



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

The Keystone

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Want your articles or pictures here? Or have a question for Zerubbabel? Send them to tvarner536@aol.com.



Greetings my Companions!

It is great to be back in touch with you. As we enter into this new normal, we can't help but to feel refreshed, apprehensive, and unsure about the direction our lives are going to take. However, these feelings often occur with any new change. As humans, we can be resistant to change. Change can be unsure, incomplete, and often just hard to accept. We will handle this; we will survive this; and we will come out of this pandemic better prepared for the future.

I recall from March that we were rolling along smoothly with my official and out-of-state visits when I received the first indication that my hectic schedule was about to change. We truly enjoyed my homecoming, first official visit to my home district, visits to District 1, 17, 18, and 10, New York, South Carolina, and Delaware. We were traveling from Delaware to North Carolina when we were diverted back home. Your Grand Scribe, Right Excellent Pennypacker and I did get to attend the virtual grand convocation of New Hampshire.

After hearing the plans from our Governor, the CDC, and the Grand Master to curtail life as we were experiencing it, the Grand Provost and I immediately put our heads together to develop a plan to fill in the downtime, and at the same time provide you some way of staying in touch with one another; thus the Zoom education seminars. Kudos to Right Excellent Tom Varner for all of his hard work in developing and presenting our zoom meetings such as the Correspondence Course, Royal Arch Geography, History and Teachings of the Ritual, Grand Chapter History, Royal Arch Music, and the Officer Leadership Program.

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As we self-quarantined we took the time to complete household projects that had been put on hold and had to give up the excuse of “I don’t have the time right now. I have to go to a meeting.” We discovered new ways to connect with our families and friends. We probably watched too much television and maybe gained a bit of weight. As the days became weeks and the weeks months, my calendar cancellations became more frequent. I did not enjoy missing so many scheduled events for us, our youth, and other Masonic bodies. I was also saddened that we had to cancel the wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington on June 23, and our Scotland trip scheduled for September 18-28. However, on a brighter note, I did get to host and live-stream our town’s annual Veterans Day ceremony via Facebook.

Fast forward to the middle of June and we were starting to see a glimmer of light at the end of a very dark tunnel and were starting to develop a plan on how to rejoin each other. The new word of the day was “social-distancing” and this word will become a part of our new normal as well. On June 27, I attended the virtual Grand Commandery of Virginia and witnessed many new firsts! By the time you see this article in the Keystone, I will have restarted my schedule and been able to continue my visits throughout the state, which I thoroughly enjoy.

Companions, I decided after many prayers, phone calls and the assistance of Most Excellent Marty Hutto to continue this year in the Grand East as previously planned. Most Excellent Marty has assisted me on many issues so far this year and I would be

remiss if I didn’t publicly acknowledge the effort and time he has invested in the craft; thank you Most Excellent Marty.

Another shout-out goes to our Grand Almoner, Right Excellent Jason “Jake” Trenary, who continues to work diligently to promote the Grand Chapter’s chosen philanthropy, Alzheimer’s Research. If you haven’t visited our Grand Chapter’s website, please do so. All current participating District Alzheimer’s walks scheduled are online for your edification. Also, I want to thank Right Excellent Michael Huff for his continued support and willingness to carry out any request. Finally, to my administrative assistant, Dennis Haas, well-done good and faithful Brother.

I have much to do in order to complete the goals and objectives I set for myself. It will take your support, good planning, and willingness to help me be successful. Please remember that “there are no failures, just incomplete successes”, but also first and foremost that “your safety and well-being are paramount”. Do not feel pressured to come out and attend any social gathering or meeting if you do not want to. The choice is yours, and although I will miss seeing your face, I will totally understand your absence.

I want to close this article with some more important information concerning the purpose and symbolism within the design of the Jeffrey Glen Burcham memorial jewel:

Purpose: The Jeffrey Glen Burcham Jewel was commissioned by Most Excellent Raymond D. Steele in 2020 as a memorial remembrance of Most Excellent Jeffrey Glen Burcham who died on November 5, 2019. Most Excellent Burcham was the catalyst for

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the Grand Chapter's relationship with the Alzheimer's Association, having selected it



as the Grand Chapter's philanthropy of choice during his year in the Grand East in 2001. The jewel was co-designed by Right Excellent Jason Curtis Trenary, Grand Almoner of Virginia, and Most Illustrious John Bridegroom, Past Grand Master of Cryptic Masons

in Indiana. To obtain the jewel, Companions must personally dedicate a \$500 donation specifically for the purpose of the jewel, to Alzheimer's Disease Research. The humble goal in mind is twofold, to continue Most Excellent Burcham's legacy of supporting the Alzheimer's Association and to remember the memory and legacy of our beloved Companion. This Jewel can be worn on all clothing except the Knight Templar Uniform. It's unique and detailed and a true memento in memory of our late Brother. For information on purchasing the Jewel, contact Excellent Companion J.D. Davis at 17091 Timberville Drive, Timberville, VA 22853.

Design Symbolism (per Jake Trenary):

- The White Ribbon - Signifying purity of heart and rectitude of conduct
- JGB – The initials of our departed Companion
- The Three Stars – Representing the three Grand Offices in the York Rite bodies that he held in his lifetime: Most Excellent Grand High Priest, Most Illustrious Grand Master, and Right Eminent Grand Commander.

- Blue, Purple, Red, and White on the Ribbon Pin – Signifying his commitment to the York Rite Bodies of Freemasonry: The Blue Lodge, Chapter, Cryptic Council, and Commandery.

- The Square on the Medal Face – Symbolizing productive leadership and virtue toward all mankind.

- The pillars of Jachin and Boaz – A double symbolism to his initials (“JB”), as they were featured in some fashion on all of his personal Masonic pins in his lifetime. They also represent strength, establishment, and the universality of Freemasonry.

- The Gold Heart – Our continued love and memory for departed brother recognized in charity and philanthropy toward others.

- The Herald Angel with the Trumpet – A valued life that was called home by God to ascend to heaven too soon before his work was complete here on Earth.

- The Triple Tau – The Royal Arch Symbol for the Christian Holy Trinity: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- The Two Deltas – The intimate connection between the Christian Holy Trinity, the Masonic concepts of wisdom, strength and beauty, and the Christian phases of a worthy man's life including life, death, and resurrection.

- The Field of Blue – The concepts of serenity, stability, inspiration, reliability, and calm. The qualities that he perpetuated as a leader in our great Fraternity.

Stay Safe!

Fraternally

Raymond D. Steele, Grand High Priest

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The Grand Almoner's Message

Companions All:



Our 2019-2020 Philanthropy effort stands at \$10,629 at the time of this writing. Momentum is steadily increasing, and we will hopefully get back in stride with our goals with the return of our Grand

High Priest's Official Visits next week. We are just over the halfway point of the Capitular year, and the last four months have been both extraordinary and challenging times. As good men and Freemasons, we must persevere in our activity and service as we always have throughout history. I must remind each of you that one of our most excellent tenets remains charity toward all mankind, and you may still be the difference in someone's life through your community service and monetary donations, directly or indirectly. The Covid-19 virus outbreak has only made it more difficult for those suffering Alzheimer's Disease to seek and find assistance, treatment, and support. We must continue to do our part to help those who are less fortunate than us.

The Year 2020 by the Numbers

The Alzheimer's Association recently released new Alzheimer's Disease figures for 2020 and these numbers are staggering.

1. Between 2000 and 2018, deaths attributed to Alzheimer's Disease have increased 146%.
2. More than 5,000,000 Americans are now living with Alzheimer's Disease today.
3. More than 16,000,000 Americans

provide unpaid care for those living with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia.

4. In 2020, Alzheimer's Disease and other forms of dementia will cost our country \$305,000,000,000 (305 Billion Dollars). By 2050, that number is expected to rise to \$1,100,000,000,000 (1.1 Trillion Dollars).

5. Alzheimer's Disease now kills more Americans annually than breast cancer and prostate cancer combined.

The Mission Continues

The mission of the Alzheimer's Association remains to lead the way toward ending Alzheimer's Disease and all other dementia by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. As Royal Arch Masons in the Commonwealth of Virginia, we are a proud partner in assisting in this just cause.

Updates on Public Policy

In March 2020, the Alzheimer's Association's AIM (Alzheimer's Impact Movement) public policy advocate program successfully lobbied Congress to pass the Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020, which reauthorized the Older Americans Act (OAA) and includes new key provisions of the Younger-Onset Alzheimer's Disease Act. In short, this program ensures that Americans living with dementia will be guaranteed access to affordable brain health services regardless of age. The legislation allows individuals who are under the age of 60 that are diagnosed with younger-onset Alzheimer's or dementia to access the OAA's support programs. These services include organizing and delivering nutrition programs, in-home care services, transportation to and from medical facilities,

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legal services, abuse prevention, and caregiver support.

The AIM program also successfully secured historic Federal funding for Alzheimer's research at the National Institutes of Health including a \$425 million dollar increase in 2019. Annual NIH research funding dedicated to Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia is now at roughly \$2.8 billion annually.

Care and Support

The following links are excellent sources for information regarding Alzheimer's Disease and the Alzheimer's Association.

- Alzheimer's Association – www.alz.org
- Virtual Support Groups and Education Programs – www.alz.org/findus
- 24/7 Alzheimer's Helpline – (800) 272-3900
- Caregiver Support – www.alz.org/care
- Advice for Caregivers during Covid-19 – www.alz.org/covid19

If you have any questions on the topics reviewed above or if you need information regarding your local campaign with the Walk to End Alzheimer's, please call me at (703) 928-8939 or by email at jake.trenary@ferguson.com. I am here to assist you in any way possible. Please consider making a research or Walk donation today. Every dollar matters in this fight. Together we make a true difference for those living with this disease.

Holiness to the Lord,
Jason Curtis "Jake" Trenary, Grand Almoner

"A Real Cool Guy" by Ex. Ed Tooma

When I first moved to Shenandoah County, I began attending Blue Lodge, and I remember seeing pictures of Jeffrey Burcham everywhere. Then I joined the Royal Arch and saw more pictures of this Brother. Out of curiosity, I started asking "Exactly who is Jeffrey Burcham?" Well, I got all kinds of answers.

I was told that he held just about every title the Institution of Masonry could bestow, and he was a member of this and a member of that - he belonged to everything, and he could memorize the ritual as quick as you or I could turn a page.

I finally met this famous Brother one evening at Unity Lodge in Front Royal. The members were lining up, literally to shake his hand and greet him. I had no idea how to address him. When it was my turn to shake his hand, I kindly said "Good evening Mr. Burcham." He took a long look at me - smiled and said, just call me Jeff. He never forgot my name.

Brother Jeff passed away last year at the age of 60. I truly miss him as do many others and will always remember him as a "Real Cool Guy." At our last Grand Convocation, Grand High Priest, Most Excellent Companion Raymond Douglas Steele in memory of Past Grand High Priest, Jeffrey Burcham said, that Most Excellent Jeffrey was a true leader. 'A Man among Men' and an inspiration to all of us worthy enough to call him companion.

I am honored to continue my support of the memory of Companion Burcham and pleased to introduce the 'JGB Memorial Jewel' as a chief component of my fundraising efforts this year for the Alzheimer's Research Association.

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Grand High Priest Decision on Reopening Royal Arch Chapters in Virginia

On June 5, Virginia entered the second phase of the “Virginia Forward” reopening plan (Executive Order 65). Accordingly, effective July 1, (subject to adjustment), Chapters holden under the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia may resume their regularly scheduled stated convocations in compliance with section 97 of the Digest of the Laws, Rules and Regulations. Until September 1, 2020 (subject to extension if necessary), the High Priest has the prerogative not to hold a stated convocation if he believes such action is in the best interest of preserving the health and safety of the members of the Chapter or if the Chapter is unable to abide by the protocols set forth herein. Should the High Priest choose to exercise this option, he must promptly communicate his decision to his District Deputy Grand High Priest who will, in turn, notify the Administrative Assistant to the Grand High Priest and the Grand Secretary. No dispensation is required. Until further notice, no called or stated convocations for the purpose of conferring any of the Degrees as conferred in the Chapter shall be held in any Chapter holden under this Grand Chapter. A plan regarding the conferral of the Degrees will be forthcoming. More information, including the Grand Lecturer's adjustments to the ritual of opening, closing, and balloting, can be found in his June 15 letter on Reopening Royal Arch Chapters in Virginia.

Mark Chapman Completes Royal Arch Degree Painting Series

Right Excellent Mark Chapman has now completed the last of his extraordinary Royal Arch Degree paintings, with the final one depicting the Royal Arch Degree. Organized by Excellent Robert Simpson, the artwork project covered the six Royal Arch degrees. All the paintings are now hanging in the York Rite Room in the Charlottesville Masonic Temple. Now that they are completed, prints will be sold to raise funds for the MAHOVA Memory Care Unit. To this end, Right Excellent Chapman is developing a marketing strategy for the fall of 2020.



Royal Arch Degree Painting



Grand High Priest congratulates the Grand Master

Grand Master, Grand High Priest, and Grand Commander attend DeMolay Ceremony

As shown above, Grand High Priest Raymond D. Steele was present in Petersburg on Sunday, July 19, when both Grand Master of Masons Douglas Vernon Jones and Grand Commander John Jeffrey McClelland received DeMolay’s highest distinction, the Legion of Honor. Having all

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three leaders of the Virginia Grand Bodies together at a regular DeMolay event is a very rare and special occurrence, as is the presence of Mid-Atlantic Department Commander William F. Reinhold. Both Most Excellent Steele and Right Excellent Reinhold are Senior DeMolays and Legionnaires. Grand Master Jones was exalted a Royal Arch Companion in June 2019. In a related activity, Petersburg DeMolay has been raising money and selling autism pins for the Grand High Priest's autism project announced last December. They will be presenting him a large check on August 1 when he visits District 4.

Royal Arch Seminar Series Completed

About 40 Companions attended the seminar on June 4, at 7 pm, when Right Excellent Jeff Hedges and Most Excellent Don McAndrews presented short vignettes on Royal Arch music. The excellent vignettes are also posted on the Grand Royal Arch website. Our final seminar was held on June 18, where about 40 Companions watched the Grand Provost review how to achieve the Claiborne Wilson Award, presented the latest update of the Program for Progress, and did some leadership training for Chapter Officers. These seminars were so successful that the Grand Officers are exploring ways to institute Chapter leadership training and other topics for next year.

Upcoming Calendar

Due to the Governor's additional restrictions announced recently, our Grand Official Visits will be virtual meetings during the rest of the year. Stay tuned for details.

September 12, Alzheimer Walk, Chesapeake, 830 am

September 19, Alzheimer Walk, Blacksburg, 8 am

September 26, Alzheimer Walk for Norton area, Kingsport TN, 8 am

Let Your Work Become Your Mark

Do you own the greatest book ever written about the Mark Master Degree? When Most Excellent Stewart Miner was Grand High Priest in 1986, his theme was "Let Your Work Become Your Mark", and he spent the year teaching the lessons of the Mark Master Degree. Near the end of his term, he condensed them into a book that was sold for \$5 each. The money was used to purchase the first Grand Chapter office computer. Now, over thirty years later, it is still available at the same price for a new generation of Royal Arch Masons to enjoy. It is an excellent source of information and the short talks are very suitable for Chapter meeting programs. The Grand Provost is selling the book at all Official Visits, with the proceeds going to the Alzheimer's Memory Unit at the Masonic Home. If you would like a book, send a check payable to "Grand Royal Arch Chapter" to the Grand Provost, 14302 Boydton Plank Road, Dinwiddie, VA 23841.

Veteran Update

Congratulations to these Royal Arch veterans: Charles D. Andrews, Luray No. 4, 50 years; and Robert J. Dinehart, Mt. Horeb No. 11, 50 years.

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THE GRAND CHAPTER ROYAL ARCH MASONS IN VIRGINIA LEADERSHIP CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

The Committee on Education presents this Course for all Royal Arch Masons within the Grand Jurisdiction of Virginia.

This Course has been developed to assist Virginia Royal Arch Masons, including Chapter Officers, in refining their knowledge of laws governing the activities of Capitular Masonry in Virginia.

The Course is divided into three (3) lessons. You may forward each lesson when completed for grading or submit the entire set when completed.

A small fee is required to participate in this program to cover the cost of materials, printing and mailing. Please enclose \$10.00 with this application. The test can be taken online or make copies for mailing in. You have one (1) year to complete the program.

A Certificate indicating completion will be presented to you after the lessons have been received and graded.

MAIL PAYMENT TO:

Grand Secretary, Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia
P.O. Box 2276
Portsmouth, Virginia 23702-2276

(Make checks payable to Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia)

MAIL LESSONS TO:

Grand Provost Thomas L. Varner, Jr.
14302 Boydton Plank Road
Dinwiddie, VA 23841

COMPANION: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE & Zip Code _____

Chapter Name & No: _____

POSITION: _____ OFFICER: YES NO