



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

The Keystone

Oct 2020 Vol 4 No. 5



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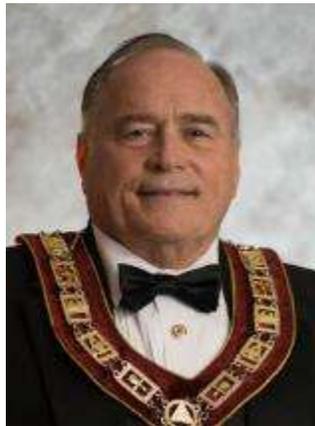
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Want your articles or pictures here? Or have a question for Zerubbabel? Send them to tvarner536@aol.com.



Companions:

As I sit down in front of my computer to write this article for the Keystone, I cannot help but reflect on the past several months. We have experienced a hot and humid summer, a continuing pandemic, and Masonic isolation. I am sure that you, like me, will be more than happy to get back to those in-person meetings. A silver lining to this crisis has forced us to better embrace technology, and utilize either "Google, WebEx, or Zoom meetings. In fact, it has caused us to consider the effectiveness of hybrid convocations for our monthly meetings. More on this idea later as it continues to be developed.

As of September 1st, chapters have begun dusting off their modified ritual, and returning to their meeting rooms, which have been sanitized according to the established protocol from our Grand Master of Masons in Virginia. I have been blessed to start our travels again and have attended several annual chapter convocations.

Meanwhile, I hosted the few remaining virtual district official visits which were concluded by the end of September. I truly appreciate the work my DDGHPS have applied in communicating with their companions, and all those who were able to connect to the zoom meetings.

During this crisis our goal to raise money for our charities has continued. We are entering that time of year for our Alzheimer's Walks, and our Grand Almoner has done a tremendous job supporting our district almoners in their walk plans. Please reach out and support these hard-working companions in their effort to support the Alzheimer's foundation. With the assistance of my DDGHPs, Lady Barbara's Dash for Cash raffle is

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progressing. Remember tickets are still available and she is giving away \$1,000 at our Virtual Grand Convocation on November 21. The Jeffrey Glen Burcham Memorial Medal fund raiser is also progressing. To date, fourteen of you have donated to this great cause and I will release the final money figures in November.

Right Excellent Jeff Hedges and Most Excellent Don McAndrews have recorded the musical vignettes for October, November, and December, and these will be posted to the Grand Chapter's website soon. Please take a few minutes and visit the site. I want to commend these two talented individuals for adding "Music for Masons" to our educational selections.

Companions, in closing I wish to leave you with this poem by an unknown author, called "Don't Quit":

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest, if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about,
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up through the pace seems slow-
You may succeed with another blow.

Often the goal is nearer than,
It seems to a faint and faltering man,
Often the struggler has given up,
When he might have captured the victor's cup,
And he learned too late when the night slipped down,
How close he was to the golden crown.

Success is failure turned inside out- The

silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far,
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit -
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.

Sincerely and fraternally

Raymond D. Steele, Grand High Priest

The Grand Almoner's Message



Companions All:

The college football season is finally here, and it is a reminder of what any successful football coach will tell you. The 4th quarter wins ballgames! Our current Philanthropy

Campaign now stands at \$19,123 at the time of writing this. We got off to a fast; whirlwind start, only to get bogged down with conditions that were out of our hands, but trust me Companions that things are truly looking up! There are so many things to be proud of! Three very important 2020 highlights to share are:

Virginia Royal Arch Masons have founded 12 different teams representing 9 different Districts across our Commonwealth in support of the Walk to End Alzheimer's program for 2020. This is the largest amount of participation we have enjoyed since our relationship began with the Alzheimer's Association all the way back in 2001. Thank you for your grit and tenacity in the face of an ugly pandemic. The results of these efforts will not be reported until later in the month of October. They will no doubt make a significant difference in your local

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communities and in our overall fundraising totals.

Fourteen Companions have personally chosen to donate to Alzheimer’s Research this year as a remembrance of our departed Most Excellent High Priest, Jeffrey Glen Burcham, through the Burcham Memorial Medal program. This relatively small number of Companions currently represent 36.5% or \$7,000 of our overall research donations thus far this year. The one word that comes to mind is “wow”. I know the Burcham family appreciates your gesture in keeping Jeff’s legacy alive. People who are suffering from Alzheimer’s and their caregivers need this assistance. The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed Alzheimer’s Disease to the back burner in many clinical and research settings. Our funding in research matters and will make a considerable impact.

Lady Barbara Steele’s “Dash For Cash” raffle has currently raised \$1,146 for Alzheimer’s Research with 100% of the money raised going directly to the Alzheimer’s Association. Thank you for your love and support Lady Barbara!

The Order of Saratoga Degree will not be conferred this year as our Grand Chapter session will be virtual on November 21. The Saratoga Degree is our annual vehicle for raising money for our philanthropy, Project Lifesaver. Project Lifesaver is a 501(c)3 community-based, public safety, 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, Virginia. 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 a program recognized internationally as a proven and effective method of “bringing loved ones home.” Please consider making a personal or Chapter donation in support of Project Lifesaver. For your convenience, you may mail any donation to me directly and I will see that it reaches this targeted destination. My address: Trenary – 814 Payne Rd. Winchester, VA 22603. Please do not forget to memo your check with your Chapter No. and District No.

Lastly, in just a few short months, the Grand Almoner’s trophy will be awarded to the District who raises the most money this year for our Royal Arch philanthropies. If you have donated in the past few months, please make sure that you communicate that donation to me so that it can be properly credited to your District. The current standings are as follows, broken down by our designated charities:

Walk to End Alzheimer's:	\$ 120
Alzheimer's Assn Research:	\$17,012
MAHOVA Memory Unit:	\$ 1,200
Autism:	\$ 791
TOTAL:	\$19,123

Breakdown by District so far:

District No. 15	\$7,067
District No. 17	\$4,658
District No. 18	\$2,467
District No. 10	\$1,553
District No. 19	\$1,000

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District No. 1	\$ 739
District No. 20	\$500
District No. 2	\$400
District No. 14	\$250
District No. 4	\$200
District No. 3	\$100
District No. 21	\$ 90
District No. 12	\$ 25
<u>Grand Chapter</u>	<u>\$ 74</u>
TOTAL:	\$19,123

Thank you again for working hard in the quarries to support our Virginia Royal Arch charities. Make sure you connect with me if you need help or support in any aspect of your philanthropy endeavors. I am here to help wherever needed. I look forward to our Grand Annual Convocation on the horizon and hope to see you all there, even if it is through a computer screen.

“When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it.” – Brother Henry Ford

Holiness to the Lord,
Jason Curtis “Jake” Trenary, Grand Almoner



Signs, by Excellent Ed Tooma

With all of these different signs - no wonder people tend to become confused. I mean to tell you they have signs for everything. Even Masonic Lodges and appendant bodies have their share of signs and the more light you receive, the more

signs go along with it. The only way I can keep up with all of the signs is to practice them. I make it a point once a week to go over every single sign that I am required to know. By doing this - when it comes time for the signs, brethren, I'm ready.

Now that I have mastered the signs, I still practice them. Try standing in front of a mirror and execute each and every sign and repeat the name of each as you go through the motions. Do the signs slowly so that each and every movement is precise. I fully realize that all of this can be confusing at times. But, whatever you do, do not let it get you down. Just keep on keeping on.

I'm going to let you in on a little secret. We all tend to become confused. That, my brethren, is normal. I have found that being confused actually makes me concentrate even more. Just keep in mind what you are doing, and do not try being a speedy Gonzalez. It just won't work. And don't watch the other person while signing, otherwise you'll really become confused. Like everything else - practice makes perfect. It's like reciting ritual. The more you go over it - the better it sounds.

A good practice on occasion would be to walk everyone through the required signs by the numbers. In doing so, you will have a better understanding of why and how we do things. After the class of instruction - ask a member to repeat what has been covered. Critique accordingly. Good luck and make it a fun session.

Calendar

- October 31 Richmond Alzheimer’s Walk
- Bluefield Alzheimer’s Walk
- November 7 Roanoke Alzheimer’s Walk
- _____ Grand Lodge Annual Comm.
- November 21 Grand Annual Convocation

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Your Information In the Breach, by Right Excellent William Searcy

A Wells Fargo historian opined “For every technology created for the betterment of mankind can and will be used for evil purposes”. He went on to describe the great “Iron Horse”, the train, which improved interstate commerce, transportation, and was beneficial in moving money from coast to coast. It did not take long for robbers, however, to realize and take advantage of the fact that during transportation, valuables either carried by passengers or otherwise transported by the trains were concentrated, vulnerable, and far from law enforcement protection. In short, the technology meant for the good of mankind was used for the evil purpose of robbery. The same can be said for banks, which provide a concentration of valuables and therefore, a good location for robbery. In fact, I once arrested a bank robber in California and asked him what made him rob banks. His answer was quite simple and prescient. He said, “Because that’s where the money is.” I could only respect the simplicity of his logic.

Today, the vulnerability of trains is negated and banks have instituted significant protections against physical robbery and access. But rather than usher in a new era of honesty, the robbers have simply moved on with the technology and now, find it easier to stay at home or wherever they might be and still manage to defraud and steal valuables through technologies that have been instituted for the good of mankind. The Internet, which has gradually grown in importance and use, is now the new Wild West. So called “e-commerce” sales in 2019 were in excess of \$3.5 billion and will continue to grow into the future. This, of course, makes shopping and banking very convenient...however, this technology, created for the good of man, is the new location for fraud and abuse, and while it is convenient, it behooves each of us to approach this new technology not with a sense of fear, but with an understanding of the vulnerabilities and how to protect ourselves and our loved ones.

The phenomenon of the Internet, while convenient and, frankly, one of the prime drivers of prosperity in our country, also presents opportunity for bad people to do bad things to good people. Due to the nature of e-commerce and online transactions, we are robbed of the ability to look a person in the eye or evaluate a messenger by appearance. We sometimes will read items on our computers or listen to voices on our phones without the same suspicion that would help us to know that something is just not right. With this introductory article, I want to encourage you to do just that, approach the new communications means with your eyes open. Further, I will provide some tools and tricks that will allow you to see behind the veil so to speak and determine what is really going on with those messages.

One need only look to our own gentle Craft and messages we have received to see some of the vulnerabilities that can be exploited through online communications. This scheme is a simple “Bait and Switch” tactic and unfolded as follows. Last week, I received the message shown below from one of our Companions, which has been reproduced with his permission. Upon receipt, a few things were obvious. There was no personal greeting and, anyone who knows me refers to me as “Bill”. These were obvious clues that there was a problem that we should all be cognizant

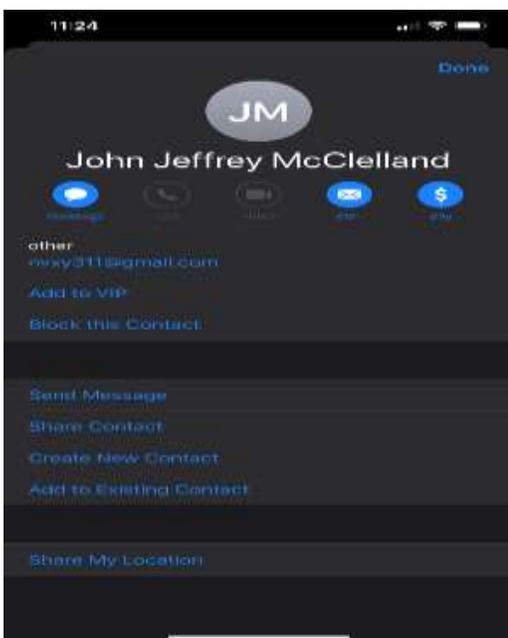
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of and required no particular technical expertise ... just plain old suspicion. That said, I immediately checked to see who the “real” sender of the message was and found the information shown below. The account nvxy311@gmail.com was impersonating the Companion and, had somehow gotten access to his mailbox to send messages. This was done by just “clicking” on the sender to reveal their contact information. Shortly afterwards, another Companion sent a message out and confirmed the same.

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In summary, the attacker, in this case, “spoofed” Jeff McClelland’s email, meaning that while the message appeared to come from Jeff, it actually came from the address shown. That means that any response would likewise not go to Jeff, but to the address hidden behind Jeff’s name. Said response would tell the attacker that you have taken the bait and are now set up for the switch. While I cannot specify the complete intention of the people

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who hijacked Companion Jeff’s email, I can say that, given their full opportunity, it most certainly would have resulted in either defrauding any who responded to the message by either gaining monetary contributions (I need money from you, send gift cards, etc.) or by gaining the person’s own email address for future exploitation and use to further the scheme by gaining access to their address book.

This is the first in a series of articles that I will add here with the intent to help educate the Companions and their spouses on the dangers of using ecommerce. These articles are not intended to discourage anyone from using the tools provided. They are extremely convenient and, frankly, in today’s environment, it is hard to imagine one being able to fully function in society without them. However, there are dangers that, if known, understood, and properly accounted for, are avoidable. The bottom line up front...if something does not seem right, it likely is not. We all have a healthy sense of skepticism in dealing with real world encounters. Have and maintain that same sense when going online, when reading email or text messages, when answering phone calls, and when going to web sites. That sense that tells you that something is wrong, that keeps you from opening the front door when a stranger rings your door bell at the wrong time of day will likewise serve you well in your online interactions as well.

At Work in the Quarry

Unity Lodge No. 146, AF&AM, held their stated meeting on Wednesday, September 2, at the Leigh-Hanson Quarry in Front Royal. Worshipful Charles Taggart invited members of the Royal Arch. Most Excellent Ray Steele was the guest speaker. Those in the below photo are the Grand Musician, Right Excellent Jeffrey Hedges, and Right Excellent Joel Ratliff Sr.



The Grand High Priest’s Travels

Besides holding District virtual communications, Grand High Priest Steele has been traveling around to various Chapters bringing good cheer and fellowship. Among them were a visit to

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Keystone No. 58, where Right Excellent Greg Hosaflook presented him with a framed portrait of the various Royal Arch degree paintings by Right Excellent Mark Chapman. Other Chapters visited were Fredericksburg No. 23, where he presented certificates, and Petersburg Union No. 7, where Right Excellent Joseph Westfall and Harless Dobbins received the Jeffrey Burcham Memorial Medal. The events are shown below.



Visiting Fredericksburg No. 23



Visiting Petersburg Union No. 7

E.H. Gill No. 50 Contributes to Scholarship Foundation



On Saturday, September 12, E.H. Gill Chapter No. 50 presented a donation to the Kirk Edward Nairn Memorial Scholarship Foundation. Kirk was killed in a car crash in May of 2019, less than 24 hours before he was to graduate from high school. In the Foundation's first year of existence, it awarded a total of \$45,000 to 10 Abingdon HS graduates. Pictured in the photo on the left are Excellent Joseph M. Matthews, High Priest of E.H. Gill No. 50, and Ann Nairn.

Correspondence Course and Veteran's Award Update

Congratulations to the following Companions: Billy Joe Hale of Marion No. 54 and Huey Allen of Fredericksburg No. 23, who recently successfully completed the Correspondence Course, and to these 50-year Royal Arch members: David H. Dew, Alleghany No. 24; Robert W. Gray III, Waynesboro Union No. 2; and James R. Hamilton Sr.; Fairfax No. 13.