



NO STATED MEETING IN MAY

Stay safe, stay well and may God Bless you and the Rite.

A MESSAGE FROM THE GRAND MASTER

MW Douglas V. Jones, 33°

Life itself—and much of what surrounds it—is fragile. **Some things**, though, no matter how tough it gets, seem to always stand the test of time—**some things**—endure storm after storm coming out on the other side maybe a little bruised and battered yet nonetheless strong and vibrant, always ready to face a new day.

I believe Freemasonry is one of those things. We will come out on the other side of COVID-19; although, we will most certainly face a new normal. For now, our Lodge rooms may be empty but Virginia Masons are far from idle. You're staying connected and sharing fellowship through Zoom meetings and I hear stories every day about acts of kindness and service flowing through the Masonic community, your response to the appeal for the Masonic Relief Fund has been incredible, over \$21,000 to date. And while I'm on that topic, if you know of a Brother who is having some financial difficulty during this time remind him it's okay to ask for help—speak to his Worshipful Master or call the Grand Lodge Office—now is not the time to suffer in silence. Here's the thing, as we maneuver these uncharted waters, the values of our Fraternity are on full display—alive and well—because of all of you! The lights in the Lodge room may be turned off for a time but there is no darkness in Freemasonry.

Now, as I write this article there is no way for me to predict now where things will be when this newsletter lands in your hands. Passing through to the other side of COVID-19 is going to take some time, the end game is not likely to come at the flip of a switch. Be assured we are weighing many contingencies so we can move the Craft forward in a safe and healthy way when the time comes.

Our Fraternity, has endured wars, pandemics, the Great Depression and many other times of uncertainty **BECAUSE** being a Master Mason is a condition of the **HEART—a good HEART, one filled with love and generosity**—in these tough times, you, my friends and Brothers, make it so every day. What happened to you and me when we knelt at the sacred altar of Freemasonry—that ongoing, transformational experience—an amazing journey and tug of war between the rough and perfect ashlar—remains with us even in these days when we can't come together for meetings.

So, yes, the COVID-19 crisis is a stark reminder of just how fragile things can be. **Some things**, though, always find a way to remain resilient beyond measure. Check your wallet, I bet there's a dues card in there proclaiming your good standing as a Freemason—better yet, check your **HEART**. God spoke through Job, *“For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.”* Freemasonry will be just fine.

VENERABLE MASTER'S MESSAGE

Mike Atkins, KCCH

All I can start with is WOW! I certainly hope and pray this is finding each of you and your family and friends in good health. Many of us have been working from home, quarantined ourselves to home, and some must be physically at work. Hats off to our First Responders, grocery store, gas station, the local restaurant communities, and all those trying to keep our Nation as close to a norm as possible.

Who would have ever thought that a virus could close our Great Fraternity for a period of time? Through all our previous battles, Masonry was able to either set aside their weapons and meet, or go underground to meet. I hope that by the time you are reading this article, the COVID-19 situation will have flattened out and we can be on our way back to our 'normal'.

I have missed our meetings and fellowship. I hope that May will be a good month and June will be even better so we can get back to our Stated Meetings in June. Meanwhile, please be safe, stay in, and wash your hands.

SCOTTISH RITE MEETING SCHEDULE

Monday, May 18, 2020

*** NO STATED MEETING ***

Monday, April 22, 2020

*** STATED MEETING PENDING ***

5:30 PMGuard Meeting

6:00 PMBusiness Meeting

7:00 PMDinner

(\$8 with a Reservation, \$10 without)

Program – Education Night

*** **RESERVATIONS REQUIRED** ***

**A STATED MEETING IS PENDING
IN JULY (27TH) AND THE STATED
MEETING IN AUGUST (24TH) ARE
NOW PENDING.**

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Tom Varner, KCCH

In the midst of the current COVID-19 crisis, I have been reflecting on our 4th and 18th Degrees, which both start with a bleak perspective before they offer opportunities for hope and growth. The altar cloth in the 4th Degree is strewn with silver tears to represent the tragic loss and death of Grand Master Hiram Abiff. In the 18th Degree, we hear that “all of our temples are demolished, our Working Tools are broken, and our columns cast down and shattered.” Timely words indeed. And yet, despite the obstacles and challenges, the candidate moves forward toward the light, learning that duty is the one great law of Masonry, that faith, hope and charity will lead the way out of the chaos of doubt and uncertainty, and that treating each other with love and respect will best serve God's will.

We all feel much grief over the personal, economic, and Masonic losses we have suffered, and we wonder when we will be able to resume our normal lives. As God said to Joshua, “I will never leave you nor forsake you”, we learn again and again in our Masonic Degrees that God is in control and will set things right.

So, what can we do in the meantime? Our Masonic brotherhood and need for connections have not left us. I have attended many virtual meetings of Blue Lodges, DeMolay, and appendant bodies in the last month, and all have been worthwhile. Our Grand Master encourages us to participate in blood drives, to reach out to infirm and isolated brethren to make sure they are safe, to practice charity and help those who need it, and to go shopping and deliver supplies to brethren unable to leave their homes.

I believe this crisis is the greatest that Masonry has faced since the Civil War, and yet it will pass. Will this be our finest hour? Will we emerge just as strong or stronger than before? As it says in the closing to the 4th Degree, “Will you truly know or understand God before you pass the sable curtains of the grave? Only you can determine this. Serve Him by serving your fellowmen so you may be found worthy of reward.” This is the admonition to all of us.

FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

Bob Carpenter, Jr., 33°



Normally at this time of year, I am talking about dues and delinquent members. I guess I can still do that, but our COVID-19 issue seems to be taking up the bulk of everyone's time. Please stay safe and stay well as we work our way through this time of toil and tribulation.

As for the dues. We have 52 brethren on our delinquent list and it is time for everyone to check your dues card and make sure it reads 2020. We need your support now more than ever. Our rental income is now \$0.00 and your dues continue to be our source of income. If you need to pay your dues, you can send a check, call and give us your credit card information, or log on to the Supreme Council's website. If you need assistance, please call the office.

Unfortunately, our May Stated Meeting is also cancelled due to the virus. Kathleen and I hope that everyone is staying safe and abiding by the required safety protocol.

If we are able to meet in June, it will be Education Night. This year we will be honoring several students with their scholarships. If the virus persists, alternative arrangements will be made and we could meet in July. **If we can meet in June, please remember to make your dinner reservations early. We will notify everyone by email of the meeting schedule when available.**

Petitions are available for the Fall Reunion. The special pricing set for the Spring Reunion has been continued into the fall. Please read Ill. Charles Robinson's article. We need a big class to celebrate being able to meet and enjoy the work of our Degree teams. Reserve the dates of October 16 and 17 for the Reunion. We need your attendance to support our Degree teams and committees.

WOMAN'S CLUB NOTES

Valerie Layman, President

Due to this virus the Scottish Rite Woman's Club has not been able to meet. This means we were not able to perform our annual audit and then hold the election of officers. Our by-laws state we have a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. We need one of our ladies to step up to fill the Vice-President position or we will be forced to disband the club. The officers term is only for a year and we only meet a few times during the year. Won't someone step up to fill this position? You can contact me if anyone has any questions.

When we are able to meet again it is MOST important that you attend that meeting. We will be discussing this situation, and deciding what we will do. Please ladies, if you want to continue supporting the Scottish Rite, we need your help and especially your support with your attendance.

PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE - Sam Dunn, 33°

Like most of you, I wish I had an answer to this madness. As some of you know, I was into music in my younger days, spending hours behind the drums and enjoying life. This pandemic brought me back to an old Bob Seger tune, 'Night Moves'. One of the lines in this song goes "how far off I set and wondered". That is exactly what I wish I had the answer to, when will life return to normal? Will it ever return to normal? Only our Creator knows the answer.

I believe He has set the RESET BUTTON to create a time to pause and reflect. I believe that when we are able to return and enjoy fellowship with one another, we will appreciate it more and be more diligent in our daily lives. Centering our lives on the points of the compass practicing the Devine precepts of Friendship, Morality and Brotherly Love. When we are able to go back to Lodge and the Scottish Rite, let us do it with a burning desire to make them better than what they were when we left.

We have missed so many opportunities since we have been dark. The opportunity to tell a brother how much we have missed him, the opportunity to do a good deed for a brother and the opportunity to help grow the Valley due to another postponed Reunion. I pray that we are well on the way to being able to assemble as brothers very soon.

Our new Reunion dates are October 16 and 17. Even though the Scottish Rite building has been closed since the order by the Governor, Bob and Kathleen have been working to keep the business end on track. Bob seems to be, along with our Director of Work, Ill. Charles Robinson, confident that we will produce a large class for the Reunion. Brethren, it takes a village. We will all have to work hard to get the Petitions for the fall class. We cannot replace the time we have missed, but we can all put 'boots on the ground' to help rebuild our membership.

Our June Stated Meeting is the meeting where we recognize 13 wonderful students for their hard work and award each a \$1,000 Scholarship from the Valley. In addition, the Woman's Club awards a \$1000 scholarship to a deserving student. This meeting has always been near and dear to me because it recognizes the leaders of tomorrow. If we are unable due to government regulations to meet in June, we will postpone this meeting until July. As you know, we are usually dark in July. However, this is an important meeting and I will try everything possible to make sure it takes place.

I will close only by saying that I have truly missed each one of you, and I look forward to greeting you soon at YOUR SCOTTISH RITE! Stay safe, stay well and may God Bless you and the Rite.

LIFE AT THE MASONIC HOME

Terry Hilton, KCCH, Development director

I hope this finds you doing well and observing safe health practices as you go about your daily lives. If you are like me, you are working from home, or maybe not working at all, and only going out when you absolutely must for groceries or other supplies!

It has been my honor and privilege to serve the Home as the Director of Development for three years already, and I love my job. As Masons, we are all familiar with the Home as a wonderful place for a Mason and his wife to live out their retirement years with fellow Masons and their wives or widows. The Masonic Home is one of only a handful of retirement communities in America that is reserved specifically for those in the Masonic family. For that reason alone, this is one of the most comfortable places you can imagine living later in life.

We all have a common interest while living in the Masonic Home. Whether it is talking about which Lodge, or how many you belong to, it is a great way to start a conversation. The residents come from all over the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Scottish Rite Masons are certainly welcome to apply for Admission to the Home. There are many SR Masons living at the Home currently, and most of them attend our stated meetings as often as possible.

The Home is officially called a Continuing Care Retirement Community, as it provides all levels of care from independent living to memory support and critical care as needed. The advantage of moving to the Home when you are younger is that you get to enjoy all the benefits of Masonic Home life including numerous activities, trips, and daily outings planned and supervised by the staff. This allows you to park the car, get on a small or large bus depending on where you are going and just enjoy the day!

I encourage you to talk with me if you have questions about the Home. I certainly do not know all the answers, but I will either get them for you or point you in the right direction. You are also welcome to visit the Home as soon as the virus quarantine is lifted, and I will be happy to show you all that we offer to Masons and their families.

RICHMOND VALLEY COMING EVENTS

— 2020 —

MAY

Sunday 10	Mother's Day
Monday 18	NO STATED MEETING
Monday 25	Memorial Day (office closed)

JUNE

Sunday 21	Father's Day
Monday 22	STATED MEETING PENDING

JULY

Saturday 4	Independence Day
Wednesday 8	Honour Court Meeting Pending
Monday 22	STATED MEETING PENDING

AUGUST

Monday 24	Stated Meeting
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SEPTEMBER

Monday 7	Labor Day Office is Closed
Saturday 26	Grand Master's Official Visit
Monday 28	Stated Meeting

THE SCOTTISH RITE NEWS

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MEMBERSHIP

CHARLES ROBINSON, 33°, CHAIRMAN

With the COVID-19 pandemic, I am sure the big questions on everyone's mind will be "when will we get back to normal", and "what will be the new normal"? To take it a step further, how will all this affect Masonry, both in and out of the Lodge? The longer we shelter in place, the more anxious we are for the fellowship we enjoy by going to Lodge. When we resume our monthly meetings, the attendance will probably be way up. This could work to our advantage since everyone will be looking for more, and we have it!

The Richmond Scottish Rite is offering the best deal for the 2020 Fall Reunion that I have ever seen. It will be in memory of Ill. Park Alton Dodd, Jr., 33°, IGH, and will be a two-day Conferral. We will start by conferring the 4th – 13th Degrees on Friday night, October 16, and then finish up with the 14th – 32nd Degrees on Saturday, October 17. A tentative time schedule will be available shortly. The cost for the Reunion will be \$265. Yes, you read that right. It will include dues for the rest of 2020 and 2021. In addition, candidates will receive the normal books, "Morals and Dogma" and "A Bridge to Light", along with their 14th Degree Symbolic Ring.

This should make it easier for all those that work so hard trying to find new members. We appreciate what you do! To show our appreciation, any member who signs as top-line signer on three (3) Petitions for the Fall Reunion, your 2021 dues are FREE! As of this writing, we have 13 petitions. If we can get at least seven (7) more Petitions, this will be the largest Reunion since the spring of 2016 when we had a class of 36.

I hope to see everyone soon!

Called from Labor

LESLIE LEE BRADSHAW, JR.
1932 - 2020

LAWRENCE BRADFORD BRANNER
1946 - 2017

JOHN KALIL BUSADA
1917 - 2020

BERNARD LESLIE COLGIN, JR.
1923 - 2020

JOHN TERENCE GAYWOOD
1929 - 2020

DONALD WAYNE GODFREY
1938 - 2020

ROBERT CHARLES JACOBS
1942 - 2020

WILLIAM EDWARD LANE
1946 - 2020

BENNY ERVIN LENOX, SR.
1933 - 2020

HERMAN EDWARD LOUGHMILLER
1936 - 2020

BERNARD ALTON MATHEWS
1927 - 2020

FREDRIC PORTER WAGNER
1935 - 2020

Virtus Junxit-Mors non Separabit

"whom virtue has united, Death will not separate"

FELLOWSHIP REPORTS

Please take a moment and communicate with our shut-in Brethren either by card or a phone call. They will appreciate your thoughtfulness and you will feel better for it.

NEW SINCE LAST NEWSLETTER

Mike Atkins

John Andrews

REQUESTED
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