

The Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Maryland, U. S. A.

MASONIC TEMPLE
225 NORTH CHARLES ST.
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201

NEWS LETTER



VOLUME I NUMBER 1

MARCH 1977



A MESSAGE TO EACH MARYLAND MASTER MASON FROM THE GRAND MASTER

Dear Brother:

This is the first issue of a news letter by and for Maryland Master Masons. As mentioned to your Worshipful Master, Senior and Junior Wardens and Secretary at the recently concluded seven regional meetings, my purpose in having this publication is to keep you fully informed of what is happening at Grand Lodge and at Blue Lodges throughout this jurisdiction.

These regional meetings were tremendously successful in addressing areas of concern and questions presented by your Lodge representatives. It also gave me an opportunity to get a reaction on plans and changes that we are considering. These changes represent thoughts and observations which were gathered during the 14 years I served as Grand Chaplain in visiting many Lodges throughout the State.

This issue of the news letter features a report on the highlights of the items covered at the regional meetings. Some of these items will be covered in greater detail by separate correspondence addressed to your Lodge. All of these items have been or will be briefed to you at a communication of your Lodge by your officers with the assistance of the Grand Inspector assigned to your Lodge.

I would ask you to join in an effort to enhance your knowledge and understanding of our Fraternity and its activities in this jurisdiction so that your actions reflect your pride and conviction in Freemasonry - A Way of Life.

Sincerely and fraternally,

Roy H. Stetler, Jr.
Grand Master

SPECIAL REPORT -

THE SEVEN REGIONAL MEETINGS (January 29 - February 26)

THEME: Your questions answered and your problems shared. Discovering at the grass roots some of the major problems in Lodges and in Grand Lodge relationships.

PARTICIPANTS: Worshipful Masters, Wardens and Secretaries of Lodges in each Region; and the Grand Lodge Panel consisting of: TMWGM Roy H. Stetler, Jr., RWDGM William M. Koenig, RWGS Stanley R. Uppercue, RWGT Elias W. Nuttle, GL Moses Appel, Chmn of Masonic Homes Endowment Comte Edward T. Brueckmann, Chmn of Masonic Education Comte Arthur L. Gosnell, Chmn of Public Relations & Publicity Comte Seymour H. Lipshitz.

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HIGHLIGHTS

* GETTING MORE MASONS INVOLVED IN GRAND LODGE OPERATIONS: At our Annual Communication in November, 1976, PGM Ernest Poyner presented two amendments to the Grand Lodge Constitution relating the limiting of the terms of office for members on the Board of Trustees and the Board of Managers. These amendments have real merit and are long overdue. Members of the Grand Lodge will act upon them in November, 1977. If there is a strong feeling that a more frequent rotation of officers be followed, then the Grand Master and the Deputy Grand Master would favor carrying such an action over into other offices such as Grand Inspectors, Committee Chairmen and committee personnel, thus getting more Masons involved in the operation of the Grand Lodge. As directed in a recent letter from the Grand Secretary, these amendments will be further discussed in your Lodge. Your Grand Inspector will assist in answering questions.

* STREAMLINING THE GRAND LODGE CONSTITUTION: A Constitution Revision Committee has been appointed to review the Constitution, By-Laws, Standing Resolutions and Grand Masters' Edicts with the hope that the Committee will bring back recommendations for changes that seem necessary and wise.

* READING THE 23rd ARTICLE ON ELECTION NIGHT: There have been serious complaints about reading the 23rd Article of the Constitution on election night when we would like to have as good an attendance as possible. An amendment to the Constitution is being considered for presentation at the Semi-Annual Communication in May, doing away with the requirement for reading the Article and making it mandatory for the WM-Elect, SW-Elect and JW-Elect to be instructed in the law prior to the annual installation.

*** SHARPENING UP OUR IMAGE:**

PUBLIC INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS: It is hoped that the Grand Lodge will see fit to approve an optional plan for public installation of Lodge Officers. We have been depriving our loved ones and close friends of the opportunity of witnessing the installation of officers. Only a few minor changes in the ritual are needed. We hope to have an expression of opinion on this matter at the Grand Lodge communication in May.

MEMORIAL/FUNERAL SERVICES: In conducting Memorial or Graveside Services for deceased brothers we need to put our best foot forward. Officers should either have the ritual memorized well or read from the Manual. It is preferred that it be read well. *Dress should always be dark suits for officers and members attending. Be sure all members and officers know how to march in and where to stand. *The Lodge Secretary will notify the Lodge's Grand Inspector when a brother dies. It is important that the Grand Inspector be present at Services to represent the Grand Master. Remember, Masonry is on display on these most solemn occasions.

PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF AWARDS: Presentation of 50, 60 or 70 year pins or other awards of outstanding service or achievement is a high honor in any Mason's life and one which his family, neighbors and friends should be permitted to witness. Prepare for these occasions by taking care of essential Lodge business first, closing the meeting early and then inviting your guests into the Lodge to participate in the Awards program.

*** GRAND LODGE OPERATIONS:** Inflation, increased maintenance, replacement of utility systems, water damage have plagued us and created severe financial problems. The Grand Lodge building is the envy of other Grand Lodges. We could never replace with the same basic materials, decoration or workmanship. The building houses our Grand Lodge headquarters, Museum, lodge rooms (rented by Baltimore lodges). It should be visited to appreciate it and take pride in our treasure. Listen carefully and reflect on what your officers will explain to you about this situation which will be discussed at the May Grand Lodge communication. Look for the possibility of an increase in the Grand Lodge Per Capita Tax to be voted on in November.

*** NPD SUSPENSION PREVENTION:** Lodges need to do more work to minimize the number of members dropped for non-payment of dues. One Lodge has only suspended four members in the past ten years; others are proud of similar achievement. It takes work, but it pays off.

*** SEMINAR PROGRAM:** We are planning a series of seminars next year, perhaps on a regional basis where discussions with Lodge officers will be held on various aspects of managing and operating a Lodge. Emphasis will be given on planning for a Lodge program of events.

* WIDOWS: Many Lodges have done outstanding work through special committees who keep in touch with known widows of Masons in the community. Attention is generally needed to give effect to this Masonic obligation.

* FREEMASONRY - A WAY OF LIFE: Each of you should have a copy of this folder by now. Has the basic facts about Freemasonry. May be a passport to Masonry for an acquaintance with whom you would want to sit in Lodge. Need more copies? See your Secretary.

* MASONIC EDUCATION - KEEPING THEM TURNED ON: Check the Table of Contents of "Instruction Manual, Vol. I", published in 1974:... "What our Friends should know about Freemasonry",... "Story of Freemasonry in the U.S.", ... "Masonic Law and Customs in Maryland",... "Masonic Library Books". Now do the same with "The Maryland Master Mason Handbook" published in 1976... 352 pages filled with a fascinating variety of subjects to satisfy the curiosity and stimulate the interest of old and new members. Excellent material for Lodge programs and for equipping Masons with knowledge and pride in our Craft. The expert in this field is Bro. Arthur Gosnell, Chmn of the G.L. Masonic Education Committee. Address questions to him care of the Grand Lodge.

* PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PUBLICITY: The world, the country and our local communities see the Square and Compasses and note the words and actions of those known to be members of the Fraternity. Is Masonry respected, and accepted in your community? Do you enjoy good relations with the local press? How do you promote a favorable image? What can be done? For openers, as individuals we should learn more and speak knowledgeably about Masonry (Masonic Education). Keep a copy of "Freemasonry - A Way of Life" with you as a reference. Expose the public to Lodge activities - public installation of officers, awards, social events, youth activities, participation in community events. Send news items for publication in local community newspapers - anything except information on the secret work of Masonry or business matters of the Grand Lodge or your Lodge. Names of individuals taking the degrees should not be publicized. Newsworthy items include announcement of meetings, officers installed, appointment of members to public office, awards, visitations of the Grand Master and Grand Line, etc. Here are some samples just received... * From Coats Lodge No. 102, a half page spread in Easton's "The Midshore Weekly" with picture of WM Phillip Schlotzhauer and transcript of "Freemasonry - A Way of Life". * From Collington Lodge No. 230, a notice in the Bowie News including meeting dates and heads of bodies meeting at their Temple. Also an announcement of a Grand Lodge Visitation. * From Manokin Lodge No. 106 a notice printed about the installation of their officers and a general statement of the background and purposes of Masonry. Anymore items out there? Send them along to the Grand Lodge, Attention Public Relations and Publicity Committee. P.S. Thanks WM Jack Calloway, Collington, for input as promised. Also to Bro. Taylor, Highland No. 184 and Curator, John A. Hughes for Star-Democrat (Easton) spread on Museum.

* MASONIC HOMES - BONNIE BLINK: Under separate funding arrangement from Grand Lodge operations. Has own budget...expenditures pretty close to income. *Meeting planned at Masonic Homes soon of representatives previously designated by your Lodge. *Negotiations have been underway for some time on sale of part of property.... now in final phase ...awaiting purchaser's acceptance of Board of Managers' final offer following zoning agreement. *Appreciate support of Lodges which encourage contributions to the Masonic Homes in lieu of flowers or other acknowledgments in memory of deceased brothers.

* LODGE ATTENDANCE: Goal is to have well-planned, interesting and varied programs. If you have ideas or special likes, give them to your Worshipful Master/Program Committee. Speakers from membership, local community or through Grand Lodge are available...Masonic or other appropriate subjects. Give youth activities (DeMolay, Rainbows, Jobies) a chance to do their stuff. Invite family, friends and neighbors to installations, award ceremonies, socials. Our Deputy Grand Master, William M. Koenig will furnish programming ideas on request. Requests made at the regional meetings for this information are being filled. Support your Lodge!

* YOU NAME IT CONTEST: We are looking for a name for this publication which may be issued quarterly. A brother has offered to pay 1978 dues of the Maryland Master Mason in good standing whose suggestion is selected. Only entries received/postmarked prior to July 1, 1977 will be considered.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS, EVENTS & VISITATIONS

Future issues of this publication will include under this heading, items of general interest to Maryland Lodges and Master Masons. These will include both Grand Lodge and Blue Lodge activities. Please send these items to the Grand Lodge, Attention: Public Relations & Publicity Committee at least six months prior to an event if possible. Here are some upcoming events and visitations:

April

- 10 Easter Sunrise Service, 7:30 AM, Bonnie Blink.
- 11 G.L. Fraternal Visit, Thomas J. Shryock No. 223, Hollywood.
- 12 G.L. Visit, Freedom No. 112, Elderburg, Mortgage Burning.
- 17 G.L. Church Service, Cheverly United Methodist Church, Cheverly.
- 18 G.L. Fraternal Visit, Potomac No. 5, FAAM, D.C.
- 29 G.L. Visit, Friendship No. 84, Hagerstown, 150th Anniv rsary.

May

- 11 G.L. Visit, St. John's No. 24, Baltimore, MM Degree.
- 15 G.L. Religious Services, Bonnie Blink, 3:00 PM.
- 17 G.L. Semi-Annual Communication, Baltimore, 7:30 PM.
- 22 G.L. Visit, Friendship No. 84, Hagerstown, Temple Rededication.
- 23 Cumberland Lodges in Concert with Community
- 24 G.L. Fraternal Visit, Takoma No. 29, FAAM, D.C., Maryland Night, 7:30 PM.

June

- 4 G.L. Visit, Patapsco No. 183, Dundalk, Grand Assembly, Order of Rainbow for Girls.
- 7 G.L. Fraternal Visit, Cornerstone No. 224, Takoma Park.
- 9 G.L. Visit, Chillum Castle No. 186, Chillum, MM Degree.
- 20 G.L. Fraternal Visit, Acacia No. 155, Thurmont.

July and August G.L. Summer Schools of Instruction

- July 5th through August 23rd, Baltimore, 7:45 PM.
- July 7th, Hagerstown
- July 14th, Salisbury
- July 21st, Brunswick
- July 28th, Cambridge
- August 11th, Hagerstown
- August 18th, Denton

September

- 7 G.L. Fraternal Visit, York No. 225, Hyattsville.
- 22 G.L. Visit, Union No. 60, Baltimore, MM Degree.
- 30 G.L. Visit, Knights of Mecca, AAONMS

October

- 8 G.L. Visit, Landmark No. 127, Brooklyn, Baltimore, MM Degree.
- 15 Harvest Home Day, Bonnie Blink, 7:00 AM.
- 18 G.L. Fraternal Visit, Jephtha No. 222, Essex.
- 24 G.L. Fraternal Visit, Friendship No. 84, Hagerstown.

November

- 3 G.L. Fraternal Visit, Wheaton No. 228, Wheaton.
- 7 G.L. Visit, Mystic Circle No. 109, Baltimore, PM Night.
- 15-16 G.L. Annual Communication, Baltimore.