The period of 'misplaced openness' began on October 8, 1956, when Life magazine had color scenes of Masonic Degrees with member in costume. It became 'chic' or 'cool' to denigrate or look down on this ancient tradition of secrecy in Freemasonry. "Secrecy, not secrets, gives us a great deal of the reputation, and aura that has always attracted young men to the fraternity."

There was nothing wrong with being elite, and that Freemasonry has never been for the common man. "When we set our protocol to accept only good men, we became elite. And my brothers, we must remain elite." To succeed in the 21st century, Freemasonry must raise initiation fees, have higher annual dues, establish attendance expectations, and maintain required dress beyond what is now seen in lodges.

If you like you can find the rest of the highlights of The Seminar in The Scottish Rite Journal, Nov/Dec 2013.

*Always continue the climb. It is possible for you to do whatever you choose, if you first get to know who you are and are willing to work with a power that is greater than ourselves to do it.*

*~Ella Wheeler Wilcox*

The last excerpt should open up a good discussion among the Brethren. Question, What kind of membership do we want- Quality? or do we go for Quantity?

In my opinion I would like a Lodge of 30 members who participate more than a Lodge with membership of a 100 when only 10 show up! I like to think we would all like that.

Hope to see all of you at Grand Lodge in Feb, 2014.

Fraternally yours

R W Carl Lindstrom  
- Junior Grand Warden





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## Deputy Grand Master's Message



Brethren,

First I would like to say Happy New Year to you and your family from Kathy and I. This year is starting very well. Kathy and I, Russ and Linda Charvonia Deputy Grand Master of California meet in Vegas for New Year. We are happy to say we watch Fleetwood Mac perform for 2.5 hours. What a blast!!! Geez I wonder how many text ill get

saying who is Fleetwood Mac LOL?

Well here we are 2014 I cant believe we are here. Grand Lodge is in a few weeks. Im sure our Grand Master is getting nervous about his function. I hope we get to see you all in Anchorage. Please support out GM and support your Grand Lodge.

Congratulations to all the new officer of our lodges. Being elected to WM,SW,JW,Tres and Sec is an honor bestowed to you by your Lodge. They are trusting you to the management of its care. With that being said remember work as a team, work together.

I will promise you this- A lodge that works as a team will grow and prosper by leaps and bounds.

A simple reminder to all about our GWMM trip. Its not to late to attend. Looks like we will have between 30 and 40 people attending. How exciting!!! I will attach a schedule of Events with this news letter. Before I forget, to all the lodges, please if you want anything display from your lodge to the GWMM please let our Grand lodge office know ASAP.

Brethren, I sure hope you have a wonderful year. Most of all I look forward to working with you this year. Remember Grand Lodge is here to support you. Don't hesitate to call us for help.

I would also like to invite you to the George Washington Masonic National Memorial on February 20-22, 2014.

We are all part owners of the GWM and February 2014 is Alaska's month to shine. We are planning a 3 day Alaskan Masonic trip to Alexandria Virginia.

If any lodge wishes to have some important artifact from their lodge displayed at the GWM, please get it to the Grand Secretary's office by December 15, 2013. Our Grand Secretary will need time to ship everything before February.

This event is an experience that I am so thankful to be a part of and I would like to share this experience with as many Brothers as I can. Please be part of this with me.

Our activities will consist of a tour of the Scottish Rite "House of the Temple". We will also actually open Grand Lodge and rededicate President and Brother George Washington's Tomb. We will have a full tour of the memorial itself, plus have many more activities.

The Embassy Suites will be our host Hotel. Rates will be \$149.00 per night. This will include a made to order hot breakfast. Furthermore a complimentary Managers two drinks and appetizers evening treat. Please call 1-800-362-2779 or call directly 703-684-5900 and use code "LOA" to make your hotel reservation. Furthermore if you are planning to attend this event please contact the Grand Lodge office at grandlodge@alaska.com or call 907-561-1477. This will help us to keep you inform with up to date information. As always if you have any questions on this event my contact info is davidworel@gmail.com or my cell 907-378-4640

Fraternally Yours,  
David Worel  
Deputy Grand Master

Grand Lodge of Alaska



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## Greetings from District 5

What a great honor it has been to attend all three District Lodge Officer Installations. First, we had Eagle River Lodge No.13 on November 18<sup>th</sup> and it was well attended with a delicious pot-luck dinner.

It was a pleasure to watch MW James Herrington install WB Tim Parris as Master and MW Hank Dunbar install the remaining Officers. I look forward to this next year as Senior Warden of Eagle River Lodge.



Next up we have Iditarod 20 Installation on December 7<sup>th</sup> that was an open installation with a

potluck dinner and it was well attended though they do have a few Officers yet to install. It went very well, as V W Cliff Darnell is a treat to watch perform the ceremony. W Bones Cannon looks forward to his year as Master of Iditarod. We wish Iditarod Lodge a prosperous 2014.

Then on to Matanuska Lodge Installation of Officers on December 14<sup>th</sup> and was very well attended including M W James Herrington, Grand Master of Alaska. I was honored to be Installing Master for Brother Tom Lehe and the Officers of Matanuska Lodge.



I have witnessed a great improvement in the communications between the three Lodges of District 5 and while there is always room for improvement, it is very encouraging.

I hope everyone has safe Christmas and New Year's Celebrations and we look forward to 2014 as a bright light for all of the Lodges in Alaska. God Bless and Keep you all and I look forward to seeing you this February at our Annual Communication in Anchorage.

Respectfully submitted  
V W Dennis N. Oakland  
Deputy to the Grand Master  
District No. 5





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## West to East & Back Again, again...

September 2013

Just a short re-cap, stepping back to 2011 - W Claude "Vapor Rider" Roberts and I, Jeff "Cat Herder" DeFreest, made a sojourn across North America to attend the Widows Sons' International Grand Gathering being held in Kingston Ontario. There we met Brothers from around the realm – the North, the Midwest, the South, and Provinces of Canada to name a few. We had the chance to get to know and ride with many Brothers from New



England, in particular, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and the "Pine Tree Riders" representing the Grand Chapter of Maine. I reported on these events, and others, experienced during my term as the Grand Orator for MW Ron Ackerman, at the Grand Lodge Communication in February 2012 at Anchorage.

Now moving forward, summer 2013 – The fellowship amongst Widows Sons continues; the subsequent International Grand Gathering of Widows Sons, held over Labor Day Weekend for 2013, took place in Acton, Maine. Two Brothers –



"Cat Herder" and Chris "Pinky" Fratello, representing the Grand Chapter of Alaska, rode the furthest, following the pavement across the United States and Canada,

while nine Brothers traveled the furthest, representing the Grand Chapter of Finland!

Only having been able to escape the clutches work for couple weeks this summer, I plotted the most expedient course to get there. My Harley "Road King" and I boarded the southbound ferry at Ketchikan on Wednesday August 21st and arrived at Bellingham, WA on Friday morning. By way of the "Super-Slab" or Interstates, we rode like the wind. The first stop for rest was Miles City, MT - some 17 hours on the road, covering about 1100 miles. During the next day, I experienced the 100 degree heat, crossing to Fargo ND, and then veering southward to Sioux Falls, SD. There I met up with my bride's uncle - Uncle Bob. He'd ridden like the wind from South Carolina to South Dakota on his new Harley Softail to join me for the eastward ride across the Midwest and to sail across Lake Michigan. The SS Badger, a coal-fired rail-car ferry, carried us from Manitowoc, WI across to Luddington, MI - what a great opportunity for a couple modern day bikers to experience some real American history. After brushing off the coal dust and disembarking, we rode onto Akron, OH for a day's rest with my



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family, and then onto Pennsylvania where Uncle Bob headed south for home, and I continued onto New York to find some Widows Sons...

Along the New York Turnpike, at a fuel stop, I was met by a small contingent of Widows Sons on the road from Rochester, heading for Maine. I was smoked, another day of riding in sweltering down-south heat, but running into these guys refreshed my spirit enough to ride on, at least as far as my family's historical stomping grounds, near DeFreestville, NY. And then finally, on Friday, I closed the gap and rode into Acton Maine to be met at the gate. After six and a half days on the road and 3777 miles on the odometer, I'd arrived. I was met by Chip Gavel, President of the Pine Tree Riders, Panda, Mike Lytle & his lady, Angel, and of course "Cramer".

The Grand Gathering events were well organized, starting with scenic autumn rides each day, a Biker-Rodeo, live music each night, and a Widows Sons Branding as finale on Saturday night. In all, about 400 Brother Masons attended, including the MW James Ross, Grand Master of Maine.

Having experienced the Branding Ceremony in Ontario, I was able to participate and helped to brand about 135 new Masons as Widows Sons... The secluded outdoor ceremony took place well after dark, with a lightning storm illuminating the skies around us. A very mystical experience was had by all; and with only a spritz of rain as we rode back to Acton.

Then came the time to roll westward once again. The return leg of my journey had only five days allocated to ride in order to catch the ferry at Bellingham. Ohio the first night, just west of Chicago the next, and back to Sioux Falls, then Missoula; wow, I was tired. The

weather stayed warm (well, HOT) and somehow I was able to thread the needle between western thunderstorms, until the last day. But as luck would have it, I made northern Idaho on time, to meet up with family, where my father-in-law had hooked up a trailer to his truck, just in case I wanted a ride across Washington, so that we could visit. My bride, Kari, was flying down from Ketchikan to meet me at Seattle, and her folks were going to drive over to see her, so, hmm, lets see - my bike has NEVER been on a trailer, but my rear tire is near bald, and another 400 miles yet to go, I've crossed the continent enough times now, so I didn't need it for my ego - so who'd turn down that kind offer?



So on we loaded. We enjoyed a dinner and a few miles of conversation, and then drove into what was the worst storm I'd seen in years! The skies opened

up just west of Spokane, and we experienced about 6 hours of driving in the worst storm with gusty crosswinds, lightning, and heavy rains. It was so bad I removed the windshield off my bike and put it in the truck. All the way across Washington it howled and rained. Gosh it was nice to be in a cab, for a change. In the Seattle area, we met up with Kari and I found a Harley shop to replace my tire, while they went off to socialize. I completed the journey to meet the ferry in Bellingham, riding the last 75-80 miles to break in that new tire. Then Kari and I enjoyed the cruise home together...





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## District 2 News



Not a bad way to end another trip from West to the East and back again. All told, two and a half weeks on the road, 7000 miles on the odometer. Old friendships rekindled, and new ones made. Masonry is alive and well across North America and the Widows Sons Masonic Motorcycle Riders Association is proud to have a part in spreading the cement of Masonic fellowship.



Submitted by: VW Jeffrey WDeFreest  
DDGM - District #4  
and Vice President, Widows Sons of Alaska



Sterling Masonic Lodge #22 annual Christmas Party was held from 5:00 P M until 9:00 on December 14, 2013, at the Sterling Area Senior Center. Both Kenai Lodge #11 and Seward #6 members were invited, as well as the OES Members.

The Worshipful Master of Sterling #22, VWB Will Josey and his Lady Betty, the Worshipful Master of Seward #6, VWB Billy Harris and his Lady Kay, the Worshipful Master-elect of Sterling #22, Brother Paul McConnell and his Lady Linda, The Grand Junior Warden for the Most Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Alaska, RWB Carl Lindstrom and his Lady Yolonda, Deputy to the Grand Master for District #2, VWB Bill Roberts and his Lady Karen, Past Grand Master, MWB Les Little and his Lady Roxie, and the Worthy Matron of Chapter #17 of the Order of the Eastern Star, Soldotna, Ak, Mrs Tichi Cole were among those in attendance.

The evening events included a delicious supper and after the supper a Chinese Christmas present exchange was held.

The dinner was catered by the Sterling Area Senior Center and the menu included: Steamboat Round Roast of Beef, Southern Fried Chicken, mashed potatoes with beef gravy, baked potatoes, green bean casserole, tossed salad, rolls and butter and



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## District 2 News *-Continued*

beef noodle soup.

A big "THANK YOU" goes to Mrs Betty Josey for making the very delicious desserts.

All present appeared to have had good fellowship and a great time.

VWB Bill Roberts, DD#2

### "Breakfast with Santa"

The Sterling Elementary School sponsored one of its annual programs, "Breakfast with Santa", on December 14, 2013 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The breakfast was cooked by volunteers from the Elementary School Staff, teachers

and PTA members. Members of Sterling Masonic Lodge #22 were invited to assist those children who needed some assistance in locating appropriate gifts for those on their gift lists.

"Breakfast with Santa" also included photos with Santa and a Gift Shop where elementary-aged



## District 2 News *-Continued*



children could purchase gifts [\$0.25 to \$4.00]. The gift items ranged from trinkets, pen/pencils, stuffed animals, measuring tapes

to gloves/caps, etc... A "BIG THANK YOU" goes to the the local merchants [Sterling and Soldotna area] who either donated or greatly reduced the prices of items purchased for the Gift Shop.

Members of the Sterling Lodge assisting were VW Will Josey, Worshipful Master, VW Bob Wiseman, Chaplain and VWB Bill Roberts, Senior Deacon.



Fraternally yours,

VW Bill Roberts, DD #2



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## Grand Lecturer's Message, *cont.*

Originally Presented to Mt. Juneau-Gastineaux #21

MWGM James Herrington's 2013 Theme:

### "Ritual, Education, Communication"

Thank you MW Jim. I would like to openly thank the Grand Master for allowing me to be of service in this manner.

Owing to the nature of my title, I thought I would provide a short lecture along with some thoughts and my experiences.



It is often said that Masonry is a Fraternity with a goal of making good men better.

Masonry is a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols.

Merriam-Webster provides the following applicable definitions:

- **Morality** is defined as conformity to the ideals of right human conduct.
- **Allegory** is a work of written, oral, or visual expression that uses symbolic figures, objects, and actions to convey truths or generalizations about human conduct or experience.
- **Symbols** are a visible sign of something invisible. We use the "working tools" of Operative Masonry, most notably the Square and Compasses, to instill the precepts of our Fraternity to our candidates.

Sounds like us, I think! I believe in our case the adoption of our principles produce visible signs as well. "People will know us by our works and conduct." So, there is a lot to learn. Becoming a Master Mason, is not unlike an electrician or carpentry apprentice striving to be a Journeyman and then a Master Craftsman. He must learn and work hard before advancing. Unlike civic organizations and most other fraternal groups, A Mason must earn the right to move from an Apprentice to a

Fellow Craft to a Master.

The Mason must master each degree before being passed and raised.

Then more work is required to be eligible for high office within the Lodge.

Since it is our goal to make good men better, Degree Work is the most important thing we do in Blue Lodge Masonry and something we should strive to do as best as we can.

I believe the Grand Master agrees.

At this point I'd like thank our Senior Warden Ken Vaughn for the hard work he has done expanding the ranks of those performing our degree work, especially in the area of our Drama and Lectures. Ken has done what I hoped when I spoke about "The Masters of the Work" as I completed my time in the East. I believe #21 does some of the best degree work in Alaska. However, I believe Brother Ken would agree, there is always room for improvement at all positions. Ken has a talent for motivating people. He was the motivation for my taking on a critical part in the Drama. In my case he motivated me by suggesting my work was a bit wanting a couple of years ago. This got under my skin and I said to myself, I'll show him! Anyway, it is important for us to strive for the best degree work we can accomplish.

When someone makes themselves available for the chairs or an appointed office, they are telling the Lodge and Worshipful Master they are willing to do the work that position requires, should the Lodge or the Master "hire them." The Lodge members do not expect perfection from their officers, no one is among us is perfect. However, it is reasonable for the lodge to expect the officer to strive for progress in his work.

Progress, not perfection, is the goal.

This is similar to saying a Mason is suitably proficient in a degree. When we do we are not saying they are perfect.



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## GEORGE WASHINGTON Masonic Memorial Alaska Trip

### *THURSDAY FEB 20TH 2014*

2:00 pm- House of the Temple Tour Washington DC

Dress: Business Casual

Transportation: We are trying to arrange transportation

6:00 pm Jim Kincheloe Sr. and the Mule Skinners will have a BBQ for  
Alaska. (Kena Shrine Temple)

Dress: Casual

Transportation: We are trying to arrange transportation

### *FRIDAY FEB 21ST 2014*

2:00 pm- Alaska Grand Lodge (Public Opening Women Invited)

3:00 pm- Alaska Grand Lodge Opens a Tiled Lodge (Master Masons Only)

7:30 pm- Alexandria-Washington Lodge #22 Honoring Brother George  
Washington (Master Masons Only)

Dress: Suits (Note for the ladies please be comfortable)

Transportation: Walking

### *SATURDAY FEB 22ND 2014*

8:00 a.m. -Wreath Laying at the Tomb of Brother Washington, Alexandria-  
Washington Lodge No- 22 at Mount Vernon,

1:00 PM - George Washington Symposium—Memorial Theater,

Dress: Suits (Note for the ladies please be comfortable)

Transportation: Walking

· Reception—Memorial Hall, 6:00 p.m. (Dress is formal)

· Concert—Memorial Theater, 7:00 p.m.

· Banquet—Grand Masonic Hall, 7:45 p.m.

· Presentation of the George Washington Memorial Award—Grand  
Masonic Hall, 9:00 p.m.

Tickets for the Saturday evening black-tie events are \$125, and may be  
purchased on our website, <http://gwmemorial.org>. Limited seating available.

For more information contact Shawn Eyer, Director of Communications, via  
e-mail at [seyer@gwmemorial.org](mailto:seyer@gwmemorial.org).