



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

The Keystone

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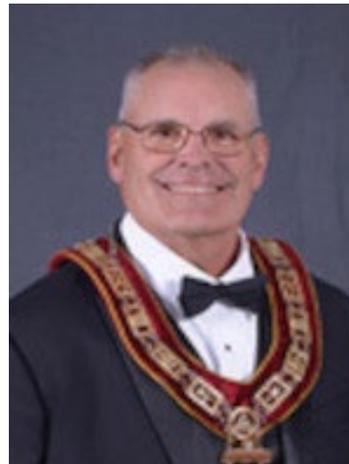
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**Want your articles or pictures here? Or have a
question for Zerubbabel? Send them to
thevakeystone@gmail.com.**

The Grand High Priest/Most Illustrious Grand Master's Message



Ho Companions! It is hoped that this finds you well. After a couple of hospital stays, we are finally on the mend. Thank you all so much for your thoughts and prayers. Lady Judy and I certainly appreciated all of them. Someone asked me if a

requirement of becoming Grand High Priest was to go into the hospital. It is hoped that is not the case.

In the next few weeks, we will be making a number of official visits to different districts across the Commonwealth that will carry us into the summer. We are looking forward to visiting with each district and thank you, in advance, for all that you do to support Royal Arch Masonry.

If you haven't signed up for an Alzheimer's Walk or made a planned donation, you are encouraged to do so. As mentioned before, my goal is to provide \$1 for every mile walked this year. As the pandemic continues, folk talk about the side effect called, "Covid Brain".

One of the things that have been encouraging this year is to hear about the number of times the Royal Arch degree is being conferred. Thank you to all who have stepped in to confer the degree. We know how much time and effort goes into conferring the degree and you are definitely appreciated for that.

If there are times when you are conferring the degree on more than three candidates, you are to be congratulated. The one thing that must be done, in those cases, is to make sure you have a dispensation. The Grand Secretary and I would appreciate a phone call or email, prior to the degree, so that requirement can be fulfilled.

It is hoped that the local Chapters would reach out to their Blue Lodges and offer to do a program on the Royal Arch. Invite all Masons to participate in Royal Arch social events. Show them what we are all about. Rather than simply offering a petition, sit down with a possible candidate and talk to them about the Royal Arch. You might be surprised at the interest that is shown. One thing that we must focus on is the future. Unless we offer the Royal Arch to younger masons, our future might not be as bright.

As we move into the summer months, it is hoped that you have a wonderful time. Hopefully, you will have the opportunity to visit with family and friends. Do not forget about the Chapter. Don't sit idle. There is much that we can do to help our world. Take care.

Peace,
Mark Pennypacker
Grand High Priest

The Grand King's Message



Companions:

As the winter season has passed and spring season is upon us, let us be reminded that spring is a time of rebirth and inspiration. Most all of us enjoy this time of year with the vibrant colors and scents

Mother Nature exhibits, unless you suffer from allergies.

A rebirth is symbolized by plants sprouting, animals reproducing and mother nature being reborn. We celebrate it religiously with Easter. A renewal is experienced in all living things, including ourselves and the Royal Arch. Spring has a way of coaxing us to think of new ideas and projects, in both our lives at home and in the Craft. Let us use this time of year to think about our Royal Arch Chapters, our fellow Companions and their families.

Just Like Mother Nature where a growth is experienced in plants and animals, we can also experience a growth in the Royal Arch. We need to think of new ways to attract members, keep in touch with our current members, and increase attendance at our Convocations. Let this Spiritual rejuvenation that we experience this time of year be carried over into our Chapters.

Be supportive of your Chapter by attending Stated and Called Convocations. Both are very important, especially the degree work when being performed. We need to impress our candidates by having members support them as they progress through the Royal Arch degrees. Many Chapters are already experiencing growth this year and it would be great to have ALL our Chapters grow! Keep up the good work!

Fraternally,
Lee Arritt, Grand King

The Grand Almoner's Message



Companions – Easter is drawing near and by the time the Keystone is published, it will have passed. This is the time to remember what the holiday is for, not what it has become. I enjoy Easter egg

hunts, chocolate eggs and bunnies filled with gooey sweetness as much as the next person and we should enjoy them with our families. Do not forget the events that led up to the holiday. The passion, pain, torture, and ultimate sacrifice so that we might enjoy a life filled with hope.

Speaking of hope, I have begun receiving donations from Districts for the 2022 Alzheimer's season. Now that COVID is largely behind us and the weather is turning nicer, it is time to dust off your Chapter's, District's or even your personal plans to raise funds to combat a disease that makes COVID look like a case of the sniffles. Think about outside family activities that could generate interest amongst the Companions, Brothers and Sir Knights families.

Activities that involve the families will draw in outsiders and help generate energy in the fund-raising efforts and may help generate interest in the Fraternity.

Mother's Day was 8 May and Memorial Day is 30 May. Both of these days are significant, but for different reasons. *Mother's Day*, for what our Mothers have done for us and for what all Mothers continue to do. *Memorial Day*, for the ultimate sacrifice that many have made to enable us to enjoy our freedoms. Put both of those days into your Chapter's and District's current and future calendars and plan an activity for each of them.

Fraternally,
Chuck Trude, PM, PHP, PC

Chapter Leadership Course Completions

Congratulations to the following Companions for successfully completing the Leadership Correspondence Course:

Princess Anne Chapter No. 1607:
Michael D. Johnstone

Pearisburg Chapter No. 29:
Arthur C. Bane, Joe G. Broce,
Joseph Givens, Robert E. Lucas,
Philip A. Reed

Grand High Priest / Grand Illustrious Master Official Visits for May, June and July

May 21, District 18, Chapters 13, 47, 58, 64; Lunch, 12:00 noon; Barboursville

May 28, District 4, Chapters 7, 3-9, 89; Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; Petersburg

June 4, District 9, Chapters 51, 70; Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; Christiansburg

July 23, District 8, Chapters 10, 22, 31; Lunch, 12:30; Roanoke

Chapter News

The Grand High Priest's Official Visit to District 14, on March 26, was held at the Hampton Inn in Lexington, VA. Hosted by DDGHP Jesse S. Lyons. District 14 comprises Waynesboro Union No. 2, Alleghany No. 24 and Rockbridge No. 44.



Front row

Stuart Jarman, Rt. Ex. Robert Curtis, Most Ex. James Arthur Fields, Jr., Rt. Ex. Baldwin Gerard Locher, Jr., Ex. George Vest, Ex. Timothy Thorman.

Middle row

Rt. Ex. Joseph Gadea, Rt. Ex. Matthew Bouelle, Jackson Marion Glisson, Jr., Most Ex. Mark Todd Pennypacker, Rt. Ex. Hafford Lee Arritt, Rt. Ex. Thomas Lee Varner, Ex. William Wimer, Dave Castro, Rt. Ex. Stephen L. Young

Back row

Ronnal Bostic, Rt. Ex. Alan Spear, Ross Morlan, Ex. Avery Nipper, Rt. Ex. Frederick Cherrington Vaughn, Sr., Rt. Ex. Fred Barnett, Rt. Ex. Jesse S. Lyons, Rt. Ex. Glen Bryant, Ex. J.H. Hogg, Rt. Ex. Ronald Stur

Fifty-Year Certificate Awarded at Shenandoah Chapter No. 17



Shenandoah Chapter No. 17 RAM at their Stated Convocation on 19 October, invited Most Excellent Companion Raymond D. Steele, Past Grand High Priest to the East. He requested Excellent Companion Alan K. Spear to present himself in the East.

M.E. Companion Steele presented Ex. Companion Spear with his 50-year Certificate from the Grand Chapter in Virginia and the beautiful 50-year pin. Companion Spear was totally surprised by the presentation and thanked all the Companions who thought him worthy enough to be a Royal Arch Mason in 1971.

“It Isn't Over”

I'm just as annoyed as you are when it comes to wearing a mask, and on top of that, both Moderna and Pfizer are working on another shot. I call it a booster double dose. That'll mean a fourth jab. This will mainly be for seniors but in due time I am sure it'll be recommended for everyone. Makes you feel like a pincushion – doesn't it? But it's worth rolling up your sleeve again and again in an effort to combat this ongoing virus and its variants.

Many stores and business places still require the wearing of a mask. Hospitals and other medical treatment facilities make it mandatory. Follow the rules. Make it a point to always carry a mask.

COVID may be on the downslide here in the USA but overseas in places like China and throughout Europe, it's still causing major illnesses and in some cases even more deaths. The short-sleeve temperatures we've been having lately mean folks are going to be traveling again. This could result in travelers' spreading a virus to others at their destinations or upon returning home. If it isn't COVID or OMICRON, it's some other variant. Always remain vigilant for signs and symptoms. If at any time you do not feel well test yourself using the COVID-19 Rapid Test Kit or call your doctor or hospital for guidance. In the meantime, remain isolated. COVID symptoms include fatigue, headache, sore throat, fever, and sometimes loss of smell and taste.

Lodges and Chapters and other Appendant Bodies of Freemasonry have suffered since the onset of COVID-19 but thank God we continued our mission of Brotherly Love and Friendship via online Zoom meetings. Gathering worldwide from our homes has enabled us as Masons to band together becoming an even stronger institution. COVID may have slowed down our degree work but it has not slowed down keeping Masonry alive and well.

Recently we've been able to pick up where we left off allowing us to continue our work. Some call it catch-up. Whatever you describe it as it's far better than those idle days where we just couldn't do anything productive. But even at that, we must always practice safety at its highest. We don't need more suffering. So far nearly a million have died from COVID alone, so don't let your guard down just yet, because as Yogi Berra once said - it isn't over until the Fat Lady Sings.

Stay safe – Stay well, my fellow brethren.

Ex. Companion Ed Tooma

Problem Solving Through Effective Leadership

The York Rite Leadership Program is designed to enhance your leadership abilities. The elements of this training are self-improvement, understanding others, and powerful communication skills. In this training you will learn to create team bonding, empower individuals to be effective team leaders, and understand how to highlight the strengths and mitigate the weaknesses of every member. The outcome of this training is sure to improve the craft and you will notice improvements in your work and family life as well.

Registration is LIVE online and there will also be an article in this month's *Decryption*, so this will also be available on the <https://crypticmasons.org> and the <https://yorkriteleadership.org/> websites.

Please let me know if you have any questions or improvements.

Stephen A. Balke
General Grand Recorder
Cryptic Masons, International