



Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia
Grand Council Cryptic Masons in Virginia

The Keystone

June 2018



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Companions and friends:

Well, the official visits are complete. Virginia is a beautiful state full of good people who love their heritage and their homeland. Each city we have visited offers its own unique hospitality with such different and variable landscapes. We have thoroughly enjoyed every one of these visits.

In my talks to the companions I continue to encourage participation in Blue Lodge meetings and functions. I remind the members to tell the Blue Lodge Masons that the Royal Arch was once part of the Blue Lodge. So to be a Royal Arch Mason is just an extension of your Blue Lodge education (further enlightenment). I also remind them that the Commandery is a wonderful organization to be a member of and enjoy the drill teams with each Commandery.

Each Masonic body was formed centuries ago with specific duties and responsibilities related to our faith and service to God. Each organization has responsibilities to its communities and families. Many Masons are members of multiple Masonic bodies. As individuals and Masonic bodies we need to support each other in our degree work, lectures, memberships, and philanthropies. Whether we belong to one organization or several bodies we all have the same goals; to serve our communities with faith and zeal that will support each of us throughout our life. We are strong men who know the strength and wisdom of faith in a higher being. We need to share this in all our Masonic endeavors.

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I attended the membership banquet at Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star. This is a group of dedicated ladies and gentlemen who support all of our Masonic bodies. It was a great pleasure to learn that the General Grand Chapter of Order of the Eastern Star has announced a philanthropy: "Service Dogs". Each jurisdiction will have a chair person to manage the charity and distribute funds to service dog centers in their jurisdiction. This is a very wonderful charity that serves our veterans and many children and citizens with emotional and physical challenges. Please give generously to help them. God Bless each of you. Hope to see you soon.

Sincerely and fraternally,

Joe G. Broce, Grand High Priest

The Grand Almoner's Message

Companions of Royal Arch Masonry in



Virginia, as the summer quickly approaches, I would like to inform you that we have just broken the \$16,000 mark in donations. I would like to congratulate District 2 and Right Worshipful Danny

Diego for accumulating over \$6,000 in donations. Great job Danny!

Warren Chapter #5 and Manassas Chapter #81 will be having a Table Chapter as a means to find a cure for Alzheimer's. They have contacted their local Alzheimer's Chapter and have requested a guest speaker with Alzheimer's to speak of their journey

with this disease. They will also be using this opportunity as a recruiting tool by inviting their local Blue Lodge Masons to attend. Most Excellent Donald McAndrews will give a talk on how wonderful our craft is and they will be ready with petitions in their hands.

As August comes near, so do our Alzheimer's Walks to Find a Cure. If you would like to join a team, go to alz.org and then click "Walk to End Alzheimer's", then click "Find Your Walk". Or, using the same method, you may want to start a team of your own. Invite your friends, neighbors, relatives, and co-workers to join and donate to your team. With your help, we all can make a difference.

At last count, there are about 5,500 Royal Arch Masons in Virginia. In every fund raising event, every lecture that I have given, about half of the participants knows someone with Alzheimer's, or knows someone who is caring for someone with Alzheimer's. What that means is there are over 2,500 Royal Arch Masons affected, in some way shape or form, by this disease. What I would like to ask each and every one of you to do is ask a friend, a fellow employee, a relative and even yourself, to instead of buying you a gift for your birthday, anniversary, your spouse's birthday, to consider writing a check, made payable, to the Alzheimer's Association. The amount can be as little or as large as you or they can afford. Ask them to give the check to you and mail it to our Grand Chapter. Please ponder the thought that the gift you give may replace the gift from someone who doesn't remember the last gift that they have received.

Paul Lockhart, Grand Almoner of Virginia

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Recent Exaltations



Royal Arch Degree Team, Keystone #58

On May 22, Keystone Chapter #58 exalted Brother Brandon Black as shown in the above picture. One week later on May 29, Petersburg Union #7 conferred the Royal Arch Degree on four candidates the old-fashioned way in two groups. For almost three hours, the Principal Sojourner walked the groups of candidates through the lecture into the Sanctuary, while Companion Earl Philpott walked gamely as the third candidate in each group. Finally, on June 6, Mann Page #89 exalted two candidates. Congratulations to the new Companions!

Grand Chapter Update

The Venue Search Committee for Grand Chapter RAM in Virginia 2019-2021 has updated information: Recent telephone negotiations with The Double Tree in Williamsburg have involved small changes to the hospitality suite arrangements. They are currently willing to allow us to have Crock Pots and food brought from outside the hotel. Previously, they indicated that they would allow only packaged snacks, but NO Crock Pots nor cooking. They will not allow open flames. Additionally, they are standing firm on the room rates of \$90, \$93, and \$96 for the 2019, 2020 and 2021 years, respectively. Furthermore, the first year (2019) would have to be the fourth Friday while our Digest Law states it must occur on the third Friday. The third Friday in November 2019 is not available because it has been booked by another organization.

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The negotiations with the Holiday Inn Executive Center offer a rate of \$79, which is an increase of 1.3% from the current \$78 contract/Ft. Magruder ending November 2018 and will not increase for 2019-2021. As of June 6, Ft. Magruder has come back with a proposal, different from the original, with new room rates of \$79, \$82 and \$86 for years 2019, 2020 and 2021, respectively.

If you compare only rates: Fort Magruder is comparable to the Holiday Inn rates. The Doubletree rates are an increase of 13.9%, 17.7% and 21.5%, respectively, over the Holiday Inn rate of \$79. Obviously, comparing only the rates is simply part of the equation, because there are potential costs for A/V, Meals, Platform Rentals, Visiting Dignitaries, Setup, etc. that may or may not increase over the next three years.

Although the committee has received many responses, it is only representative of a small percentage of our companions across the Commonwealth. We would love to have as many as possible to respond. Again, please forward your suggestions to the committeemen: fggmplus@earthlink.net, therunningrev@gmail.com, and razor036@comcast.net. Thank you for your time and input.

Correspondence Course Update

On Saturday, May 19, DEO Ray Bacchus and District 17 held a District Correspondence Course Working Group at Manassas Chapter #81. While working on their course, the Companions enjoyed the good discussion and debate. Manassas Chapter's High Priest, Excellent Joe Martinez, couldn't have been more accommodating or prepared. He arranged for a delicious breakfast, and provided sufficient copies of the courses themselves along with the reference materials and writing utensils. He also displayed the reference materials on a large screen monitor so everyone could be comfortable viewing them. The Companions all left having furthered their knowledge of and zeal for Capitular Masonry. Completing the course were the following: Warren #5: Gary Sprifke; Manassas #81: Arthur Wood, Joseph Martinez, Doyle Meadows, Michael Slonin, Bill Costis, Tom Costis, Philip Sommers, and Clancy Nidell.

Other Companions who have recently completed the course are: Norfolk Union #1: Walter Burton III, Eric Andersson; Harrisonburg #6: Steven Giddens; Great Bridge #82: Gregory Gustafson, Walter Trinkala; Mann Page #89: Gregory Johnson; and Princess Anne #1607: William Peterson, Benjamin Tendilla, Ariel Alcantara.

Recent Veterans' Awards

William Wright Bell, Norfolk #1, 70 years; Pete Liosotas, Norfolk #1, 50 years.
John R. Miller, Orange #47, 50 years; Michael L. Goodwin, Luray #4, 50 years.
Harry A. McCauley, Keystone #58, 50 years; James Robert Gray, Cradock #72, 50 years.
John H. Crosby, III, Urbanna #59, 50 years.

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District 2 Red Coat Nights



Attendees at Naomi #87 on April 6

Under the leadership of District Deputy Grand High Priest Danny Diego, District 2 continues to hold Red Coat Night at various Blue Lodges. On April 4, they attended Naomi #87 as shown above. Two months later, 25 Companions attended Willis V. Fentress Lodge #296 on June 5, which is pictured below. The District then held a Red Coat Night on June 12 at Doric Lodge #44.



Attendees at Willis V. Fentress #296 on June 5

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Ask Hiram

What is the correct image of the Grand Omnific Royal Arch Word as represented in the triangle (in cipher) on the top of Virginia Chapters Arks and also of the correct arrangement of inscriptions on the Ark's sides? There is no exact image of the Grand Omnific Royal Arch Word as it appears on the Ark of the Covenant in Virginia. We know what the exact words are, but the code used to display them is variable. As you know, the key has thirteen places, and each place can be either blank or have a dot in it. However in Virginia, the letters can be inserted in the places in any particular order, and do not have to begin with A. We know that other Grand Jurisdictions may begin the upper left corner of the key with A, but Virginia does not require that. The arks in Virginia Royal Arch Chapter have many different arrangements of characters on them, depending on how the key is set up. Brother John Lundin of Richmond Royal Arch Chapter #3 has done a study of the various arks in Virginia and how the words are coded differently on many of them.

York Rite Masonry, "Open Your Book", R.E. J. Richard Rawls, District Lecturer

As District Lecturer, I try to come up with topics that might make you think, help you with your Ritual and give you a better perspective on things that might work for you. As it turns out, most of my talks come from my own personal experiences or observations. This one is no different. So here you are, a new Master Mason in your Blue Lodge and you are elected Junior Deacon. What do you do? And then, you join a Royal Arch Chapter and get appointed as Grand Master of the 2nd Veil. What do you do? And later, you decide to become a Knights Templar in Commandery and are elected as the Junior Warden. What do you do?

So, let's break this down. In your Blue Lodge, you attend practices, you work with your Lodge Instructor on Work, you attend your local Ritual Schools and then you seek out a Brother who can help you learn your part. In your Royal Arch Chapter, you follow a similar path by attending practices, attend Ritual Schools, and then seek out a good Companion who can help you with your part. But wait, Royal Arch has a Ritual Book you can buy! And then you are in Commandery and you attend practices, attend local Ritual Schools, seek out a fellow Sir Knight who can help you with your part and then you buy their book. All straight forward and easy, right? If you are like me, all of this can be very complicated and often times difficult. In your Blue Lodge, Brothers are willing to help as are your Companions and Sir Knights in your Chapter and Commandery. Your first step is to seek Light, or in this case instruction. All you need to do is ask. Have you heard that before? But unlike your Blue Lodge, both Royal Arch and Commandery allow you to purchase and hopefully use a Ritual Book. So, let's go back to when you are first elected or appointed to a chair. The question was, what do you do? Do you learn your chair as well as you can? Do you consider that you might be asked to move up a chair or two? Do you also learn other chairs? Hopefully, you have a goal of eventually advancing to the East and leading your respective York Rite Body. To do this, and to do it well, you need to know all of the parts of every chair in each York Rite Body. You need to be prepared for that evening

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when your Lodge, Chapter or Commandery has vacancies in the chairs. As they used to say in Boys Scouts, “Be Prepared”. Are you preparing yourself to fill other chairs as you move towards the East? I would make the following suggestions:

- 1) Attend practices as much as possible;
- 2) Don't be satisfied with only learning the chair you occupy;
- 3) Get with more informed Brethren and ask questions;
- 4) Always be looking ahead several chairs and learn those parts;
- 5) Be willing to challenge yourself by moving up when needed;
- 6) **You bought the book, OPEN IT! STUDY IT!**
- 7) And finally, be proud of your Ritual work. Keep in mind that it is our obligation to do the best we can. Strive for perfection in your Ritual work and know that none of us are perfect. As humans, we do make mistakes.

Companions, whether it is in your Blue Lodge, Royal Arch Chapter or Commandery, there is a lot of Ritual to learn. Unless you have a photographic memory, an extremely high IQ or are one of those folks that find this easy, you have to work hard to become proficient in your Ritual work. And by becoming proficient in your Ritual, you will help maintain the Sanctity of our Work and be better prepared to advance through the Chairs and to help others.

Upcoming Calendar

August 27-28, William B. Millican Royal Arch School, Taylor Lodge, Salem
October 27, Alzheimer's Walk, Museum of the Shenandoah Valley, Winchester
November 14-17, Grand Convocation, Fort Magruder Inn, Williamsburg

DeMolay Legion of Honor

Congratulations to Most Excellent Daniel Hufford Surface and Most Excellent Joe Gilbert Broce, who were just elected as recipients of the DeMolay Honorary Legion of Honor. They will receive their degree on July 22 at Melrose Lodge in Roanoke at 2 pm.



A Happy Group of Royal Arch Alzheimer's Walkers, Virginia Beach, April 14

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Attendees at District 18 Official Visit, Barboursville



Right Excellents Diego and Murphrey welcome the Grand High Priest



Attendees at District 20 Official Visit, Chincoteague