

Free State Freemason



March 2006

New Concepts in Communication

2006 Grand Line Officers

M.W. Grand Master - Ronald G. Bélanger
R.W. D.G.M. - John R. Biggs, Jr.
R.W. Sr. Grand Warden - Stephen J. Ponzillo, III
R.W. Jr. Grand Warden - Carl W. Todd
R.W. Grand Secretary - Herbert Y. Holcomb, III
R.W. Grand Treasurer - Wm. Raymond Bosley
R.W. Grand Marshal - Harold A. Garren
W. Grand Chaplain - Donald C. Stottlemeyer
W. Asst. Grand Chaplain - Elwood L. Ulmer
W. Asst. Grand Chaplain - Richard C. Oursler
W. Sr. Grand Deacon - Jay W. Hodges
W. Jr. Grand Deacon - Kerry P. Collins
W. Sr. Grand Steward - Jeffrey L. Schuster
W. Jr. Grand Steward - Paul C. Cornelius, Jr.
W. Grand Standard Bearer - C. Denning Wiggins
W. Grand Sword Bearer - G. Steven Shlagel
W. Grand Pursuivant - William E. Gyr
W. Grand Dir. of Ceremonies - Arthur R. Dickerson
W. Grand Tyler - Melvin E. Harrison
W. Asst. Grand Tyler - Richard H. Uren
W. Grand Lecturer - David L. Schneider
W. Grand Organist - Ronald L. Unger
W. Asst. Grand Organist - Kenneth C. Mars
R.W. Grand Secretary Emeritus - Jack R. Frazier
W. Grand Lecturer Emeritus - Edward B. Kraft

From the Grand Master:



I hope all of you didn't throw away your Scottish Rite Magazine, if you did your missing out on a new idea and a new concept of promoting our great Fraternity. Yes, change can make a difference and in an effort to reach all of you we have entered into what I feel is a beneficial partnership with the Southern Jurisdiction of the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite of the United States of America. Your Freestate Freemason will now be coming to you as an insert in the Scottish Rite Journal. This will allow the Grand Lodge to put out a higher quality publication six times a year as opposed to quarterly for slightly less than we were spending before our partnership. In turn, this allows the Supreme Council to reach all Maryland Masons with their message as well, truly the Maryland Masonic Family working together to "Make a Difference." The first noticeable difference is our ability to use color photos and of course a higher quality paper on which to print those photos. The hidden benefits are the sharing of combined mailing costs which are an ever increasing burden on both organizations. I believe this is a relationship beneficial to both organizations and I welcome the opportunity to bring you, the Masons of Maryland, the best publication we can possibly provide.

Additionally, we have the list serve function up and running. This is an opportunity for all Masonic Bodies in Maryland to keep the entire jurisdiction up to speed on your Lodge or collateral body's activities. All you have to do is send a message to: glmaryland@listserve.com. We have an administrator who will review your message for content and then put it out to all who have signed up to receive a mailing. How do I get a mailing you ask? Simple, visit: <http://mailman.listserve.com/listmanager/listinfo/glmaryland>

Follow the instructions for receiving these messages and you will automatically be sent a mailing several times a week (*Continued on page 3*)

The Grand Lodge of Ancient,
Free, and Accepted Masons
of Maryland





Deadlines for submitting articles & information for publication in the *Freestate Freemason*: the 20th of January, March, May, July, September, November. These dates are firm as the issue must be formatted and given to the AASR the last day of these months.

Grand Lodge of Maryland
304 International Circle
Cockeysville, MD 21030
410-527-0600 tel
410-527-1276 fax
FSFM@covad.net

<http://freemasonry.org/maryland/gl>

Article Submission

These points should be followed for articles submitted for inclusion in the FSFM:

Original pictures or pictures from a digital camera on disk are fine - use the highest resolution.

Ink jet prints or newspaper pictures **will not reproduce satisfactorily.** If you desire return on the pictures they must have submitting individual's name on back.

Pictures should have accompanying documentation detailing who is in the picture and what the picture represents if not accompanied by an article. Articles must be typewritten.

Articles can be submitted to the editor by e-mail, fax, regular mail or dropped off at the Grand Lodge office.



The Grand Lodge of Maryland Ballroom Rentals

Contact: Raymond J. Vogel, Ballroom Coordinator at 410.527.0289

E-Mail: glballroom@covad.net, Fax 410.527.0289

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.- Monday - Friday by appointment.

Catering: Approved list of caterers.

Ballroom Capacity: Receptions, 320, with a nice dance area.

410 for banquets without dance area. Separate room for Weddings and Special Events.

Rates: Call for information.

Parking: Free on site, 178 spaces.

Information: Foyer is marble with a fantastic staircase. Ballroom is 55 ft. x 111 ft., with hardwood floors. Twelve brass chandeliers, dance area depends on table setup. A must see in person to really see and feel the beauty of this facility. Call us and come see our Ballroom in this beautiful Hunt Valley setting.

License Plates

Masonic License plates are available to Maryland Masons, with vehicles registered in Maryland, as well as their wives, widows, and sons and daughters living at home.

You do not have to wait for renewal of registration. Call Ray Vogel at 410-527-0600 to find out how it works and how easy it is to put them on your vehicle. Ray is available during regular business hours Monday through Friday. **Be proud of your fraternity and display these plates on your car this year.**

Chair Plaques & The Tree of Life

Chair Plaques are for chairs located in the Corinthian Room on the second floor of Grand Lodge. You may have your own name on a plaque, or have it in memory of, or to honor a person, club, or group.

The Tree of Life is located in the main lobby of the Grand Lodge Building. You can sponsor a leaf on the tree, or have it in memory of, or to honor a person, club, or group.

The Chair Plaques and the Tree of Life leaves cost only \$200.00 each. This provides you with up to four lines on either, with twenty-one characters per line. What a wonderful way to remember someone. Call Ray Vogel at the Grand Lodge at 410-527-0600 to make arrangements for yours.



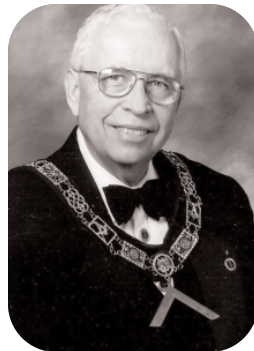
(Continued from page 1) or whenever info is released by the administrator. Remember, this is not an open forum or chat-room. This is to be used to keep the membership across the jurisdiction up to date on current affairs and activities. Topics such as fund raising, memorial services, ritual schools and meeting schedules are most welcomed by any and all of our Masonic Family Organizations. Jokes, complaints, and other trivial matters will not be posted however and we'll leave you to sending those via your own address book. Yes, your Grand Lodge may actually be approaching the 21st century and the computer age and we are hoping that these avenues of communication will assist all of us in making a difference.

The installations are completed and the new officers are hopefully hitting the ground running. There is much to accomplish and it takes all of us doing our part to make it happen. The Worshipful Master of your Lodge can not do it alone! We were very successful in many areas last year and it will take a continued effort to make it happen again this year. I view a part of my job as providing you the tools for success, having said that I can't do it for you. I can however stretch my cable tow as far as possible to assist in any way possible to ensure the success of all the subordinate Lodges in Maryland but, I am not a mind reader nor am I clairvoyant. Communication and dialog and the absolute commitment to avoid apathy at all costs are mandatory if we

are to continue making successful strides in our jurisdiction. As ignorance is the mother of all prejudice, the education of the Craft, particularly our newest members is paramount. It demands our utmost attention and the pursuit of excellence is just one of the methods available to us for the purpose of attaining the much needed education within the Craft. It is said if you truly want to learn anything, teach it. In order to achieve this goal I encourage all of you to read, learn and teach the lessons of Freemasonry to a new Brother. Become a mentor to a new Brother and you will have expanded on the legacy that has been left by those who have come before us. Masonry is a way of life. How will you contribute to its success and its survival? Let us all be about helping one another be better Masons and more considerate of the needs of our Brethren. Let us all be about "Making a Difference."

*Fraternally,
Ronald G. Belanger
Grand Master*

From the Deputy Quantity or Quality



There are those that judge the success or failure of a Lodge by the size of its membership; some to the point of wanting to make drastic changes to the very structure of the fraternity.

Some blame membership on catechism requirements, some on the length and necessity of the lectures; some warn of the need to shorten every thing to adapt to the changes of present day society - is this the answer? I readily admit I do not have all the answers to what many perceive as "our problem", but is gutting it the way to go? Maybe some change in these areas is needed? I would love to hear your opinion on this.

Our fraternity has endured the high and low of membership for nearly all of the many years it has been in existence - are we merely in another low period? I tend to think we are - I have been receiving, on average, 6 to 8 emails a week asking for information on Freemasonry, and how to petition a Lodge. This works out to be about 400 a year, and certainly indicates to me that there is a definite interest in our fraternity from those that have found out about us. Interestingly the majority of these inquiries that had a Masonic relationship was of their grandfather's membership. I seems that in some instances we have lost a generation of men.

One of the easiest ways today to obtain information is the internet, however, those that have performed a search on Freemasonry will quickly tell you there is a lot of garbage and lies out there as well as factual information. A reasonable thinking individual will probably realize these trash sites for what they are, and quickly discount them. (Continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 3) We, however, must do everything we can to educate our communities and those around us at every chance we have.

A Lodge not taking advantage of this is not using powerful resources that are presently available.

Should a Lodge that hasn't taken in a candidate in 6 years think about merging - maybe - or should it consider why this is happening, and take the necessary steps to develop a strategy to turn this situation into something of a positive aspect. Some would say this Lodge is dead and just doesn't know it yet, but that is a defeatist attitude. I look at Leaders like Terry Beale, who, several years ago, took a Lodge on the verge of turning in its charter, and brought it into the light of the community, and began seeing petitions come in the door; Leaders like Gene Purkey of Potomac Lodge in Cumberland who held an open house on their 150th celebration day and ended up with a fare number of requests for petitions from people that didn't even know what was inside of the building; future Leaders like Chris Pavon, newly elected Master of Chester Lodge, and the 125 attendees at his installation - they couldn't get everyone inside the Lodge that evening; Howard Lodge that took in 50 new members in 2005; Bill Sweeney, newly elected President of the Knights of Mecca, Bill has made an aggressive plan to revive his club and is well into doing just

that. Brethren, the list could go on and on, but these are a few that come to mind. They have done this without any modification of our constitution or ritual, and I really believe other Lodges can do the same! It won't be done without dedication and hard work brethren, but we have Lodges around the State that are doing it.

Does size matter - I attended a small Lodge, less than 200 members - they struggled for several years, but through the perseverance of a handful of its members, it now has a full line of new young members. I am also aware of a Lodge that has 4 times as many members that was seriously considering a merger. The answer to me is "involvement" - without it we fade away. Apathy, as our Grand Master says, will surely be the death of a Lodge.

In much of the United Kingdom when a Lodge reaches 100 members they split and become two Lodges. This leaves each Lodge 50 members. When you visit these Lodges, you will find every member will be in attendance unless he is sick or away on business or vacation. Some meet quarterly, some monthly and some twice a month, but regardless of this they are supported by their membership.

Testimonial

The following letter was received following an Open Installation this year:

Most Worshipful Grand Master:

The installation you conducted

with your Grand Officers was one of the most impressive things this lodge has ever seen. The seldom seen Masons and non Masons in attendance were at least equally impressed. You and your Grand Line Officers made us all look better than we were. One attendee (formally a seldom seen type) who had not been back to a lodge since he received his third degree told me this morning he didn't realize what he had been missing. He had attended our lodge a couple of times since GI Utterback presented him with his 50 year pin from the Grand Lodge of PA., but now intends to show up more often. His comment to others at the breakfast table included the fact that he knew the work was done from memory but it was delivered in such a way that one would think an unrehearsed explanation and procedure was taking place. I suspect an affiliation petition may be in the offing.

My wife is not easily impressed either, but I believe the words she used included magnificent and I agree entirely. I know our new Worshipful Master, Chris Pavon, was in awe of the whole event.

I believe P.G.M. David Haacke mentioned a petition was received immediately after the ceremonies were completed. It now is in the mail to Linda Z.

Today I learned another petition for the three degrees will be presented to us next week from a man who has been a little undecided for a couple of months or more. He (Continued on page 5)



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also observed the installation.

I must confess I have always had some doubts about the wisdom of open installations. Those doubts disappeared January 19, 2006.

Chester Lodge did not do the best job of thanking you and your Grand Line while you were in the lodge and I regret that. Please accept my thanks and convey my personal appreciation to all who participated. I think you set Chester Lodge on a course of success for a long time to come just by this installation.

*Sincerely and fraternally,
Jesse G. Cunningham
Secretary*

Amazing Trip

This summer, as I was driving to Provo, Utah for a business trip, I stopped one night in Pueblo, Colorado. Since it was still fairly early (about 6:30), I looked on the Colorado Grand Lodge web site to see if there was a Lodge holding a Stated Communication that evening. There was, Pueblo Lodge No. 17. I changed, got directions to the Lodge and drove to the Lodge building in downtown Pueblo. I was welcomed and admitted into the Lodge.

It was a great evening of fellowship, as I always find when traveling to Lodges in other jurisdictions. The ritual was different but still very familiar. Some of the differences I liked; for the others, I like our ritual better. Of course that could be because the

Maryland ritual is what I know.

After the stated communication I joined them for refreshment and fellowship. As I was leaving, the Secretary gave me a copy of the history of Pueblo Lodge No. 17 which had been prepared in celebration of their Centennial celebration. This was, naturally, pretty much a history of the town of Pueblo. Many of the city founders were members of the Lodge.

I didn't get to read the history until after my arrival in Provo, several days later. As I was reading it, I read a story I've known most of my life about a Lieutenant in World War I. He, like all the other members of Pueblo Lodge No. 17 who were members of the American Expeditionary Force, had been presented with a Masonic medallion. This Lt was wounded by shrapnel and lay on the battlefield for two days. He was found by a German patrol, one or more of who were Masons.

They recognized him as a brother in need, got him immediate medical attention and returned him to the Allied Lines. These actions undoubtedly saved his life. The reason I knew this story is that this lieutenant was my grandfather. Until reading this story, I did not know that my grandfather had been a member of Pueblo Lodge. Reading a little further I discovered that my great-grandfather had also been a member.

Since I was in Utah to work on perfecting my wood turning skills, I took the opportunity to turn a gavel to present to Pueblo Lodge.

I turned it from an exceptionally striking piece of a wood called bocote. It is a hardwood from Mexico with a very highly figured grain pattern. I had a brass band made to wrap around the head of the gavel which said it was from me to Pueblo Lodge in memory of C. W. O'Kelley (my great-grandfather) and L. L. O'Kelley (my grandfather).

I delayed my homecoming by a few days to return to Pueblo Lodge for their next stated communication. I didn't tell them why I was there until we were in Lodge. When I told them the story and presented the Worshipful Master with the gavel, the members were thrilled and more than a little amazed. The W.M. used the gavel to close Lodge and said it would be used for special occasions such as installations and memorial services. The rest of the time it would be in a display case for all to see. I know beyond any doubt that I have a Masonic home in Pueblo any time I stop in.

Michael O'Kelly, W.M.

Prince Frederick Lodge No. 142

Masonic Square Bears

Brethren, in keeping with the Grand Masters Motto "Making a Difference", we have a terrific opportunity. We as masons can place our lodges in the public's eye by participating by placing a Bear in the hands of a child.

This is a program that each lodge can participate in with very little effort. Maryland Lodges have purchased and distributed more than 3000 (Continued on page 6)



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Bears throughout the state. Many lodges have participated one time and then decided not to continue to participate. Children do not stop being abused, hurt, or neglected. We as masons have and opportunity to assist them through their troubling times.

We can place the bears in the hands of our public service organizations, Fire departments, police, ambulances, child abuse centers, hospitals to name a few. A bear in hands of a frightened child can be the calming effect that is needed to insure the proper treatment of them at that very moment of fear. "A Bear Hug is Beary Good Medicine."

For more information contact Glen Clary. 2532 Cheval Dr., Davidsonville, Md. 21035-1128, Phone: 410-721-1375, or email: gbcac129@comcast.net

Thanks

Thanks to all the Brethren of the Grand Lodge of Maryland:

To try to express how I felt on the evening of June 24th is neigh onto impossible. I was overwhelmed with the outpouring of friendship that you showed at the testimonial dinner. I want to thank the Grand Master and Deputy Grand Master for arranging this wonderful evening. It will be a night that neither of us will ever forget. Many of you, who were unable to be with us, sent congratulations and regrets, which meant so very much to us. Thank you to so many of our good friends for the wonderful compliments and

memories which you shared, along with the roasting. As I said that evening, "It's nice to know that a job, that was such an important part of my life for so many years, has been appreciated." From the bottom of my heart...THANK YOU!

*Ed Kraft
Grand Lecturer Emeritus*

Stewardship

Grand Master Belanger often speaks of "Stewardship" - here are three comments on that subject that should be the "rule and guide" for each of us.

"I am only one; but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. I will not refuse to do the something I can do." --

Helen Keller

"Use what talents you possess; the woods would be very silent if no birds sang except those that sang best." -- *Henry Van Dyke*

"I not only use all the brains that I have, but all that I can borrow."

-- *Woodrow Wilson*

Pursuit of Excellence Ritual Program

Objective: To recognize and reward those members in good standing who have achieved and maintained the highest level of proficiency in the ritualistic work of the three degrees of Masonry of the Grand Lodge of Maryland.

Goal: To certify and present a card signifying the level of recognition to those brothers who are found to be proficient and have given their time and effort to learn and preserve the ritual of the Grand Lodge of Maryland.

Card Level:

Gold: Full opening and conferral of the three degrees, including all lectures; Calling off and opening within the degrees; Ballot process-petition and catechism proficiency Memorial Service.

Silver: Full opening and conferral of the three degrees, less the lectures; Calling (Continued on page 7)



Each year, Bro. Norris Cartright hosts a "Pig Picking" outing at his house. Above, "Jack" Biggs, D.G.M. presents a 50 year pin to one of the attendees.



(Continued from page 6)

off and opening within the degrees;
Opening of the Lodge of Sorrow;
Grand Masonic Word

Bronze: Proficient in the catechism of all three degrees
(Questions and Answers)

Program Description:

The Ritual Excellence Program Card will be issued to a member of the Maryland Masonic Fraternity when he has proven himself proficient in one or all of the levels described above. In order to obtain the Gold Card the brother must be proficient in the Bronze and Silver level before he can obtain the Gold Card level. Each participant in the program has one full calendar year to complete his certification. However, when applying for a Gold or Silver card the brother must complete, at a minimum, one full degree on a single evening. A brother who requests to be certified as a Bronze cardholder shall complete all three degree catechisms in the same evening.

The cards, distinguished by color, will bear the brothers name, Lodge name and number, date issued, signed by the Grand Master, Grand Secretary and the Grand Lecturer.

The Gold cards will be valid for five years and the brother will be required to stand a partial exam yearly to retain his card. Once the brother has had his card for five years he becomes a Gold Card member for LIFE and does not require being re-certified. The Silver cardholder must renew his card every three years. The Bronze cardholder must renew his card

every two years. Failure to abide by the rules for renewal will cause the Grand Master to revoke the card.

The Grand Master will present the cards at the Grand Lodge Semi-Annual and/or Annual Grand Lodge Communications.

Regulations:

The brother shall prove his ritualistic ability to a committee consisting of the Grand Lecturer or his designee, and two Deputy Grand Lecturers. This committee shall use a scoring system established by the Grand Lecturer. A brother seeking a Bronze Card shall be allowed no more than two errors per degree. A brother seeking a Silver card shall be allowed no more than a total of 25 errors and a brother seeking the Gold card shall be allowed no more than a total of 30 errors. An error is considered to be a word or phrase omitted, a wrong word (including adding or forgetting the "S" at the end of any word), proper signs and responses.

Renewing the card, which you hold, shall be completed in the presence of the Ritual Card Committee using the same criteria as required when originally certified.

The card becomes invalid if the brother does not renew it within the prescribed time period, if the brother is suspended for non-payment of dues or convicted of un-Masonic conduct. The Grand Lecturer will make the determination and file a report to the Grand Master with a recommendation for action. The Grand Master will

make the final disposition of this action.

First consideration as a Deputy Grand Lecturer will be given to Gold Card holders.

All Deputy Grand Lecturers should encourage every brother they come in contact with to participate in this program. If you have any question concerning the program, please contact your Deputy Grand Lecturer or Dave Schneider, W.G.L.

Masonic Family

Saturday, November 16, 2005, the Harford Chapter was pleased to initiate 5 new members. Three of our new Sisters are members of Bethel No. 35, one is the sister of a Job's Daughter, and one the wife of a new Master Mason and mother of a new DeMolay. The sidelines were filled with family and friends for the initiation including the Grand Guardian of Job's Daughters, Sister Pat Pelham, and Past Matron of Gleaner Chapter. On Saturday, December 10, 2005, the first Annual Masonic Family Christmas Dinner and Program was held. 140 members of Mt. Ararat Lodge No. 44, Harford Chapter O.E.S., Bethel No. 35, I.O.J.D. and Nelson J. Briggs Chapter, Order of DeMolay, their families and friends were in attendance. The evening began with a social hour, followed by a family style dinner in our festively decorated dining hall, under the coordination of Sister Debbie Hribar, P.M. We then moved into the Lodge room for a Christmas program under the direction Sister



Our Masonic Family Christmas



From the left: Heidi Padilla, new member; and sister of Honor Queen; Stacey Marley, Honor Queen No. 35; Jennifer Pauer, Past Honor Queen No. 35; Pat Pelham, Grand Guardian, P.H.Q. No. 49; Becky Fayer, P.J.P. No. 35; Beverly Fletcher, M.M. Harford No. 83; Edsel Crouse, W.P. No. 83 and Pam Loftus, new member and wife of a new Master Mason.

Betty Bollock, P.M. O.E.S. Members of all four bodies participated in the program in some way. All of those in attendance were asked to bring a canned good, toy or pair of socks or mittens. These were collected and then given as an offering during the program, like gifts to the Christ child. We were happy to see that over 160 canned goods, 12 pairs of mittens and 20 toys were collected and

given for Christmas to those less fortunate. Following the program everyone returned to the refreshment hall for Christmas cookies. Prior to the dinner, each presiding officer spoke a little about his or her organization. We are happy to announce that the Job's Daughters were able to distribute a petition that evening, and that young lady has since been initiated. We were fortunate to have all

of the presiding officers that meeting in our Masonic Center in attendance, and to participate in some way. It was our wish that as this was being planned, that the as this was being planned, that the Christmas Program would continue for many years to come, promoting our fraternal ties among our own. We are looking forward to the 2nd Annual Masonic Family Christmas.

List Serv

To sign up, send a message to: glmaryland@listserve.com. We have an administrator who will review your message for content and then put it out to all who have signed up to receive a mailing. How do I get a mailing you ask? Simple, visit:

<http://mailman.listserve.com/listmanager/listinfo/glmaryland>

Regional Meetings

February

4: Regional - Meeting at Grand Lodge 9:00am, Coffee and donuts 8:30 a.m.

11: Regional Meeting at Mt. Ararat Lodge No. 44 - 9:00am, Coffee and donuts 8:30 a.m.

25: Regional Meeting in Wicomico Lodge No. 91 - 9:00am, Coffee and donuts 8:30 a.m.

March

11: Regional Meeting at Hagerstown Lodge No. 217 - 9:00am, Coffee and donuts 8:30 a.m.

18: Regional Meeting at Centennial Lodge No. 174

Snow date to be announced if necessary.