



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

The Keystone

Jan 2020 Vol 4 No. 1



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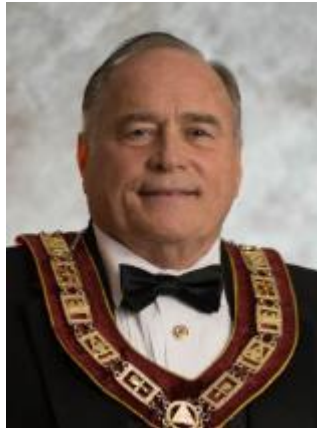
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Companions:

Our 211th Grand Convocation is over and I truly appreciate all who attended. A special thank-you to those who contributed in making this occasion successful! I am humbled by the support you have shown me thus far as your 178th Grand High Priest, and am anxious and excited to see what this year brings. I am looking forward to visiting all the areas of Virginia and seeing you, my companions. I would be remiss if I did not congratulate Right Excellent Tom Varner as the newly elected Grand Master of the First Veil and welcome him to our Grand Line. Tom really needs no introduction because he has been Grand Provost and extremely active in that role.

The business of the "committee of the whole," was handled expeditiously and resolution number one passed. A very special thank-you to Lady Barbara, my family, my assistants, the hotel staff, and above all my Lord and Savior. This year has gotten off to a very fast-paced start. After returning home from our Grand Convocation, we were able to unpack and then repack for a return trip to Williamsburg to attend Virginia's Miss Jobs Daughter's Pageant. This group of young women did a superb job representing their respective Bethels. Congratulations to the pageant winners, and in my opinion all the young women were winners. Their leaders and sponsors are to be commended for doing a great job in conducting this event. Shortly after that we traveled to King of Prussia, Pennsylvania to attend their Grand Convocation. Again, we enjoyed some wonderful hospitality. Our northern neighbors run their grand session a bit differently than we do in Virginia. That's the nice thing about visiting other jurisdictions; you get to access how others conduct their convocations. Also, I would like to

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thank Right Excellent Jason Curtis Trenary, his mother, Audrey Jenkins, and Lady Tracy, for honoring Barbara and me at our homecoming reception. Thanks to the many folks who came and wished us well.

During December we attended several local Chapters, Blue Lodges, and two Commandery Christmas observances. A group of us from Winchester Commandery #12 assisted the United Methodist Men from Bunker Hill, WVA in stuffing bags and boxes that were distributed to 75 area needy families. Our Grand Scribe, Right Excellent Mark Pennypacker, the High Priest of John Dove #21, Excellent Matt Bouelle, and I rang bells for the Salvation Army. On Sunday, December 22, Right Excellent Jeff Hedges, Most Excellent Don McAndrews, Right Excellent Dennis Haas, and I traveled to the Masonic Home of Virginia, and entertained the patients of the memory unit with Christmas music and caroling. Right Excellent Jeff is truly a very talented Grand Musician. It's this type of charitable work that makes one truly appreciate what we have, and demonstrates our need to work in various roles in our communities. I am certain that others in all regions of Virginia have been quietly contributing to this effort also. To each of you a very special thank-you!

I was able to attend my first Masonic Home of Virginia Board of Directors meeting. This was a true eye opener. These folks do a tremendous job in handling the operations of our Crown Jewel in Masonry; the Masonic Home. Congratulations to Ms. Anne Hagen, the home's new CFO/CEO.

In January I begin my official visits and look forward to the company of many fellow companions, our Masonic widows, family,

youth, and friends. All my official visits will be open and I extend an invitation to all. Districts 15, 1, and 17 are the first districts scheduled. These will occur in Strasburg and Manassas.

We are off to a great start in accomplishing some of my objectives: I have established monthly video conference calling for the Grand Line, in an effort to promote better communication and continuity. (No cost to the Grand Chapter's budget). Right Excellent Pennypacker has coordinated with a travel agency, and we recently rolled out promotional information on our Scotland trip scheduled for September 18-27 (see pages 9-10). Our Grand Secretary has distributed trip information to each of the chapter secretaries.

I am working with the DDGHPs from District 1 and 17 in the following venture; "The Lost Word Fundraiser." The promotional literature states: The Lost Word Fundraiser – help us find that which is lost by 1 in 59 children affected with Autism. This project is a joint fundraiser between the Grand High Priest of Royal Arch Masons in Virginia, and the local International Order of DeMolay chapters for the year 2020. ALL donations will go to the Rite Care Summer programs assisting in cure and care for Childhood Autism. This will feature a limited edition lapel pin (shown below) for a \$10.00 donation. Checks can be made payable to



Woodlawn DeMolay Chapter. Lady Barbara has kicked off her charitable raffle which all of you will have a chance to hear about during our visits. The

proceeds are directed to both the "Masonic Home of Virginia's Memory Unit", and to "the Alzheimer's Association". Remember,

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if you want to donate via check, please be sure to make it out to “the Alzheimer’s Association”, and write your “Chapter name and District numbers” in the memo line. This will assure that your donation is credited appropriately by our Grand Almoner, Right Excellent Jason Trenary.

In closing, please allow me again to express my humble appreciation to all my companions for allowing me to serve this great fraternity in this great state for this ensuing year. May God continue to bless us!

Raymond D. Steele, Grand High Priest

The Grand Almoner’s Message



Companions All:

It’s hard to believe, but the Philanthropy Campaign for 2019-2020 is already underway. With just a few short weeks to pause and reflect on what we have

accomplished together this past year, let me again thank you for the results you generated during the 2018-2019 Philanthropy Campaign. The numbers speak for themselves. You provided \$40,122.00 to Virginia’s Walk to End Alzheimer’s Program, \$29,895.01 in donations directed to the U.S. POINTER Alzheimer’s research study being conducted by physicians at the Wake Forest University School of Medicine, \$2,131.00 in contributions to the MAHOVA Memory Unit, \$625 in gifts to UsAgainstAlzheimers, and lastly, \$4,515 in donations to Project LifeSaver. This was \$77,288.01 in total contributions to our public charities. In one word, WOW!

As I told you in my Grand Chapter address, our focused role in charity fulfills three very important objectives. First, we get the opportunity to give of ourselves to help those less fortunate than us. This is truly charity in the Christian biblical sense. We don’t expect direct reward or admonishment. We are not a corporation or business. We’re just good men who do what is right. We’re Royal Arch Masons! Secondly, we are directly supporting doctors who are actively looking for a cure and/or substantial treatment for Alzheimer’s. Alzheimer’s is one of the leading causes of death in our current era. We are choosing to be front line difference makers. Lastly, we are providing men who aren’t Freemasons a chance to become inspired by our example and to want to be a part of our brotherhood. We may not know them yet, but good men saw our involvement this year and they will seek us out.

When I look at the road in front of us, I know we have what it takes to break the longstanding charity goal of \$100,000 in 2019-2020. All I can ask is that you make the decision to volunteer for the work and let me know where I can assist you. If I don’t know the answer, I’ll find it for you. Let’s get creative and get face to face with our communities. Let them see us working industriously in the quarry of Royal Arch Freemasonry.

Please join me in congratulations for Companion Charles Dunn Harmon who was the 2018-2019 District Almoner for District No. 15. His District raised an all-time high \$18,831 in charity donations and took home the inaugural Grand Almoner’s trophy. It will be presented to him at Most Excellent Raymond Douglas Steele’s Official Visit to District No. 15 on January 4, 2020.

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I had the opportunity to meet 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 will be sharing the details of that program in the next edition of the Keystone. In the meantime, I will be busy pairing the new year's Alzheimer's Walk information and contacts up to your Districts over the holidays. I would like to encourage each District Deputy Grand High Priest to select a District Almoner to work with me and please email that Companion's contact information to me. I hope you had the Merriest of Christmases and a Joyous New Year! Holiness to the Lord!

Jason Curtis "Jake" Trenary, Grand Almoner

New Grand Master of the First Veil



Our new Grand Master of the First Veil is Right Excellent Thomas Lee Varner Jr. of Petersburg Union Chapter No. 7. He was born in Waynesboro, went to college at the University of Virginia, and is presently the

Lead Environmental Engineer for AdvanSix in Hopewell. In 1977, Tom joined John T. Smith DeMolay Chapter in Waynesboro, eventually serving as State Master Councilor in 1982-1983. The same year, he was raised a Master Mason, and then served as Worshipful Master of Williamsburg Lodge No. 6 in 1992. He later served as District Deputy Grand Master for District 57 in 2018, is the Secretary of Mann Page No. 157, and the Chairman of the Grand Lodge Committee on Finance. Joining Waynesboro Royal Arch

Chapter No. 71 in 1983, he later affiliated with Keystone No. 58, then with Uroy Harris No. 83, serving as High Priest in 1989. After moving back to Virginia in 2015, Tom served as District Deputy Grand High Priest for District 4 in 2016, as District Lecturer, and also as Grand Provost for the last three years. He received the John Dove Award in 2017, and also has earned Gold and Scarlet Ritual Cards. Currently the High Priest of Petersburg Union No. 7, he is also a Past Commander of Stevenson Commandery No. 8, a KYCH, and is active in other York Rite Bodies as well as the Scottish Rite, where he has received the KCCH. In 2015, he helped start Petersburg DeMolay Chapter, and is currently serving as Chapter Advisor as well as Central Region Deputy. He is married to the former Diane Lea Kelly, and is the father of two daughters, Ann and Marilyn.

Grand High Priest Homecoming



On Saturday, December 4, the Grand High Priest attended a homecoming in his honor, thrown by Right Excellent Jake Trenary, family members, and District 15. About 40 people attended the

event at Unity Masonic Lodge in Front Royal, and enjoyed much excellent food and outstanding fellowship. It was a great way to start the Capitular Year. Most Excellent Steele was all smiles, as shown in the above picture standing next to his banner.

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District 12 Alzheimers Quilt Fundraiser

District 12 recently held a very successful Alzheimers Quilt fundraiser. The beautiful quilt shown below, crafted by Shelby Maxwell, the mother-in-law of Right Excellent Roger Van Dyke, was won by Ms. Toni Doman of Abingdon, who has a radio show on WBCM radio for The Birth Place of Country Music Museum, and is also member of the Wheeling (WV) Eastern Star.



Ms. Doman, Mrs. Maxwell



Allegheny No. 24 Christmas Program



R. Master Painting

Other Royal Arch News

As shown above, Allegheny No. 24 hosted its Commandery and other visitors on December 19, and Right Excellent Mark Chapman completed his work on the Royal Master painting.

Royal Arch Christmas at MAHOVA



On Sunday, December 22, the Grand High Priest, Most Excellent Raymond Douglas Steele with Past Grand High Priest, Most Excellent Donald Leo McAndrews, Right Excellent Jeffery Cole Hedges, and Right Excellent Dennis Mark Haas travelled to the Masonic Home of Virginia and presented a medley of Christmas music and songs to the residence and staff in the memory unit. Right Excellent Hedges played piano and Most Excellent McAndrews sang, the residents happily

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joined in and sang along. It was a beautiful sight to see their smiles and eyes light up as they joined in singing. We were also joined by Masonic Home resident Sir Knight William Frederick Reinhold, Right Eminent Mid-Atlantic Department Commander, Grand Encampment Knights Templar. Pictures of the happy occasion are shown above and below.



Distinguished Companions Provide Christmas Cheer at MAHOVA

“Just How Famous is the name Mason”, by Edward Tooma

We’re such a well-established institution that the name Mason has taken on many meanings: A Brick Layer is a Mason. Then there’s the boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania called the Mason-Dixon Line. People have the name Mason, and would you believe there are 17 states having the name Mason. There’s Mason, Virginia; Mason, Texas; Mason, New Hampshire; Mason, Nevada; Mason, Ohio and the list goes on. Around the world we have a town in the Philippines with the name Mason. Same goes for Haiti and Italy. Many famous folks have the name Mason. There’s Mason Williams who recorded the instrumental “A Classical Gas.” Then there was Mason Carter, a US Army Officer who served in the American Civil War and later received the Medal of Honor for his role in the battle of Bear Paw, fought on January 8th, 1877. The name Mason is found in politics, sports, the military, and even in the movies. Remember actor James Mason who starred in “20000 Leagues Under The Sea?” Television gave us Perry Mason, comic Jackie Mason, and even Homer Simpson from the Simpsons had a millionaire father named Mason Fairbanks. The name Mason itself is masculine, although, the name seems to be very popular among the ladies.

According to the Internet movie data base, 1,130 movies have included male characters and 417 have included female characters named Mason. The popularity of the given name Mason has risen in recent years, becoming the second most popular name given to boys in the United States. Now, the origin of the name Mason comes from the occupational surname Mason, which means “One Who Works With Stones.” The nickname for someone named Mason is “Mace or Macey.” The Biblical meaning of Mason is “The Artificer of Stone.” In the Bible, the Masons of Tyre (an ancient Phoenician City) were very skilled in architecture and building things from stone. In

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1858 – John Landis Mason, a 26-year-old tinsmith from Philadelphia invented the Mason Jar. This hefty little glass jar became famous among households across the nation. Americans were snapping up these jars by the millions to can their favorite fruits and veggies. And here we are in 2020 – and the Mason Jar is still in wide circulation – just as Freemasonry should be. We can't afford to let a jar get the best of us. When you talk to someone you think would make a good Freemason – let them know that. This is not asking someone to join. You are only complimenting them as being a good person, and our mission is to make a good person better. Because, Better Men – Make a Better World.

Upcoming Calendar

January 4, Grand High Priest Official Visit to District 15, Strasburg, 6 pm

January 17, Grand High Priest Official Visit to Districts 1,17, Manassas, 6 pm

January 25, Grand High Priest Official Visit to District 18, Culpeper, 6 pm

February 22, Grand High Priest Official Visit to District 10, Marion, 6 pm

Brief Summary of the Grand Annual Convocation

The Grand Annual Convocation was attended by 221 Companions from 45 Chapters. Fourteen Chapters received the Robert Claiborne Wilson Award, led by Marion No. 54. The Grand Line Bowl was awarded to Right Excellent J. Brandon Hale, DDGHP of the 10th Capitular District, and the Alzheimer's Trophy was awarded to District 15. Right Excellent James H. Pate received the John Dove Award, while Most Excellent Joe G. Broce received the Ish Sodi Award. An additional John Dove and Ish Sodi Award will be announced later. Resolution #1, authorizing an increase in the Capitation Tax was approved unanimously after a thorough deliberation. Resolution #2 was withdrawn after the Committee on Work resolved the issue. Right Excellent Raymond D. Steele was elected and installed as Grand High Priest, all other Grand Line Officers advanced one place in line, and Right Excellent Thomas L. Varner Jr. was elected as Grand Master of the First Veil. Various pictures of these events are shown below.



Grand High Priest enters Grand Convocation GHP Goodwin welcomes the Grand Master

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Brandon Hale hoists the Grand Silver Bowl



District 15 wins Grand Almoner's Trophy



James Pate receives John Dove Award



Most Excellent Broce receives Ish Sodi Award



The 2019-2020 Grand Royal Arch Chapter Officers

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Scotland: Fall 2020

explorica.com/Pennypacker-4780

September 18 - September 27, 2020

Day 1 Start tour

Day 2 Hello Glasgow

Meet your tour director and check into hotel
Glasgow city walk: Strathclyde University, City Chambers, George Square

Day 3 Glasgow--Highlands

The Mother Lodge of Scotland visit
Travel to Highlands via Loch Lomond

Day 4 Highlands

The Glentworth - Distillery and Tasting Experiences visit

Day 5 Highlands (Loch Ness)

Loch Ness boat cruise
Free time in Inverness

Day 6 Highlands--Edinburgh (via Trossachs, Stirling)

Travel to Edinburgh via the Trossachs
Dunfermline Abbey visit
Stop in Bannockburn

Day 7 Edinburgh

The Grand Lodge of Scotland visit (group-arranged)
Rosslyn Chapel visit

Day 8 Edinburgh Landmarks

Edinburgh guided sightseeing tour: Royal Mile, Old Town, Sir Walter Scott Monument
Edinburgh Castle visit
Edinburgh city walk: Charlotte Square, Alexander Graham Bell's home, Robert Louis Stevenson's home, Robert Burns Monument
The Scotch Whisky Experience Tour

Day 9 Edinburgh (St. Andrews excursion)

St. Andrews excursion : University, Cathedral visit, Castle visit, Old Course (golf course)
Optional Scottish folklore show

Day 10 End tour



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Reserve your Spot!



Tour Center ID: Pennypacker-4780
Registration deadline: January 10, 2020

What's included

We provide everything you need for a remarkable trip:

- ◆ Round-trip airfare
- ◆ Overnight stays in hotels with private bathrooms
- ◆ Full European breakfast daily
- ◆ Dinner daily
- ◆ Full-time services of a professional tour director
- ◆ Guided sightseeing tours and city walks as per itinerary
- ◆ Visits to select attractions as per itinerary
- ◆ Tour Diary™
- ◆ Note: On arrival day only dinner is provided; on departure day, only breakfast is provided
- ◆ Note: Tour cost does not include airline-imposed baggage fees, or fees for any required passport or visa. Please visit our Fees FAQ page for a full list of items that may not be included in the cost of your tour.

Tour investment

Students (travelers under the age of 23): \$3,923
Adults (age 23 and over): \$4,408

Price reflects savings of \$100 scholarship. Sign up by 1/10/2020 and enter code mason20 in order to take advantage of this limited-time offer!

Automatic monthly payment plan

Pay just \$50 upon enrollment and the balance will be divided into equal monthly payments, charged automatically to your credit card or checking account. As of December 09, 2019, your monthly payment would be just \$553.29.

Manual plan also available; learn more on explorica.com/paymentplans.

Travel protection

Most Explorica travelers protect their investment with one of our trusted plans, starting from just \$12 per day. To learn more, visit explorica.com/cfar.

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by phone, or by mail



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