



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

The Keystone

September 2022 Vol. 6 No. 4



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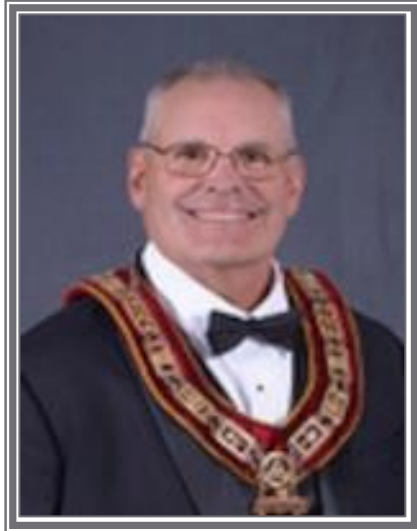
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GRAND HIGH PRIEST/MOST ILLUSTRIOUS GRAND MASTER'S MESSAGE

No Companions!

It is hard to believe that the last quarter of this capitialar year is upon us. Things have moved very quickly this year. There is still much to be done. The final District Meetings will be held. It has truly been a joy to visit each District. You have opened your Chapters to Lady Judy and me. We are very grateful for all the hospitality shown to us.

Planning for the Annual Convocation in November is moving along. It is hoped that you will place it on your calendar. As



look forward to 2023. Rt. Excellent Lee Arritt is finishing up the planning for his year and there is no doubt it will be a great year for our body.

My fall semester at both my high school job and my college position have started. It always amazes me at how quickly the summer passes. It

is great to be back with my students. They possess an energy that is passed on to me and allows me the opportunity to be reinvigorated with teaching. Just the other day, my students and I were discussing the world and all the changes that are taking place. The hope, for the future, that they possess is always something that brings a smile to my face and a belief that our future will be bright. If you ever have the opportunity, sit down with young family members or young neighbors and listen to their thoughts. It may remind you of what you thought as a youngster. It may also give a different perspective on the future of our society.

**AS THE FIRST DAY OF FALL IS
DRAWING UPON US, MAY YOU
FIND PEACE AND JOY IN YOUR
LIVES.**

of this writing, the Call for Grand Convocation will have gone out or will go out in short order. It will be a great time to transact any business that needs to be attended to. It will also be a great time to look back on the successes of 2022 and

The Grand Chapter officers have begun the process of creating a plan of action that can be used each year. It will serve as a guide for the future Grand Officers to follow. That is crucial. Each year, the Grand Line goes through a process of “re-invention”. The planning for Grand Convocation seems to a process of creation. That is normal. There should be a format that we can follow. We should have a model with which to construct the next Grand Convocation. It will allow the entire line to see what needs to be done. This will allow future Grand High Priest’s the opportunity to begin planning for their year and will not feel that they must “Re-invent the wheel”. It is something that can only benefit Grand Chapter.

As Lady Judy and I have traveled the State, we have seen many things. Each District has been different from one another. Each visit has been unique.

That has been wonderful. It is the reason that we have given the District Deputies “carte blanche” in designing the visit. It has afforded us the opportunity to see the state in different lights. Though we all share the same belief system, as Royal Arch Masons, it is wonderful to see how our differences help to bind us together. The District Deputies have done an outstanding job and we are forever grateful for all the effort that you have put in this year.

As the first day of Fall is drawing upon us, may you find peace and joy in your lives. Should there be anything we can do to help you, your Chapter or your District, please do not hesitate to reach out. Take care.

Peace,
Mark Pennypacker
Grand High Priest

THE GRAND KING'S MESSAGE

No Companions!

Greetings to all and hope you are enjoying the few days left of summer.

As we approach November, I hope you are making plans on attending the Grand Convocation of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia in Williamsburg.

For this edition of the Keystone, I thought about writing on why we should be a Royal Arch Mason. In researching this idea, I found some interesting thoughts and thought it worthwhile in discussing this topic. It is always good to refresh our memory so we can be prepared to relay this information to a Blue Lodge Brother interested in the Royal Arch.

It is not doubt that the York Rite increases and simplifies the Blue Lodge teachings. In the Blue Lodge, we are taught about the building, completion and dedication of King Solomon's Temple. As we advance in the Royal Arch, we are taught about the destruction of the



Temple and about the legacy of our Grand Master, Hiram Abiff.

Yes, the true word of a Master Mason is discovered and explained to you. In the Blue Lodge, the word is lost, and it is rediscovered again in the Chapter. The meaning of the word is given in connection

with its importance and implication to Masonry.

In the Blue Lodge we are taught about the wages paid by the Senior Warden and it is also explained to us. But in the Chapter, we learn what the wages are and how they are to be distributed.

In the Past Master's Degree, we are taught the lesson of consensus among the Companions. This degree is exemplified to continue its ancient custom and is a requirement to being exalted a Royal Arch Mason.

The Most Excellent Master Degree teaches us to exercise respect as it is centered on the dedication of the completion of the Temple. It finalizes the symbolic lessons that are brought to our

attention in the Mark Master Degree. With the completion of King Solomon's Temple, an enlightening mystery is disclosed to us.

We finally reach the pinnacle in the Royal Arch Degree as it completes the story of Jewish history during some of its somber hours. It informs us of when Jerusalem and the Holy Temple are destroyed, and their people being held captive as slaves in Babylon. They are eventually set free to return home and engage in the noble and glorious work of rebuilding the city and Temple of God.

There is much more information on the Royal Arch which we need to learn so to

attract our Blue Lodge Brothers in becoming a member or the Royal Arch. The more you know about the Royal Arch, the better you are able to explain to a Brother what he can expect to gain by petitioning the Chapter.

Again, I hope to see you in November and remember to support our Grand High Priest in the remainder of his year as he and his Lady continue their travels throughout the state.

Sincerely and Fraternaly,

RE Lee Arritt

Grand King

THE GRAND ALMONER'S MESSAGE

No Companions!

The summer is almost over, and fall will soon be upon us. With this change in seasons the Alzheimer's Walks will soon be beginning. Registration is open for the one in Manassas I participate in. It has been almost 2 years since many of these walks have taken place in person with large



The other thing we need to be on the lookout for is our young people. They are returning to school and for some this may require a large adjustment after being “on-line” for an extended amount of time. We have our Masonic youth, Rainbow Girls, Job's Daughter and the DeMolay, that we normally look out for,

but we are charged to look out for all youth not just ours.

Our EHP just held a ‘non-traditional’ fund raiser at O'Brien's Irish Pub. We all met for food and fellowship prior to the District 4 Masonic Ritual class. A decorated “bucket” was placed on the table and the EHP collected funds directed for Alzheimer's Research. Think out of the box for fund raising opportunities as we return to more normal conditions. We also partnered with Meadows Farms Golf Course to raise funds for Alzheimer's. Nothing complicated here, a Companion noticed a collections jar on one of the counters and asked a simple question. A partnership was born.

**ENSURE YOUR “WALK”
COORDINATOR CHECKS TO
MAKE SURE YOUR TEAM IS
REGISTERED WITH THE
ALZHEIMER'S FOLKS**

gatherings of people. I was surprised to see that the Royal Arch Team I walked for had lost their place in the list of teams to register for. A word to the wise, have your “Walk” coordinator check to make sure that your team or teams are still registered with the Alzheimer's folks. Inactivity seems to have caused our Team to lose its place.

Finally, I am looking forward to the Grand Convocation in November. I had a great time at the Grand Conclave in May '22

and anticipate the same at the Convocation..

GRAND HIGH PRIEST VISITS AND NEWS

Visits

District No. 18 - 10 September 2022 at 12pm

District No. 19 - 10 September 2022 at 6:30pm

Districts No. 2 & 3 – 17 September 2022 at 12pm

Family Day at MAHOVA – 1 October 2022 at 8am

Grand Annual Communication – 11 & 12 November 2022

Grand Annual Convocation – 18 & 19 November 2022

Correspondence Course Completions

The following Companions have successfully completed the Grand Chapter Leadership Correspondence Course:

8/31/2022	David L. Stone	Fredericksburg No. 23
8/31/2022	Joseph K. Gilkerson	Fredericksburg No. 23
8/31/2022	Patrick F. McConnell	Fredericksburg No. 23
8/31/2022	Chad C. Kingston	Warren No. 5
8/31/2022	Adam R. Kline	Fauquier No. 25

CHAPTER / COUNCIL NEWS

1st Capitular District

The Most Excellent Grand High Priest visited the 1st Capitular District, 13 August 2022. All visited the George

Washington National Masonic Memorial and provided the group picture shown below. Good fellowship was enjoyed by everyone.



2nd and 3rd Capitular District

On August 6, Companions, families, and friends of the 2nd and 3rd Capitular District gathered for a group photo at Princess

Anne Royal Arch Chapter #1607 prior to participating in the Alzheimer's Walk 2022. This group was ready to take on the walk with gusto!



17th Capitar District

Virginia Royal Arch and Cryptic Council Masons have made supporting the Alzheimer's Association an organizational priority and over the years devotion to this mission has been thriving. This year, the Chapters and Councils of Virginia's District 17 have added another community collaboration to their effort. They partnered with Meadows Farms Nurseries & Landscaping to bolster support for the fight to find a cure.

Meadows Farms is one of the largest independently owned nursery and garden centers in the country, with more than 15 locations across Virginia, and employing 100s of landscape professionals. The Meadows Farms partnership with the Alzheimer's Association started in 2018 after the passing of their founder Mr. Bill "Farmer" Meadows (May He Rest in Peace) due to Alzheimer's.

They began raising funds and awareness in earnest in an effort to help find a cure. To date, they have raised more than \$174,000.

While shopping, a member of Warren No.5 noticed signs at Meadows Farms about the shared mission, recognized the opportunity to partner in support of it and brought it to the attention of the High Priest/Illustrious Master, Excellent Chad Kingston. Ex. Chad discussed this with Companion El-Mehdi Marhoum, the District 17 Almoner, and they agreed it would be fun and a good idea to try

making it a collaborative effort in the District with each

Chapter/Council engaged in friendly competition to see who could raise the most funds.

With the support of and coordination by the District Almoner, the Chapters/Councils (Warren No. 5,

Manassas No. 81 and Potomac No. 88) with the leadership of their High Priests



From left to right: Excellent Tom Costis, District Almoner – Companion El-Mehdi Marhoum, Meadows Farm Vice President Brad Bobenrieth, Excellent Chad Kingston and District Deputy Grand High Priest – Right Excellent Raymon Bacchus

(Excellent Chad Kingston, Excellent Tom Costis and Excellent George (Tommy) Chapman respectively), began to raise funds in support of the effort.

Companion El-Mehdi, Excellent Chad Kingston, Excellent Tom Costis along with the District Deputy Grand High

District No. 17 and Meadows Farms has brought favorable public recognition to our gentle Craft as well as to Meadows Farms. Both organizations appreciated the favorable outcome which fuels the desire to press on with this charitable effort.

Norfolk United #1

A Great night for Royal Arch Masonry as Norfolk United #1 opened their Chapter room for the Royal Arch Masson Degree on Friday evening August 19. Eight Candidates from across District 2 (NURAC#1, GBRAC #82 and PARAC #1607) were in attendance to be exalted.

Priest/Illustrious Master, Right Excellent Raymon Bacchus met on Friday June 17th, 2022, with VP Brad Bobenrieth at the Meadows Farms location in Chantilly and presented a check in the amount of \$1,503. This triumphant collaborative effort to positively impact our community between the Chapters/Councils of

On the horizon, both organizations will participate in the upcoming Alzheimer's Fall Walk in Reston, Virginia together and they will work with the Alzheimer's Association to promote more industry collaborative efforts by publicizing this example of a successful outcome.

The degree team that evening was comprised of Companions from all three chapters as well as plenty of participants on the side lines from the three Chapters as well. It was a great evening the degree team did an awesome job in conferring the degree. Below is a photo from that event.



Marion Royal Arch No 54

On July 30th at Marion Royal Arch No. 54, we had the pleasure of hosting a Royal Arch Festival and creating 15 new Companions. We had a phenomenal degree team and they were presented in the upmost and impressive manner. The class was named in honor of our Friend, Brother, and Mentor: Most Excellent Howard F. Coleman.

Distinguished Brothers Present:

ME Snodgrass

ME Surface

ME Broce

RE William "Bill" Owens, Grand Scribe

RE James Nunn, Grand Captain of the

Host

RE Tom Varner, Grand Master of the 3rd Veil

RE Randy Johnson, Grand Lecturer

RE Chris McCartney, Associate Grand Tiler

It was a huge success thanks to members and visitors from across our beautiful Commonwealth. It is truly a blessing for days, Fraternity, and brotherhood that was shared among all.

In addition, for Warwick Chapter.

Companion Vain was given his Mark Sheet to create and return to your care and a Royal Arch Ritual Book. He was polite and was the Candidate for the Select Master's Degree.

Always a pleasure to assist and looking forward to our next step together as a Temple of Living Stones.

In His Service and Yours,
J. Brandon Hale



**Howard F. Coleman Memorial Class Marion Royal Arch Chapter No. 54
30 July 2022**

Fredericksburg Royal Arch No 23

I love Royal Arch Masonry and becoming the High Priest of Fredericksburg's historic Chapter was a very great honor for me. I also love ritual so, as the High Priest, one of my objectives was to polish our ritual and to become conversant with all of the degrees. We were blessed with an influx of candidates and the idea evolved that we would confer all of the

degrees ourselves for the first time in many years.

Fredericksburg has the honor of having the first recorded conferral of the Royal Arch Degree on December 22, 1753 but, in recent years, it has not been able to do so. We proceeded to confer degrees, add candidates, confer the same degrees again to get all the candidates on an equal footing with the Royal Arch as our ultimate goal.

We finally got everybody synched up for the Select and Royal Master Degree and conferred that on six candidates – we were nicely on track. Then, unfortunately, one of our candidates suffered a medical emergency so we had to proceed with the remaining five. Our Grand Master of the third veil, Excellent Michael Brennen did a superlative job conferring the Most Excellent Master degree on the remaining five candidates and we focused on the Royal Arch Degree. Much studying was done and then, as so often happens, one of our cast, our Principal Sojourner suffered an injury followed by work commitments which took away the possibility of him continuing.

Receiving the Royal Arch Degree was a significant event for me and the Principal Sojourner for my Degree was Right Excellent Tom Varner. He immediately came to mind as the man we needed to

fill in and, being Tom, he was more than willing to assist and what a tremendous job he did! The day finally arrived. A couple of the Companions went in the morning and prepared the room saving us a great deal of time and effort.

The usual last-minute changes happened as one called out sick and another showed up unexpectedly and one candidate failed to show up. With adjustments “on the fly” we worked our way through and ended up exalting four new Royal Arch Masons! What a great experience! What a great night! What a great team! I am so very proud of Fredericksburg Royal Arch Chapter 23 as they saw this through from beginning to end! The end result:

HP Richard Fisher



Newly Exalted Companions David Ellis, “Rob” Dubois, Jake Watters and Mikhail McCarty

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

Excellent Companion Ed Tooma

2B1 ASK1!

No Companions!

My fellow Brethren - my humble thanks for taking a Masonic moment to read this article. My intent - open our doors to more "good men."

Getting one to "Ask 1 2 B 1" - How do we do it? Believe it or Not (Ripley said that - not me) there are many good men



how many of you remember this but years ago a profane had to "Ask 1 2 B 1" three times in order to receive a petition. How times have changed.

Those who are not Masons just don't realize what they are missing out on. What I often do when I have a conversation with someone I feel in my heart would make a good Mason is to say things like - "You know, you'd sure make a good Mason" or, "It's people like you that make a fraternity like Freemasonry keep its good name." This way you are not directly asking a friend to join. You are only, what I call, arousing his curiosity or tossing out a hint. Or, putting bait on the hook, hoping for a bite. Once interest has been made and a friend begins to inquire about Masonry, this is your opportunity to proudly tell what we're all about.

Make your friend aware that Masonry is

**... MAKE YOUR FRIEND AWARE
THAT MASONRY IS THE
WORLD'S OLDEST AND
LARGEST FRATERNITY!**

out there who would make a wonderful Freemason. I know that we as Masons are not supposed to ask anyone to join our fraternity. It must be of someone's own free will and accord. However, there is a way to let a profane know that in order to become one of us he must first "Ask 1 in order to be 1." I don't know

the World's Oldest and Largest Fraternity. Let him know of the many charities and needy families Masonry supports. Mention the Shriner's Hospitals that provide advanced care for children with orthopedic conditions and spinal cord injuries. And, there is no cost whatsoever in caring for these children.

You might also mention some famous names of Freemasons that everyone knows - like the Father of our Country - and first president of the United States, George Washington; The founder of St. Jude's Hospital - Danny Thomas; Comedian Red Skelton; Colonel Sanders; of Kentucky Fried Chicken - Ernest Borgnine; John Wayne; and frontiersman, soldier, politician, congressman, and prolific storyteller, Davy Crockett. This list goes on and on.

Today there are over 2 million Freemasons in the United States with lodges found in almost every community. Worldwide our membership is around 6 million.

If your approach to explaining what our Institution is all about, there is an excellent chance your friend will want to know more, all hopefully leading to those

magic words. How can I become a Mason? So, arm yourself to always be ready to answer what you can, about how wonderful it is being a part of an ancient Institution that's been around ever since 1717 with the founding of the United Grand Lodge of England. However, Freemason societies have existed for much longer. The most popular theory is that Freemasonry emerged out of the stonemasonry guilds of the Middle Ages. Yes, we are Ancient and mighty proud of it.

So, start thinking of ways you can interest good men to become one of us by using methods that are within the bounds of our teachings.

“You can if you think you can” - the words of Brother Norman Vincent Peale.

Brother Ed Tooma
Spurmont Lodge No. 98
Hunter No. 135
Shenandoah RAC No. 17

Sources: Internet and personal knowledge.