



Volume X, Issue 41

March 2018

17 MARCH
Virginia Scottish Rite Workshop
Richmond, Virginia



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- Workshop Schedule
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Sovereign Grand Inspector General

Illustrious James D. Cole, 33°

Let's Get Together

Illustrious James D. Cole, 33°

Lt. Grand Commander and S.G.I.G. in Virginia

As I write this article sitting at my desk, I look out my window and see nothing but darkness. It has been a long day, but a smile comes to my face as I think of my Brethren gathering in Masonic meeting places around the world at this hour.



We gather with a warm clasp of hands, smiles, some teasing about “where have you been for so long?” Like the stones in a wall, we are different shapes, sizes, some more affected by the sun or weather than others.

We go through our rituals, we discuss the oh so important aspects of our organizations, such as the leaky roof, the broken faucet, those long letters from some higher Masonic authority, or who will bring the food at the next meeting. Perhaps, though not at every meeting, we discuss how the group can in some way help other folks, even those outside the Masonic meeting place. We might vote to support childhood language disorders, help children with burns, support Alzheimer’s research or provide college scholarships. If the evening is conducted the way we promised, we leave in peace and harmony.

These are all good things. Good men coming together. These are times that our Creator likely appreciates.

Freemasonry has never been nor, can it ever be, limited or confined to a Masonic meeting place.

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Let's Get Together

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Unfortunately, ninety percent (90%) of the good men on our membership rolls who pay dues every year do not attend these gatherings.

Speaking in Masonic terms, "in this our dilemma, what shall we do?"

The dilemma stated another way, is "do we not owe it to our non-attending Brethren to do something for them?"

My point is very simple. I want to ask each Scottish Rite leader to allot time at each Masonic gathering to ask the assembled group one question: How can we create more opportunities to be in touch with our non-attending Brethren?

I am a Master Mason, yet I have been out of town and unable to attend my Lodge meeting for the past four months. That makes me no less a Freemason. I have however, seen my Brethren at the store, at Church, at the gym, on the street. We had a clasp of hands, a smile, a warm greeting, just as we would have had inside my Lodge hall.

Freemasonry has never been nor, can it ever be, limited or confined to a Masonic meeting place.

A few ideas to consider: a calling committee, outings for bowling, golf, or ballgames, a cookout, a trip to a theater or historic monument, a hike, etc. Just get together.

The common theme – let's plan ways to be Masonic, but let's not be limited by the space.



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Deadline for next issue:

May 1, 2018

17 March—Scottish Rite Workshop in Richmond

Allen D. Beckner, KCCH,
Scottish Rite Conference Vice President for the Alexandria Valley

I want to invite each of you to attend the 2018 Scottish Rite Conference Spring Workshop presented by the Danville Valley Scottish Rite, hosted at the Richmond Valley Scottish Rite Temple on:

Saturday, March 17, 2018

The Richmond Temple located at 4204 Hermitage Road, Richmond, VA.

Telephone is (804) 264-2050.

8:30 Coffee and donuts will be available

9:30 Workshop begins

12:00 f Fried chicken and fixin's

Brother Ray Anderson, KCCH, of the Danville Valley is the President of the Scottish Rite Conference Workshop and Conference for 2018. The Valley Vice Presidents will introduce their respective Valley leadership. Most Worshipful Taylor, Grand Master of Masons in Virginia will give us his message and Most Worshipful and Illustrious James D. Cole, 33°, SGIG in Virginia and Lieutenant Grand Commander, will give us an update on events in the Southern Jurisdiction.

The main program will feature only one guest speaker, Mrs. Patti Carey, business communication lecturer and Director of the McGaughey Professional Development Center at Longwood University. She will speak on "Effective Listening Skills." This will be an enjoyable and participatory program on a skill that we can use in our business and personal lives, as well as in our Lodges.

The Workshop is a no cost event that will offer you great information and genuine Virginia hospitality. Our Richmond Brethren need our anticipated numbers to prepare breakfast and lunch for all attendees. Also consider carpooling; it's always more fun to travel together and get to know your Brothers.

I hope you will take advantage of this opportunity for sharing food, fellowship, and relevant information.

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Anno Lucis

Donald L. McAndrews, KCCH



So, where did AL and the extra 4000 years come from? Originally it was thought that the creation of the earth took place in the year 4004 BC (that's "Before Christ").

Have you ever listened to your Lodge Secretary read the minutes and refer to AD 2018, AL 6018, and wonder what the "AL" means? There may even be a few brothers who wonder what "AD" means. These are the initials of Latin words which denote the computational method by which the date is determined – in other words, from where did we start counting the years?

In the case of AD, we start counting from the supposed birth of Jesus Christ. "AD" refers to the Latin "Anno Domini." Anno means "year," and Domini means "Lord." Taken together they mean "The Year of the Lord," which is what you may have seen written out in older documents.

So, where did AL and the extra 4000 years come from? Originally it was thought that the creation of the earth took place in the year 4004 BC (that's "Before Christ"). James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh in Ireland made this calculation around the year AD 1650. Using clues from Genesis and various other books of the Bible, he set the precise date and time of creation as October 22, 4004 BC, at sunset. Bishop Ussher called this starting point Anno Mundi or the Year of the

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Anno Lucis

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World. In the late 17th and early 18th centuries, Ussher's chronology was printed in the margins of many copies of the authorized King James Bible.

When the first Grand Lodge formed in London in AD 1717, this chronology was accepted as fact. Masons borrowed from this chronology to lend a more ancient pedigree to our fraternity. Although modern science has proven creation to have taken place much earlier, Freemasons around the world use a similar calculation of 4,000 plus the current year to mark the passage of years in the Craft or Blue Lodge and in the Scottish Rite. Being mindful that the Supreme Architect's first act of creation was to create light, and that each Mason's lifelong quest is in search of more light, we refer to our calendar as Anno Lucis, which is Latin for the Year of Light, hence the abbreviation AL.

Peculiar systems of measuring the passing years extends to other bodies in Masonry. Royal Arch Masons mark the years Anno Inventionis or the Year of Discovery. This relates back to the rebuilding of the second Temple by Zerubbabel, the Prince of the Jews, in the Holy Land in 530 BC, when certain lost secrets were discovered in the rubble of the original Temple and so Royal Arch Masonry adds 530 years to the current year and 2018 AD becomes 2548 AL in the Royal Arch Chapter.

Cryptic Masons (Royal and Select Masters) mark their calendars from the year in which Solomon's original Temple was completed. The Cryptic ritual deals with the deposit of certain secrets in the original Temple, which led to the notation on the Cryptic Calendar Anno Depositionis, which means Year of the Deposit. This adds 1,000 years to the present time, making the year 2018 into 3018. This is a bit confusing since Anno Domino and Anno Depositionis have the same initials AD.

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What are We Here for, Brethren?

Worshipful Samuel G. Welty, KCCH

This article raises questions, so it is important to be entirely clear about context in which I ask this of you. One may be tempted to read it as a loosely worded version of the standard Masonic query, "What came ye here to do?" The equally standard response to which is of course, "To learn, to subdue my passions and improve myself in Masonry." The easily paired question and answer appear frequently in Masonic work, especially in the catechism, so asking, "What are we here for?" should sound familiar. We just need to give a vague and unconvincing, yet familiar and orthodox response so we can move on to other topics for discussion. That would be perfectly reasonable. There remains one major problem.

Treating the question with such nonchalance leaves us endlessly and mindlessly repeating our pater nosters.

The question presents genuine difficulties. Some may find it impossible to answer. But if we are to jar Masonry out of the complacency which, for far too many, hopelessly ensnares it, we must break free of the enemy of human progress and commit to answering this difficult question. Complexity does not excuse complacency. Aimlessness breeds apathy.

Think, Brethren. Truly take a moment and consider ... what are you here to do?

Let me make it a bit easier with some clarification. Let us assume that "you" are a Mason in good standing and reasonably active in your Lodge. As for "here," let us assume that you may or may not necessarily be in the Lodge or on the premises, but rather let us refer to Masonry as a philosophy, an activity, and as a way of life. We could even condense the question to an even simpler form, not in the meta-physical sense, but in a very real and tangible form:

Why are we here?

This poses the first and most important question that Masons should consider if we are to succeed as a Fraternity. We are surrounded by many wonderful elements in Masonry which offer potential answers.

We have history.

We can trace Freemasonry back through hundreds of years of proud tradition spanning the globe. Our forebears include the people who founded nations, led revolutions, sat in legislative bodies and shaped the course of human history. The historic accomplishments of our Brethren give us cause for pride. We are heirs to the people who wrote the fabric of modern society.

Let us now examine closely the definition of a word we all will recognize:

Sibboleth: (n.) a custom, principle, or belief distinguishing a particular class or group of people, especially a long-standing one regarded as outmoded or no longer important

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We have Fame.

We can count among our membership many of the most famous names in relatively recent history. In Europe, it can be difficult to name a monarch who was not a Brother. In the United States, many of our founding fathers, Presidents and high officials were Brethren, including the Mason and father of his country, Brother George Washington. Vast numbers of celebrities, business executives, athletes, and 'movers and shakers' in general have found a place among our numbers. Consider also the occasional blockbuster film or novel that piques public interest in the fraternity from time to time.

We even have infamy.

If you ask a non-Mason (one shudders at the term "profane") what Masonry is, you will hear everything from "all-powerful masters of the universe who are secretly running the world from behind the veil" to "evil devil-worshippers who would love nothing more than to subvert the good people of the world from behind a façade of respectability." Obviously, this is not a point to brag about, but it does lend certain credibility in today's culture. After all, no one can do anything of note or significance without acquiring a few detractors. Mystery draws men to Masonry like a magnet.

What good is any of this? What does it accomplish in reality?

We have extraordinary history, fame and infamy at our behest and yet they provide no tangible benefit to the craft in any real, practical, useful way. After all Brethren, what good does a long history do us when we are trying to fundraise for building repairs? What good is a list of famous members from the past when we keep suspending more members for non-payment of dues than we can initiate?

What good is infamy in a world of distortion, disinformation, factoids and myths that cast doubt on the best qualities of the Craft? What good is notoriety when our boldest detractors rely on "reality" shows for their authority?

What good is any of all that if we can't attract enough members to open a tiled Lodge? Indeed, too many of us believe that we have all these factors "going for us" when in fact they count for little.

Let us now examine closely the definition of a word we all will recognize:

Sibboleth: (n.) a custom, principle, or belief distinguishing a particular class or group of people, especially a long-standing one regarded as outmoded or no longer important

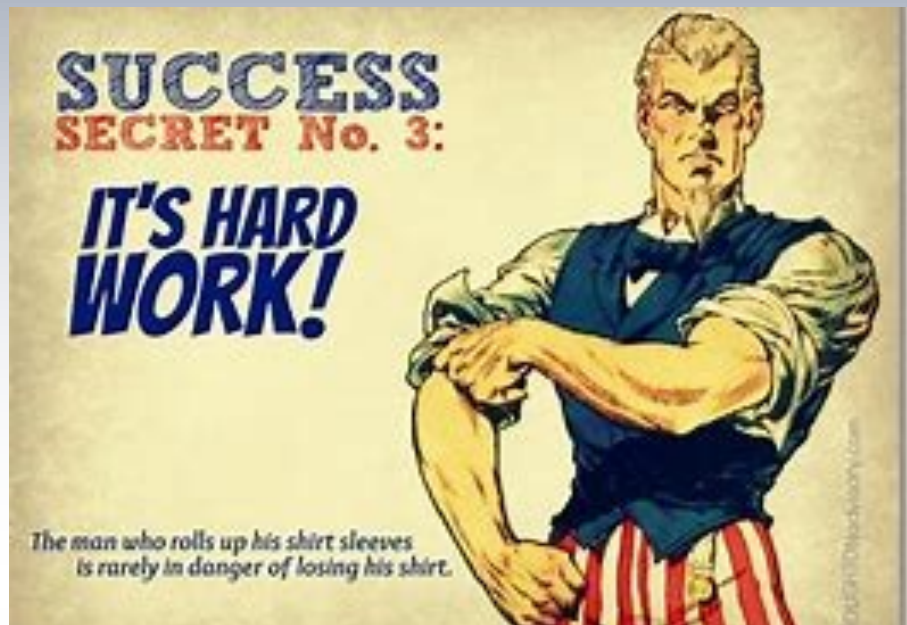
We use the word Shibboleth as a mode of recognition, so to us it is perfectly relevant and useful. However, we should take a moment to notice the second half of the [above]definition, which refers to "a custom, principle or belief" as "outmoded or no longer important." This point lies at the core of Freemasonry and its reason for being in the here and now. Forget about the past credentials, the famous members, and the

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mysterious ritual. Let us contemplate the ultimate question of import affecting our Fraternity's present and continuing essence.

Why are we here?

Unfortunately, for the Craft's overwhelming majority, there are two answers; the one we say with our words, and the one we say with our actions. The answer that speaks far more loudly seems to be... to rest upon the laurels of others without earning our own. We are so busy being proud of what we used to do and congratulating each other for being fellows in an organization which was so wonderful at one time, that we rarely take even a moment to continue the traditions of innovation, imagination, creativity and excellence that allowed our Masonic ancestors to blaze the glorious path we stroll in smug satisfaction.

The unique opportunities contained within the Fraternity of Freemasonry are so boundless and varied that no army of men could explore them all. That's the absolute truth. Recall the vast number of volumes to be found in most Masonic libraries, and yet how often does the average Mason even pick up one book up to browse more than the introduction or index?

The phrase "resting on one's laurels" dates back to ancient Greece when, in the Olympic Games, a garland of laurel leaves was placed upon the victor's head. The victor at that moment had a very important decision to make. What should he do at the following games? Compete and potentially be defeated? Participate and risk loss of the accolades so arduously won? Perhaps he should choose to sit out the

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What are We Here for, Brethren?

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remaining contests, unable to win further honor but secure in the glow of former victories? Should he choose to “rest on his laurels?” Should we?

It is a difficult condition to admit, my Brethren. As a Fraternity we have accomplished so much, after all. Why not take it easy for a few decades? The Brotherhood has survived for centuries and we have no reason to think it will not be around for centuries more. We are the oldest and greatest Fraternity in the world and people will always be beating down our doors to have and receive a part of what we offer. We have nothing to worry about.

Except ... we do. Plenty.

We all know and hear often that our numbers are rapidly declining at such a rate that any CEO in a correspondingly declining publicly traded company would be tarred, feathered and the video uploaded to YouTube. We often operate quite happily at what some call the “10% Rule.” Meaning: 10% of those initiated will make it through the catechism all the way to the Master Mason’s degree. And 10% of those left will be relatively active in the regular management of their mother Lodge. This means that, of all the interested potential members, approximately 1% of them will go on to become active, contributing members. This perpetuates a never-ending need for line officers, appointed officers, stewards’ committees, educational and instructive officers, and leaves fewer men to go on to populate the entire membership of the various appendant bodies with all their extensive needs.

No wonder we never hear the end of our need to bring in more members, cultivate bring-a-friend nights, promote one-day-conferrals and anything else we can think of to make joining the Fraternity easier and less of an inconvenience. These look like wonderful ideas on the surface, but upon due consideration, the ease and appeal quickly unravel. For as we all know, Brethren, when something comes to us so easily that we barely even notice the investment, how rarely do we value that which is given? Take a moment to think and see if you can count on more than a few fingers how many newly raised Brethren of a one-day-conferral ever even return to lodge to pay their first year’s dues, much less become active. There are of course those who do. But those who do are decidedly the few.

We have heard of many committees and meetings designed to address just such problems in the Craft. Membership, Education, Lodge Services and several more committees of well-meaning Brethren have been trying mightily to solve the gargantuan issues we face. Can they get the elusive results we have tasked them to achieve? They might. But what is the more likely result? A committee dedicated to Lodge membership cannot go out into the world and beg people to knock on out-doors. A committee dedicated to educating our Brethren may not put out any work of even minor significance in several years. A member of a committee dedicated to serving the Lodges of its jurisdiction may stand up in a stated communication and

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declare, "who knows what we are supposed to be doing, because I sure do not." When these are the circumstances of, thankfully not all, but most of the committees entrusted with ensuring our future, what are we to expect?

At this point one may be tempted to cry in outrage, "Who are you to toss about such disparaging remarks? How should it be done since you are so wise and all-knowing? What could be done better since you are so quick to cast these stones?"

One could ask all these things and, with good reason, do so in a very un-Brotherly manner. These are serious considerations and should certainly not be taken lightly, as I assure you that they are not at all lightly raised.

These are not aspersions laid upon the many well-meaning Brethren who genuinely try their best and work hard to contribute to the craft which has given them so much. They are not even aimed at the few who talk a very big game but soon prove themselves to be directing construction of the Temple from behind a hoodwink

But by far, my Brethren, I lay these criticisms upon myself. I hurl them at the man sitting across from me in a meeting as he checks his Facebook feed on his smartphone. I challenge the man who could not be bothered to show up for a degree because the big game ran late. And I blame you... yes, you there, sitting right there reading these words, if indeed I have not already lost you a few paragraphs ago.

I accuse us, each one, for it is with each of us that the responsibility for the future of our Fraternity lies. With growing frustration, I ask these questions and I refuse to give any easy and clear answers. The questions we face are huge and complex. They are difficult to ask, much less begin to find [an] any answers. The questions torment us with riddles almost impossible to solve, because they require us each to take the responsibility upon ourselves. Not the Brother in the next chair, but each one of us.

The time has come. This article full of questions has run its course for the time-being. There is a great deal more to discuss but I prefer to stop now while your outrage is relatively mild and less likely to get me a friendly and Brotherly fat lip. The questions we have explored all have similar answers. They are short, but by no means simple answers which cannot be glossed over or lightly set aside. Are you ready? Here they come...

Be worth it.

Be a Brother worth spending time with.

Be a Lodge worth attending.

Be a Fraternity worth joining.

Use the tools we are given, to do the work we have taken upon ourselves.

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Live your Masonry for the fellowship, the friendships, and the freedom from religious and political squabbles, do good unto all and behave as though you are convinced that every human being has a claim upon your kind offices.

See what I mean? Deceptively simple.

Easy to discount and disregard. How easy it would be at this moment to nod your head in agreement or smirk in dismissal and go back to what we have all been guilty of for the last one hundred years. Go back to the days when you may not have had to work that hard at Masonry, because many Lodges had a line of new initiates or non-officers who were itching to prove themselves. Go back to the days when a Past Master earned the right to take a well-deserved break and give those laurels a bit of a rest. Those were most definitely the days Brethren. And those days are most definitely gone.

The answers are deceptively simple because nothing could be more complex. It is easy to discount, disregard, and dismiss their simplicity because that's the easy thing to do. The good old days are easy to reminisce about because nostalgia has blurred the hardships of those times. Nevertheless, if the Lodge needed to fill a line of officers? Here's a list of twenty who will vie for the position. Need a repair to the building? No problem. One of the Past-Masters needs a large tax deduction. Need an endowment fund? We have so many members that raising dues by \$1 will meet all our needs. Those Brethren worked.

At least for the foreseeable future Brethren, this is Masonry no more.

We all have a great deal of work to do. We all share the responsibility, and when you shirk your duties, pass them on to someone else, or ask of a Brother more than his share so that you can have an easier time, you are part of what can easily bring our beloved Craft to the brink of oblivion. It does not take anyone actively seeking to undermine the Fraternity. The end can come quite easily by one Brother being rude to the wrong person at the wrong time, by staying home when you gave your word that you would be there for a ritual part, by putting one dollar in the collection bowl when they requested five for a meal, or by bullying a hard-working Brother so that you look better in the eyes of others.

Our ritual provides the answers, Brethren. It is in the words we work so hard to memorize for a certificate, but so rarely take the time to ponder. Words we use "to love Thee supremely and to be friendly to each other," that we may "best work, and best agree" as we work in "service to God and the relief of a distressed worthy Brother" with "Harmony as our strength and support." Our Fraternity is designed for our mutual betterment and can accomplish these goals as effectively now as it has for centuries. Brethren, we have only to pick up the tools and set ourselves to the work we know we can do.

So now Brethren, let us begin.

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Maintaining Your Balance in an Age of Hyperbole

Coarseness in speech is often a reflection of carelessness in thought. Rational argument, based on facts and logic, entails consideration of all sides of an issue. This takes effort and requires that we at least try to understand other points of view. It is easier to proclaim one's own opinion as fact and dismiss all who disagree with us.



Illustrious Edmund Cohen, 33rd
Personal Representative of the SGIG in Alexandria

We appear to be living in a hyped-up period in history when technology is moving so fast it is hard to keep up, and at the same time passions are so high it is hard to stay calm. Even in ordinary speech everything is superheated and supercharged. It is common to hear on radio and television the term “breaking news.” But is there any other kind? If it is not breaking news – it is not news but a rehash of what we’ve already heard. Similarly, when our kids excitedly tell us that something is “very unique,” we wonder how this is possible. If it is unique, it is the only one of its kind and unlike anything else – so how can anything be very unique?

EXAMPLES

- ❧ “The bag weighed a ton.”
- ❧ “I called you a million times!”
- ❧ “It was so cold, I saw polar bears wearing jackets”
- ❧ “She is so dumb, she thinks Taco Bell is a Mexican phone company”
- ❧ That joke is so old, the last time I heard it I was riding on a dinosaur.

Of course, we are used to hyperbole. Don’t we often use terms such as “she is thin as a toothpick,” “these shoes are killing me,” or “I told you a million times to do that.” These particular exaggerations are harmless and simply make a point, but all too often hyperbole develops a bite, and evidences a meanness of spirit. These overstatements are meant to insult and vilify as we magnify the peccadillos of our enemies and ignore the major faults that we or our friends exhibit. In biblical terms we are quick to perceive the mote that is in our brother’s eye, but slow to notice the beam that is in our own eye.

Coarseness in speech is often a reflection of carelessness in thought. Rational argument, based on facts and logic, entails consideration of all sides of an issue. This takes effort and requires that we at least try to understand other points of view. It is easier to proclaim one’s own opinion as fact and dismiss all who disagree with us. John Fort Newton pointed out years ago, with his inimitable eloquence, that “barriers of race, of creed, of caste, of training, and interest separate men today as if some malign genius were bent on keeping man from his fellows, begetting suspicion, uncharitableness and hate” – and unfortunately such is the case today.

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Maintaining Your Balance in an Age of Hyperbole

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It is largely a question of how we propose to treat others. In business, it is the difference between puffing – a bit of exaggeration about the advantages of what we are selling – and outright lying about the product. In personal relationships it is the difference between authenticity and posturing, between sincerity and pretense. The question is whether we see life as a series of one-time transactions where our goal is to win as much as we can as often as we can. If so, we tend to adopt what in negotiations is called a win-lose strategy. If I am to win, you have to lose. Or we can view life as building relationships, where, by understanding the different needs and interests of each side, we can reach a compromise, with each side winning something; if so, we try to adopt a win-win strategy.

It is no surprise where Masonry stands. Newton points out that “each lodge is an oasis of equality and goodwill in a desert of strife, working to weld mankind into a great league of sympathy and service. At its altar men meet as man to man, without vanity and without pretense, without fear and without reproach.”

This is where Masonry stands, but where do we stand?

We read about examples of Masons or their spouses or children who encountered problems and needed assistance while traveling, or who found themselves in the hospital in a distant city, and how Masons – men they never met and don’t know – went out of their way to provide the comfort and support they needed.

But we sometimes encounter, often closer to home, neglect of duty and disregard of obligation. And it is not just others, it is us. We may find ourselves so rushed and so busy that we are perfunctory in our interactions and even discourteous to our Brethren. We may promise to attend a meeting or take a part in a degree and then fail to show up. In the heat of the moment, our words may be insensitive and our actions hurtful. We may get too wrapped up in measuring our status against our Brother, coveting honors, accumulating slights, and nursing resentments.

This is where Masonic equilibrium and balance comes in. It requires finding the emotional space to control our passions so we act like Masons and consider in advance whether our words and our actions will be hurtful. It means taking the time, no matter how busy, to be kind and act like a Brother. In the Lodge we are

Of course, it is not just about how we behave in Lodge and with our Brethren. We are judged by our demeanor during our daily transactions, and this reflects, for good or bad, on our Fraternity. We recall in the 31st degree, the candidate in the drama is judged with respect to how he fulfills his obligations to God, his country, and his neighbor.

hyperbole

noun | hye-PER-buh-lee

extravagant exaggeration

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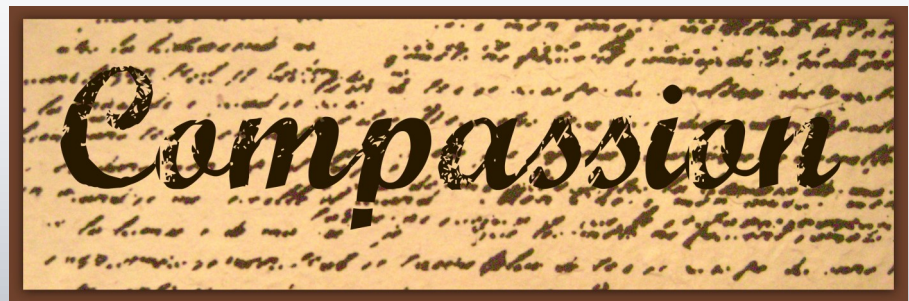
Maintaining Your Balance in an Age of Hyperbole

Continued from page 14.

careful to use the term “Brother,” and in the Chapter “Companion.” These are terms of particular importance and deep meaning, and not meant to be a casual salutation like “hello” or “good evening.” It signifies a moral and spiritual tie, a standard of conduct, and a set of mutual obligations. And that is why we pay so much attention to guarding the West Gate. It is why we are concerned less with the number of candidates we have and far more about the quality and character of the men we admit. For these will be men to whom we owe our friendship and our regard. A Masonic Brother is a man who can be trusted not to cheat us, wound our feelings, or take advantage of our confidences or weaknesses. Thus, as Brethren we are to guide each other along the difficult and treacherous paths of life, helping each other with tact and patience to avoid error and indiscretion and; when tragedy or disaster strike, to be there to smooth the way with sympathy and compassion, and with material help as well.

We are required, long after we receive the Master Mason’s degree, to practice these virtues, live up to our obligations, and become the Mason we promised to be when we were obligated in the Blue Lodge and in the degrees of the Scottish Rite. This does take practice – for none of us is perfect – and while we require little encouragement to look after our own interests, it takes resolve to extend ourselves for others.

Of course, it is not just about how we behave in Lodge and with our Brethren. We are judged by our demeanor during our daily transactions, and this reflects, for good or bad, on our Fraternity. We recall in the 31st degree, the candidate in the



drama is judged with respect to how he fulfills his obligations to God, his country, and his neighbor. Then, as now, maintaining our balance in an age of hyperbole requires more than merely meeting the bare requirements of our legal obligations. It requires that we also satisfy the moral obligations of the situation. This requires compassion and a sense of fairness, and obligates us to be just in our dealings, courteous in our relations, and sympathetic to our fellows.

God Bless you and yours,

Reprinted courtesy of Valley of Alexandria Scottish Rite Bulletin

This is where Masonic equilibrium and balance comes in. It requires finding the emotional space to control our passions so we act like Masons and consider in advance whether our words and our actions will be hurtful. It means taking the time, no matter how busy, to be kind and act like a Brother.

We are Such Stuff as Dreams are Made on...

Worshipful Joel Bundy, KCCH

Recently I was watching *The Tempest*, the play that stands at the end of Shakespeare's body of work - thirty-seven plays in all, one hundred and fifty-four sonnets, and various other poems. This was the last play he wrote alone after a long and prosperous career. It was his swan song, and at the end of this last act, in this last play, the main character Prospero, and Shakespeare himself, is pondering on life, his own, that of his family and the others with him over the five acts and the many decades before.

Our revels now are ended. These our actors, as I foretold you, were all spirits and are melted into air, into thin air: and, like the baseless fabric of this vision, the cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples, the great globe itself, yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve and, like this insubstantial pageant faded, leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep.

William Shakespeare,
The Tempest, Act 4 Scene 1



Continued on page 17.

We make our future and should not depend on the wisp of chance to lead us on our journey. Let us travel together down the pages of our own plays, writing those words together, hand in hand, as brothers and friends. We are such stuff, we have the right stuff- here in our Orient of Virginia.

We are Such Stuff as Dreams are Made on...

Continued from page 16.

There is so much here that we Brothers in Virginia can glean from. On the surface, we can think of our reunion and the plays we put on for the candidates. We, as actors, perform a drama with backdrops of places far away, captivating and even Hellish, wearing the robes of kings and priests. Yet, when we are all done the curtain comes down, the costumes hang together behind locker doors, and the "pageant" is faded as we drive away in our cars, leaving not even a "rack", or a wisp of clouds behind.

This is also a metaphor about "us" as we step outside of these Scottish Rite degrees and slip back into our own lives. Yes, for each of us, our revels will end. Our lives, though they may be gorgeous and blessed, will one day dissolve and fade away, as we find our way into the sleep of that undiscovered country. I don't believe, however, that Prospero is simply telling us that our lives are made "of" dream, an illusion, that is here and then gone, like the clouds on a summer's day.

If you look deeper, I find there is a more esoteric meaning to these words that Shakespeare penned. *The Tempest* itself has an ending, and our Scottish Rite degrees move along towards their final words. And yes, our lives are rounded with a sleep. But what of the dreams? We all dream, but we are those dreams as well. When you think of the unbelievable and strange worlds of our nocturnal dreams, those don't compare to our living, waking lives that are greater still. We breathe, we think and reason, we touch, we hold hands and kiss those we love, we bring into this world children that we nurture and fawn over, develop lifelong friendships, and sometimes feel great loss. We are truly alive. I believe that there is a reason it reads that we are what dreams are made "on." In this life, we actively build our own dreams rather than passively exist in some fleeting ethereal dreamlike imagination.

We make our future and should not depend on the wisp of chance to lead us on our journey. Let us travel together down the pages of our own plays, writing those words together, hand in hand, as brothers and friends. We are such stuff, we have the right stuff- here in our Orient of Virginia.

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ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

Freemasons have been “undeservedly stigmatized” and will be running a series of open evenings to prove they are not a secret society, the organization’s leader has said.

The United Grand Lodge of England placed adverts in three national newspapers on Thursday headlined “Enough is enough”, claiming it is a victim of misrepresentation.

Freemasonry explained: a guide to the secretive society

David Staples, the United Grand Lodge Chief Executive, said he had written to the Equality and Human Rights Commission about concerns that its 200,000-plus members were victims of gross misrepresentation and discrimination.

“Our members shouldn’t have to feel undeservedly stigmatized. No other organization would stand for this and nor should we,” he said.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

At the United Grand Lodge of England, we value honesty. Integrity and service to the community above all else. Last year we raised over £33 million for good causes.

As an organization we welcome individuals from all walks of life, of any race, with age, class, or political persuasion. Throughout our 300-year history. when people have suffered discrimination, Freemasonry has embraced them into our Lodges as equals.

The United Grand Lodge of England believes that the ongoing gross misrepresentation of its 200,000 plus members is discrimination. Pure and simple.

Our members should not have to feel undeservedly stigmatized. No other organization would stand for this and nor shall we.

I have written to the Equality and Human Rights Commission to make this case.

I appreciate that you may have questions about who we are and what we do, so why not ask those who know? Over the next six months our members will be running a series of open evenings and Q & A events up and down the country. These will be promoted in the local media and on our website.

I am also happy to answer any queries directly. Please feel free to write to me here at Freemasons' Hall, 60 Great Queen Street, London WC2E 8AH and I will come back to you,

We are open.

Dr. David Staples

“Our members shouldn’t have to feel undeservedly stigmatized. No other organization would stand for this and nor should we,” he said.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

Continued on page 19.

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Continued from page 18.

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We're open.



Dr David Staples
Chief Executive

The United Grand Lodge of England



UNITED GRAND LODGE
OF ENGLAND

www.ugle.org.uk

He said people may have questions about Freemasonry, and members would be hosting Q&A sessions across the country. "I appreciate that you may have questions about who we are and what we do, so why not ask those who know?" he said.

Last year, the United Grand Lodge of England raised more than £33 million (\$46,350,397) for good causes, Staples said.

Reprinted from The Guardian,
Freemasons,

[https://
www.theguardian.com/uk-
news/2018/feb/08/
freemasons-we-have-been-
undeservedly-stigmatised](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/feb/08/freemasons-we-have-been-undeservedly-stigmatised)

Last year, the United Grand Lodge of England raised more than £33 million (\$46 million) for good causes.

Scottish Rite Foundation of Virginia Officers and Directors 2016-2017

ALEXANDRIA	President	Philip Niemann Rhodes, KCCH
DANVILLE		John P. Dameron, KCCH
LYNCHBURG		Donlie R. Henderson, KCCH
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NORFOLK		James H. Pate, KCCH
PORTSMOUTH		Donald W. Ruth, KCCH
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TREASURER		Leonard A. Rowe, 33°
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GENERAL COUNSEL		James D. Higginbottom, 32°

Scottish Rite Foundation of Virginia Officers 2016-2017

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Bruce L. Edwards, 32°	Vice-President
Leonard A. Rowe, 33°	Treasurer
James D. Cole, 33°, SGIG	Assistant Treasurer
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James D. Higginbottom, 32°	General Counsel



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(Danville)

Vice-President Brother Page S. Neal, Jr. 32° KCCH
(Newport News)

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VMAP Working Tools

Your Guide to News & Best Practices

From the VMAP Committee Chairman

Greetings Brethren!

Welcome to VMAP 2018 and the return of the *VMAP Working Tools* newsletter!

[The 2017 VMAP workbook is available for download.](#) Based on the feedback from members at the 2017 Workshops some significant changes have been made to improve program for all Valleys, regardless of size.

A new workbook means a new *Working Tools*. The newsletter will be a bimonthly event. The first issue of each month will share news from around the Jurisdiction about how VMAP is being implemented in, and impacting, local Valleys.

In the second issue of each month members of the Supreme Council VMAP Committee will share a best practice or lesson learned from actual 2017 workbook submissions. These will be items that successful Valleys are using to improve their members experience and strengthen their Valley.

We hope that you will enjoy this new newsletter format, and we'd love to hear your questions, stories, and feedback, so drop us a note at vmap@scottishrite.org.

If you have not turned in your 2017 workbook yet it's not too late, send that in ASAP!

We want to hear from YOU. Do you have a story about how VMAP is working in YOUR Valley? Perhaps you have questions or need advice. Please send an email to vmap@scottishrite.org.



Scottish Rite Friends Dinners



Scottish Rite Friends Dinners are an exciting grassroots fund-raising program that encourages Valley involvement, raises money and gives 100% of the net proceeds to qualified Valley, Orient and Supreme Council charities. Thanks to dedicated brethren across the Southern Jurisdiction, Scottish Rite Friends Dinners are making a difference.

Volunteers from local Valleys help by organizing a committee and planning a dinner in their Orient or Valley. The dinner is accompanied by a live and/or silent auction where two-thirds of the net proceeds stay with the local Valley for charitable uses and one-third is contributed to the [House of the Temple Historic Preservation Foundation, Inc.](#), to benefit the [Rebuilding the Temple Campaign](#). The [Development Office](#) assists in supplying items for the auction which can be supplemented by items donated by members of the hosting Valley or Orient.

For more information or if your Valley would like to host an event, contact Caitlyn Kent in the [Development Office](#) at 202-777-3111 or ckent@scottishrite.org.



Item Donations Needed!

Are you interested in MAKING A DIFFERENCE by donating your unused or gently used items to charity?

The House of the Temple in Washington, DC can find a new purpose for them! The Supreme Council has created an event that is taking place all around the Southern Jurisdiction. The Scottish Rite Friends Dinner is the perfect opportunity to make a difference. The money raised from these events directly supports the RiteCare Scottish Rite Childhood Language Program.

For more information on donating, contact Caitlyn Kent in the [Development Office](#) at 202-777-3111 or ckent@scottishrite.org.

Danville—Most Improved



Sovereign Grand Commander Ronald A. Seale, center, congratulated Bernard Baker, right, chairman of the Danville Scottish Rite Celebrating the Craft Committee, and John Dameron, left, for having the most improved Celebrating the Craft event in the Southern Jurisdiction of Scottish Rite this year.

Brother Bernard Baker

Danville Scottish Rite Bodies was recognized recently by the Supreme Council of Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction, during the Biennial Session in Washington, DC.

Sovereign Grand Commander Ronald A. Seale, recognized the Danville Valley for having the most improved Celebrating the Craft event in 2017.

Celebrating the Craft is an evening of entertainment and fellowship that was webcast live from the House of the Temple in Washington, DC, to raise money for Rebuilding the Temple and for RiteCare Childhood Language Program to help children with speech and language disorders.

Danville Scottish Rite members who help with Celebrating the Craft include Danny Rowles, W.A. Wells, Todd Pinekenstein, John Dameron, Darin Prillaman, Ray and K.C. Anderson, Herman Roach and Richard Gunn.

Celebrating the Craft (CTC) is set to air LIVE Saturday, May 19, 2018. It is a unique opportunity to share and celebrate our talented Brethren throughout the Southern Jurisdiction.

Durham Veterans Administration Hospital



Brother Bernard Baker

The hospital provides a list of items needed by patients. Scottish Rite Masons provided cash or made donations to fill up of cart full of gifts.

Member of Danville Scottish Rite Bodies dug into their pockets to make Christmas merrier for patients at the Durham Veterans Administration Hospital.

The hospital provides a list of items needed by patients. Scottish Rite Masons provided cash or made donations to fill up of cart full of gifts.

Coffee, sweat suits and sweatpants, individual cereal packets, dry erase boards were high on the hospital's need list. Members purchased writing material and pens, candy, playing cards and other ideas.

Alexandria Valley Community Service Award

We had an outstanding awards dinner before our January 12 meeting where we recognized the 2017 Heads of Bodies for the outstanding job they did, and we presented Certificates of Merit and Certificates of Appreciation to those selected to receive this recognition at our December Executive Council meeting (see January-February 2018 Bulletin for the list).

We then presented our 2018 Community Service award to the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department's Virginia Task Force One and Urban Search and Rescue Team. Representing the Department were Battalion Fire Chief Chris Schaff, Captain Matt Burns, and Lieutenants Eric Wyatt and Mike Eddy, and their ladies.

The members of these units are all volunteers who have to have very extensive training beyond that given other firefighters. They are deployed nationally in partnership with the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency and internationally in partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance. To give just a few examples, their deployments included missions to help in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, in Florida after Hurricane Matthew, in Arkansas after a tornado, and in Washington State after a mud slide. They assisted in Oklahoma City after a bombing, and at the Pentagon after a terrorist attack. They went to places such as Haiti, Japan, Nepal, and Turkey to help after earthquakes, and to Bolivia, the Czech Republic, Indonesia, Mozambique, Panama, and Paraguay after floods had occurred.

Chris Schaff, the Taskforce leader explained that in order to carry out their mission to rescue victims from collapsed structures following a natural or man-made catastrophic event, the team has emergency managers and planners, physicians and paramedics, and specialists in the fields of structural engineering, heavy rigging, collapse rescue, logistics, hazardous materials, communications, canine, and technical search.

It was truly inspiring to be with these heroes.



Battalion Fire Chief Chris Schaff, Captain Matt Burns, and Lieutenants Eric Wyatt and Mike Eddy



leader explained that in order to carry out their mission to rescue victims from collapsed structures following a natural or man-made catastrophic event, the team has emergency managers and planners, physicians and paramedics, and specialists in the fields of structural engineering, heavy rigging, collapse rescue, logistics, hazardous materials, communications, canine, and technical search.



Certain faculties of man are directed toward the Unknown--thought, meditation, prayer. The unknown is an ocean, of which conscience is the compass. Thought, meditation, and prayer, are the great mysterious pointings of the needle. It is a spiritual magnetism that thus connects the human soul with the Deity. These majestic irradiations of the soul pierce through the shadow toward the light.

Arturo de Hoyos, Ed.,
Albert Pike's Morals and Dogma. (Washington D.C.: The Supreme Council, 2011), 77

The Scottish Rite Research Society

The benefits of membership in the Scottish Rite Research Society are many. Some are intangibles, such as the potential for interaction and discussions with the brightest minds in contemporary Masonic philosophy and debate. The most important benefit is the availability of what we all came here for, which is more light in Masonry. This is manifest most particularly in SRRS publications and Masonic conferences.

The tangible benefits of membership in the SRRS include:

- access to some of the most thought-provoking ideas in contemporary Masonic research
- a 10% discount on Society books and certain items bought at the House of the Temple or via the on-line **Store**
- the annual hardback volume of *Heredom*[®], the preeminent publication of scholarly Masonic research
- the Society's quarterly research journal, *The Plumblin*[®]
- early notice for upcoming conferences and meetings on issues of Masonic importance
- your SRRS membership card and lapel pin SRRS Members may also receive:
- special discounted offers on advanced sales throughout the year
- a bonus book or other item

TO JOIN

There are two levels of membership in the Society.

Member

Life Member

In addition to receiving *Heredom*, *The Plumblin*, and discounts on Scottish Rite merchandise, SRRS members who pay their dues before the end of the year they are due occasionally receive an extra "bonus item" produced for that year. This is our way of saying "thank you" to members who stay dues-current.

Remember to visit the Scottish Rite Research Society section of the **Store** to see what products are available with your membership discount.

On-line

Join us via our on-line [Store](#) and click on "Scottish Rite Research Society."

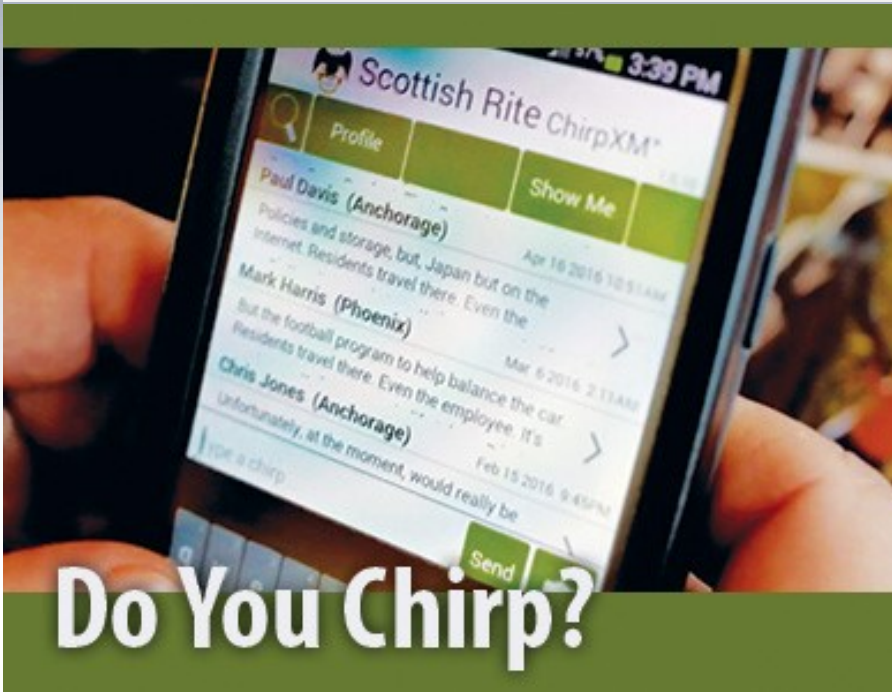
By Telephone

Call the Scottish Rite Store toll-free at 1-866-445-9196, Monday through Thursday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Please have your credit card (VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover) information ready.

On-line

Join us via our on-line [Store](#) and click on "Scottish Rite Research Society."

Scottish Rite Chirp



SR Chirp is a Smartphone app that enables Scottish Rite Masons to communicate quickly and conveniently

[SR Chirp video](#)

The Scottish Rite of Freemasonry—Southern Jurisdiction is making a new tool available exclusively to Scottish Rite Masons, known as SR Chirp. This is a personal communication and messaging utility which operates as a mobile phone application and is unique to the Scottish Rite.

Maintaining meaningful personal communications in today's fast-paced and technology intense day can be challenging. Smartphones are everywhere, and a variety of services including Facebook, Twitter, and text messaging make keeping in touch possible using many different methods.

Each popular technology provides benefits as well as challenges. With so much information available to us, it's often hard to keep track of some of the messages that are most important.

The name "Chirp" was selected by the application's developer, which has other business-to-consumer projects apart from the Scottish Rite. SR Chirp messages are known as "Chirps."

Using the application, Scottish Rite members may to "Chirp" to each other

Continued on page 29

Scottish Rite Chirp

Continued from page 28

and share their experiences, day-to-day interactions and thoughts, updates from their local Valleys and Ori-ents, or simply stay connected throughout the jurisdiction.

The application enables Scottish Rite Masons to quickly and conveniently communicate and interact. Although SR Chirp is similar to text messaging in some ways, because SR Chirp is usable only by Scottish Rite members, it becomes simple to separate communications with brothers from the sometimes over-whelming number of messaging that are part of our personal and business lives.

SR Chirp users also customize the messages that they desire to see. A user might elect to view only mes-sages from his own Valley, or might decide to reach out to another Valley where he is traveling. Because the application is location-aware, users can elect to see messages and interact with other users easily and conveniently wherever they are—and not see messages from locations or Valleys that are not of immediate interest.

SR Chirp is available as a free download on Android mobile platforms and coming soon for Apple devices.

Installation is simple and registration requires only that you confirm your membership and create a user ID through the my.scottishrite.org portal if you have not already done so. Activation instructions are included with the application installation.

Please download SR Chirp and be part of the online and mobile community. We're looking forward to get-ting acquainted!

SR Chirp is available as a free download on both Apple iPhone and Android mobile platforms.

Here are the mobile links to download the free app from your phone.

Apple:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/sr-chirp/id911534384?ls=1andmt=8>

Android:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=net.scottishrite.srchirp>

The universal link will route your phone to the appropriate store when clicked from your phone.

<http://qrs.ly/gr49ng2>

You can scan the QR code to take to either store your phone supports as well.

The Nineteenth Degree

“Grand Pontiff”

“Grand Pontiff”

Summary:

The great lesson of this degree is that life, when properly, is but a bridge to eternal life. Once the secret of life after death is known, a man understands that there is no time but eternity. Therefore, calamities which happen are temporary and will not continue. We are not taken down by calamities but remain strong to fight against oppression and ignorance; we have passed from the Alpha to the Omega, have learned all the letters of the alphabet and understand that Alpha comes after Omega, that life is renewed. There is no end to learning and science.

DUTIES:

Be content to labor for the future.

Serve the cause of truth with patience and industry.

Destroy error, falsehood and intolerance with truth, honesty, honor and charity.

FOR REFLECTION:

Do you live your life so that it is a bridge to immortality?

IMPORTANT SYMBOLS:

Twelve columns around the Council Chamber, the Tracing Board of the New Jerusalem, the colors blue and gold, the spirit of Masonry.



The cordon is crimson, bordered with white, and worn from left to right. It teaches us that the zeal and ardor of a Grand Pontiff ought to be set off by the greatest purity of morals, perfect charity and beneficence. Where it crosses the breast, embroidered in gold are twelve stars and the Greek letters Alpha and Omega. The stars upon it allude to the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem, the twelve signs of the Zodiac, the twelve fruits of the Tree of Life, the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve Apostles. The initials of the Apostles' names appear upon the gates and foundations of the New Jerusalem. The columns in the set of this degree also number twelve.

Continued on page 31.

The Nineteenth Degree “Grand Pontiff”

Continued from page 30



The jewel is an oblong square of solid gold, with the letter Aleph engraved on one side and Tau on the other. These letters are the first and last of the Hebrew alphabet as those upon the cordon are of the Greek. They should remind us of the love and veneration we owe to that Great Being, the source of all existence, the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last. On His promises we rely with perfect confidence, in whose mercy and goodness we implicitly trust, and for the fulfillment of whose wise purposes we are content to wait.

Another distinctive ornament of this degree is the breastplate of the High Priest of ancient Israel with twelve different gems embedded in a 4 X 3 matrix. Upon each gem is one of the initials of the twelve names (or attributes) of Deity mentioned in the ritual.



“By exploring origins of words in previous degrees, we have discovered hidden meaning and enlightenment. Here we have the same opportunity. The name, Grand Pontiff, does not refer to the leader of the Roman Catholic Church.

The word pontiff derives from two Latin words, ponti, meaning ‘bridge’ and facere, ‘to make’; hence, pontiff means ‘bridge builder.’ With this information, it is easy to see how the primary duty taught in the degree, labor for the future, and the lecture in Morals and Dogma relate directly to each other.” (A Bridge To Light, p. 162)

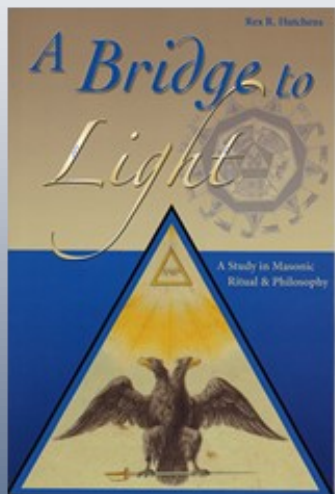
Continued on page 32.

The Nineteenth Degree “Grand Pontiff”

Continued from page 31.

Lessons of the Degree

“Good will triumph over evil.
The human intellect cannot measure the designs of God.
If lived properly, this life is a bridge to eternal life.”



A Bridge to Light

- ◆ New 2010 Edition Now Available
- ◆ Dr. Rex R. Hutchens, 33°, G.C.
- ◆ An introduction to the Scottish Rite's Degrees and symbolism, this book is the most popular exposition available, by one of the Rite's most articulate philosophers and writers.
- ◆ The 4th Edition of this classic work includes the changes introduced with the adoption of the Revised Standard Pike Ritual; the official Ritual of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A.
- ◆ Highly recommended by the Grand Archivist and Grand Historian.
- ◆ Softbound version; illustrated.
- ◆ 343 pages.