



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

# The Keystone

**November 2019**



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Want your articles or pictures here? Or have a question for Zerubbabel? Send them to [tvarner536@aol.com](mailto:tvarner536@aol.com).



Friends and Companions:

“Like sands through the hourglass, so are the days of our lives”...especially when you are having fun! I hope each one of you has had as much FUN as Lady Karen and I experienced this year. As I've said many times over, we had a great time visiting numerous locations this year. That's because of YOU! You have blessed us with your hospitality and friendship. It would be wonderful if we all were able to visit one another or a different part of the Commonwealth more often. Virginia is a beautiful state with gorgeous scenery from the mountains to the sea; however, it is not surpassed by the people and especially companions and their ladies. I would encourage everyone to put forth the effort to visit somewhere new in the coming years. You'll be amazed at the gracious and spectacular scenery, the friendly people, and quite possibly find a reason to return. Your visit may cause someone in the visiting community to come visit your neck of the woods.

During the last few months we have had the pleasure of visiting two more Grand Jurisdictions - Grand York Rite Bodies of Kentucky and Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons of West Virginia. We had a wonderful time at both events, renewing friendships and making new friends. I would encourage everyone to visit another Grand Jurisdiction, not only to see the similarities in the floorwork/ritual but to meet new companions with like interests. On September 28th we had an outstanding Multi-Jurisdictional Festival in Fredericksburg; thanks to Most Excellent Howard Coleman for his planning and implementation of the festival activities. Fifty-seven Royal Arch Masons were exalted (42

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Virginia with 15 from other jurisdictions). THANKS to all the Companions and Ladies that supported the Multi-Jurisdictional Festival with their attendance and special thanks to the Degree Teams, especially the RA Degree Team who did an outstanding job. Thanks Most Excellent Howard for the delicious meal and special thanks to Lady Sue for her support!

Also, the MAHOVA Family Day was beyond spectacular; the weather was great and the overall attendance good. Many Royal Arch Masons were present. Again, this year we were blessed to participate in the parade with a quality cast of able-bodied companions; after the parade, plenty of food, fun and fellowship was enjoyed by all. Royal Arch Masonry (with Red Coats) showed a presence, thanks to all for your attendance and support at MAHOVA family day.

This year's success was only possible by the tremendous support of the Grand Chapter Officers, the DDGHPs, the many Companions and especially the "Ladies" throughout the Commonwealth. And a BIG THANK YOU goes out to my sister and Administrative Professional, Lady Karen, for her dedication and tireless support throughout. Thank you for such an outstanding year! And please, if not already, make plans to attend Grand Chapter's Annual Convocation in Williamsburg, November 22-23. As we continue into the 21st Century, let's strive to support our local Chapters, who make it possible to have our Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia and its officers. Thank you to all the Grand Chapter Officers and ladies for their support this year. Now, I encourage everyone to continue

"Soaring To New Heights" as we all support the Grand Chapter Officers for the upcoming years into the future. May God continue to richly bless us all, our great Capitular craft and especially, these UNITED STATES of AMERICA!

*Floyd Byron Goodwin, Grand High Priest*

## The Grand Almoner's Message

Companions All:



As Most Excellent High Priest Floyd Byron Goodwin will tell you, the most exciting lap of any stock car race is the final lap. After 10 months of hard work together in support of our philanthropic endeavors, we find ourselves coming down that backstretch and rounding turns 3 and 4. It's time to put a lead foot down on the gas. Let's leave it all out there and plan to finish in first. It's time to make your move if you want to take home that checkered flag and win that trophy! Our work is sincerely appreciated by our charities and for the first time, they have a clear and concise understanding of just how big our impact is. Our generous contributions have no doubt made a big difference in the lives of those who need our support. As we rush headlong into the end of the 2018-2019 capitular year and prepare for our upcoming Grand Chapter, let's focus on finishing strong. Let's focus on pulling out all the stops and coming home with our best finish possible on the track.

All the motivated excitement being said up front, I want to take this opportunity to thank

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you for believing in me and for supporting me in this leadership role as your Grand Almoner. I realize that we have implemented some significant changes and that some of them have changed the way we work within our charities, but trust me, these changes were directed at fostering cooperation with our partners and they have provided organization that we can build on for years to come. Thank you for being willing to adapt and try out some new ideas. Though challenging to us all now, they will make our future philanthropy efforts much easier and more successful.

The deadline to collect charity donations will be 5:00pm on Thursday, November 21, 2019, so that we can have a completed total of each District going into the activities associated with Grand Chapter. If you have any donations that need to be submitted, please make sure you get them turned in on time to be counted. I certainly do not want anyone who has donated to be disappointed at Grand Chapter that their donation is not counted. If you are a Companion who is responsible for getting donations turned in, please do so now so there is no heartburn later. Please make sure you have your Chapter and/or District number written on the donations you submit so they can be recorded properly.

The latest research headlines from the Alzheimer's Association:

- Research programs like our US POINTER study continues to suggest that making multiple healthy lifestyle choices, including healthy diet, not smoking, regular exercise and cognitive stimulation, may decrease the risk of cognitive decline and dementia.

- Current research data presented has provided significant advances in blood-based methods for evaluating biological markers of Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases.

- Current research data has reported having identified several differences in the biology, progression, and risk of Alzheimer's Disease between men and women.

Our current research and philanthropy totals to date are posted below. Our grand total is now north of \$50,000.00 and we still have one month left to go!

Walk to End Alzheimer's:	\$36,803.00
Alzheimer's Assn Research:	\$20,784.01
MAHOVA Memory Unit:	\$ 2,081.00
Us Against Alzheimer's:	\$ 625.00
<u>Project LifeSaver:</u>	<u>\$ 850.00</u>
Cumulative Total:	\$61,143.01

Until I can thank you in person at the Grand Chapter in November, please keep up the good work and thank you for supporting the Alzheimer's Association and our other charities! If I can be of service to you in any way, please don't hesitate to call or email. Holiness to the Lord!

*Jason Curtis "Jake" Trenary, Grand Almoner*

## Correspondence Course/Veteran Update

Congratulations to John Kendrick of Barrett No. 76 and Troy Isakson of Petersburg Union No. 7, who recently completed the Correspondence Course! This makes 16 completions since last November. These Royal Arch veterans have also reached milestones recently: Robert W. Dunford, Norfolk United No. 1, 70 years; Theodore H. Prehodka, Cradock No. 72, 60 years; Clifton

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C. Molleen, Cradock No. 72, 50 years; Thomas G. Meiggs, Cradock No. 72, 50 years; Eugene W. Graham, Craig No. 30, 50 years; James C. Bay, III, Alleghany No. 24, 50 years; William B. Gates, III, Petersburg Union No. 7, 50 years; John E. Lashley, Jr., Petersburg Union No. 7, 50 years; James W. Tomko, Petersburg Union No. 7, 50 years; Samuel R. Richardson, Orange No. 47, 50 years; James E. Sawyer, Sr., Great Bridge No. 82, 50 years; Charles R. Warren, Jr., Great Bridge No. 82, 50 years; and Charles B. Goddin, Keystone No. 58, 50 years.

## Alzheimer's Walks



**Fredericksburg Walk on October 12**



**District 10 at Bristol Walk on October 19**



**Winchester Walk on October 26**

## The Rite Step To More Light, by Edward Tooma

One of the biggest mistakes after a Brother is Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason is then to ask him to join an appendant body. Let the Brother first understand the teachings of the Symbolic Lodge and complete his catechism work before taking on any other responsibilities.

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Give him the opportunity to participate in his Blue lodge activities, filling a need. I would wait at least three to six months before bringing up another Order. Keep in mind the financial aspect of additional membership. The new Mason is now obligated to his Blue Lodge. Taking on any additional obligations for dues and another night out may not be suited for him or his family at this particular time. This is why I say - wait a while. That old adage "one step at a time" still applies today.

When the opportune time comes, talk to the Brother about appendant body membership, and explain the teachings of becoming a Royal Arch Mason. Educate him about the York Rite and why he should consider taking "The Rite Step To More Light." Ensure that he has brochure material explaining each degree of the Royal Arch. This material is available from the Grand Chapter. And be there to answer his questions. Enlighten him that upon exaltation to the Holy Royal Arch Degree, he will then have completed the Master Mason's Degree and will no longer be left in darkness, or in doubt of the "True" Master's Word. See that the Brother receives a petition. And, make sure that he is duly and truly prepared for his next journey to more light.

The Holy Royal Arch degree is said by many to be the most beautiful degree in all of Freemasonry. The prospective candidate will surely be impressed to hear this. Let him know that we meet as Companions in a place called a Chapter. Make mention of the various titles of our officers. To educate the Brother even further - invite him to a Chapter night. Prior to the meeting, introduce him to the Companions and let him see first-hand the layout of a Chapter with the officers in their respective chairs wearing their aprons, and jewels, etc. This eye-opener could be the key to membership. Proudly let our Brother know that Royal Arch Masonry is the first part of the York Rite system of the Masonic Degrees, and that membership is open to all Master Masons in good standing. Companions from around the world including Virginia are honored to be Royal Arch Masons and delighted to share their feelings of why they took "The Rite Step To More Light."

*"To be honest, I had absolutely no idea what the Royal Arch was when I petitioned. Another young Mason and I were approached by a mason who asked us to join. We had recently received the degrees in the Scottish Rite and was told that there was another path called the York Rite. So we joined." Rt. Ex. Mark Pennypacker, John Dove No. 21, Grand Captain of The Host.*

*"My grandfather was a Royal Arch Mason and he always told me that someday I would follow his path and I did. Becoming a member of the York Rite opened the door for more light. I'm so thankful for taking the Rite step." Anonymous."*

*"My first exposure to RAM occurred shortly after I was initiated into C. Vernon Eddy Chapter of the Order of DeMolay in May 1975. I knew my great-uncle, Gilbert R. Whitmire, was a Mason and went to visit him (I believe) the weekend following my initiation and while there, noticed a copy of the Royal Arch Mason sitting on his coffee table. I was intrigued by the symbolism and asked him about it. I recall him talking a bit about the keystone and triple tau, then picking up*

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*his Bible and informing me that if I wanted to know more, read the Bible as everything is in there! Following his death in January 1981, I began to visit his widow, my great-aunt Maud Madeline Whitmire, also known by just about everyone as "Aunt Dolly," and helped her gather my uncle's clothing and effects for distribution to other family members. In the process of going through his personal papers in search of an insurance policy, I discovered his Past High Priest certificate. As it turned out, Gilbert served as High Priest of John Dove No. 21. This piqued my interest and upon returning home from college that Spring, I asked one of my mentors, Rt. Ex. Donald Dwain Holliday for more information. Don was happy to oblige and after returning my Master Mason's catechism, I requested a petition to join the Chapter. It was then that I met my future Royal Arch mentor, Rt. Ex. Haywood Silas Griffith, who proceeded to teach me virtually all the Chapter ritual I know, and who instilled in me a deep appreciation for this branch of the York Rite. Not only does membership in the Chapter open up a great opportunity to expand one's Masonic vistas by making one eligible for invitation to other bodies, but it completes the journey one begins in Lodge by recovering the long lost Master Mason's Word. It is, in short, the culmination of Ancient Craft Masonry and without it, one's Masonic education cannot be complete." The late ME Jeff Burcham, 1959-2019, PGHP, 2001.*

*"After seeing the Master Mason degree performed several times, when I was still a young Master Mason, I picked up on several places in the ritual where things were not clearly discussed and not articulated in detail. I was looking to have a clearer understanding of the circumstances surrounding the building of King Solomon's Temple and the untimely death of the man, Hiram Abiff, who designed it. I wanted to know what the true word of a Master Mason was and why the first three Grand Masters had gone through so much effort and trouble just to keep it a secret from the Craft. I was also trying very hard to link our ritual up to the chronology of the Old Testament in the Holy Bible. The degrees of the Royal Arch provided me with the ability to know and understand all of these things in great detail. I am very happy that I chose to explore the appendant bodies of York Rite Freemasonry." – Excellent Jason Curtis "Jake" Trenary, John Dove 21, Grand Almoner.*

*"When I was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason, I was told that I now only know half of the story. To gain more light, I should join a Royal Arch Chapter to receive, not only the rest of the story, but numerous explanations and meanings of the preceding degrees. I was not disappointed, I am glad I joined the Royal Arch." Rt. Ex. Dennis Haas, Hiram 45, PDDGHP.*

The York Rite is the oldest and largest Rite of Freemasonry. It takes a Master Mason on a journey into the oldest traditions of English Freemasonry. The benefit from the added knowledge gained through the York Rite (Royal Arch) is an experience of a lifetime. The mystical knowledge of the Order of Royal Arch Masonry awaits your presence, but you will have to take "The Rite Step to More Light" for that door to open. I sincerely believe you'll enjoy every minute of the Royal Arch and its teachings. Please note that I have written this expressly for our Craft Lodge Brethren who have not advanced themselves to become Royal Arch Masons. This article is not only applicable to the young members, but also applies to all others who have not taken the next step.

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The information contained herein is to be given the widest possible dissemination for a better understanding of the York Rite. The Grand Chapter has pamphlets available that go more into detail about Royal Arch Masonry. The Grand Chapter website has an excellent video that can be used as a recruiting tool and is hosted by ME Don McAndrews, PGHP 2015. <https://virginiaroyalarch.org/>.

## **Grand King Announces Grand Master of First Veil Nominee in Petersburg**

Grand King Raymond Steele visited Petersburg Union No. 7 on Thursday, August 22, where he announced Right Excellent Thomas L. Varner Jr. as his proposed nominee for the Grand Master of the First Veil, if he is elected Grand High Priest at the 2019 Annual Convocation. Thirty-one Companions were present and enjoyed the “All-American Meal” prior to the meeting. Companion Varner has been Grand Provost for three years, is a Past High Priest of Uroy Harris No. 83, and is the current High Priest of Petersburg Union No. 7.



**The Grand High Priest, Grand King, and Companions at Petersburg Union No. 7**

## **Other Royal Arch News**

At the September Stated of Keystone No. 58, Most Excellent Russ Snodgrass (pictured below) presented a program on the due guards and signs used in Royal Arch Masonry. He demonstrated the correct manner of execution and explained their origins and meanings. It was a most informative program and enjoyed by all.

The Multi-Jurisdictional Festival (pictured below) held at Fredericksburg Chapter No. 23 on September 28 had nearly 125 attendees and over 40 candidates. The states of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia were well-represented.

On September 10, Companion Louis Hamrick (pictured below), a member of Shenandoah No. 17, opened his barber shop for the last time. He retired after 58 years of cutting hair, and is now

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able to sit down on weekdays and do whatever he wants.



**ME Snodgrass**



**Multi-Jurisdictional Festival**



**Companion Hamrick with customer**



**Three candidates exalted at Petersburg Union No. 7**



**Eight candidates exalted at Keystone No. 58**



**MacWelch and Trude**

For the past few years, Warren No. 5 has been a strong proponent of the Fauquier County Sheriff's

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Office work on Project Lifesaver. The Sheriff's Office lead for this project is Lt. Rick MacWelch. To support this effort, Warren No. 5 donated \$600 to Project Lifesaver to purchase two wearable locating Lifesaver Bracelets. The bracelets emit a unique frequency for each individual and can be tracked from three miles away. The Sheriff's Office, once they are informed of a missing or lost special needs person can locate that person within several minutes and returned back home. The above picture captures the Community Capstone presentation with the High Priest of Warren Chapter No. 5, Excellent Charles Trude, and Lt. Rick MacWelch.

Project Lifesaver is a 501(C)(3) community-based, non-profit organization that provides law enforcement, fire/rescue, and caregivers with a program designed to protect, and when necessary, quickly locate individuals with cognitive disorders who are prone to the life-threatening behavior of wandering. The organization was founded in 1999 in Chesapeake. The necessity of this program was determined through the correlation between cognitive conditions and the act of wandering. With the dramatic increase of cognitive conditions since the inception of the organization, the program has grown from a localized program to one recognized internationally as a proven and effective method of "bringing loved one's home." This program complements the Grand Chapter's Alzheimer's Campaign. For more information go to [ProjectLifesaver.org](http://ProjectLifesaver.org).

## Most Excellent Jeffrey Burcham Passes Away

The Royal Arch world was stunned to learn of Most Excellent Burcham's passing on November 5. Companion Burcham was a Past Grand High Priest and Past Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Virginia, and also a Senior DeMolay. He was a giant in Masonry, and his many contributions, awards, and recognitions are too voluminous to list here. His Memorial Service on November 12 was attended by over 150 brethren and friends, including the Grand High Priest and many Grand Officers. Always a voice of good cheer and friendship, he will be missed greatly.

## Grand Chapter Resolutions to be Presented

### **Resolution #1**

Whereas, given that the expenses of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia have continued to increase, due to the increase in supplier costs, since the last Capitation Tax Increase was approved for the fiscal year beginning on October 1, 2013; and,

Whereas, given that the membership of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia has declined by 23.5% from September 30, 2013 through September 30, 2018 and continues to decline; and,

Whereas, given that the combination of inflation and membership decline will cause the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia to begin to draw funds from the reserve accounts held by the Grand Trustees, the first such withdrawal to begin in the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020, and, without your approval of an increase, into the future as well, and,

Whereas, in order to meet the obligations necessary to sustain the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia into the future, and, most importantly, to provide the continued level of service that the Subordinate Chapters and Companions deserve;

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NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that effective October 1, 2020:

**Section 116. Returns and Dues.** Every Chartered Chapter shall, with its annual returns, make payment to the Grand Chapter such sum as shall be determined by Grand Chapter for each member reported (including Honorary Members) of such Chapter, and for any members not accounted for on its latest returns, together with such sum for each exaltation during the Chapter year as shall be determined by Grand Chapter, provided, however, that no Grand Chapter dues shall be paid on any member of a Chapter who holds perpetual membership in such Chapter, or on any member of a Chapter who shall have an aggregate of fifty years in a regular Chapter chartered by this Grand Chapter, or by a Grand Chapter recognized by the Grand Chapter of Virginia, and whose membership for the five years last past shall have been in a Virginia Chapter, and whose name shall be certified annually by the Grand Secretary as having such membership. (Adopted 10/24/87)

Be amended to read:

**Section 116. Returns and Dues.** Every Chartered Chapter shall, with its annual returns, make payment to the Grand Chapter **the sum of thirty six (36) dollars** for each member reported (including Honorary Members) of such Chapter, and for any members not accounted for on its latest returns, together with such sum for each exaltation during the Chapter year as shall be determined by Grand Chapter, provided, however, that no Grand Chapter dues shall be paid on any member of a Chapter who holds perpetual membership in such Chapter, or on any member of a Chapter who shall have an aggregate of fifty years in a regular Chapter chartered by this Grand Chapter, or by a Grand Chapter recognized by the Grand Chapter of Virginia, and whose membership for the five years last past shall have been in a Virginia Chapter, and whose name shall be certified annually by the Grand Secretary as having such membership.

Submitted by: Gordon H. Sprigg, Jr., PHP Richmond Washington No. 3-9; James M. Scarce, Jr., PHP Murray No. 22; Clyde M. Perry, PHP Princess Anne No. 1607; Nelson C. Trinkle, Sr., PHP Richmond Washington No. 3-9; Wayne H. Anderson, PHP Mt. Horeb No. 11.

## **Resolution #2 Proposition for change in Grand Chapter ritual**

Whereas Section 94 of the Digest of the Laws, Rules, and Regulations of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia states: Every Chapter shall practice the ritual as taught by the Committee on Work and the Grand Lecturer, and approved by the Grand Chapter, and

Whereas, the current ritual teaches the following: At the conclusion of the opening ritual, as soon as the High Priest declares the Royal Arch Chapter opened in solemn form, the Companions proceed to their seats and **must** sit down, thus ending the opening ceremony. Then, the Chapter conducts the standalone Pledge ceremony, where the High Priest gives three raps, the Companions rise, and then at the direction of the High Priest, the Companions recite the Pledge of Allegiance, at the conclusion of which the High Priest gives one rap and all sit down,

Be it resolved that the ritual be amended as follows and that the following be taught instead: After the High Priest declares the Royal Arch Chapter opened in solemn form, the Companions return to their seats and **may** sit down as they wish, thus ending the opening ceremony. The standalone Pledge ceremony then is performed as is done currently.

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Reason for Resolution: This resolution **makes sitting down optional** after the Chapter is declared opened in solemn form. In many Chapters, many of the Companions now remain standing at their seats at the end of the opening ceremony in preparation for the Pledge. They are increasingly unwilling to sit down only to be called to their feet a few seconds later. In addition, Grand Lodge introduced a Pledge of Allegiance resolution in 2015 that requires the Blue Lodge brethren, after the Lodge is opened, to remain standing for the subsequent Pledge of Allegiance ceremony. This appears to have also altered the Royal Arch Companions' current actions in relation to the Pledge. The High Priest will still give three raps before the Pledge to call up the Companions and one rap after the Pledge to seat them.

Respectfully submitted by: Right Excellent Thomas Lee Varner Jr., Past High Priest of Uroy Harris No. 83 and High Priest of Petersburg Union No. 7.

## Upcoming Calendar

November 21-24, Grand Convocation, Hilton Double Tree, Williamsburg

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

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

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

## Award Winning York Rite Colleges in Virginia

As Grand Governor for the York Rite Colleges of Virginia I want to take a moment to share with our Masonic families how proud I am of the YRC's in Virginia. Our annual assembly was held in Salt Lake City, Utah, this year. We enjoyed the luxury accommodations of the Sheraton downtown one block from the Mormon Tabernacle. I had to rise on several occasions to receive the awards our Colleges had won.

Again this year, Hampton Roads No. 95 received the international award of excellence in YRC, the **Spencer** award. Each college submits an activity report which earns a score and the highest score gets the **Spencer** award. Colleges from the Philippines, Canada, and USA are reviewed for this. In addition to this prestigious award, Hampton Roads No. 95 also received the Saunders award which is a similar award for the best activity report from a college in the state. Honor College status was awarded to four of Virginia's five colleges, which honors their work in the community. Virginia also had five Order of the Purple Cross recipients (pictured below), and six OPC recipients for next year were approved; this is 120% of our colleges receiving OPC's.

Wilderness Road No. 94 recently did the Order of the Knight of York on five candidates and Valley of Virginia No. 161 did the same for one candidate. All of these candidates expressed how they were very impressed with their degree work. There have been many, many comments on the perfection, quality and inspiration of these degrees. Virginia Colleges keep improving with their ritual and their ability to assist Masonic bodies with their degree work and community involvement. Although it would be tough to top this year, I can't wait to get to Kansas City next year. It would be great to win the **Spencer** award three years in a row! So proud of Virginia!

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Good Work, Square Work, Just Such Work as is Needed for the Temple. Joe G. Broce, Grand Governor.



**James Nunn, Joseph Murray, Romi Capuno**



**James Dean, Patrick Murphrey**

## **Where am I? The Grand High Priest's Contest**

The Grand High Priest started a new contest in June. From his travels, he has taken many pictures, and is hoping you can identify where he was at the time. Please send your answers to Grand Provost Thomas Varner at [tvarner536@aol.com](mailto:tvarner536@aol.com). One Companion will be selected from the successful entries to receive a special prize from our Grand High Priest, and you must get all three to win. Here are the three pictures:

