

# Free State Freemason



November 2006

## The End, To a Long and Winding Road



### *From the Grand Master:*

My Brethren:

As I write this final article it is already mid September and I am rapidly approaching the end of a very long and challenging journey that has left me grateful and appreciative of the opportunity to serve our Grand Lodge. Let me first begin by thanking you, the Craft for the opportunity of a life time. I hope that I have lived up to your expectations and while at this writing there are still many loose ends yet to tie up, there are so many more ideas that never reached the light of day, ideas that could have made a lasting difference on the image of our beloved Fraternity.

The sands of time run all too swiftly for any leader and I assure you it has been my enemy these last two years. I am proud of some of our accomplishments and when I say "Our" that is exactly what I mean. No man can ever hope to "Make a Difference" without the support of those who have placed him in the ultimate leadership role. I always reference the idea of the captain of a ship standing at the helm, he may know how to navigate his vessel but, without the men on the oars, the vessel goes nowhere.

This is and will forever be, our Grand Lodge and so long as we continue to take an interest and an active part in its government I assure you my Brethren it will continue to be successful. Yes, we have met with several disappointments and that is always to be expected, but overall I think we have moved at least one step ahead. Our net losses are just barely more than our net gains and I apologize for not having done a better job on that score but, we did get very, very close. I truly feel the tide turning and I trust the trend is going to be one of a positive note within the next few years.

Finally, Karen and I wish to thank all of you for your kindness and friendship over these past years. In our travels we have met so many wonderful members of our Maryland Masonic Family and we cherish each and every one of you. May our Creator continue showering His blessings upon all of you and your families, and we look forward to being with each of you on every convenient occasion. Remember my Brethren: "It is far better by noble boldness to run the risk of being subject to half the evils we anticipate than to remain in cowardly listlessness for fear of what might happen!"

God bless you all!  
Ronald G. Bélanger  
Grand Master



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.

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## Article Submission

These points should be followed for articles submitted for inclusion in the Free State Freemason publication:

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: [gballroom@covad.net](mailto:gballroom@covad.net), Fax 410-527-0289

**Office Hours:** 10:00 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.



## Gathering of Masonic Family

On April 17th 2006, Tuscan Lodge No. 202 had a program on the York Rite with Bros. Stephen J. Ponzillo, III and James B. Coker as guest speakers. The positive result of this evening was seven petitions presented to Bro. Stephen.



(Above: Richard Uren, Asst. Grand Tyler, Stephen J. Ponzillo, III, R.W. Sr. Grand Warden, W.M. Robert S. Yingling, James Coker, Past Sr. Grand Deacon and John McClay, Grand Inspector - All active members of York Rite.)

## 50 Year Service Award

On Tuesday, June 13th 2006, at Bonnie Blink Daylight Lodge No. 1, Brother Charles J. Truitt, Jr., of Lafayette Lodge No. 111, received his 50 Year Grand Lodge Service Pin and Card from Grand Inspector Avrum (Al) Tamres and



Worshipful Master Louis J. Bandell, Jr. (pictured above). Brother Truitt was very apprecia-

tive to receive his Service Award, especially at Bonnie Blink, since he was Worshipful Master of the Daylight Lodge in 1998! Brother Bandell, is so pleased to see that many of the Brothers are electing to receive their Service Pins at Bonnie Blink Daylight Lodge No. 1, which is a perfect venue for those Brothers who cannot get out to their Mother Blue Lodge at night and much rather prefer a Lodge setting. Family and Friends are welcome to attend this presentation who, for some Brothers, is a once in a life time experience to be shared by all loved ones. Bonnie Blink Daylight Lodge No. 1 meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 10:30am. Brother Bandell can be reached at 410-252-6020.

## Camp Springs Lodge No. 227 Celebrates 50th Anniversary

The members of Camp Springs Lodge No. 227, along with their ladies, friends and visiting brothers celebrated the lodge's 50th year Saturday May 6th 2006, with a night of dinner and entertainment at The Club, Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland.

The golden anniversary celebration turned out to be a sort of a reunion among members and families. Two of the original founders or charter members were present, Brothers George Christman, PM and Ned Waters. Graced by none other than Camp Springs own Past Master, the Most Worshipful Ronald G. Bélanger, Grand Master of A.F. & A.M. of Maryland, who

proudly congratulated the members. He spoke before the crowd of equally proud members and even supporting visiting brethren outside Grand Lodge of Maryland and narrated some of the memorable events as well as colorful accomplishments of the lodge and its Past Masters that took place during the past years.

PM Pat Curtis, Secretary and chairman of the anniversary welcomed the visitors and thanked his committee members. The Capital Barbershop Quartet, who wowed the audience with their brotherly harmonious serenade, provided entertainment for the night. Red roses were distributed to the ladies present and Masonic coins commemorating the 50th anniversary were given to the male visitors. Also present that evening was Grand Inspector James G. Howcroft, PM, who was presented his 60th-year pin as a Master Mason by GM Bélanger himself. The occasion ended with the closing remarks of Grand Inspector Richard Shaffer, PM and current two-time Worshipful Master Miguel P. Banagan, thanking everyone who made the anniversary celebration a success.

The following Tuesday May 9th 2006 was a continuation of the celebration. At 5:30 PM, officers and interested brothers assembled at Bell Methodist Church to commemorate the first meeting of 50 years ago. After a fantastic dinner prepared by PM Ernie Birckhead, Asst. Grand Chaplain

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Maurice Rackey and Bob Lee; WM Miguel P. Banagan, received with honors the Grand Master and his line of officers. MWGM Ronald G. Bélanger greeted the brethren and introduced the Grand Officers who traveled with him and handed back the gavel to the Worshipful Master.

Next in the agenda of the stated meeting, WM Banagan introduced the guest speaker who was eagerly awaited by visiting brethren in attendance, the Illustrious Bro. S. Brent Morris, managing editor of the Scottish Rite Journal, Past Grand Director of Ceremonies, GL of Maryland and one of the world's foremost Masonic scholars and author of several Masonic titles. Currently, he is the Junior Warden of Quator Coronati, the famed research lodge of the Grand Lodge of England. Bro. Morris talked about the Politics of Masonry as well as pre-revolutionary American Masonry. WM Banagan, informed the brethren present that Bro. Morris is the author of the newly published book entitled "Complete Idiot's Guide to Freemasonry".

PM Jerry Jordan who traveled from Florida was called to summarize the history of the lodge. The charter of Camp Springs Lodge 227 was granted on May 15th 1956 by MWGM Arthur W. Dowell with following brothers as officers: Albert Kroll, WM; Clarence Clayton, SW; Cecil Holsinger, JW; Jack Ferrel, Secretary and Herbert Poundsberry, Treasurer.

Before closing the lodge, GM Bélanger spoke about the Past Masters who continuously dedicate themselves for the betterment of Camp Springs Lodge. To the GM, Camp Springs Lodge No. 227 represents the epitome of the best of what the members can accomplish and more if only everyone really can work towards achieving a common goal.

The lodge is located at 6311 Old Branch Ave., Camp Springs, MD 20748, (301) 449-9793.

## Daylight Lodge No. 1

My Brethren, can you still remember the moment of thrill when you were finally raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason? How those many long hours spent with your instructor learning the catechism of the Degrees now seemed more worthwhile. You had reached that elusive goal and you were now full of vigorous enthusiasm.

Now if you will, fast forward your life to today. Your eyes are such you no longer drive at night. It seems like such a bother to call one of your Brothers and ask for a ride to Lodge. So what is there to do? The answer is right before your eyes and yet you probably didn't even think of it.

We call it Daylight Lodge No. 1 and it meets at the Grand Lodge on the second Tuesday of each month, except July and August. The name is Daylight Lodge which means it calls on at 10:30am. You don't need to drive at night and, matter of fact, you may not need to drive at all. There are probably

Brothers who live near you that would be happy to pick you up and bring you with them. Our meetings are short and we usually have a speaker with information that you would like to hear. You can bring your better half to most meetings and they can hear the speaker also. We close lodge and bring the ladies in.

Brethren, come join us and rediscover Masonry. There is Brotherly Love and affection and you and your Lady will be warmly welcomed.

## Southern Maryland Masons Dedicate Cornerstone for Civista Medical Center

In a ceremony kicking off the public launch of Civista's capital campaign, members of Perseverance, St. Columba, and other Southern Maryland Lodges as well as representatives from the Grand Lodge of Maryland led a ceremony dedicating the cornerstone for the expansion of Civista Medical Center.



*(Pictured above is the procession of the Craft representing nine Masonic Lodges of Southern Maryland, for a total of 30 Master Masons involved in this public event.*

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The cornerstone dedicated was a brick set aside during the demolition of the LaPlata Town Hall in 2005 to make room for the expansion project. That building was the site of the former Jarwood Clinic, where J. Parran Jarboe, MD and Arthur O. Woody, MD had their medical practice for many years.



*(Pictured above are from left to right: William A. Holt, WM No. 150; Henry L. Pierce, Jr., PM and construction superintendent; Doug Souris, PM No. 208; Fred White, PM No. 208)*

The cornerstone now rests in the South East corner of the four-story tower which will house an expanded emergency department, two 30-bed private patient units, and new state of the art surgical suites.

For nearly 300 years, Masons have joined with communities throughout the United States to lay cornerstones and celebrate the construction of new public buildings. For many, these dedication ceremonies remind us that all enduring things, buildings and people alike, must be built on a firm foundation. While today the ceremony is more symbolic, it represents Masonry's commitment to public institutions. Fundamental for the stability of the building, the cornerstone is generally located at the

point where vertical and horizontal measurements for erecting the structure are made with the cornerstone symbolizing the firm foundation that ensures solid structures. The stones fit into a space left in the brick work and generally seals an offering to the future.

Historic cornerstone ceremonies in the nation's capital include the U.S. Capitol by President and fellow Mason George Washington; the Army War College Building and House of Representatives Office Building by President and Mason Theodore Roosevelt; and the Washington Monument.

During the May 8th ceremony, Civista Medical Center's President & CEO Chris Stefanides, noted that the laying of the cornerstone, "celebrates the milestones we've accomplished in the building project since we broke ground last January and the remarkable steps we are taking toward making a real difference in healthcare for Charles County residents."

## Thank You

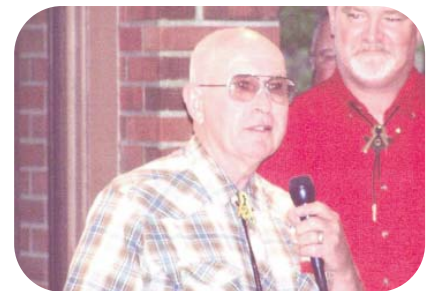
While traveling through the state of New Mexico, two of our Brethren met Brother Roland Milton, a Mason from that state, and made a generous contribution to the Masonic Charities of New Mexico.

Brother Milton called the Grand Lodge of Maryland to acknowledge this contribution, however, he did not get the names of our Brothers.

Therefore this goes out as a "Thank You" from Brother Milton and the State of New Mexico to the unidentified Brothers.

## Maryland Mason Inducted into Montana Masonic Hall of Fame

Bro. Jim E. Trowbridge, member of Collington Lodge No. 230, Bowie, MD was inducted into the Montana Masonic Hall of Fame at the Grand Lodge of Montana's annual meeting last June for his many contributions to Montana Masonry. Standing in the background is Bro. Jack D. Anderson, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Montana. While living in Maryland from 1972 through 1995, Bro. Trowbridge was very active with Masonry serving as Worshipful Master of Collington in 1982, Grand Director of Ceremonies -1986, Grand Inspector from 1988 through 1992 and served as President of the Board of the State Area for 1991 and 1992. He was also active with the York Rite, Order of the Eastern Star,



DeMolay and Jobs Daughters. When Bro. Jim moved to Montana in 1995, he continued to be active with the Masonic family. He served as Worshipful Master of Ionic Lodge in Hamilton for 2002/2003 and Secretary since 2003. He was also Grand Master of the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Montana, York Rite, during 2002/2003. Collington is very proud of Bro. Jim.



**60 Year Service Award**

It was a hot day in July - oppressively hot! But, as the day progressed, the weather took a turn for the better! It took some passing thunder storms and high winds to do the trick and the net result was an overcast sky, lower humidity, a nice breeze, and temps about 15 degrees cooler! What a break in the weather and what a pleasure it was for members of Sharon Lodge No. 182 to travel to Brother George Meiser's house to present him with his 60 Year Grand Lodge Service Award. Good weather or no, it is always



fair weather when honoring one of our own on such a special occasion. As the picture shows, with Bro. George Meiser seated in the "Chair of Honor", our Grand Inspector Bro. John Rafine presented the Certificate and Pin, while WM Brian Robinson, with Wallet Certificate Card in hand, made that presentation, as well. Bro. Ted Stegmiller, in the center, is flanked by Bro. Warren DeColigny, P.M., Chaplin and Bro. Oliver Strong, P.M., S.D.

Congratulations, once again, Brother George. It was a pleasure for all of us to be Masons and to share in your happiness!

**9th Annual Lodge of Low Vale**

On May 20th, 2006 Jephthah Lodge held its 9th Annual Low Vale at the Rocks State Park.

On this evening two Brothers were passed to the Fellowcraft Degree, Brothers William Woodring and Richard Feit, both from Jephthah Lodge #222.

The Officers of the Lodge for the evening were introduced by the Worshipful Master of Jephthah Lodge #222 Daniel S. Adams PM.

If you've never been to a Lodge of Low Vale, what you've missed is the opportunity to see our Masonic Ritual performed at its finest and in the greatest of Temples, the Temple of the Grand Architect of the Universe.

The carpeting is the lush green grass, its walls are the mighty oaks, maples and pines, and the ceiling is the vast displays of our universe. As dusk falls you then notice that the lighting for the Lodge is nothing more than candles, lanterns and torches. The only thing familiar is the furnishings of the Lodge.



On behalf of the members of Jephthah Lodge, we thank all the Brothers who attended and made this 9th Low Vale a success, and a Special Thanks to our Low Vale committee.

**MMH Resident's Crab Feast**

The residents of Bonnie Blink and friends of the Grand Master were treated to a crab feast on August 10, 2006. The "crack crew" at the Masonic Homes put together crab cakes, piles of steamed crabs, ribs and chicken and brought the residents over to the



ballroom in the Grand Lodge building. The sounds of Frank Sinatra were heard above the pounding of mallets and peals of laughter and chatter. This annual event is looked forward to by everyone at the Homes and was enjoyed by all. Thank you Grand Master!

**Masonic Care Bears Presented to Johns Hopkins Bayview Pediatric Unit**

Recently, members of Highland Lodge No. 184 presented the first supply of "Masonic Care Bears" to the Johns Hopkins Bayview Pediatric Unit for their use in calming and cheering up injured and burned children. The plush bears, wearing a yellow shirt with the slogan "Masons Care", each have a card attached identifying the donor Lodge to the parents. Ms. Ceal Cury of the Pediatric Unit

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gladly accepted the donation, looking forward to putting the bears to good use. Often, such a seemingly small gesture makes a



marked difference in an injured child's attitude towards the Staff members and the treatment needed to restore the child to health. The bears were presented on behalf of the Lodge by Tom Landerkin, PM; Bill Marshall Treasurer; and Ray Willner, Chairman of the Lodge's Board of Trustees. The gorilla was not identified.

## St. Columba Open Golf Tournament

On June 5 of this year, St. Columba Lodge held their annual golf tournament and raised \$2,000 for the MSA/USO "Operation Phone Home" program. We wish to thank all the brethren, volunteers, advertisers, and golfers who



made this event a success. This was our ninth Tournament, and we

have now raised over \$10,000 for various charities. This year the Wally Zinn Memorial Plaque was awarded to the team of Salyers, Mudd, Mudd and Mudd. We thank everyone for making this event a success.

## Masonic Compact

Because I am a Freemason:

I believe that freedom of religion is an inalienable human right and tolerance an indispensable trait of human character; therefore, I will stand in my Lodge with Brothers of all faiths, and respect their beliefs as they respect mine, and I will demonstrate the spirit of Brotherhood in all aspects of my life.

I know that education and the rational use of the mind are the keys to facing the problems of humanity; therefore, I will bring my questions and my ideas to my Lodge, and strive to advance the growth of my mind alongside my Brothers.

I know that the rich tradition of Freemasonry and its framework of Ritual are important platforms for growth and learning; therefore, I vow to stand upon these platforms to improve myself as a human being, and I vow to help in the mission of the Craft to provide tools, atmosphere, challenges and motivation to help each Brother do the same.

I know that charity is the distinguishing human virtue, and that personal community service is the best demonstration of one's commitment to humanity; I acknowl-

edge that words without deeds are meaningless, and I vow to work with my Lodge to provide service to the community, and to promote charity, friendship, morality, harmony, integrity, fidelity and love.

I know that my obligation to community extends beyond my local sphere and is plainly fulfilled in my patriotism love of my country, obedience to its laws and celebration of the freedoms and opportunities it symbolizes.

I know that leadership is best demonstrated by commitment to serving others; I will therefore participate in, and help work at improving individual leadership skills, and serve the Brothers of my Lodge to the best of my ability.

I know that friendship, fidelity and family are the foundations of a well-lived life; I therefore vow to be a faithful friend to my Brothers, as I expect my Lodge to respect my personal obligations, and to treat my family as though my family were their own.

I know that the last great lesson of Freemasonry, the value of personal integrity and the sanctity of one's word, is a lesson for all people in all times; I therefore vow to be a man of my word.

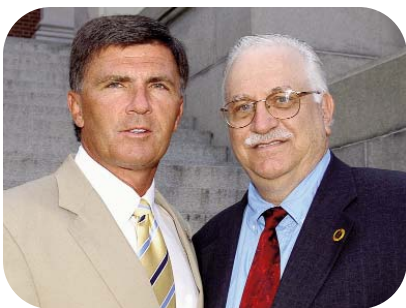
I know that Masonry's power is best exercised when its Light is shared with the world at large; I therefore vow to bring the best of myself to my Lodge, in order that my growth might be fostered and nurtured, and to present myself to the world as a working Freemason, on the path to building a more perfect temple.





## Still Trying to Make a Difference.....

The sands of time have run their course and I have little time left but, rest assured I'm still trying. At a recent visit with the Honorable, Robert L. Ehrlich, Governor of the great state of Maryland, our conversation covered two subjects near and dear to my heart, our Masonic Charities of Maryland and our attempts at securing the financial future of our Grand Lodge through our Land Lease Program. While admittedly there is little he can do to assist in the problems attached to the Land Lease Program at this time, his interest in the philanthropic endeavors of the Masonic Charities of Maryland was peaked when he was made aware of the yearly contributions that are made to the youth of our great state by the Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Maryland.



I took this opportunity to inform Mr. Ehrlich, that for the past twenty years our MCM Board has been responsible for forty eight \$1,000 scholarships and the underwriting of the MSAP program here in Maryland. MSAP is responsible for the training of counselors and teachers to identify drug and alcohol abuse in young students and is something we are very proud of and

will continue to support so long as we are able. Last year alone MCM was responsible for over \$100,000 of support to Maryland's youth, with the bulk of those funds going to the MSAP program. He listened with great interest as I explained our future plans to expand on this support and I suspect now that he is familiar with the efforts of MCM will be paying closer attention to what we, the Masons of Maryland, are doing as we continue our efforts to "Make a Difference."

## How not to visit a Foreign Masonic Lodge

I planned a 2 week cruise through the British Virgin Islands this past August. It was a last minute vacation on the S.V. Mandalay, a 236-foot 3 masted Barquentine carrying 72 passengers built in 1923. As part of my visit I hoped to visit St. Ursula's Lodge No. 8952EC in Roadtown, Tortola.

On my arrival on the ship I asked the activities mate supposedly knowledgeable of the islands if she knew where St. Ursula's Lodge was. She handed me a phone book to no avail. As we sailed out of Tortola for the first time, I put the thought of a visitation to rest.

I returned to Tortola the following Saturday with a huge cruise ship disembarking thousands of passengers for their 3 hour tour. As luck would have it the BVI Tourist Board had a representative there. Again I asked the female rep about St. Ursula's and was again rebuffed. Not one to give up, I asked about a Mason's Hall or Freemasonry. She

asked a male cabbie awaiting a fare and returned with a phone number of Ralph T. O'Neal. Excited, I found a working pay phone and contacted Bro. O'Neal. He sadly informed me the lodge would not meet until the last Saturday in August and it would be installation night. Disheartened and sailing out of Tortola for the second time, I put to rest the thought of visiting the lodge.

On the next to the last day of my cruise, fate would have it that I was to go on a snorkel boat outing to the Indians off Norman Island (reputedly the place on which Treasure Island is based). As I boarded the snorkel boat, a British skipper was on his cell and said "I've got him right here"! He said to me "we have been chasing after you for a week" which went right over my head.

The next day I spent several hours with my newfound British brothers. Their lodge is small with less than 80 members.

After an exchange of some wonderful gifts, we headed to an inn near the airport for Masonic Fellowship and hoisted several pints over lunch.

## How to visit a Foreign Masonic Lodge

1. Plan 3 months in advance.
2. Never ask a lady for help. (Except the Lindas at Grand Lodge)
3. Take along some Masonic gifts.
4. Have faith that your Brothers will find and greet you with open arms and the strong grip of a Master Mason.

Fred Laser, PM  
Charity Lodge No. 134