



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

# The Keystone

**Mar 2020 Vol 4 No. 2**



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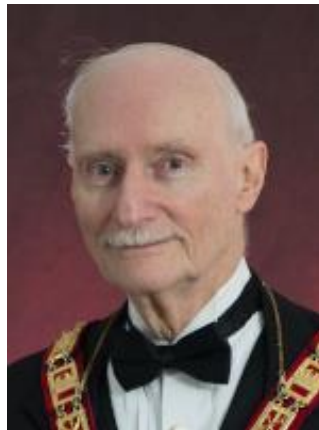
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Want your articles or pictures here? Or have a question for Zerubbabel? Send them to [tvarner536@aol.com](mailto:tvarner536@aol.com).



Companions:

Although I am working full-time, am busy as the Personal Representative in the Valley of Alexandria for the Scottish Rite Orient Deputy, have obligations as the Chair of the National Sojourners Fraternal Relations Committee, and support my local Masonic bodies, my primary job is to get ready to assume the East in Grand Chapter and maintain the momentum being created by our Grand High Priest ME Ray Steele.

Like our Grand High Priest, I am deeply concerned about the health of our Chapters. I know that some of our Companions have almost singlehandedly kept their Chapters alive, serving again and again in the East, and performing our beautiful ritual. But more of us need to step up to help. Increasing our membership is important and maintaining the participation and enthusiasm of our current members is essential. A key focus of my preparation to be your Grand High Priest is to develop programs to support and strengthen our Chapters.

I wonder how many of our companions are focused on the fact that our law requires that "Every Chapter shall hold at least one stated convocation in each month..." (Grand Royal Arch Digest Section 97). This means that if you are unable to open at your scheduled time, you need to get a dispensation from the DDGHP to hold your meeting on another night that month. In addition, Section 117(a) states that "If any Chapter shall fail to hold their annual Stated Convocation in accordance with Section 115, or fails to open at least three other convocations during the Capitular year, the Grand High Priest may appoint a committee to investigate the failure of the chapter to comply with this Section, or, at his discretion, may under Section 118(a),

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arrest the charter of the Chapter after making the determination that the Chapter has failed to comply with this Section.”

I am not sure how strictly these Sections have been enforced, but they point to the importance placed by Grand Chapter on having the subordinate Chapters meet regularly. I would offer a suggestion to the High Priests not to waste a meeting night. If six, seven, or eight members have come to the meeting, don't allow this to have been for naught, even though there are not enough members to open Chapter. Instead of dismissing everyone, the High Priest can still use the time to put on a program, or have a discussion about Royal Arch or about projects the Chapter might begin, or use the time to go over some ritual. Without the required nine Companions, we cannot have a tiled meeting or conduct business, but we can do everything else and we can turn “a failure to open” into a successful Royal Arch experience with the companionship, the camaraderie, and the Masonic education that will reward those who did show up.

A second suggestion is to always have a program. There are many Companions around the Commonwealth who would be glad to be your speaker and there is a wealth of educational materials on the Grand Chapter website that can be used as a Chapter program. Remember, no one should leave Chapter without having learned a little more about Freemasonry and particularly Capitular Masonry than they knew before they came. And it is useful to publicize the program in advance. Sometimes a Companion will decide whether or not to attend based upon what is planned for that meeting. Third,

communication is key. Having a monthly trestleboard mailed or emailed is important to keep the Companions engaged with their Chapter, particularly those who live at some distance from where you meet. But the personal touch is even more effective. The High Priest and his dais officers should regularly call the members of the Chapter who live in the local area but are not regular attendees at meetings. Too often the only time the Companions hear from their Chapter is to remind them that they are behind in their dues. This is not as it should be. We should be calling our Companions to inquire about their health and how their families are doing. We should ask if they need any assistance. Only then should we talk about Chapter activities and encourage them to support the Chapter. The more we reach out to our members on a regular basis and establish or reestablish a relationship, the more likely the Companion will see his Chapter membership as a value proposition and be motivated to become active. For many of our Chapters, if the members who don't now come to meetings would come to at least one or two meetings a year, we would rarely have trouble opening and we would have a more vibrant Chapter.

Reaching out to our Companions is a part of what our Grand High Priest has in mind with his theme “Good Work – Square Work, The Foundation of America.” Royal Arch Masonry is known for the bonds of friendship that are formed between the Companions, but these ties can only be sustained by regular personal contact. In this regard, each of us can make a real difference. Your Companions will be pleased that you have

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made the effort to talk with them you will be building deeper relationships and developing additional friendships. This is what Masonry is all about and it starts with each of us just making that little extra effort.

Fraternally

*Ed Cohen, Grand King*

## The Grand Almoner's Message



Companions All:

2019-20 Philanthropy Campaign is running on all cylinders, and we have already surpassed our first \$5,000 toward that all-important goal of \$100,000 this year.

As I communicated in my previous Keystone article, I had the opportunity to meet with Harry Johns, President and CEO of the Alzheimer's Association, on December 3 and participate in his 2020 Strategic Planning Round Table in Northern Virginia. I wanted to use this article to share the details of that discussion to help us all to gain a clearer focus on where the Alzheimer's Association is currently concentrating their energy and what they are presently trying to accomplish in the fight against Alzheimer's. I will break down the briefing into seven distinct parts below. If you have any questions after you review, please feel free to reach out to me.

1. Diversity & Inclusion – There is a need to create more engagement from a variety of people across diverse social, economic, and racial demographics. In short, the groups that are most impacted by AD historically are the least aware of its presence and therefore the least active at seeking out support and

assistance.

2. Concern & Awareness – There is a focus on generalizing what Alzheimer's disease is as a form of dementia to the general world population and creating awareness for how the Alzheimer's Association is fighting the disease. Public address ad campaigns and activities at the high school system level for children will receive focus in 2020.

3. Appropriation & Lobbying – There is a nationwide goal of lobbying to have Federal funding increased for the support and research of Alzheimer's Disease to hopefully rival the financial support offered to the various forms of cancer and HIV/AIDS.

4. Local Advocacy – Advocacy for Alzheimer's Walk programs and other forms of local fundraising opportunities will be utilized to mobilize communities and medical personnel to support those suffering from Alzheimer's Disease and their care providers.

5. Alzheimer's Impact Movement – Increasing medical care infrastructure and caregiver training opportunities at the local, state, and Federal levels.

6. Functional Care & Support – Create an internal community of caregivers, medical staff, and volunteers inside of the local health systems. The goal in this segment is to find ways to improve the quality of life of those suffering from the disease without raising general medical costs.

7. Research – The Alzheimer's Association will continue to navigate around the constraints of government involvement in research opportunities, by remaining the largest non-profit funder of Alzheimer's research in the world. Currently there are 6,000 volunteer clinicians in the research analysis field. These physicians are changing how the disease is evaluated and studied.

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Biogen is said to have the 1st Alzheimer's treatment drug nearly completed for submission to the Food & Drug Administration for approval. This will be a major milestone when it is finalized.

Lastly, two news highlights were touched upon concerning major Alzheimer's Association donations. Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, and MacKenzie Bezos have teamed up to donate over \$20 million to a program called the Diagnostics Accelerator, a project that is part of the Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation (ADDF). The Diagnostics Accelerator's mission is straightforward, but also quite difficult to develop, it's an easy and affordable test for Alzheimer's disease. CVS Pharmacy is also making major headlines. To show their support for all who are impacted by Alzheimer's, including those living with the disease, their families and caregivers, they committed to raising \$10 million in financial support over the next three years for the Alzheimer's Association. All their donations will be slated to provide care and support services to those affected and advancing research toward treatment, prevention and ultimately, a cure. I'm looking forward to seeing you all at our upcoming Grand High Priest's Official Visits. Until then, keep your light reflecting positively on our gentle craft.

*Jason Curtis "Jake" Trenary, Grand Almoner*

## Correspondence Course Update

The following have recently completed the course: Frederick Deel, Barrett No. 76; George Vest, Waynesboro Union No. 2; Kevin Richardson, Castlewood No. 34; Pat Harmon, Mann Page No. 89; Harold Schrecengost, Mann Page No. 89; Brian

Nash, Mann Page No. 89; and Joseph Sturdivant, Warren No. 5.

## Jeffrey Glen Burcham Memorial Jewel Fund Raiser for Alzheimer's Association



Companions All:

Those of you who attended our last Grand Convocation may recall the Necrology I read for Most Excellent Jeffrey Glen Burcham. He was a true leader, "a Man among Men", and an inspiration to all of us worthy enough to call him a companion. I am honored to continue

my support of the memory of Companion Burcham and pleased to introduce the "JGB Memorial Jewel as a chief component of my fundraising efforts this year for the Alzheimer's Research Association.

Your donation of \$500 (payable in one or more increments) entitles you to this beautiful jewel that can be worn on any and all clothing except the Knight Templar Uniform. All proceeds will go for Alzheimer's research and can be obtained from Excellent J.D. Davis at 17091 Timberview Drive, Timberville, Virginia 22853. You can request your jewel and certificate to be presented in your chapter, at our Grand Convocation or mailed to you. Checks payable to The Alzheimer's Association, with your District number and chapter name and number should be included on the memo line of your check. Thank you for your participation and support of this very worthwhile and special cause.

Fraternally and Sincerely,  
*Raymond D. Steele, Grand High Priest*

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## Veteran's Awards

Congratulations to the following Companions who are celebrating their Royal Arch Veteran status: 60 years - Raymond Harold Patrick, O'Keeffe No. 26; 50 years - Ernest Fugate Gillespie, W.G. Bottimore No. 28; Billy Joe Duncan, Taylor No. 70; Arthur Landon Gord, Arlington No. 35; John Robert Wigglesworth Jr., Arlington No. 35; Richard Lee Thomas, Norfolk United No. 1; Frank Edward Buchanan, W.G. Bottimore No. 28; Kenneth Barton Franklin, W.G. Bottimore No. 28; and Horace Gray Cooke Jr., Alleghany No. 24. The picture on the below left shows 50-year veterans James Tomko and William Gates of Petersburg Union No. 7.



**Veterans Tomko and Gates**



**DDGHP Steven Urban visits Warwick No. 80**

## Mann Page No. 89 Holds Biggest Stated Meeting Ever

On Wednesday, February 19, a total of 27 members were present on the occasion of District Deputy Grand High Priest Herbert Griffith Turner's Official Visit to Mann Page No. 89, as shown in the below picture. All three District Chapters were represented, including eight from Petersburg Union No. 7 and over half of Mann Page Chapter's membership. The Chapter is growing and prospering, and this meeting was the largest ever held in the Chapter's short history.



**February 19 attendees at Mann Page No. 89**

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## Recent Exaltations

On January 30, Petersburg Union No. 7 exalted two new members and one from Mann Page No. 89. A month later on February 29, District 14 held a Festival at Rockbridge No. 44 in Lexington with 16 candidates and 34 Companions in attendance, including Grand High Priest Raymond Steele. All of the ritual work was done in excellent fashion under the expert direction of Most Excellent Russell Snodgrass, and it was a high-quality affair. The attendees are shown below.



**Candidates and Companions at the February 29 Lexington Festival**

## Louisa Alzheimer’s Walk

Right Excellent Mark Chapman and District 18 are organizing an Alzheimer’s Walk in Louisa County on Saturday May 9, and Grand Almoner Jake Trenary is the guest speaker. All Masonic groups are invited to participate. The below picture was taken at their last Walk.



**Susan Chapman, Mark Chapman, Sam Caughron, and Jay Cotner**

## “Spreading Royal Arch Light”, by Edward Tooma

If you have ever read some of my articles, you will notice that I talk a lot about programs on meeting nights. Having something of interest is a must if we are to attract Companions to remain

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active. If you do your homework, you would be surprised at what you can package into a short talk. My aim is 10-12 minutes. I like to use meat and potato words - versus empty words just to be saying something. Apply your very own technique and style to hold the audience. Whatever you do - don't bore your listeners with a lot of hot air.

Make it a point to project when presenting your talks so everyone can hear what you are saying. The boredom comes when you mumble your delivery. Using voice inflection keeps the listeners ears perked up. And pacing is another method of holding one's attention. I've been asked on several occasions - Do I ever get nervous before giving a talk? Who doesn't? Having butterflies is a natural thing. This is why I like to use some humor before my talk. It not only relaxes the audience, but it relaxes me too. Once the relaxed mode takes effect - you have captured the attention of those present.

I have often wondered what becomes of a talk after it has been presented? I hope you don't toss it in the round file. May I suggest that you save these talks and build yourself a library. Talks can always be recycled and updated as needed. Here's another idea: get some mileage out of those talks that you have spent hours preparing for your Chapter, and visit other Chapters in your District and share the message with them. By doing this, it is hoped that it will motivate the entire District to do likewise. One other thing before I forget. When you visit other Chapters, invite your Chapter members to join you and make the night out a Fraternal visit. Spreading Royal Arch Light can be Fun! So Mote it Be!

## Upcoming Calendar

March 7, George D. Stevens Area Ritual School, Urbanna, 9 am

March 14, Eastern Shore Area Ritual School, Chincoteague, 9 am

April 3, Grand High Priest Official Visit to District 3, Newport News, 5 pm

April 4, Grand High Priest Official Visit to District 4, Petersburg, 5 pm

April 25, Virginia Beach Alzheimer's Walk, oceanfront, 8 am

April 25, Grand High Priest Official Visit to District 2, Virginia Beach, 5 pm

May 9, Grand High Priest Official Visit to District 20, Chincoteague, 5 pm

## Let Your Work Become Your Mark

Do you own the greatest book ever written about the Mark Master Degree? In 1986, when Most Excellent Stewart Wilson Miner was Grand High Priest, his them was "Let Your Work Become Your Mark", and he spent the year talking about the lessons of the Mark Master Degree. Near the end of his term, he condensed all of the talks into a book that was sold to all Chapter members. Now, over thirty years later, it is still available for a new generation of Royal Arch Masons to enjoy. It is an excellent source of information and the short talks are very suitable for Chapter meeting programs. Grand Provost Thomas L. Varner Jr. is selling the book at all Grand Official Visits for \$5 each, with the proceeds going to the Alzheimers Memory Unit at the Masonic Home. If you want to purchase a book, send a check payable to "Grand Royal Arch Chapter" to the Grand Provost at 14302 Boydton Plank Road, Dinwiddie, VA 23841.

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**Grand High Priest Steele and DDGHP at District 15**



**DeMolay Vincent Metz recognized**



**Grand High Priest Town Hall at Districts 1 and 17**



**Grand Musician Hedges Entertains**



**Barbara Ann and the Grand High Priest**



**Welcoming Rainbow Girl Samantha Snell**