



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

# The Keystone

March 2024 Vol. 8 No. 1



## Contents

Grand High Priest/ Most Illustrious Grand Master's Message .....	2
Grand King's Message .....	3
Grand Scribe's Message .....	4
Grand Proboost and Grand Council Committee On Education And Service Message .....	6
Chapter / Council News .....	8
Guest Contributor .....	13

A publication of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch  
Masons in Virginia. 500 Masonic Lane, Suite C,  
Henrico, VA 23223-4916

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

## GRAND HIGH PRIEST/ MOST ILLUSTRIOUS GRAND MASTER'S MESSAGE

### Ho Companions!

I want to thank you for allowing me to your Most Excellent Grand High Priest/Most Illustrious Grand Master for 2024 but more importantly I want to thank my Lord and Savior for this opportunity. I would also like to thank my wife, Farry, for all her support for the last several years. I want to thank Most Excellent Dan Surface for nominating me as Grand Master of the First Veil.

My Theme for this year is "Be the Light" it reminds me of a couple of my favorite Bible verses: from Matthew 5 verses 14 and 16 "Ye are the light of the world." 16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven".

Companions, it takes every one of us working together to increase membership in our Chapters and to get our current Members to attend regularly,



sponsoring fund raisers to contribute more to our Charities, and perfecting our Ritual. I am now asking you to be the Light in Royal Arch Masonry this year. Let your light shine so everyone may see your good works and together we will have a successful year.

I am looking forward to my Official Visits to the different parts of Virginia and out of state visits starting in March 2024. I hope to see a lot of Companions at these visits. I want to thank the District Deputies for arranging these events.

Thank you again for electing me to be your Grand High Priest for 2024 and if you ever need anything I am always available to help.

Sincerely and Fraternally

M.E./M.I. William R. Owens

Grand High Priest / Grand Master

# The Virginia Keystone Newsletter – March 2024

## GRAND KING'S MESSAGE

### Ho Companions!

I extend my heartfelt gratitude for entrusting me with the role of Grand King for the upcoming year. As we disperse from the Grand Annual Convocation and return to our homes and chapters, I sincerely wish for your safe journey home, carrying the same enthusiasm that filled this year's Convocation. The increased attendance is a promising sign for the year ahead, and I personally thank each member who participated. I encourage all able members to plan for the 2024 Annual Convocation.

As we embark on a new Capitular year, reflect on Mt. Ex. Owen's theme, "Be the Light." Apply this message to your Chapter, inspiring members to attend meetings, learn new degree work, and



contribute to the overall improvement of our Chapter. The power to enhance our Chapters lies in the collective efforts of every member.

On our Masonic journey, let us embrace the timeless theme resonating in our teachings - "Be the Light." In every step, ritual, and interaction with fellow brethren, let the radiant light of Masonry illuminate our path.

If I, or any member of the Grand Line, may be of assistance to any companion throughout this year, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Fraternally,

James P. Nunn

Grand King

## GRAND SCRIBE'S MESSAGE

### Ho Companions!

I hope each of you are doing well and are enjoying a happy and healthy New Year. Congratulations to Most Excellent William R. Owens on becoming our 182nd Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia. We all look forward to supporting him and the Grand Chapter throughout the year as we embody his theme “Be the Light.” Also, a hearty congratulations and well wishes to Most Excellent H. Lee Arrit, Jr., our newest Past Grand High Priest. Thank you for your dedicated service to the Craft.

As we embark on 2024, I am sure I share this thought with many Companions; I approach the new year with renewed enthusiasm and a more dedicated vision for our Royal Craft. We all have the unique opportunity to make a deep and lasting difference to our Chapters, District, and our Grand Chapter. By focusing on Servant Leadership and asking ourselves “How can I be of better service to the Royal Arch?”, we can begin to



grow our Craft and strengthen our Chapters. To me Servant Leadership begins with service to God and doing what is right in His sight. Servant Leadership is a leadership style that prioritizes growth, well-being, and empowerment. We are all leaders in our Chapter and must serve God, our family, and our Craft well.

We must focus on growing the Craft with active and engaged Companions. So many Companions regularly participate in their Blue Lodges, but we should strive to be more active and have a present in our Lodges and Masonic Districts. There are Brethren that would be attracted to the Royal Arch if they knew a little more and the Chapter had a bigger visibility. Make sure that the Lodges in your area have Chapter Liaisons who can make quick connections and get petitions into the hands of good Masons interested in “More Light” through the Royal Arch. Have “Red Coat Nights,” Chapter get

togethers outside of regular Chapter meetings, get articles in local Lodge bulletins promoting the Royal Arch, or even hold a Chapter or York Rite banquet or festive board.

In closing, I would like to thank you for electing me Grand Scribe and I want to

express to you all how extremely proud I am of you and our Grand Chapter. Continue to be humble and lead by example. Let uprightness and integrity attend your steps, justice and mercy mark your conduct, and fervency and zeal stimulate you in the discharge of the various duties incumbent upon you.

Holiness to the Lord,

Kyle W. Strickland

Grand Scribe

## GRAND PROVOST AND GRAND COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND SERVICE MESSAGE

### My Dear Companions,

I hope this finds you and yours safe and well. It is an honor and a pleasure to be serving you as Grand Provost and Chairman of the Grand Chapter and Grand Council Committee on Education and Service this Capitular and Cryptic Year. Our Most Excellent Grand High Priest/Most Illustrious Grand Master William Randall Owens has provided his plan and we are busy at work!

I invite you to reach out to me with your thoughts and ideas. It is together, invested, will we strengthen our Chapters and Councils. I remind you that the Subordinate Chapter and Council Officer Training Manual, which provides many needed tools, can be found on our website under the “Forms and Information” page (further under Miscellaneous [Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia - Forms \(virginiaroyalarch.org\)](http://virginiaroyalarch.org) as well as on the Education page (in the block at the bottom below the Educational Programs and Materials).

We continue working to increase the listing of resource materials on the website: [Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia - Education \(virginiaroyalarch.org\)](http://virginiaroyalarch.org) of the programs have been used by Companions both in and out of this Grand Jurisdiction to provide light in their Chapters and Councils. Please do reach me with programs you have developed or are aware of or links to sites that you feel would be a good resource to share. The online Correspondence Courses have been launched! You can now enjoy the opportunity to take the courses individually or as a group and allows you to complete them at your leisure, wherever you may choose to do so as long as you have an internet connection. The course itself has been updated; the course registration form and lessons are located at [Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia - Education \(virginiaroyalarch.org\)](http://virginiaroyalarch.org).

Your Committee on Education and Service continues to strive to bring you

news and helpful information via The Keystone Newsletter publication. It always makes for a better publication when Companions provide input to allow us to share what is going on in the rest of the jurisdiction. We encourage you to provide input as often as possible.

Please submit entries to [thevakeystone@gmail.com](mailto:thevakeystone@gmail.com).

The Grand Chapter & Grand Council Committee on Education and Service continues to provide opportunities for our collective improvement and enlightenment, through virtual educational presentations. We hope you will join us! Sessions will be held on the

Zoom platform on the following dates and times:

- 22 June 2024 from 10:00 to 11:00 am EDT
- 28 September 2024 from 10:00 to 11:00 am EDT

Join the Zoom Meetings at:

[Launch Meeting - Zoom](#) Please remember to reach me at any time with questions, concerns, or ways to improve.

Sincerely and fraternally yours in friendship and service,

Raymon W. Bacchus

Grand Provost



## CHAPTER / COUNCIL NEWS

### Capitular District No. 4

### Mann Page No.89

Right Excellent Cliff Gregory (4th Capitular DDGHP) submitted the below

picture when he submitted his report after visiting Mann Page Royal Arch Chapter No.89.





**District No. 14**

The 14th District Division Leadership Conference District Division Leadership Conference was held 26 January 2024, at the Scottish Rite, Newport News. The York Rite table was managed by great companions. These are their name (right to left): Right Eminent Grand

Commander Dennis M. Hass, Right Excellent Richard Rawls, Excellent Robert W. Burton, and Excellent Joseph Gadea.

Results: We gave two petitions to join Warwick Royal Arch Chapter No.80.



## District 15 Festival

On October 21, 2023, a Royal Arch Festival was held at Richmond Washington Royal Arch Chapter No. 3-9 (1807 E. Franklin St. Richmond, Va.). Thirteen Brothers were Exalted to the Most Sublime Degree of a Royal Arch Mason. (See Pictures below).

Two Brothers from District 15 were candidates:

Shenandoah No. 17, Companion G. Rupert Ravens

Hiram No. 45, Companion Dale Laverne Perry

The Degrees were conferred in a fine manner and the Work was enjoyed by all who attended. It was a long day as the Chapter opened at 9:00 am with a Pizza Lunch served and closed about 4:00 pm. Your DDGHP was the only current DDGHP present at the Festival. RT. Excellent Companion Jack Moorman, Deputy Grand Treasurer was the Host of the Festival and deserves all the credit for setting it up and his follow-through. Rt. Ex. Jack and his Casts did Good Work.



**Waynesboro Union No. 2**

**Ashlar Lodge No. 125**

Many thanks to Rt. Wor. Todd Day for hosting a Royal Arch Mason night at Ashlar Lodge No. 125 on January 8, 2024. Five members of Waynesboro Union Royal Arch Chapter No. 2

attended: Russ Snodgrass, Ed Dearing, Jim Fields, Steve Young, and Emory Merryman. Todd Day is a member of Luray Royal Arch Chapter No.4.

Pictured below: Russ Snodgrass, Ed Dearing, Todd Day, Jim Fields, Steve Young, Emory Merryman



**Westmoreland No. 41**

A total of twelve companions were present for the District Deputy High Priest

official visit to Westmoreland No. 41. It was an evening filled with many positive suggestions and a good time was had by all.





**GUEST CONTRIBUTOR**

**Ex. Companion Ed Tooma**

**With special thanks to Most Excellent Companion Don Mc Andrews**

## **Chapter Visitation Verification**

### **No Companions!**

Craft Lodges have their act together when it comes to checking if someone is authorized to attend their meetings. Unless a brother can be vouched for, he will have to undergo an examination consisting of some questions and have his dues card verified for being current and a member of a recognized Lodge.

I cannot ever recall seeing this being done at a Royal Arch Chapter. We need to tighten up our visitation procedures since several jurisdictions do not require a Companion to have the cryptic degrees which are optional. Fortunately for us Virginians, we receive both the Capitular and Cryptic degrees when becoming a Royal Arch Mason, and our dues cards reflect these conferral's. Other jurisdictions require a Royal Arch Mason to petition a Council of Cryptic Masons to receive them, should they desire to do so.

The purpose of examining a visiting Companion is to satisfy the committee doing so that the visitor is indeed a Mason and a member of a Royal Arch Chapter. Always make a visiting Companion feel at ease during the examining process. If a Companion visitor has not received the Cryptic degrees, can he still attend our meetings? He most certainly can. However, certain elements must be omitted from the opening Ritual.

If the Chapter plans on having any Council degree work, only Cryptic Masons are permitted. It never hurts to be on the safe side when someone shows up at your Chapter who is unknown to the members. That old saying check and double-check is the right thing to do and visiting members are fully aware that credentials will be checked.

Whenever in doubt - consult with your Chapter secretary.

Ex. Companion Ed Tooma

## World's Largest Masonic Temple

### Ho Companions!

We've often heard about the Oldest Masonic Lodge in the world which is: The Lodge of Edinburgh No. 1 in Edinburgh, Scotland. It's often referred to as Mary's Chapel because the Lodge first met in the Old Chapel of St. Mary's which since has been demolished. Now that you know where the oldest Masonic Lodge is located, what about the largest Masonic Temple or Lodge in the world? It's located in the Motor City – Detroit, Michigan in the Cass corridor area at 500 Temple Street thus giving it the name Temple versus Lodge. This building serves as a home to various Masonic organizations and appendant bodies of the institution, including the York Rite Sovereign College of North America.

The Lodge rooms all have different decorative treatments – the motifs of decoration being taken from the Egyptian, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Italian Renaissance, Byzantine, Gothic and Romanesque. The rooms are all true to the period. All the artwork throughout the building, especially the beautifully decorated ceilings was done under the personal direction of famous Italian artists.

This Masonic Temple contains a wide variety of public spaces including three auditoriums, two ballrooms, and a Drill Hall. Recreational facilities designed in the structure include a swimming pool, racquet ball court, gymnasium, bowling alley, and a pool hall. There are also numerous Craft Lodge rooms, offices, and dining spaces as well as a 'hotel' tower, designed for visiting members. The Masonic Temple Theatre is a venue for concerts, Broadway shows, and other special events in the Detroit Theater District.

Detroit Masonic Temple was designed in the neo-gothic architectural style, using a great deal of limestone. The cornerstone was placed on September 19, 1922, using the same trowel that Worshipful Brother George Washington had used to set the cornerstone of the United States Capitol in Washington D.C. The building was dedicated on Thanksgiving Day, 1926. It has 14 floors, stands 210 ft tall, and has 1,037 rooms inside.

It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Detroit Masonic Temple became the largest Masonic Temple in the world after 1939 when the Chicago Masonic Temple was demolished.

This complex, centrally located in downtown Detroit, dominates the skyline of the city. It's within walking distance of the Motor City Casino & Hotel. Should your vacation plans take you to Detroit, include a tour of the automobile companies to see how they manufacture the cars we drive. Another highlight of Detroit is "Hitsville USA", the original studio building where artists like the Supremes, the Temptations, The Four Tops, and many other rhythm and blues singers recorded their hit songs on that ever-popular record label Motown.

Detroit, or the Motor City, has a lot to offer. Think about putting it on your list of places to visit!





Ex. Companion Ed Tooma

## Seeking More Light?



Capitular District 15 is in the process of having a Royal Arch recruiting seminar to be held on Saturday, April 27th from 11 AM to 1 PM at Unity Lodge in Front Royal, Virginia. All Blue Lodges in and around the area have been contacted regarding this first ever gathering for District 15. We're hoping to pack Unity Lodge with Brothers seeking more light in Masonry by advancing and taking the "First Best Step to More Light" by becoming a Companion in the ranks of the Holy Royal Arch. Brochures covering the history of York Rite Masonry and the 6 Degrees will be available for all in attendance to include petitions and a directory of contacts. Needless to say, Capitular District 15 is excited about this seminar with fingers crossed for a successful event.

The seminar will feature a guest speaker who will cover the history of the "American York Rite," the "Mystic Degrees" of the Order and the "Exaltation" of becoming a member of the oldest Rite in Masonry – The York Rite. This gathering will be an educational experience unveiling the mysteries of the Holy Royal Arch.

If you are in the area, make it a point to join us. All Masons seeking more light and Companions are cordially invited. Light refreshments will be available.

S&F,

Ex. Companion Ed Tooma

Shenandoah Royal Arch Chapter No. 17 - Edinburg, VA