



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

Plus Lucis

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TAKING FULL OWNERSHIP OF OUR RIGHTFUL PLACE IN CRYPTIC MASONRY

In December 1841 the Grand Council Cryptic Masons in Virginia formally gave up jurisdiction of the Select and Royal Master Degrees on condition that the Grand Chapter agreed to take such jurisdiction. They also transferred all money and property of the Grand Council to the Grand Chapter and ordered that all money and property of subordinate Councils be transferred to the nearest subordinate Chapter. Subsequently, the Grand Council ceased to function. We are somewhat hazy as to why this happened, but the fact remains that we have conferred these degrees in Chapter since that time.

During my visit to the Grand Chapter and Grand Council in Vermont, the Grand Secretary of all three York bodies was curious about how Virginia differed from other jurisdictions regarding Cryptic Masonry. I gave him the details of how we work in the Chapter. He then informed me that if a Virginia Royal Arch Mason were to request to attend a Cryptic Council meeting in Vermont, he would be denied. Quite shocked, I said that our Royal Arch Masons have taken the Cryptic Degrees so why would you deny them? He replied that Virginia does not open Cryptic Councils. I informed him that we do. We open a Council of Select and Royal Masters and confer the two degrees, and then close that Council. In fact, each Chapter is a Cryptic Council when we confer degrees. The only difference is that we do not conduct business in the Council, only in the Chapter.

I went on to inform him that every year at Grand Chapter we confer the Super Excellent Master Degree (which they do not confer every year in Vermont), that we also open the Grand Council of Thrice Illustrious Masters and confer that Cryptic chair degree on all Past High Priests, that since 2007 we have awarded the Ish Sodi Award, so what more would you expect from us? His reply is that we do not open and close a Grand Council. He had me on that one. We do everything that every Grand Cryptic Council does (and more than some), except opening and closing Grand Council. Even the Grand Priory Knights of the York Cross of Honor have acknowledged that we do open Cryptic Councils when we confer the degrees, and consequently award the KYCH to Virginians who have not actually served as Illustrious Master of a Cryptic Council.

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My Grand Administrative Assistant, Martin Juul, who is originally from New York State, was told by the Illustrious Master of a Council in his hometown that he could not attend Council. Consequently, he joined a Cryptic Council in the District of Columbia in order to be eligible to attend.

In the interest of protecting the rights of our members to participate in Cryptic Masonry in other jurisdictions which are not familiar with our system, it would be a simple matter to open the Grand Council Cryptic Masons in Virginia in ample form by a simple declaration, and to close it in like manner. Once opened, we can declare that all business will be conducted concurrently with the Grand Chapter, and proceed to open the Grand Chapter in our usual form.

But to accomplish the above in a legal manner, some additions to our Grand Chapter law would be necessary, which is the purpose of a resolution which will be presented at Grand Chapter this year.

Once the Grand Council is constituted and provisions made for the concurrency of officers both in the Grand Council and constituent Councils, the concurrency of finances and the conduct of business, we would only need to make a small adjustment in our opening and closing ritual at Grand Chapter. There would be no dues, no additional meetings, no additional elections – basically nothing we are currently doing will change.

However, we would then be able to seek mutual recognition with the other Grand Jurisdictions. Our Grand Secretary, as the Grand Recorder of the Grand Council Cryptic Masons in Virginia, would then be able to communicate with other Grand Councils without burdensome confusion and endless explanations. We would also have the added benefit of exchanging Grand Representatives with the other Grand Councils, giving more companions in Virginia an opportunity to have a Grand title. I have discussed this with the General Grand Master of the General Grand Council of Cryptic Masons International and he is quite supportive. Although he understands that we will not be joining the General Grand Council, he wants to see us take a bigger role in Cryptic Masonry and greater pride in the importance of the Cryptic Degrees.

Keep in mind that there would be no additional meetings, no additional dues, and no additional elections. Quite simply, nothing would change except to add the brief ritual of opening and closing the Grand Council in ample form at our Grand Convocation, to allow us to communicate directly with other Grand Councils, and to more easily exchange Grand Representatives. Nothing would change in the local Chapters.

Companions, we own the Cryptic Degrees, we confer the Super Excellent Master Degree (a Cryptic degree), we open a Grand Council of Thrice Illustrious Masters and confer the Thrice Illustrious Master Degree (a Cryptic chair degree), we present the Ish Sodi Award (a Cryptic Award). We do everything which is done in every Grand Council around the world (and more than many). It is now time to take full ownership of Cryptic Masonry in Virginia by constituting the Grand Council Cryptic Masons in Virginia. It is time to take our rightful place in Cryptic Masonry both nationally and internationally.

Donald L. McAndrews

Grand High Priest

VISIT TO KING CYRUS GRAND CHAPTER HOLY ROYAL ARCH MASONS, PHA



On Saturday, Oct. 3, 2015, your Grand High Priest had the great privilege of attending the King Cyrus Grand Chapter, PHA, held in Virginia Beach. Most Ex. Samuel L. Rivers, Jr., received me with honors and ceremony. We are working together to begin the process of establishing mutual recognition and

applying the same visitation protocols now in place with our respective Grand Chapters. Most Ex. Rivers and The Honorable Roger C. Brown, Grand Master, have been invited to attend our Grand Chapter in November.



Left to Right: Glennie Forbes, Mark Chapman, Diane Wade, Susan Chapman, Allen Wade, Ian Forbes, Ken Power (our guide), Bunnie (our Host), Jim and Bonnie Kraut, Don and Suzanne McAndrews, Bill Rorer, Donna and Lee Arritt, Adrian Hollander, Marty and Anita Juul, Herb Hollander, and Judy Rorer.



Chapter Visitation in the Egyptian Room



Left to right: Most Ex. Michael J. Ward, Grand King, Most Ex. Donald McAndrews, GHP, and Most Wor. Douglas T. Grey, Grand Master of Ireland. After the Supreme Grand Chapter Convocation, Most Wor. Grey was kind enough to invite us for drinks in his office at Freemason's Hall.

VISITATION TO THE SUPREME GRAND CHAPTER OF IRELAND

On Friday, Sept. 11, 2015, your Grand High Priest, accompanied by 18 travelers, flew to Dublin, Ireland, for 9 days and 8 nights filled with many activities. Our principal goal was to attend the Supreme Grand Chapter of Ireland, along with 3 full days of tours and 3 days of Masonic activities. Our hotel was conveniently located across the street from the Grand Lodge building Freemason's Hall.

Brother and Companion Ken Power arranged all of our transportation and tours in Ireland, and did a spectacular job. His company, Templar Tours of Ireland, specializes in Knight Templar and Masonic sites <http://www.TemplarToursOfIreland.com/>. That evening, Ken arranged a catered dinner at Freemason's Hall to welcome us to Ireland.

Sunday, the bus took us to St. Patrick's Cathedral, built in 1191, for services. We were in luck to enjoy the Boy's Choir who were singing for the first time after their summer break.

Monday morning, Ken gave us a short walking tour around inner Dublin. That evening, we visited Royal Arch Chapter #2 meeting in the Egyptian Room at Freemason's Hall. We were their guests at another catered dinner at Freemason's Hall.

Tuesday, we attended Lodge in the main hall where Grand Lodge meets. They conferred the Entered Apprentice Degree. Both the Chapter and Lodge rituals were very similar to Virginia. Again, we were guests at dinner catered at Freemason's Hall.

Wednesday, Supreme Grand Chapter met at 10 am. We were received with great pomp and honors. Refreshments were served afterward, however the Grand Master invited us to his private office for some adult beverages.

Thursday, we enjoyed tours of two distilleries just an hour west of Dublin. Near the town of Tullamore, we visited the Charleville Castle, which was specially arranged by Ken Power. This castle has connections with Knights Templar including a fascinating wing (likely a Preceptory), whose only entrance is through a secret door inside a bookcase in the library. They also have on display a certificate stating that the person named received the Knight Rose Croix degree at the castle. More information about Charleville Castle is available on their website <http://www.CharlevilleCastle.ie>

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Freemasons' Hall, Molesworth St., Dublin



Just north of Dublin is New Grange, a massive 5,000 year old Neolithic structure, older than the pyramids



Hill of Tara Stone of Destiny



Hook Lighthouse



Fern Castle

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Friday we drove about an hour north of Dublin to New Grange, a 5,000 year old neolithic observatory to mark the Winter Solstice. After exploring New Grange, we stopped at the nearby Hill of Tara and the Stone of Destiny where the High Kings of Ireland were said to have been anointed in old times.

Saturday we drove south to the Hook Peninsula and explored a lighthouse built by a Knight Templar, William Marshall Earl of Pembroke, in the early 1200's. The lighthouse was operated by Cistercian Monks, whose reformer St. Benedict of Clairveaux was intimately connected with the first Knights Templar. William Marshall built many other structures including a castle in the Town of Fern, where we stopped to see what is still standing and has been preserved. On our return to Dublin, we enjoyed a farewell dinner at Freemason's Hall accompanied by our guide Ken Power and Lady Debbie.



Charleville Castle



Dublin Castle

FINAL COMMENTS

My Companions, I thank you for the privilege of serving as your Grand High Priest for 2015. This has been a thoroughly enjoyable, rewarding, and unbelievably busy time. We have made huge advancements this year, due to your hard work and the leadership of our Grand Chapter Officers and District Deputies, in Education, Charity, Membership, and Fraternal Relations. Keep up the good work in your Chapters, support your new District Deputies, and especially support your next Grand High Priest Jim Scarse. You Companions make me proud that I am a Royal Arch Mason.

Donald L. McAndrews
Grand High Priest 2015