



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

# The Keystone

**March 2017**



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C, Henrico, VA 23223-4916



Companions:

What a great experience it is serving the Grand Chapter as the Grand High Priest. The hospitality and friendship shown to Cindy and me has been very generous. The attendance at the Official Visits has been outstanding and we all are enjoying the fellowship. It has been very beneficial to visit the Districts and see how enthusiastic you are in growing Royal Arch Masonry. Great

things are happening with our Craft that are exceeding my expectations. A special thank you to Right Excellent Tom Varner, the Grand Provost; Right Excellent Paul Lockhart, the Grand Almoner; and Right Excellent Emmett Pate, the Grand Webmaster. They each are motivated and skillful in their respective areas, and they are getting things done!

Sincerely and Fraternaly,

Dan H. Surface,  
Grand High Priest

### Upcoming Calendar

March 25, 630 pm: Official Visit to Districts 1,17; Manassas  
April 21, 600 pm: Official Visit to District 2, Virginia Beach  
April 22, 900 am: Alzheimer's Walk, Virginia Beach  
April 22, 600 pm: Official Visit to District 3, Poquoson  
May 12, 630 pm: Official Visit to District 18, Culpeper

# The Keystone of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia

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Companions, it is truly my honor and pleasure to serve you as Grand Almoner. It has been three months since our Annual Convocation and our Lodges and Districts are in the full swing of “Fun-Raisers”, events and companionship!!

I have attended several of the Official Visits of the Most Excellent Grand High Priest Dan Surface and was invited to Fredericksburg Chapter No. 23 to speak on different ideas for “Fun-Raising”, and to talk about the effects of Alzheimer’s on the patient and family. In each of these events, more than half of the attendees know someone that is suffering from this disease or know someone who is caring for or has a family member supporting someone with this disease. **WE NEED TO FIND A CURE!**

It is great to see the excitement in Royal Arch Masonry and the many different “Fun-Raisers” going on throughout the state. I have set up on Facebook a page for the Grand Almoner that will describe the different events that are going on. My hopes and desires is that this page will be a venue for different ideas of what each of the Chapters are doing, and to pass different ideas to each other. If you would like to join the page, just ask to join the closed group.

The dates for the Alzheimer’s Association walks are listed on the Grand Website as well as the contact information of the people at the Alzheimer’s Association to help you with

your fundraising events. Use these people in your quest to find a cure. That is what they are there for. If you would like to reach out to me, my phone number is 540-272-7248.

I find it genius that our Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Virginia has chosen to find a cure for Alzheimer’s as its philanthropy. As Masons we are always hoping to achieve more light in Masonry. But yet, if a Brother or Companion has Alzheimer’s, this horrible disease will extinguish the light of his soul.

I will leave you with a Dylan Thomas poem that Right Excellent Jeff Hedges read to me.

Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning  
they do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green  
bay; Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in light,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men near death who see with blinding  
sight; Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be  
gay; Rage, rage against the dying of light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I  
pray. Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

*Paul Lockhart, Grand Almoner of Virginia*

# The Keystone of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia

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Our new Grand Master of the First Veil is William Randall Owens. Right Excellent Owens was born on November 26, 1958 in Richlands. After graduating from Richlands High School, he became

an electrician and later received his Master Electrician's License from Southwest Virginia Community College. Since 1989, he has worked for VDOT and is currently a Bridge Maintenance Superintendent. In 1982, he enlisted in the Virginia National Guard and achieved the rank of Staff Sergeant. He is married to Farry Dye Owens. They have one married son, Curtis, and one grandson, Curtis Jr.

Companion Bill was raised in Richlands Lodge #318 in March 2010. He rose quickly in Masonry, serving as Master in 2012-2013. He is also a member of Cedar Bluff Lodge #260, and served as Master in 2012-2014. After he joined O'Keefe Chapter #26 in 2010, he served as High Priest in 2012-2013, as District Deputy High Priest in 2013-2014, and received the Ish Sodi Award in 2014. He has also been active in Clinch Valley Commandery #20, serving as Commander in 2012-2013, and as District Deputy Grand Commander in 2015-2016.

In addition, he is an officer in the Allied Masonic Degrees, Knight Masons, and York Rite College, is a member of the Red Cross of Constantine, and has received the Knight of York Cross of Honor. We look forward to seeing him advance through the Grand Line.



We recently posted an exciting new video by Most Excellent Don McAndrews to the website. It is an excellent recruiting tool in which he explains how Royal Arch Masonry is an extension of the lessons taught in the three Craft

degrees. Watch as he shows how the six degrees truly represent "Further Light in Masonry" and how this can be used to attract new members.

In the Richmond area, District Education Officer Tim Evans has been presenting the video to Blue Lodges and Royal Arch Chapters with great results. A number of petitions have already been received, and I encourage all of you to contact your local lodges, perhaps set up York Rite or Royal Arch programs, and present the video. I think you may be surprised at how effective it is.

Working with the District Deputy Grand High Priests, we have been successful in appointing Education Officers in most Districts. Please use them to set up programs and assist you in retaining and training your members, old and new alike.

Do you own the best book ever written on the lessons of the Mark Master Degree? It was written by our Most Excellent Grand High Priest Stewart Wilson Miner in 1985. Many were sold then, and now it is time to introduce it to a new generation of Royal Arch Masons. I have copies available for \$5 plus \$3.99 for shipping, and all proceeds go to benefit our Alzheimer's Charity. Call me at 815-210-8757 to order one.

*Tom Varner, Grand Provost of Virginia*

# The Keystone of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia

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Our Grand High Priest, as you may expect, has been very busy, and has made a number of well-attended Official Visits, as shown by the pictures below. He has presented a fifty and a sixty-year veteran award, and after learning of a Brother from Glade Spring Lodge #236 who had terminal cancer, made him a Royal Arch Mason on sight. All in attendance were very moved! Each of these activities were very inspirational and meaningful, and shows the true compassion of our fraternity. Of special note is Right Excellent Donald Patrick Harmon, District Deputy Grand High Priest of District 4, who has attended every Official Visit so far. He is attempting the rare and maybe unprecedented achievement of attending every Official Visit this year.



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