



From the Grand Master

Brethren:

A new page has been turned in the history book of the Grand Lodge of Maryland and when we look at the page we find it not yet filled in. Instead, if we study the page over the coming months, we will find the page to be filling with the story of the next two years. And, the question is, what will be recorded there in November 2010? It is my sincere hope that the state of Masonry in Maryland will be as good as, or better than, we found it on November 15, 2008. It is my goal to improve the state of our fraternity in this jurisdiction by continuing good programs and initiating others where needed.

The Maryland Masonic Child Identification Program (MDCHIP) has taken off like a wild fire since its inception a year ago by MWPGM Biggs. To date, we have IDed over 4,000 children and the number continues to rise with each new event. We have just purchased three more computer systems for the program using money donated by PNC Bank. These computers will be added to the pool of computer hardware we now have, bringing the total to 20 computers available for events. This pool of computers will be managed by the CHIP committee so that the proper number of working computers will be available for each CHIP event, ready to be set up and put to work without the worry of inoperable equipment and dried ink cartridges. Bro. Doug Bassett, PM Mt. Moriah No. 116, is the chairman of the CHIP program and I look for him to continue the success we've seen thus far while continuing to refine our operating procedures as we learn new things from the CHIP events. I encourage every Lodge in Maryland to get involved in this program because it is an easy way for you, and your Lodge, to make a very favorable impression on your community and to give back to your community as well. We need your involvement to identify possible CHIP event opportunities, to work with the CHIP committee to plan the event, to make contact with local news media to publicize the event, and to provide the manpower to staff the event. The major investment is your time.

We will also be continuing the Amnesty program for reinstating Brothers who have been dropped for non-payment of dues in the past. The rules and procedures to be followed are the same as they have been for the past four years.

Once again, Regional Meetings will be held throughout the jurisdiction. These meetings will continue in the same format as we have used in the past. The first meeting will be at the Grand Lodge complex in Cockeysville, and will begin with coffee and pastries at 8:00 AM on February 28, 2009. I would like to see every Lodge make an effort to attend one of these meetings, and that every elected and appointed officer of the Lodge attend. The information presented at these meetings is of importance to every Officer.

On April 4, 2009, we will be hosting a seminar for Masters and Wardens of our Lodges. The purpose of this seminar is to work with the three principle officers of the Lodge in the areas of leadership, planning, and governing their Lodge. In addition, we will also spend time discussing the process of mentoring new members. Attendance at this seminar will be mandatory for the Masters and Wardens of every Lodge in the jurisdiction. More information about the activities of April 4th will be forthcoming.

At the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge last November 15th, a proposed change to the Constitution was presented to be voted upon in May 2009. This proposal has to do with the electronic distribution of the Lodge trestleboard in lieu of the current method. In preparation for dealing with questions and other issues rising from the possible adoption of this change, I am going to appoint a new committee, known as the Information Technology Advisory Committee, that will have the responsibility of providing advice to the Grand Master and to subordinate Lodges on these questions and on the subjects of computers, automation, the Internet, email, etc. They will also act as a resource for Lodges to use when considering the purchase of computers for Lodge use, and for issues such as standards for software suites, data file backup requirements, and security requirements. I am looking for the names of those Brothers who have a background in IT and would be willing to serve on this committee. If you have an interest, please call me at the Grand Lodge, or send me an email at mwgm@glmd.org.

At this time, the Grand Line and I have accepted invitations to eighteen Installations of Officers during the month of January. This means we will most likely be in your area at some time during the month. I would encourage you and your spouse to attend one of these Open installations, even if it is not for your Lodge, and observe the friendship and brotherly love that is abundant at these gatherings, plus, you will observe an Installation Ceremony that will knock your socks off when it is done by the Grand Line. Check the calendar on the Grand Lodge web site (www.mdmasons.org) for the date and time.

Elsewhere in this issue of the Free State Freemason, you will find a list of the Grand Line Officers for 2009. I call your attention to their names and wish to thank all of them for agreeing to serve the Grand Lodge for the coming year. I know they will all contribute to the successes we expect to have in 2009. When you see them, give them your best wishes.

The Holiday Season is upon us and the New Year is rapidly coming. Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, or just the passing from 2008 into 2009, Carole and I wish you good health, prosperity, and great happiness and we hope to see each of you at a Lodge in 2009.

Fraternally,

Thomas M. Velvin

Most Worshipful Grand Master

2009 Grand Line Officers

- M. Worshipful Grand Master Thomas M. Velvin, Jr.**
- R. W. Deputy Grand Master Stephen J. Ponzillo, III**
- R. W. Sr. Grand Warden Kenneth R. Taylor**
- R. W. Jr. Grand Warden Kostas "Gus" Vourvoulas**
- R. W. Grand Secretary Herbert Y. Holcomb, III**
- R. W. Grand Treasurer William E. Gyr**
- W. Grand Marshal Ronald A. Block**
- W. Asst. Grand Marshal Shawn R. Winpigler**
- W. Grand Lecturer Paul H. Fishell**
- W. Grand Chaplain Elwood L. Ulmer**
- W. Asst. Grand Chaplain Walter F. Burgess**
- W. Asst. Grand Chaplain Jack R. George**
- W. Asst. Grand Chaplain Leslie G. Metcalf, Sr.**
- W. Asst. Grand Chaplain Randall A. Schoch**
- W. Sr. Grand Deacon Douglas E. Cooper**
- W. Jr. Grand Deacon C. Edward Poarch, II**
- W. Sr. Grand Steward Brian K. Watson**
- W. Jr. Grand Steward Edward M. Berkman**
- W. Grand Standard Bearer Terry L. Beal**
- W. Grand Sword Bearer Page T. Shanklin, Sr.**
- W. Grand Pursuivant John B. Grieve**
- W. Grand Dir. of Ceremonies Thomas A. Marraffa**
- W. Grand Tyler Thomas A. Keller**
- W. Asst. Grand Tyler C. Wayne Skidmore**
- W. Grand Organist Ronald L. Unger**
- W. Asst. Grand Organist Kenneth C. Mars**
- W. Grand Photographer W. Grant Gibson**
- W. Asst. Grand Photographer Mark E. Hartz**

Deadlines for submitting articles & information for publication in the *Free State Freemason*: **the 1st day of March (Spring), June (Summer), September (Fall), and December (Winter).**

These dates are firm as the issue must be formatted and given to the printer the last day of these months.

Send mail to:
Free State Freemason
304 International Circle
Cockeysville, MD 21030

410-527-0600 tel
410-527-1276 fax

FSFM@glmd.org

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 the return of pictures, they must have submitting individual's name on the 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@glmd.org, Fax 410-316-9410

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 experience 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. (*Motorcycle tags are not available*)

Be proud of your fraternity and display these plates on your car this year.

Chair Plaques & The Tree of Life

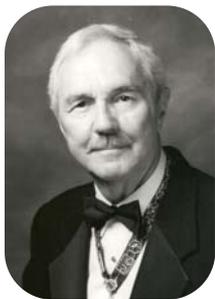
Chair Plaques are for chairs located in the Corinthian Room on the second floor of Grand Lodge. You may have your own name on a plaque, or have it in memory of, or to honor a person, club, or group.

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. Call Ray Vogel at the Grand Lodge at 410-527-0600 to make arrangements for yours.

A NOTE OF THANKS



In concern for my well being, you have sent to me many cards, letters, and even flowers. During that long stay in the hospital all that made the days shorter and life even more worth fighting for. I am deeply grateful for your kind attention and thank each of you very much.

Now in rehabilitation, and working hard at it, I am receiving good reports on my progress and expect to go home before Christmas.

You, my brethren, are the tops in my opinion and I feel strong Brotherly Love for you all. My best wish goes to each of you. I wish you good luck, good health, and may God bless each of you.

Sincerely and fraternally,
William M. Clark, Jr. PGM

Stephen J. Ponzillo, Jr. Memorial Library & Museum Board of Directors

Brethren, the Grand Lodge is in need of 9 individuals who would be interested in serving on a new board created for the Stephen J. Ponzillo, Jr. Memorial Library and Museum.

The Board of Directors would be responsible for making operation and financial decisions for the 501C(3).

We are seeking the following terms to be elected at the Semi-Annual Communication for the 2010 Term:

- 3 Members serving a 1 year term
- 3 Members serving a 2 year term
- 3 Members serving a 3 year term

The requirements for these positions are the same as those for the Boards of Managers, Trustees, and MCM Board of Directors.

Those brethren who are already serving on a Board, or are currently holding an elected Grand Lodge office are not eligible for these positions.

Please contact the Grand Lodge Office if you are interested in running for one of these offices.

Resumes for all elected offices for the 2010 term will be printed in the Spring 2009 edition of the Free State Freemason. Deadline for these resumes will be March 1, 2009.

THE LATE HARVEST HOME 2008

What a beautiful fall morning for the late 2008 Harvest Home. A crisp fall morning started at 2:30 a.m. A thin cloud cover and a few sprinkles soon moved out and a beautiful pink hue began to form as the very first rays of the morning sun began to emerge. Our Supreme Architect was going to bless this day with sun and warmth.

Workers began to climb the hill to fill sausage vats, coffee urns and mix pancake batter. Soon the rumble of motorcycles and antique cars were streaming in. Band members, drum corps and pipers were soon there to add to the days enjoyment. In the dawn's early light, the hill was alive with activity as hundreds of people scurried about with their respective interests. Soon the bright yellow vessels begin to shuttle the masses from far and wide. The day was under way!

The smell of sausage filled the air as did the sounds of fraternal greetings of those who meet and remember friendship at this gathering of the harvest. Then almost as quickly as it began, the crowds soon begin their descent from the hill and journey back home to await the next Harvest Homecoming.

Will there be a "next year" for this event? Should there be a next Harvest Home? I, for one, hope this gathering to "harvest" old acquaintances and make lasting friendships never ends, but let's look at reality! There is no greater loss to the Masonic Homes than the Harvest Home event. While there has **NEVER** been intent to make money or even break even from this event, the losses have and continue to mount to almost unjustifiable amounts. Why? What is causing such huge losses? Let's look at this year's numbers. The total reported count (those going through the gate) was 1,493. And a total of 280 passes onto the hill (these are not free- they are just access to the hill). Everyone should be counted (Lodge No.) and make their donation.

Now don't get your feathers ruffled just yet. Many of the men arrived early as requested in order to reduce vehicle traffic, but many arrived before the gates were manned with counters and coins. Therefore, they may not be in the official count. Each Lodge gets credit for attending members. Many went over and checked in after the gates were manned while others bought their "penny" at the coin tent (this still counts as a donation but your lodge gets no credit for your attendance). Some, however, have every excuse imaginable as to why they should not pay the \$5.00 **donation**. "I brought my car" or "I brought my bike for all to see", etc. "That helps the show". "I am playing music for the Grand Master". "I spend all morning cooking" and "I get up at 3:00 a.m. to get here to help park cars". Why do I have to pay \$5.00? I repeat, **there has never been a charge to attend Harvest Home**.

In bygone days, men came to actually harvest the crops, shuck the corn, and shock the stalks. In return, they were fed breakfast and given a "penny" for their labors. This became such a huge event that everyone looked forward to it. Even after the crops were only a memory in the minds of our senior members, it was decided that Harvest Home should continue. The fraternal bonds and friendships far exceeded the cost of keeping the event going. So, the Masonic Homes budgeted for the event knowing that it would be a loss. At first, a donation of \$3.00 was requested in exchange for labor and a token ("penny") given for the days wages. Today a \$5.00 donation is requested. The "penny" is still given in exchange for the donation.

Did you know that the "penny" token costs \$1.12 each? That leaves \$3.88 to help defray the cost of breakfast. This year the sausage increased to \$2.40 a pound and pumpkin pies increased to \$5.99 each. We ordered 2,200 pounds of sausage and 225 pumpkin pies. Extra pies were offered for sale for \$6.00 each which was a profit of **one (1) penny** per pie. And yes, some complained that we were making a profit and they should be sold for \$5.00 each. The remaining unsold pies were sent to the Masonic Homes to be served to the residents.



I use these particular items because they are tangible and everyone can actually relate to them. **Coins, sausage and pies**. But what about the other costs? I won't bore you with the numbers, but have you ever given a moments thought to: the pounds of coffee, cases of pancake batter, butter, syrup, cooking gas (propane), outdoor toilets, tent rentals, trash containers, refrigerated truck, napkins, mustard, rolls, aluminum pans, coffee creamer, sugar, and of course the big yellow busses that move you up and down the hill. Perhaps none of these things ever cross your mind but the costs to the Masonic Homes this year was \$20,931.37! Now, let's do some simple math. Cost of coins \$4,557.20, sausage \$5,280, pies \$1,347.75, and "other (items listed above)" \$9,746.42. The total cost is \$20,931.37.

Now consider attendance of 1,493 people at a \$5.00 donation equals \$7,465.00. The actual individual coin sales of 1,733 at \$5.00

each equaled \$ 8,665.00. The total income is \$10,351.

Total income \$10,351.00 less expenses \$20,931.00 creates a loss of \$10,580 for the Masonic Homes!

Now, the ruffled feathers! Did you make your donation? If so, you did your part! A donation is all that has ever been asked. I repeat again, **there has never been a "charge" to attend Harvest Home**.

You receive a "penny" in wages for your labor or your donation. So, in your "heart" if your labor was playing music, bringing your car, motorcycle, or various other reasons for not donating, then you too can smooth out your ruffled feathers. Or, if you arrived before the counters were ready to take your donation, you also can calm your ruffled feathers. It was not your fault "we were not ready".

The bottom line is the loss to the Homes is great and gets worse every year. What do we do to offset the loss? Would you quit cooking if we asked you to donate \$5.00? Would you stop working the gate or parking cars if you had to donate \$5.00? Would you stop attending if we asked for more than a \$5.00 donation? This year the Masonic Home spent an average of \$14.02 for each person attending this annual event. Who has the answer? Do you? I sure don't. But I will say that even after

spending hours, days, weeks, even months getting ready, sending out letters, meeting with committees, working with various companies, fire departments, collateral bodies, mailing out invitations, passes, etc, I ask myself every year if it is worth it? And why do we do it? The only answer I can come up is: with after a beautiful, warm morning like this, after meeting with and talking to the brothers from all over Maryland, after watching the men cutting and cooking sausage, men mixing and dispensing pancake batter while bantering with each other, hearing the exchange in the coffee room as to the quality or lack

thereof of what they call coffee, seeing the smile on the ladies faces in the Grand Lodge lobby as they sell their cakes, candy and other delicious goodies, going downstairs and seeing the few regular men waiting to give blood to a needy soul whose path they will probably never cross, **I say, YES, it is worth it and may it never come to an end no matter what the cost!**

May our Supreme Architect smile on each and every one of you who make Harvest Home Day the fraternal success it is, has been and ever will be.

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR ON OCTOBER 3

Sincerely and fraternally,
Bro. Marlin L. Mills
Harvest Home Day
Committee Chairman

Prince Hall Visitation

In light of the recent action taken by the majority of the permanent members present at the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Maryland concerning visitation by and with the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge and their subordinate lodges and in response to the many phone calls and emails to this office concerning this action we offer the following guidelines.

1. Visitation by any Lodge or Mason beholdin' to the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge will be by "Proper Invitation" only. By "Proper Invitation" is meant: Only the Worshipful Master may in writing extend such an invitation.

2. As any Mason in good standing is entitled to object to sitting in Lodge with anyone he deems unsuitable must not be infringed upon, any objection of this nature must be made prior to the invitation being extended. It is therefore imperative the Worshipful Master consult and advise his members of the intent to invite in advance of the actual invitation being extended. Once the Worshipful Master receives permission from the members present to extend such an invitation and NOT BEFORE may he in writing, with a copy to be sent to both Grand Lodge Offices, invite the intended Lodge, Mason and or Masons to attend a stated or special communication of the Lodge over which he presides.

3. In order to maintain subordination, good conduct and good will between both Grand Lodges, once the Worshipful Master is satisfied that the membership is willing to extend such an invitation, and the invitation has been sent, the individual Mason will have waived any further right of objection in this particular instance. This in no way prevents a Mason in good standing the right to object but does place upon any individual the responsibility to do so before any invitation can be extended thereby avoiding any possible embarrassment to the members of his Mother Lodge and the Grand Lodge of Maryland.

These guidelines are being re-released at the request of Most Worshipful Grand Master Thomas M. Velvin, Jr.

Grand Commandery Awards

Many Masons have heard of awards such as the 33° or the OPC (Order of the Purple Cross), but few know there are four types of honors the Grand Commandery of Maryland may give, they are:

"Knight Commander of the Temple" (KCT), "Knight Templar Cross of Honor" (KTCH), "Companion of the Temple", and "Honorary titles" such as "Grand Prelate Emeritus", "Grand Recorder Emeritus", etc.

I will attempt to give you a brief summary of these Awards.

Honorary "Grand" titles are only conferred upon a Sir Knight who has preformed long and well in a particular job/station in our Grand Commandery, such as "Grand Prelate Emeritus" Richard A. Ortt, who received this award 24 October 2008. Permission to confer this title must be approved through the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA.

There are also honorary titles that each local commandery may confer upon one of their Sir Knights. That would be "Prelate Emeritus" since the prelate would have only served a local commandery, vice the Grand Commandery.

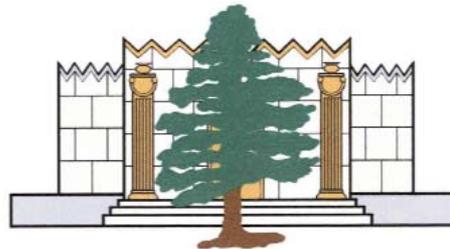
"Companion of the Temple" is usually awarded to a non-sir knight or a lady. This honor would be conferred on one who has helped the Grand or local commandery by their service, such as helping in fundraisers, serving meals, arranging events, cooking food, etc. Mrs. Alison Coker was honored this year (25 Oct 2008) with this award. We did not have as many of these awarded in the recent years as we have had in the past years.

"Knight Templar Cross of Honor" (KTCH) is our second highest honor given and the highest honor given to a Sir Knight. The Sir Knight has not at the time the award is given, was or is an elected Grand Commandery Officer. There is only one such award given per year for this honor; this year Sir Knight Richard H. Westermeyer was honored. The Sir Knight must have serviced his commandery well and for many years to be considered. Generally his commandery submits his name and a write up of the Sir Knight's accomplishments. The Grand Commander of Maryland, then, must choose the one he feels is most worthy.

The last and highest honor is the "Knight Commander of the Temple" (KCT). As of this writing there are only nine holders in Maryland of this highest honor. The last such honor was awarded to Past Grand Commander Stephen J. Ponzillo, III at the Grand Lodge of Maryland on 17 May 2008. And then on 25 October 2008 this honor was conferred on Past Commander Eugene D. Racz. Other names you might know, who were awarded this honor were Governor William Donald Shaffer, Past Northeast Department Commander Dr. Alton G. Billmeier, and Past Grand Master Bennie G. Owens.

This award is given only to those who are truly worthy of this highest honor by many years of service to mankind. This can be through government service, Grand Lodge service, or Grand Commandery service. One of the holders of this honor must write up the nomination of this person, and all the holders must approve of this nomination and then it is forwarded to the Grand Encampment for the final approval. This paperwork is thus handled through our Grand Jurisdictional Deputy College of Honors, William B. Colburn.

Ronald L. Aughenbaugh, PGC



**Tall Cedars of Lebanon
of North America**
<http://www.tallcedars.org>

Come and join us in our "Fun, Frolic and Fellowship."

Travel with us to the many Forests (Lodges) in our area. Attend our Conventions and help us raise money for Muscular Dystrophy Research.

Masonic related, the Tall Cedars of Lebanon was chartered in Trenton, New Jersey in 1902.

Beginning in 1951, the Tall Cedars of Lebanon became the first organization to offer continuing financial assistance to the Muscular Dystrophy Association. This year marks our 56th Anniversary supporting MDA.

"Visit our website, use the Forest Finder to locate a Forest nearest to you & contact the Scribe for more information on how to become a Tall Cedar"



Annual Awards Night St. Columba Lodge No. 150

On Tuesday evening, October 7th 2008, St. Columba Lodge No. 150 of La Plata held their Annual Awards and Widows Night. This night affords St. Columba Lodge to present awards to the Widows of our Brothers who have passed to the Celestial Lodge Above this year and special presentations of Masonic Care Bears to the Charles County Rescue Squads and to the Charles County Sheriff Department located in La Plata. A special thank to Lenny Merryman for these photographs.



WM G. Steven Shlagel presenting a Widows pin to Olga Gamble, wife of Bro. "Buck" Gamble.



Front L to R: WM G. Steven Shlagel presenting Care Bears to Corporal Rhett Callaway-Charles County Sheriff Dept., Allen Hayden-La Plata Rescue Squad, Gary Anderson-Dentsville Rescue Squad. Back L to R: Bro. Alfred Thomas; Daniel Stine, Tyler; PM Kipling T. McConnell; Matt Kiley, Sr. Deacon; and Fleming Mathews, III, Jr. Deacon.



Sec-Keith Vivian presents a donation of \$2,090.00 to Mr. Mike Zabko CEO - American Red Cross Southern Maryland Disaster Relief Fund proceeds from St. Columba's 11th Annual Golf Tournament held at Wicomico Shores Golf Club.

Announcements for Election to Offices of the Grand Lodge

The following names are those Brethren who will be running for an elected office at the Semi-Annual Communication, May 2009 for the 2010 Term:

Senior Grand Warden

Robert W. Chase - Mt. Moriah Lodge 116
Arthur R. Dickerson - Jephthah Lodge 222
Julius H. Poston, Jr. - Corinthian Lodge 93

Junior Grand Warden

Jay W. Hodges - Friendship Lodge 84
Leslie G. Metcalf, Jr. - Sincerity Lodge 181

Board of Managers

All positions vacant

Board of Trustees

R. Bruce Tanner - Door to Virtue Lodge 46
Henry C. McDonald, Jr. - Concordia Lodge 13
David L. Schneider - Howard Lodge 101

Board of Directors - MCM, Inc.

Charles E. Blake - Howard Lodge No. 101
John A. Young, Jr. - Ionic Lodge 145

Masonic Membership Card

I hold in my hand a little scrap of paper 2 x 3 1/2 inches in size. It is of no intrinsic worth, not a bond, not a check or receipt for valuables, yet it is my most priceless possession. It is my membership in a Masonic Lodge.

It tells me that I have entered into a spiritual kinship with my fellow Masons to practice charity in word and deed; to forgive and forget the faults of my brethren; to hush the tongues of scandal and innuendo; to care for the crippled, the hungry, and the sick, and to be fair and just to all mankind.



It tells me that no matter where I may travel in the world, I am welcome to visit a place where good fellowship prevails among brothers and friends.

It tells me that my loved ones, my home, and my household are under the protection of every member of this great fraternity, who have sworn to protect and defend mine, as I have sworn to protect and defend theirs.

It tells me that should I ever be overtaken by adversity or misfortune through no fault of my own, the hands of every Mason on the face of the earth will be stretched forth to assist me in my necessities.

And finally it tells me that when my final exit from the stage of life has been made, there will be gathered around my lifeless body friends and brothers who will recall to mind my virtues, though they be but few, and will forget my faults, though they may be many.

It tells me that and a great deal more, this little card, and makes me proud, yet humble, that I can possess this passport into a society of friends and brothers that are numbered in the millions.

Masonic Service Association Texas Appeal

As is so often the case when a natural disaster offers, it is hard at first to assess the actual damage that was done. MSA has just received a letter from the Grand Lodge of Texas in which they state:

"The Grand Lodge of Texas has suffered considerable loss during the 2008 hurricane season. The devastation that came about as a result of Hurricane Ike and Hurricane Dolly caused an enormous amount of damage."

Now that the full extent of the damage is realized it was far more wide-spread than originally though.

Please forward to the MSA such funds as you feel appropriate to help our devastated Brethren and their families in this stricken jurisdiction. Please make checks payable to the **MSA Disaster Relief Fund** and send to 8120 Fenton Street, Ste. 203, Silver Spring, MD 20910-4785.

Thank you very much for your help!

Most Sincerely and fraternally,
Richard E. Fletcher, PGM
Executive Secretary

From the Deputy



It is an honor to serve as the Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master and particularly to serve with Most Worshipful Grand Master Thomas M. Velvin, Jr. as he brings an ongoing vision designed to continue to move the Grand Lodge of Maryland forward.

Community service is a vital part of making non-masons aware of who we are and for what we stand. Perhaps even more important and vital to our success is training Masonic leaders of this new century so that Masonic Lodges create new Masons who are knowledgeable about the craft and its mission in sustaining a "brotherhood of men, under a fatherhood of God." Our Most Worshipful Grand Master is conscious of this imperative and will inaugurate a training program designed to mentor new members and train new leaders.

My Brothers, I encourage you to seek out men of good character who are your acquaintances whom you believe would benefit from membership in our fraternity. It is entirely appropriate to determine if a man has heard of the fraternity and understands its purpose. Following up and being armed with a petition you can "strike when the iron is hot."

I look forward to seeing you along the "installation trail." May this new year of 2009 be one of health and progress for all of our members, their families and our fraternity.

Maryland DeMolay

Fraternal Holiday Greetings from Maryland DeMolay! We would like to congratulate Grand Master Tom Velvin, Deputy Grand Master Steve Ponzillo (Past State Master Councilor of Maryland DeMolay and Past Master Councilor Dundalk DeMolay) and all of the newly installed officers of the Grand Lodge of Maryland! We look forward to working with all of you over the next term. A big THANK YOU goes to the out going officers for their support over the last two years. Past Grand Master Biggs and his line have been at the fore front with the youth in mind, from sponsoring activities for the Masonic youth to the ever important Maryland CHIP program and we again thank them for their efforts in supporting the next generation of the Masonic family.

Maryland DeMolay has been busy over the last few months. Brother Luke McCormick was elected State Master Councilor and Brother Tommy Plourde was elected Deputy State Master Councilor at our annual Conclave at Salisbury University in July. The support of the Masonic family was fully evident by the amount of people who drove to the Eastern Shore on Sunday for the Banquet. Seeing all of you there shows the young men that they are appreciated and have the full backing of the Masonic Family.

Many of our members attended the Hershey Park trip sponsored by the Grand Commandery of Maryland. This event is much anticipated by all of the youth groups and gives us a great opportunity to bring prospects to show them how much fun they can expect from joining our ranks. Thank you to Right Eminent Past Grand Commander Patrick Curtis and the Grand Commandery of Maryland for this wonderful event.

September brought the annual Region II Ritual Competition where Champion level members of several Jurisdictions on the East Coast get together to compete for Regional Champion bragging rites. Maryland DeMolay showed up in force and brought home many of the Region II Championships. For Masons who have not seen or heard the young men of DeMolay perform their memory work, YOU ARE MISSING A TREAT! We urge everyone to take in a DeMolay meeting or attend a Degree Class to see these guys in action; you will want them in your lodges - guaranteed!

Many of the Youth descended on the Grand lodge three times in the month of October, first for Harvest Home Day to mingle with you. This provides us an opportunity to explain DeMolay to those who don't know about us, reunite old DeMolays and again get leads on prospects. Second was for the MSADC Awards Day. This is the day when Maryland DeMolay shows off its finest. Awarded on this day was the Degree of Chevalier (the highest honor for active DeMolays) and the honors of Active Legion of Honor and Honorary Legion of Honor (both for adult service to DeMolay and humanity, active is for Senior DeMolays and Honorary is for those who were not members of DeMolay) and third was for the "Evening with the General" program. WOW,

what an event! Kudos to everyone involved in this program! The second time was for the Grand Master's Barn Dance, what a great event for us to again bring prospects! Thank you again to all who were involved with this event and your support of our youth.

November brought the York Rite Degree Class held in Frederick. Like the Grand Master's Class, this Class was held in honor of the leading members of the York Rite. Maryland DeMolay brought in 11 new members on this great day as well as holding their Court of Chevalier Observance and Installation. Having Most Excellent Grand High Priest Lou Bandel, Most Illustrious Grand Master of the Grand Council Richard Naegele (Senior DeMolay) and the Right Eminent Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Maryland Tom Hiemiller (Senior DeMolay) in attendance was fantastic. We know how tight their schedules are and appreciate their efforts in coordinating their calendars for this event. We were also able to present Right Eminent Grand Commander Hiemiller with his 25 year pin as a member of DeMolay much to his surprise. Many of us were also able to attend the Grand Lodge Installation and it was a wonderful evening.

In closing, we would like to remind everyone about our web site, www.mddemolay.org. This is a great place to start for learning about our Order. We have seen an increased interest in starting DeMolay around the state and are trying to meet with all who are interested. We do have a program that can be used at Lodge meetings to explain our Order and bring DeMolay to you. Please contact us if you are interested in having us come out to present the DeMolay story or fill you in on how to sponsor a Chapter in your Lodge, Chapter, Council, Commandery or other Masonic group you may belong to. Prospective member names are always welcomed and we will see that these young men are contacted in a prompt manner.

Fraternally,

Bro. Carl Michel

Executive Secretary

MD State Association of DeMolay Chapters

A Date with the General

On October 7, 2008 the Corinthian Room at the Grand Lodge was visited by some very important personages. No less than President George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and the Marquis de Lafayette. Accompanying these historic Freemasons was the U.S. Third Infantry Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps.

This event commemorated the 225th Anniversary of General George Washington's resignation in Annapolis Maryland of his commission as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States. That event established the supremacy of civilian control over the military.

Thus, the Grand Lodge and Brown Advisory Group jointly sponsored an event held in the Corinthian Room to mark our collective heritage as Americans.

Accumulated for display to students from area middle and high schools were items associated with Washington's distinguished life of public service. From the Grand Lodge Museum, the secretary's desk from the old senate cham-

ber on which General Washington placed a copy of his resignation as Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Forces in 1783 as well as a copy (courtesy of the Maryland Archives) of his reading copy of that resignation. From Potomac Lodge No. 5 of Washington D.C., the Gavel used by President Washington to "set" the cornerstone of the U.S. Capital in 1793, and from Alexandria Washington Lodge No. 22 of Virginia, the Trowel that he used to spread the cement on that very cornerstone.

Also on view was the Bible on which President Washington took his oath of office as our First President. This Bible was available by courtesy of St. John's Lodge No. 1 of New York. This was the first time that these artifacts were assembled in one place at the same time.



The event began with a performance of the Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps of the Third Infantry of Ft. Meyer, Virginia and was followed by a play entitled "A Rising and Setting Sun" featuring Benjamin Franklin and President Washington, performed by the American Historical Theatre of Philadelphia. Students and guests from the Masonic Homes viewed this "free of charge" event and were able to ask the historical figures questions.

In the evening, the artifacts were again on view for Masons, their family members, guests and the general public – again free of charge. Following a reception, the evening performance of the play "On Fire for Liberty" was performed by the American Historical Theatre featuring Generals Lafayette and Washington. After the event, both historic figures answered audience questions.



In all, over 700 individuals attended the combined morning and evening performances at which officials from Brown Advisory Group and the Grand Lodge of Maryland brought greetings.

This event is the first of a series of American and Masonic Heritage presentations sponsored by the Grand Lodge. Watch future issues of the Free State Freemason for upcoming events in the planned series.

Maryland Masonic Homes



Anniversary Banquet May 1, 2009

Tickets: \$75.00/person
Sponsors:

Bronze = \$1,000 Silver = \$2,000
Gold = \$2,500 Diamond = \$5,000

For More Information, Call: 410-527-1111

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Maryland Masonic Homes

It has been an interesting and fulfilling 2008 for MD Masonic, full of changes and progress that continue to propel us into the 2009. Reflection always brings precious memories of those residents we have lost and the profound impact each made to our community. We hold dear these remembrances and are grateful to have been blessed with their friendship.

As we turn toward the future, we must also remember the Masonic Homes past. We are a community rich in history and tradition and we will continue to embrace the vision and mission that originated in 1934 when we opened our doors.

"To provide excellent care in a safe, affordable, dignified, quality environment for eligible Masons and their families, in keeping with Masonic principles, providing for expansion, while maintaining financial viability."

The Homes has grown from a farmhouse to a thriving retirement community. The three levels of care, Independent Living, Assisted Living and Health Care provide services based on the needs of the resident. Our campus offers an array of amenities as we cater to the active senior and are no longer considered "the place to come to die." Residents have the choice to pay privately or apply for a financial assistance program (specific Masonic eligibility required).

Our Health Care center offers the highest quality care and services in Maryland. The Nursing Management team of Deb Allred, Director of Nursing, Kim Sage, Assistant Director of Nursing, Chrissy Walter, Assistant Director of Nursing, Donna Holmes, Assisted Living Manager are the leadership team that provides guidance and education for our staff. Combined they offer over 40 years of MMH experience and geriatric nursing skills. These professional and compassionate caregivers are dedicated and committed to providing superior care and love to our residents. Thanks to each of you for choosing MMH and being members of the Bonnie Blink family.



In the ever changing Health Care environment, you have many choices for retirement living. It is comforting to know that MMH is still here and available to you. The core values and vision remain...and as we move forward we embrace the change and growth that is necessary. Let us re-introduce you to Bonnie Blink.

Hugs,
Paula L. O'Neill, N.H.A.
Executive Director

Events List Anniversary Banquet May 1, 2009

Hors d'Ourves/Open Bar

Dinner
Catering by Atlantic Caterers, Inc.

Musical Selections from the
Peabody Institute

Distinguished Guest Speakers

Live Auction

Fireworks Display Finalé

Ticket Sales begin
January 1, 2009



Resident and Staff performers celebrate at the end of the first annual MMH "Gong Show" held In September in celebration of National Assisted Living Week.



Maryland Masonic Homes "Bonnie Blink"

Bonnie Blink Admissions

The Maryland Masonic Homes proudly boasts the on-set of our 75th Anniversary and legacy of unparalleled compassion and service of all residents past and present. Since its conception, MMH has been a beacon of security and hope to our aging Masons and Eastern Star Members. As we move toward the future the Homes continues to focus and nurture these ideals.

Many changes have come to the Homes in 75 years but the core values that bring us together remain the same. The strong bond of brotherhood and sisterhood radiate from our residents and staff members alike. Lodge and Eastern Star Meetings are held on-site and attended regularly by many residents. Community Events are frequent and provide opportunities for residents in all levels of care to come together and contribute to the family like atmosphere.

Other amenities at the Homes include our Chapel which offers non-denominational religious services, a Medical Clinic, Dining Rooms and Cafeteria, a resident operated Gift Shop, Beauty and Barber Shop and so much more! The Homes welcome new residents into all levels of care including: Independent Living, Assisted Living and Health Care and tailors its programs to suit the specific needs of the individual.

To find out more about the changes that have taken place at the Maryland Masonic Homes call (410) 527-1111 for more information or to set up a tour today!

Stacey Sedesee
Admissions Coordinator

Bonnie Blink Residents Appreciate the Masons

Bonnie Blink residents live in different areas of the Maryland Masonic Home: Ionic (Independent Living), Doric and Terrace (Assisted Living). These residents make up the I,D,T Council which meets once a month to be updated on suggestions from residents, maintenance of the Home, health and dietary announcements, activities planned for upcoming months and community needs which the Council might sponsor.

Each Harvest Home Day a



Maryland Masonic Homes Then

Council Committee sponsors a Bazaar held at the Grand Lodge along with a 50-50 raffle. This year the raffle brought in \$930 and the winner was Potomac Lodge Brother Stanley Seckman who received 50% of the raffle sales. With the sale of Masonic jewelry and our traditional bazaar items, the Council Treasury netted over \$1200.

This past year a portion of our funds went to very needy causes; A resident who needed transportation assistance and a donation to the Armed Forces Foundation, an organization that assists returning troops and their families with medications and jobs.

We are ever so grateful to all of the many Masons and friends who participated in this annual activity and want to especially thank those Lodges who sponsor the Sunday Chapel Services and Friday Night Bingo.

Thank you for helping to make Bonnie Blink "A Home Away from Home" for over 130 seniors!

Charlotte Hanna, Treasurer
I,D&T Resident Council

An Inside Perspective

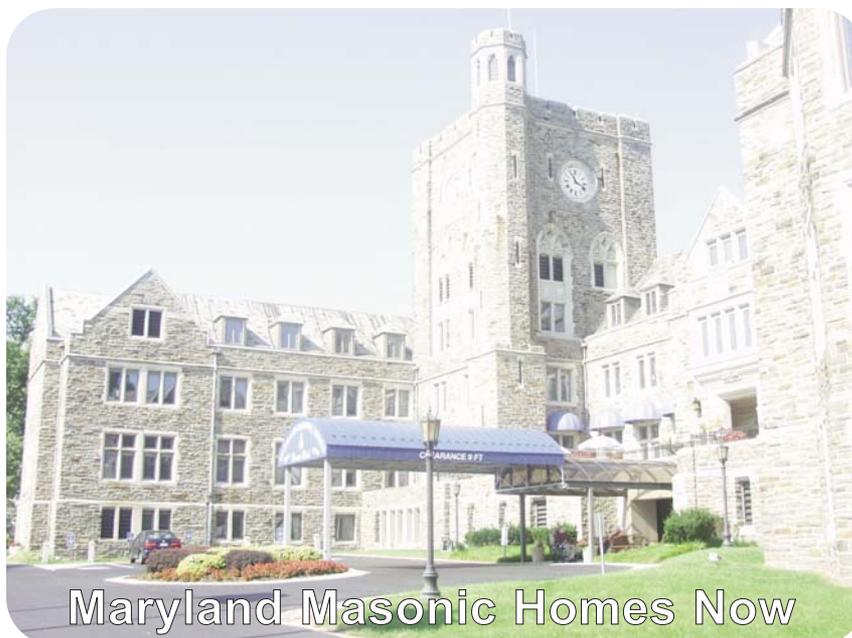
Very few people are lucky enough to love their jobs. As I walk the halls of Bonnie Blink watching our residents decorate Christmas trees, sing Christmas carols, and eat cookies, I realize just how lucky I am! Of course every job has its challenges but being a part of such a dedicated team makes me proud to do my part. Each staff member shares the same goal - to provide a home for our residents that is built

on respect, dignity, and compassion. As my one year anniversary quickly approaches, I realize, it's not just a job, it's a way of life.

Entering the lobby of Bonnie Blink, for me, is like walking into my Grandma's house. Both are warm, inviting and make you feel at home! Bonnie Blink is currently home to over 130 seniors who enjoy being a part of the social family-like environment. Prior to writing this article I researched the number of seniors living in the United States. As of 2007 there are approximately 80 million baby boomers going into retirement! The oldest baby boomers turned 60 in 2006, and when the trend peaks in 2030, the number of people over age 65 in the U.S. will soar to 71.5 million. That's one out of every five American looking to enjoy their golden years and to relinquish the burdens of being a home owner. While that is a scary thought for some, it's a future that I look forward to knowing that there are wonderful communities such as Bonnie Blink to call home!

It is indeed a privilege to work at MD Masonic and I invite you to tour and see what I'm talking about.

Jennifer Paul
Director of Administrative Services



Maryland Masonic Homes Now



Resident Carrie Clifford plays the piano daily for the residents of the Healthcare Unit Of MMH. Carrie has a large following of residents who often sing along with her.