



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

The Keystone

July 2021 Vol 5 No. 4



In This Edition...

Pages 1-3, Grand King's Message

Pages 3-4, Grand Captain of the Host's Message

**Page 4 Grand Almoner's Message;
Upcoming 50-year Anniversaries**

**Page 5, Alzheimer's Poker Run
Announcement; Education Committee
Message**

**Page 6, Scheduled Events; District 15
Degree Work**

Pages 7-8 Chapter News and Pictures

**Pages 8-12, An Essay on "Wisdom,
Strength and Beauty"**

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**Want your articles or pictures here? Or have a
question for Zerubbabel? Send them to
jim@landerkin.com.**

The Grand King's Message:



My Dear Companions,
First and foremost,
please remember to
keep Most Excellent
Ed Cohen in your most
fervent prayers. In
addition, please keep
his wife, Gwen, and
their entire family in

your thoughts and prayers. It is our hope that
he will see a recovery from his illness and
will be able to join us at future gatherings.

It is with trepidation that this article is being
written. There is no way that anyone could
fill the shoes of M.E. Ed. We will simply do
the best we can and hope that our words will
provide something meaningful for you.

In many parts of the state, we are seeing
Chapters begin to reopen. That is
outstanding! It is great to be among the
Companions again. This week, there was the
opportunity to talk with a Companion who
now lives in Mississippi. Since the beginning
of the pandemic, their Chapters have
remained open and have been taking
necessary precautions. As always, stay safe!

The Keystone of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia

July 2021

Some have asked if the Grand Chapter is going to encourage the continued use of technology. The answer is “Yes.” Though it is better to meet in person, technology has allowed those, unable to join us in person, the opportunity to be present in a different way. We have seen Companions that haven’t been in Chapter for quite some time. For various reasons, they have not been able to attend an in person stated. Through Zoom and like technology, we have been able to make contact. We need to continue to use that technology.

Recently, we were in a meeting where an elderly Companion was not thrilled with the use of Zoom. He said that nothing is better than an in-person meeting. He is right. However, we need to think about the word “Technology.” What does it mean? It is anything that we can use which makes our lives better. The cave man used a stone to help him in his life. That was technology. Think about life in the 19th century. Most rode horses or walked. There were no cars. There were no phones or computers. To be sure, there were advances in technology. Imagine when a Chapter was first introduced to electricity? There were, no doubt, Companions who thought that was wrong. It did help the Chapters and it was adopted.

It does need to be stated that we should never adopt something new just because it is something new. There have been occasions when the latest technology turned out to not be very helpful for our lives. Many of our older Companions might remember the AMC Pacer car. They might also remember 8-track cassettes and Swanson T.V. dinners. Though we might see electrical lights or battery

powered lights, my heart is always moved by the “three burning tapers.” Technology should only be adopted through careful thought and prayer.

As the Grand Line has traveled the state, via Zoom, it has been a definite privilege and honor to be with all of you. With each visit, we follow the guidelines set forth by M.E. Ed. When a town hall meeting is held, each Companion is asked to share their thoughts regarding the Grand Royal Arch Chapter in Virginia. We want to hear the good things and the not so good things. Notes are being kept. Your opinion does matter. Some have said things might become repetitious. That is no problem. If we didn’t want to hear from you, we wouldn’t have asked. The visits have definitely provided good information for the Grand Line. Thank you for that.

This summer, we are moving forward with plans for an “in-person” Grand Chapter in November. It is hoped that we will return to our normal format. In that regard, we are meeting with the hotel and setting a schedule. In other words, mark the date on your calendar. MAHOVA day is also on the calendar. Please mark it down and plan to attend. Recently, we received word that the Multi-Jurisdictional Festival will also be held. This one-day conferral is a great way for a candidate to be introduced to the Royal Arch. Some of the best ritualists from different states will be coming together to confer the degrees. More information will be sent regarding all of these events in the near future.

The Keystone of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia

July 2021

It is hoped that you have great plans for the summer. Take care of yourselves and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Peace,

Rt. Ex. Mark Pennypacker
Grand King

The Grand Captain of the Host's Message



I was asked to write a brief article for this July *Keystone* edition. First Let me give you some information about me. My wife Farry and I live in Russell County, Virginia and for the past 32 years I have

been employed by the Virginia Department of Transportation as an Operations Manager for the Bristol District Bridge Division. I was exalted at Castlewood Chapter No. 34 and am currently a member at O'Keeffe Chapter No. 26 and Marion Chapter No. 54. I was High Priest at O'Keeffe No. 26 and District Deputy Grand High Priest in 2014.

The last year-and-a-half has been a very challenging time for Royal Arch Masonry. With the Covid-19 pandemic causing everything to shut down,, we were met with the stark reality of not being able to meet, do our Degree Work,, our Fundraisers, Official Visits, or Grand Convocation, but we did not let this stop us from moving forward. With the help of technology and our virtual zoom meetings, we were able to carry on.

Thankfully, now we are coming out of the pandemic and it is time we get back to meeting in person, putting on our Degrees, resuming our Fundraisers and working to increase membership.

I would like to talk to you now about membership. As most of you know, membership has declined over the past several years. There are a lot of Masons in the Blue Lodges who do not know about the Royal Arch. We can inform these Masons about the Royal Arch by going to the Lodges and, with the Worshipful Master's permission, presenting programs, Red Coat night, Red Coat Degree Teams, and videos like the one Most Excellent Don McAndrews has put together. We also need to keep our current members attending our Stated Meetings by having more than just a business meeting. This can be accomplished by inviting guest speakers, presenting educational programs, and travelling to other Chapters.

These things need to be publicized well in advance in an effort to encourage more member participation. Members would be more encouraged to attend by including their families in events such as family night, cookouts, and dinners held before the Stated Meetings.

Lastly, a few words on education. The Grand Chapter website has many educational programs from history, general topics, ritual, symbolism, leadership courses and membership. These programs were developed by many worthy Companions, including Most Excellent Marty Hutto, Most Excellent Don McAndrews, Right Excellent Tom

The Keystone of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia

July 2021

Varner, and Right Excellent Joel Bundy to name a few. I encourage each of you to visit the Grand Royal Arch website in order to take advantage of the many educational benefits available there..

By working together and keeping with Most Excellent Ed Cohen's theme, "Devotion and Dedication," Royal Arch Masonry will continue to grow and prosper.

Rt. Ex. William R "Bill" Owens
Grand Captain of the Host



The Grand Almoner's Message

Companions – COVID is still with us, but both the federal and state governments have lifted many of the restrictions for those who have received vaccinations. Do take

advantage of this for your Chapter and District events.

The Alzheimer's Executive Council is planning for the Alzheimer's Walks to be in-person this fall. Set up your teams and get the registration rolling. It looks like the Walks will be the main fund raising opportunity this year.

District 17 and the Guardians Chapter 29 WSMRA have most of the plans in place for the AUG 2021 Alzheimer's Poker Run. See the announcement on the next page!

Also, remember that any funds donated by a Companion, Chapter or District will count towards our giving.

If one responds to a solicitation made by mail, phone, email, etc., record the amount and report it to your District Almoner. If you do not have a District Almoner or know who it is, let me know. Be sure to include your name, Chapter, District and whether it was for Alzheimer's or Alzheimer's Research.

Finally, let us remember Mt. Ex. Ed and Lady Gwen in our prayers during his stay in the hospital.

Fraternally,

Rt. Ex. Chuck Trude PM, PHP, PC
Grand Almoner
540-229-4043
trudecr@comcast.net

Upcoming 50-year Anniversaries:

Carl S. Weeks, Fredericksburg #23, 9/17/70
Adrian L. Eure, Warwick #80, 6/29/71
Carl G. Jackson, Castlewood #34, 7/10/71
Obia B. Lockhart, Castlewood #34, 9/11/71
Martin P. Bull, Chincoteague #75, 9/30/71
Billy K. East, Chincoteague #75, 10/14/71

The Keystone of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia

July 2021

ALZHEIMERS POKER RUN



WHEN: SUNDAY, AUGUST 29TH
START POINT: MANASSEH LODGE #182
9810 COCKRELL RD
MANASSAS, VA 20110

END POINT: TOBACCOLOGY
6710 MADISON STREET
HAYMARKET, VA

HOSTED BY: WIDOWS SONS MRA, GUARDIANS CHAPTER

REGISTER AT: <https://tinyurl.com/WSPokerRun>

COSTS – Riders: \$35 Passengers: \$25

KICKSTANDS UP: 09:30 AM



The Alzheimer's Poker Run will be hosted by the Widows Sons MRA, Guardians Chapter. This event will take you to Unity Lodge in Front Royal, Griffin Tavern in Flint Hill, Mt. Carmel Lodge in Warrenton with the final stop at Hay Market Lodge in Haymarket. The festivities at the end of the Alzheimer's Poker Run will be held at Tobaccollogy.

From the Education Committee

Dear Companions, it is a pleasure to serve you on the Education Committee this year. There have been quite a few changes and growth that will help the future of Royal Arch Masonry.

The Education Lectures have been highly enlightening and a treat to all who attend. Education is a key part to Masonry. While we have ritual, education, and symbolism which teaches us the lessons, most important is the passing of the knowledge.

Mentoring is not just teaching ritual but the true bonds of friendship. To me, mentoring is truly extending our family to others and impacting their daily lives. Imparting life lessons, education from a Masonic, York Rite, and Scottish Rite perspective but also applying them to our daily lives.

As the Royal Arch Degree states, we go forth on our journey without the hope of fee or reward. This is not done for us but to build our Companions around us. Let us focus on building one another, teaching a Brother, and always providing an attentive ear.

As we are progressing and degree work is again becoming active across our Commonwealth, let us remember that new Companion still needs the same guidance as when we joined the Symbolic Lodge. The degrees have lessons that can impact them for a lifetime. Be the one who supports him, Be the one who teaches him, Be the one who listens, most of all, Be that Companion he can depend on.

The best opportunity in Masonry is to be worthy of emulation. Teaching him and staying true to the tenets of our order will ensure that our lessons will carry on. We all have our examples that we emulate. Make them proud. Let us hope that our candidates, when they enter the quarry of the Mark Masters Degree, we could very well have a future Grand High Priest. Most importantly, we are on the way to having a new Companion and friend.

Sincerely and Fraternaly, J. Brandon Hale

The Keystone of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia

July 2021

Scheduled Zoom Events:

June 26
10:00 to 11:00 am
Most Excellent and Most Illustrious Don McAndrews, PGHP of Virginia and PMIGM of Washington, D.C.
“The Intimate Relationship Between The Craft Lodge, Royal Arch, and The Cryptic Council”

Sep 25
10:00 to 11:00 am
First Speaker
Right Excellent Companion Chadwick Burks, General Grand Scribe of the General Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons International
First Program
“Royal Arch Masonry: Ten Tiny Tweaks – Ten Terrific Terminations” (35-40 minutes)

Second Speaker
Right Puissant Companion Bill Snyder, Deputy General Grand Master of the General Grand Council of Cryptic Masons International
Second Program
“Shedding some light on Cryptic Masonry” (10 minutes)

Join the Zoom Meeting by clicking on this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85124620869?pwd=d0ozMkFjR0ltTFNYME4rcnRLblc4dz09>

Rt. Ex. Raymon W. Bacchus
Grand Provost

Degree Work:

The 15th Capitular District is planning to host a District Conferral Schedule for the remainder of 2021. Each of the Chapters will confer one or more of the degrees. If you know of a Brother who wishes more Light in Masonry and wants to join Shenandoah Chapter No. 17, please obtain a signed petition and submit it to the Chapter Secretary so we have a large group of candidates. The following is a tentative schedule of Degrees:

Mark Master: Thursday, July 8 at 7:00 P.M. at John Dove No. 21 (Winchester)
Past Master: Tuesday, August 17, time TBA at Shenandoah No. 17 (Edinburg)
Council Degrees: September 8, time TBA at Luray No. 4 (Luray)
Most Excellent Master: October 14, time TBA John Dove No. 21 (Winchester)
Royal Arch Degree: October 16 time, 8:30 AM at Hiram No. 45 (Front Royal)

The Keystone of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia

July 2021

A True Family Affair at Murray Royal Arch Chapter No. 22 in Roanoke!



Murray Royal Arch Chapter No. 22 has three generations of a family serving as the High Priest, King and Scribe.

The High Priest is James Wilhelm; his son, Kurt Wilhelm, is the King, and James's grandson and also Kurt's son, Raymond Wilhelm, is the Scribe.

Left to right in the picture is Kurt Wilhelm, James Wilhelm, and Raymond Wilhelm.

York Rite Bodies of Warrenton Virginia Sends off Rt. Ex. Barry Constant, PDDGHP Capitular District 17 and KYCH



On May 08, 2021 members of Cochran Lodge No. 133, Warren Royal Arch Chapter No.5, Turner Ashby Commandery No. 35, and Black Horse Council AMD No. 555, gathered to bid Rt. Ex. Companion Barry a fond farewell as he is moving to Florida to open a new Real Estate Office near Venice Beach. Funds were raised between all the Masonic Bodies in Warrenton who purchased a vintage 1851 Navy Colt black powder pistol and had each Body's Name inscribed on the barrel and his initials on the bottom of the pistol grip as well as a Square and Compasses and a

Past Master emblem on each side of the receiver. Rt. Ex. Companion Barry was active in the all the bodies plus several others. There were 17 Companions including Mt. Ex. Companion Don McAndrews, PGHP present. Submitted by: Alan Spear, SM Black Horse Council AMD No. 555.

The Keystone of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia

July 2021

A Night To Remember...



Most Excellent Companion Raymond D. Steele was honored at the May Convocation at Shenandoah Royal Arch Chapter No.17 in Edinburg by being presented with the Past Grand High Priest Jewel that once belonged to the late Mt. Ex. Grand High Priest, Companion Jeffrey Burcham. The award was presented by his wife Tammy Burcham. Also present for the event was Barbara Steele, Mt. Ex. Ray's wife, Mt. Ex. James A. Fields, Mt. Ex Russell G. Snodgrass, Rt. Ex. Grand Secretary, Andy Anderson,

District 15 DDGHP Kevin Walek, Jake Trenary, PDDGHP and several members from Capitular District 15 including officers and guest Companions. The ceremony was headed up by MEHP Dennis Parmenter, High Priest of Shenandoah Royal Arch Chapter No. 17 in Edinburg, VA.

Wisdom, Strength and Beauty An Essay

[Editor's notes on the following essay: In 1993, George I. H. Mason, then MEHP of Alexandra Chapter No. 11, Nova Scotia, presented this Rededication Service Address focused on the Royal Arch Chapter closing prayer about Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. It was intended to be educational as well as inspirational.]

I share that talk with you now, because I agree that through more careful consideration of the different levels of meaning in our closing prayer we can both learn more and be inspired further.

That Excellent Companion alluded first to an observation by many Masonic writers: that it is often possible to find three references, three alternative implications, or three overlapping meanings in so many parts of our rituals ... and it is true of this one: Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. Also note that some of the wording in his essay was specific to Nova Scotia, e.g., in his reference to the King's Lecture.]

July 2021

Wisdom, Strength and Beauty

As with other ancient texts, so with our written rituals we should look beyond literal meanings. We should look for interpretations – often easy to find, perhaps with a little digging. Some come clear only after years of exposure to our work, and increasing familiarity with it, as patterns emerge, research trails are explored, original references are discovered, and reasons are perceived – the reasons why our predecessors selected what they wove into the texts which we, many generations later hear, learn, repeat and consider.

And when we do carefully consider any one of the special phrases or word-sets sprinkled throughout our texts (such as Wisdom, Strength and Beauty), we can often interpret such a phrase in three different ways; from three perspectives; draw three meanings; multiply our benefits; brighten the light by which we see; expand our horizons of knowledge, and come step by step closer to understanding why we search, what we seek, and where we might find the ultimate answers.

In the Royal Arch Degree, during the King's Lecture, we hear these words:

“The number three has always been held in high estimation by the Fraternity. We find it pervading the whole ritual.” Indeed, we do:

- The Three Great Lights: the Bible, Square and Compasses
- The Three Lesser Lights: representing the sun, moon and Master of the Lodge
- The three Senior Officers of the Lodge: The Master, and Senior and Junior Wardens
- Three Degrees. Three distinct knocks. Three ways to meet, act and part.
- Three Grand Masters of the Veils.
- The Council of Three, plus the three Companions: Captain of the Host, Principal Sojourner and Royal Arch Captain, plus the three Veil Masters again – three times three.
- The Triple Tau, Royal Arch Masonry's emblem.

But the number three is no *new* focal point. It had a sacred, magical or mystical significance among practically all ancient cultures. Several used it in one way or another to signify the Deity or Supreme Being who has three essential attributes: Omnipresence, Omniscience and Omnipotence.

The Hebrews used the number three for the yod – a point within an equilateral triangle with three equal sides and equal angles – as a mode of expressing the incommunicable name of Jehovah. Many religions and mythologies make reference to or use the concept of the Triad (a succession or relationship of three), to define a ruling trinity, or a being in three forms. As examples:

The Keystone of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia

July 2021

- Osiris, Isis and Horus
- Brahma, Vishnu and Siva
- Zeus, Poseidon and Hades
- Woden, Friga and Thor
- Father, Son and Holy Spirit

So, by no means has the number three been imbued with significance only by Masons. Quite the reverse. Our forefathers who planned, prepared, and perpetuated our rituals consciously and carefully crafted them to include trios, triads and other threesomes as a reflection, reconstruction and reinvigoration of what others had done long before.

And they did so with enough obviousness to make sure we shouldn't overlook it; to encourage us to think about it; and to incite us to research it. They wanted to send us a message – or perhaps three messages.

One message is given in the symbolism Lecture following the Master Mason Degree. The wording varies from one ritual to another, but here's how it went in the old Webb Standard Formula Ritual:

“How many grand Masonic pillars are there? Three: Wisdom, Strength and Beauty.

Why are they so called? Because it is necessary there should be wisdom to contrive, strength to support and beauty to adorn all great and important undertakings.

By whom are they represented? By Solomon King of Israel, Hiram King of Tyre, and Hiram Abif, who were our first three Most Excellent Grand Masters.

Why are they said to represent them? Solomon King of Israel represented the pillar of wisdom because by his wisdom he contrived that superb model of excellence that immortalized his name. Hiram King of Tyre represented the pillar of strength because he supported King Solomon in this great and important undertaking, Hiram Abif represented the pillar of beauty because by his cunning workmanship the Temple was beautified and adorned.”

Is this a sufficiently valuable message? – that wisdom, strength and beauty are needed to contrive, support and adorn all great and important undertakings? Perhaps.

But there's another reference in the Craft Rite to wisdom and strength. At the raising of the body in the Third Degree drama in the Webb work, King Solomon says these words:

“Masons should ever remember that when the strength and wisdom of a man fails, there is an inexhaustible supply above, yielded to us through the power of prayer.”

Prayer is given as an inexhaustible source of wisdom and strength.

The Keystone of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia

July 2021

Prayer is inserted as an alternative for beauty – or perhaps as a metaphor for the way to access it. And an allegorical meaning is offered, that God – to whom we pray – is the source of all wisdom, strength and beauty.

Again, is this a sufficient explanation for the multitudinous use of threes in Masonry? A sufficiently valuable message? Perhaps.

But we as Royal Arch Masons know that a fuller and larger message is offered to those who seek further light and come knocking on our door.

We say that the reason the number three has always been held in high estimation by the Fraternity is: Because it refers to God; It takes us back to when the Hebrews needed a way to express his incommunicable name and used the yod – the point in an equilateral triangle.

Masonry therefore weaves into the fabric of its work – via all the uses of the number three in the Craft Degrees, and then via this further explanation in the Royal Arch Degree (both now taken together) – an allegorical emphasis on the historical past, future and eternally transcending importance of God.

The Royal Arch Degree, we are told, is “calculated to impress on our minds a firm belief in the existence and attributes of a Supreme Being, and it teaches us a due reverence for His great and holy name.” In its methods of doing so, it includes many references to ancient writings which compose the Hebrew Volume of Sacred Law (which Christians call the *Old Testament*); and to writings as old or older, from other parts of the world. The roots of these references can be traced to the Mysteries of Greece, Egypt, Mesopotamia and far beyond.

And to the student of those references – to the reader of those older writings – to the amazed eyes of scholars who keep coming across such evidence of how our rituals reach back across not just centuries but millennia of questing, creative and reverent thought – to fill their minds with wonder and challenge and ever-greater reward – comes a third level of meaning, a third message, a third opportunity to understand:

Freemasonry is a modern version of an old tutorial, told time and again by wise and good men wherever civilized society develops the will and ability to listen, to hear and to understand:

Without a belief in and reverence for a Supreme Being – and without the hope of ultimately standing before the great white throne, knowing we have sought His grace and having confidence in His mercy – we are nothing and can amount to nothing.

On those essential foundations, inherited from the ancients, are built the great and fundamental principles our institution seeks to impress on our minds; for then and only then can we feel that friendship, that union, that fervency and zeal, and that purity of heart and rectitude of conduct

The Keystone of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia

July 2021

which should actuate every Royal Arch Mason and which are essentially necessary to gain admission into the Sanctum Sanctorum above.

Here, where we consider those virtues, we are also necessarily led to contemplate, with gratitude and admiration, the sacred source from whence all earthly comforts come.

Here, at the end of each convocation, our closing prayer recalls what we started to learn through the allegory of the Three Pillars of the Lodge, represented by the Worshipful Master, Senior Warden and Junior Warden, who represent in turn King Solomon's Wisdom, King Hiram's Strength and the beauty of Hiram Abif's integrity. And here we rephrase it in terms of reverence for the source of *all* wisdom, strength and beauty, when we say:

By the wisdom of the Supreme High Priest may we be directed, by His strength may we be enabled, and by the beauty of His holiness may we be incited to perform the obligations here enjoined on us, to keep inviolably the mysteries here unfolded to us, and invariably to practice all those duties out of the Chapter which are inculcated in it.

Here, then, we inculcate those duties we should practice before the world, in the sight of God.

But we cannot do so effectively without help. We need to be directed by wisdom, supported by strength and incited by the beauty of holiness. We can tap an inexhaustible supply of wisdom and strength through prayer – prayer to the source of all beauty.

Belief that that is so – that the source exists – that there is a Supreme Being who is the epitome of all wisdom, strength and beauty – is not in itself a religion, though it is common to all virtuous religions and always has been. But surely it is the fundamental principle which inspired the minds and enlivened the souls of our Masonic forefathers.

As we listen to the words in our rituals, as we recognize the additional symbolic and allegorical meanings, and as we learn more about the patterns of truth and virtue which have actuated all good men down through the millennia, may our minds be so inspired, and our souls so enlivened.

My personal comments on this paper: *In reading and presenting this essay, I was struck by the elegant writing style of the author. In a paper that seeks to explain the proliferation of “threes” in Freemasonry, the author uses that construction over and over and over to drive home his points. By doing so he effectively uses alliteration to echo the main point of his topic.*

In addition, I was impressed with how he uses the title concepts – Wisdom, Strength and Beauty – to tie together the Blue Lodge ritual with the Royal Arch, especially in that paragraph where he ties those fundamental foundations of our Craft into the denotations of the banners of the three Veilsmen and the Royal Arch Captain, and then ends the essay with the presence of those concepts in our closing prayer.