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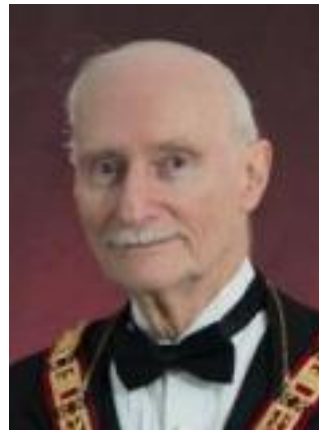
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Want your articles or pictures here? Or have a question for Zerubbabel? Send them to jim@landerkin.com.



Dear Companions:
In this issue I want to talk about membership – which for so many Chapters is a critical issue. And this is why our #1 Goal for 2021 is GROW THE CRAFT.

Some of our most dedicated members are growing old and cannot continue to drive at night to attend Chapter meetings; ultimately they pass to the celestial chapter. We need to replace these stalwart members by inviting our Blue Lodge Brethren to continue the logical next step after they have completed the Master Masons Degree – by learning the rest of the story as told in the degrees conferred in the Chapter.

In addition, we need to engage our new members who all too often spend the time to get the six Royal Arch and Council degrees and then they do not get involved in the work of the Chapter, lose interest and ultimately demit.

I think most of us will agree that this is an important goal but having a goal does not automatically lead to success. So how do we get from where we are today to where we want to be?

Grand Chapter has a role to play, but much of our success will rest at the Chapter level, and so each Chapter is well advised to establish a Membership Program to attract new members.

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The first thing I would suggest is setting an annual membership goal for the Chapter. It is hard to measure success without having a concrete goal, and simply saying: “we need members,” just doesn’t cut it. What we need to do is analyze how many Companions we lose, for example, through death, demits or suspensions for non-payment of dues. Then we need to calculate how many we gain from exaltations, affiliations, and members who pay their dues and return to the fold. I suspect in many cases the losses exceed the gains, so we need to set a membership goal that will reverse this trend.

We cannot do anything to affect the deaths, so in order to bend the curve we need to reduce demits and suspensions, get back the members we have lost, and attract new members. It also is necessary to set realistic goals, but the good news is that if we get just 2-3 more Companions each year than we ordinarily get, we can start to turn the corner.

Second, I suggest that the High Priest appoint a Chapter Ambassador to each Blue Lodge in the area served by that Chapter. While it is true that every Companion is a member of your membership committee, it is also true that you need to have someone who has that specific responsibility and is focused on membership.

The Chapter Ambassador needs to attend Lodge and should mention something about Royal Arch or what the Chapter is doing at each Lodge meeting. Remember, we get our new Companions from the Blue Lodge; if

you are not there to talk about Royal Arch, no one will. Indeed, the High Priest should encourage each Companion to regularly attend Blue Lodge, participate in the degree work, and be in a position to ask at least one Blue Lodge Brother to join the Chapter.

In this regard, Chapters may wish to reach out to the Worshipful Masters in the Blue Lodges in their area to offer to assist with the degree work and should consider organizing a Red Jacket Degree Team. With the permission of the Worshipful Master, Companions of a Chapter could confer a Blue Lodge degree in a Lodge, to include the lecture, while wearing red jackets, along with Blue Lodge aprons and jewels. The Chapter could even provide the meal and give a brief program about Royal Arch after the degree.

In addition, the High Priest should ask each Worshipful Master in the area served by that Chapter for permission to put on a Royal Arch program at a stated communication. The program presented at Lodge might include showing the membership video produced by Mt. Ex. Don McAndrews, which is available on our Grand Chapter website, and then distributing our recruitment brochure. Another Lodge program with some dramatic effect that should encourage petitions is the Fervency and Zeal program adapted from one used by the Grand Chapter of New York. It is put on with seven companions: three in tuxedo, one dressed as a Fellowcraft, one as King Solomon, one as Hiram Abif, and one as High Priest. Without taking too long to

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perform, it explains to a Blue Lodge Mason how the Royal Arch builds on the foundation of the Blue Lodge degrees and has a brief section on each of the six degrees we confer.

We also recommend that the Chapters in each District get together to hold a Royal Arch Table Chapter and invite the Blue Lodge Masons in the surrounding Lodges to attend. This can help to increase awareness of, and interest in, the Royal Arch, and money collected in excess of the costs of the dinner can go to our Alzheimer's charity. Indeed, inviting Blue Lodge Masons to any Chapter fundraiser is a good idea, as it both increases the money we collect and can generate interest in the Chapter.

As important as it is to attract new members, it is equally important to keep our existing members active. So in addition to a Membership Program to attract new members, the Chapter needs to have a Membership Retention Program. The High Priest should delegate to each Chapter Officer the responsibility to call Chapter members who have missed two or more meetings. We want to find out if the Companion is well and help him if he needs assistance. We also want to keep in contact so that the Companion's connection with the Chapter is not lost. With regular friendly contact and the right encouragement, even a busy Companion can be persuaded to attend at least one Chapter meeting each year, and if all our Companions attended one meeting each year, our attendance would significantly increase.

The High Priest also should delegate to one of the Chapter Officers the responsibility to keep in contact with older members who live in the area but do not drive at night, and coordinate with other Companions to provide them transportation to and from Chapter. Now that we are having a Zoom component to our in-person meetings, we also want to regularly call the out-of-state members to encourage them to sign on to our Zoom meetings.

Another important aspect of member retention is member engagement. If a member has nothing to do in the Chapter, he is likely to withdraw. It is important, therefore, for the High Priest to develop a list of jobs to give to new Companions, and then ensure that each new Companion is quickly involved in the work of the Chapter. Of course, in assigning a job or task, it is important that it be one the Companion feels comfortable doing and fits within the time he has. Even Companions with a young family and a demanding job can help if you don't give them a job that requires a significant amount of their time.

I also suggest that those Companions who cannot come to Chapter can also play an important role. They might have sufficient time to be able to regularly call a handful of Companions each month to check on them and to report back to the Chapter if there is a problem.

I have listed a number of ways to attract and retain membership, but I suspect you may have a number of additional ideas, and I

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encourage you to try both the ones I have outlined and any others you may have.

I noted earlier that Grand Chapter also has role to play, and we have formed two new Committees, the Grand Chapter Committee on Membership and the Grand Chapter Committee on Chapter Services. We realize that the current situation in some Chapters is more difficult than in others, and some of our Chapter leaders frankly may have run out of steam and need help. Thus, the purpose of both of these Committees is to provide the High Priest with an additional resource, and I encourage you to call upon these Committees for ideas and suggestions tailored to your situation that may help you to deal with the issues you are facing.

A lot of Brethren in Virginia and other Grand Jurisdictions have thought about membership issues, and we do not need to reinvent the wheel. So our new Grand Chapter Committee on Membership, headed by Ex. Companion Kerry Worsham, is beginning by identifying existing membership programs that can promote mentoring and membership growth. Ex. Worsham and his Committee are prepared to assist High Priests to develop and implement membership, mentoring, and membership retention programs that make sense for their Chapter.

The Committee also will conduct conferences and workshops and give presentations and workshops to foster membership development, mentoring, and retention. They will work closely with the

DDGHPs, District Membership Coordinators, and the District and Chapter Educational Officers, to conduct or facilitate Membership Workshops in each Capitular District. And working with the Committee on Education will develop, publish, and distribute materials on membership, mentoring, and retention. These will be available on our website and as appropriate, published in our Keystone magazine.

In addition to the Membership committee, our new Chapter Services Committee, chaired by Mt. Ex. Danny Bowman, is being set up to give focused assistance to Chapters in distress, helping them to understand and address problems and develop a program to help the Chapter overcome challenges. This Committee will work with our Grand Chapter Committee on Education to develop and promote leadership training for Chapter Officers. We want to encourage our Companions, and particularly our officers, to take the Grand Chapter Leadership Correspondence Courses, preferably in a group setting so they can discuss the questions and issues. We also want to provide customized leadership training to assist incoming High Priests to plan their year, set membership and other goals, have educational programs at each meeting, and support Grand Chapter charity efforts.

The problems facing our Chapters have developed over many years, and we cannot expect to solve them overnight. But we cannot afford to continue to ignore the problem, and simply talking about it is not enough. Instead, we are putting in place a

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process and a plan to overcome these challenges in order to make our Royal Arch Chapters stronger than ever. Your suggestions and support are earnestly sought.

Fraternally,

Ed Cohen



The Grand Provost has asked me to offer some thoughts for this issue of the Keystone. There was no mention of what was to be addressed. So, we have been given “Carte Blanche.”

That can be a dangerous thing. It is also a problematic thing for the person writing. The scope of what is being asked is so wide that choosing a topic can prove difficult.

For the last month, the Grand Line Officers have been meeting with the different chapters via Zoom. It has been wonderful. This is our chance to visit with you during a time that technology allows that to take place. It is, in many ways, outstanding.

Before offering my thoughts, I need to tell you a little about myself. That is not something normally done. But, it bears out on the topic of discussion. For over thirty years, my life has been in the classroom. For the last ten, it has also taken me to the college classroom as well. The innovations that have been introduced into the

classroom, during that time, can be a bit overwhelming.

We no longer use overhead projectors, slide projectors, film projectors and an assortment of things from when you were in school. Many classrooms do not have chalk boards anymore. Instead, we have white board, smart boards and an array of technology that can be “dizzying.” We don’t use VHS recorders, DVD players or CD players anymore.

With all of the changes, some might ask, “What do you do?” That is an easy answer. We teach. In all of my classroom years, we have sought to make those connections with our students. It is understood that the world is a changing place and, in order to make those connections, we need to make changes.

Perhaps, this might extend into the Royal Arch. Years ago, someone engrained within us that “We plan our work and we work our plan.” In order for us to grow the Royal Arch, we need to do just that. The ritual will always be with us. That is a mainstay of who we are. Opening and closing the Chapter is essential for us. It is what happens between those times that we might give some thoughtful consideration.

If we want to have more members, we need to make it appealing for the membership to take an evening away from family and other pressing needs. Simply stating that we are having a monthly meeting does not work.

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We need to let people know what they will receive when they get there. We need to make the meeting appealing. How do we do that? We invest time into the planning of the meeting.

When planning a meeting, make sure that your program is planned. Publicize it. Don't simply say that "Companion so and so is going to speak." What are they going to speak about? Imagine students walking into a classroom and the teacher launches into a lesson without telling the student what they are going to learn that day. It doesn't tend to work. If possible, have the upcoming speaker post a tidbit regarding their program. It might entice people to attend.

If there is no program, state that there is no program. You should, however, do everything possible to plan a program. There are Companions who are put on the spot to speak when there is no program. Sometimes it works. More often than not, it doesn't. As with students, our Companions know that no effort went into either. There are times when a Companion will pull out a pocket program and proceed to read it. Again, with no foresight, the listener might not hear a single word. Let the Companions know what you are talking about and why you think it might be important to them. Giving them something "cold" doesn't often go well.

When presenting a program, provide outlines of the talk or copies of the talk. The more senses that are used in the learning

process, the more information will be retained. If you are going to read a program, make sure that you "CAN" read the program. So often, the reader has not practiced what they are reading and the words get lost in the presentation. If you cannot read it well, have someone else read it for you. If you can utilize visuals, do so. It will show that you took the time to plan. And, the more senses involved, more will be retained.

There is a point of emphasis that needs to be made. If you read anything that was taken from a source, you must give due credit to where it came from. If you do not, that is plagiarism. There have been many occasions that a Companion has printed up something and read it to the Chapter for consideration. Offering your sources allows the Companions to pursue their own research and possible future learning.

Keep your program within due bounds. Reading something to folk who have been at work all day might sound good. Is it really? As Most Excellent Cohen has mentioned, give a Companion a minute or two and engage in conversation. Consider reading a part of an article. Read an article that is pertinent and timely. Unless it is absolutely necessary, have only one program. Have one focus. Imagine teaching Geometry in the midst of a Biology class. It wouldn't go very well. There is a reason we shouldn't have programs when the Grand High Priest or the DDGHP visit. We focus on one thing.

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A common statement heard when reading from a book, magazine, newsletter, or some other source is, "There's a lot of good information here." That might very well be true, but it is up to us to make the learning come alive. We can provide all of the resources needed. If we do not plan, if we do not engage the brain, then the resources are useless.

So often, at the conclusion of a program that was read to us, the presenter might receive praise for the job they did. It might be that they truly did an outstanding job. It might be that they did not. Yet, we praise them anyway. Would you praise the plumber who installed a toilet backwards? In a learning situation, the learner should come away with something. The presenter should also come away with something. There are many occasions where things have been tried in the classroom only to never be seen again because they do not work. With the proper tweaking, some lessons become great. As the learner, offer insight to the presenter. They will probably appreciate your thoughts. As you ponder on these words, perhaps your mind has been taken back to some of the best teachers that you ever had. Perhaps your mind thought about those less than stellar teachers. In either case, as we move forward to improve our craft, let the lessons that those educators impressed upon you help to guide the craft.

Peace,
RE Mark Pennypacker, Grand King



Hello Companions, I hope this finds you and yours safe and well. It is an honor and a pleasure to be serving you as Provost and chairman of the Grand Chapter and Grand Council Committee on Education and Service. ME Ed has provided his plan and we are busy executing. The following is what we are up to, and an invitation for you to reach me with your thoughts and ideas. For it is together, invested, will we strengthen our Chapters and Councils.

We are continuing the work RE Tom Varner started and conducting quarterly virtual educational presentations. On the fourth Saturday of March, June and September, from 10-11am, a guest speaker will provide a program for our enlightenment. Our first speaker is Most Excellent and Most Illustrious James Loudermilk, PGHP and PMIGM of Washington D.C. and 33° Scottish Rite Mason. He will present a program titled "Limited Time, Faithful and Selfless Service". The meeting details will be distributed shortly. Of note, we already have speakers for the rest of the year booked. ME Don McAndrews will present "The Intimate Relationship Between The Craft Lodge, Royal Arch, and The Cryptic Council" in June. In September, we will have Right Excellent Companion Chadwick Burks, General Grand Scribe of the General Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons

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International presenting a program titled, "Royal Arch Masonry: Ten Tiny Tweaks – Ten Terrific Terminations" (35-40 minutes) and following him we will also receive a short presentation from the Right Puissant Companion Bill Snyder, Deputy General Grand Master of the General Grand Council of Cryptic Masons International titled, "Shedding some light on Cryptic Masonry" (10 minutes). Please let me know if you have any suggestions for speakers as we have begun booking for 2022.

We are reviewing, updating and preparing the Correspondence Courses to be launched electronically. This will provide the opportunity for you to enjoy an experience whereby you can take the courses individually or as a group and allows you to complete them at your leisure, wherever you may choose to do so. There are a number of Companions holding virtual meetings where they are working together to complete the courses. For those taking advantage of it this virtual environment, it has proven quite fruitful and will become a much easier and user-friendly process once the courses are launched electronically.

We are working on producing Chapter and Council Officer Training. Much like Subordinated Lodge Officer Training this will provide those Companions serving the Chapter and Council in an officer role with a better understanding of what is expected, allowing them to better succeed and Chapters and Councils to thrive.

We are working to increase the listing of resource materials on the website. We have received feedback that several of the programs have been used by Companions both in and out of this Grand Jurisdiction to provide light in their Chapters and Councils. This is very encouraging news as it means the work this committee has been engaged in over the years is coming to fruition. Please do reach me with programs or links to sites that you feel would be a good resource to share.

We are working to increase the exchange of information with the District Education Officers, as well as the Chapter and Council Educations Officers to get a clearer understanding of where Chapters and Councils need some additional help with their educational programs. We are also working through them to encourage increased correspondence course completions, either though working groups or individually. Learned Companions are imperative to our success.

We look forward to hearing from you and working together. You may reach me directly at rwbacchus@gmail.com or 703-899-8590 with your thoughts or suggestions or any member of this committee.

Sincerely and fraternally yours in friendship and service,

Raymon W. Bacchus
Grand Provost

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The Grand Almoner's Message



Companions – The COVID experience is still with us. I am on a list to receive the shots, but who actually knows when that will be? In the meantime, I choose to look forward with a positive attitude. I attended a meeting of the Alzheimer's Executive Board on 10 FEB, on-line of course, and they are looking ahead with the same positive attitude. They are planning for the Alzheimer's Walks to be "in-person" this fall. The information they receive from their fellow health related organizations indicates that "we" should be returning to the real "normal" by the end of the summer. For those Chapters/Districts that do not want to wait to hold a "Walk," feel free to hold a "virtual" walk.

With that in mind, I have been working with my Chapter, Guardians, of the Widows Sons Masonic Riders Association (WSMRA) to pull together a "Poker Run" to benefit both Alzheimer's and the MAHOVA Memory Unit. I am trying to get the WSMRA of VA interested in having the chapters in each District put on their own "Run" to benefit the same organizations. Warm weather is required for these events. I will keep the Companions up to date on the progress made. The big fund raising from these events comes from the silent auction of items held at the end of the run.

Also, remember that any funds donated by a Companion, Chapter or District count towards our giving

If one responds to a solicitation made by mail, phone, email, etc. record the amount and report it to our District Almoner. If you do not have a District Almoner or know who it is, let me know. Be sure to include your name, Chapter, District and whether it was for Alzheimer's or Alzheimer's Research.

Fraternally,

Chuck Trude PM, PHP

Grand Almoner

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"Mr.Mentor"

The word "mentor" means an experienced and trusted advisor. Every Masonic Lodge and appendant body needs one or more mentors. When you think of the name itself, you automatically think of a candidate's teacher. This is not always the case. A mentor can also advise in other areas, but let's keep this article related to a candidate's progression.

Upon completion of each degree, a newly initiated Brother needs advice and help with the lessons he has just received, portions of which are a part of the catechism that require memory in order to advance.

This is where a mentor steps in to instruct our new Brother in each and every part of the degree for the purpose of thoroughly understanding its teachings. He uses a Q&A process. Once the Brother qualifies himself, his mentor will schedule him to appear in open Lodge for advancement examination.

In Shenandoah County, Virginia, we are very fortunate to have a Brother we all call Mr. Mentor. Day or night, rain or shine, anytime, he is always there to reach out to those in need. Mentorship is a strong relationship guiding the less experienced. A good mentor is willing to share his skills, knowledge and expertise. You've heard the saying: "You're In Good Hands with Allstate." We in Shenandoah County are "In Good Hands with Mr. Mentor."

I've been a Mason for many years from a different jurisdiction but after attending Virginia Lodges, and watching how Mr. Mentor conducts the Q&A examination for proficiency in the degrees of Masonry, I became interested in qualifying myself with the Virginia ritual. I don't think I have to tell you who I went to for help.

To make a long story short - I approached Mr. Mentor, informing him of my request. The rest is history. I received what I wanted, and I'm so proud of taking another step in Masonry.

Brethren, I leave you with these words. You can always rely on a mentor to be at your side. Follow his instructions as I have done, so you too can advance and gain more light.

Thank you, Mr. Mentor, Robert M. Artz for the many years you have devoted to the Craft throughout Shenandoah County. We couldn't have done it without you.

Brother Artz is a Past Master of Mt. Jackson Lodge and a Past District Deputy Grand High Priest of Capitular District 15.

RE Edward (Ed) Tooma, PHP, Shenandoah Royal Arch Chapter No. 17, Edinburgh, VA

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Hidden Treasures on the Website

Grand Master of the Second Veil Thomas L. Varner Jr.

How often do you look at our Grand Royal Arch Chapter website? Over the past eight years, it has greatly expanded its content under the leadership of Grand Webmasters David McAndrews and Emmett (Buddy) Pate.

Separated into functional categories such as Grand Chapter, Information, and Links, you can easily find anything you want to know about our Grand Chapter and Royal Arch Masonry. For example, do you want to read current or back issues of *The Keystone*? They are found in the Keystone section. If you want to take or are taking the Leadership Correspondence Course, you can find the actual tests in the Education section, some of the answers in the History of Grand Chapter section, plus the Digest of the Grand Chapter is found in the Grand Chapter section.

Speaking of the Education section, it now has 70 different meeting programs, organized into General, History, Ritual, and Symbolism categories, and new ones are constantly being added. Didn't find what you were seeking? Then, check out the Resources from Other Grand Chapters section, where there are links to four other Royal Arch Libraries containing hundreds of additional programs.

Do you need to do a membership presentation for a Blue Lodge? The Most Excellent Don McAndrews recruitment video is at the bottom of the Education section and has been used many times with great results.

Going on a trip and want to see which Chapters may be meeting nearby? Then go to the Subordinate Chapters section, where you can find out which Chapters are meeting this week, when and where all of them meet, the contact information of their High Priests and Secretaries, and even a Virginia map of where they are located. If you need to contact your District Officers or even a Grand Officer, all you need to do is click on their listings and the highlighted hyperlinks will give you their email addresses.

Interested in knowing more about the Grand High Priest or his schedule? They are both available in great detail: His biography and Executive Orders are listed in the Grand High Priest section, and you can look at the Calendar section and see where he is scheduled to visit. The Calendar section also shows when each Chapter has its monthly meetings. If you want to learn more about Past Grand High Priests, the History of Grand Chapter section shows all of their pictures and terms of service.

High Priests who need to know Grand Royal Arch Law can simply look up the current Digest and find what they need. Do you want to know more about our ritual or even enhance the degrees?

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The Information section has degree summaries, the Education section offers explanations and symbolism of the degrees, and the Music section offers the music for the Mark Master and Most Excellent Master degrees.

Would you like to see lists of Grand Chapter award recipients? They are easily found in the Awards section. Finally, if you are interested in future activities like the Grand Convocation, where the next Alzheimer's Walk might be held, or where the Grand Lecturer will hold his next school, they are all located in the Events section.

I encourage each of you to take advantage of the information **available from our Grand Chapter** to learn more about our Royal Craft. We are proud to have one of the most informative Royal Arch websites anywhere in the world and are constantly improving it. Check it out, **it is a valuable resource for you and your Chapter.**

Update from Luray Royal Arch Chapter No. 4



RE Glen Mayes (seated) presents Companion Dale Hoak his 50-year Veterans Pin in his shop at his home on Jan. 27, 2021. Companion Hoak was exalted May 10, 1966 in Luray Chapter 4 and is also a Lifetime Member in Perpetuity.