

# Freestate Freemason



Summer 1999

*From the Deputy Grand Master—*

## HARVEST HOMES DAY 1999

Brethren:

September 18, 1999 will be a banner day in the history of the Grand Lodge of Maryland. Master Masons are invited to bring as their guests, non-masonic male friends, and male family members to enjoy the fellowship that abounds on the "HILL" on that day.

In addition to the wonderful sausages, roast beef sandwiches, pumpkin pie, hot cakes and coffee; there will be much excitement and enthusiasm on the "HILL." There will not be any formal speeches, however the Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Past Grand Masters, and many Grand Line Officers will be pleased to meet and greet as many Brothers and their guests as possible. Informational tables will be set up under the tents to explain and support all phases of our fraternity.

Think of this day as a FAIR. You can learn all about our wonderful fraternity, at the same time meet and greet OLD FRIENDS, and, we hope, make a few new ones. You can learn much more about our Masonic Homes. Learn about their beginnings and what prompted them to come into existence. Be informed about changing times and the new programs associated with Bonnie Blink. We now can admit directly into Assisted Living or Health Care on a pay-as-you-go basis. Life Care for our Brethren and eligible family members has not changed. These services will help to provide the needs for our Brethren in the Twenty-first Century. You will have opportunities to DONATE BLOOD, one of the great philanthropic endeavors of our fraternity. There will be opportunities to visit the antique cars on display. Several SHRINE and TALL CEDAR units will be on hand to demonstrate what they offer. The YORK RITE and the SCOTTISH RITE will have information tables. All of our

THE GRAND LODGE OF ANCIENT,  
FREE, AND ACCEPTED MASONS  
OF MARYLAND

*See HOMES DAY on p. 3, col. 1*





Issued quarterly by the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free, and Accepted Masons of Maryland, U.S.A. This publication is a medium for informing the Craft of activities of the Grand Lodge and constituent Lodges and for sharing with the media, community, family, and friends those events, activities, and personalities which exemplify the objectives of the Masonic fraternity.

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*Send articles to the editor, address changes to the Grand Lodge.*

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## BACK TO THE FUTURE

The masonic lodges of Maryland have been given an exciting opportunity—a chance to return to traditional practices and to restore some administrative discretion to themselves. An amendment was proposed to the *Constitution* of the Grand Lodge which would allow constituent lodges to open and meet on any degree; it will be voted on at the November annual Communication. Two issues should be considered when this matter is discussed.

**CAN WE DO IT?** This is the easiest question and is best answered by reviewing Maryland masonic history. On May 18, 1842, the Grand Lodge of Maryland “*Resolved*, That all the business of a Lodge, except that of conferring the inferior degrees, and the instruction therein, should be transacted in a Master Mason’s Lodge.” In other words, after 92 years of meeting on the First Degree—from 1750 to 1842—Maryland lodges made the administrative decision to change the way business was conducted. (Lodges virtually everywhere outside the U.S. continue to meet on the First.) If now—157 years later—we choose to return to our original way of working, there’s nothing to stop us.

**SHOULD WE DO IT?** This is a more difficult question and requires some thought. For me, the answer is a resounding, “Yes!” All modern management theory recommends delegating decision-making to the lowest possible level of an organization, where the front-line managers best understand the situation. I don’t know if your next meeting should be held on the first, or second, or third degree, but I am confident that the master of your lodge can answer this better than anyone else in the state. I want to restore his authority to make such decisions. If your lodge is conferring the Fellowcraft Degree, it might make sense to open and close on the Second and to go home. On the other hand, there’s nothing to prevent your lodge from opening on the Third, calling off, opening on the Second, conferring the degree, closing on the Second, calling on, closing on the Third, and *then* going home. No lodge would be forced to do anything, but they could now decide what works best for them.

Perhaps a more important reason for restoring this authority to our lodges is the potential effect it could have on candidates. New members now wait typically 2–8 weeks between degrees while they learn their catechisms. Their only contact with the lodge can be their instructor and fellow candidates. What if they were encouraged or even expected to attend every meeting between their degrees? What if they shared 2–4 or more months of lodge fellowship before they became Master Masons? What if they were encouraged and helped with their memory work by other members of the lodge after meetings? Could any of this make more enthused and more dedicated masons? Perhaps not, but it should not diminish their interest in the least. When a man becomes a Freemason, the first masonic body he is exposed to is the Blue Lodge. We should be giving ourselves every possible tool to attract and to keep the interest of our new members.

*S. Brent Morris, Editor*





HOMES DAY *from p. 1*

youth groups will demonstrate what they do and what they have to offer. Freemasonry in Maryland has an awful lot to offer. You can fellowship with brethren and their friends from all walks of life in a casual and friendly atmosphere.

For those individuals and organizations that wish to disseminate information, please contact Richard P. Mainley, Jr., Steve Ponzillo, III, or Lynn D. Shreffler for information and advice. Let us make this one of the greatest HARVEST HOMES DAY celebrations that we have ever had. It will be the last one of the 20th Century!

Remember, in the old days we came as a service to the Homes to help husk their corn. That need has passed, but the need to support the Homes and our Fraternity has not. If we can capture the wave of enthusiasm that is now rampant in our Grand Lodge, we can and will return to the glory of former times.

**YOUR HELP IS WANTED!**

**YOUR PARTICIPATION  
IS NEEDED!**

**YOUR BROTHERLY LOVE  
IS EXPECTED!**

As our Most Worshipful Grand Master would very probably say to you, "PLEASE HELP ME IN THIS BRETHREN."

Faternally,

**BENNIE G. OWENS**

Deputy Grand Master

## Candidates for Grand Lodge Offices

M. W. Francis E. Larrimore has announced a new policy for candidates for elected Grand Lodge offices. The Fall 1999 *Freestate Freemason* will publish pictures, biographies, and statements of all brethren who intend to run for an office at the Annual Communication, if there is more than one announced candidate for that office. The purpose of this change is to have a better informed membership.

When asked if publishing this information might violate our traditional prohibition of "politics," the Grand Master said, "This isn't politics, it's common sense. How can you cast an intelligent vote if you don't know anything about the candidates or what they stand for?"

The offices for which biographies of intended candidates will be accepted are Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Sr. Grand Warden, Jr. Grand Warden, Grand Treasurer, and Grand Secretary. Any brother who intends to have his name placed in nomination is invited to submit a photograph (a head shot is recommended) and 275-word statement to the Grand Secretary's office. There is no restriction on the content of the information, though a brief biography and position statement are recommended. All information received by October 10, 1999 will be published in the Fall 1999 *Freestate Freemason* if more than one brother declares himself for a grand office.

## Woodworking on the Hill

The latest addition to the amenities at Bonnie Blink is a fully-equipped woodworking shop with first class machines. It is located between the two barns and offers yet another recreational outlet for the residents.

While the shop has plenty of power tools, there is a current shortage of hand tools. The Bonnie Blink Wood Shop needs squares (combo), chisels, clamps, and other tools as well as wood of all kinds. For any brother having an extra tool or so, it is suggested that you consider donating them to the wood shop. The resident wood workers will put them to good use.

Bro. Joseph L. Edmonds, President of the Resident Council, has volunteered to give a tour of the shop to anyone interested. He lives in apartment 446 and can be reached at [emeje@juno.com](mailto:emeje@juno.com).

## Fourteenth Annual Crab Feast

The Dr. John Coats Memorial Lodge No. 1787 will hold its fourteenth annual Grand Master's Crab Feast/Bull Roast on Sunday August 8, 1999 from 1:00-5:00 pm. at Bonnie Blink. Tickets are \$23 through your Lodge secretary, and children under 12 are free. This is open to all of the Masonic Family, but especially to your friends with whom you would like to sit in Lodge but who are not currently members. This will be a great day of fellowship.





Newest members of the Council of Anointed High Priests of Maryland. Front row, left to right, Pennell V. Jester, R.A.C. No. 21, Gilbert N. Kinnamon, R.A.C. No. 25; back row, left to right, Richmond C. Laney, R.A.C. No. 19, Robert B. Lumbert, R.A.C. No. 1, and Ralph P. Hooper, R.A.C. No. 17.

## 175th Birthday for Md. High Priests

The Council of Anointed High Priests of Maryland held their regular annual meeting on Saturday, April 24, 1999, at the Masonic Temple in Odenton. The Maryland Council was founded in Baltimore in 1824 and celebrated its 175th anniversary this year. Maryland claims the honor of being the oldest Council of Anointed High Priests in the world, having preceded its nearest rival, Massachusetts, by two years. No High Priest can be installed in a Royal Arch Chapter until he has been anointed, consecrated, and set apart to the Order of High Priesthood.

The meeting of the Maryland Council was opened at 1:00 pm, and the following newly-elected High Priests were received into the order: Robert B. Lumbert, No. 1, Ralph P.

Hooper, No. 17, Richmond C. Laney, No. 19, Pennell V. Jester, No. 21, and G. Neill Kinnamon, No. 25. Following the ceremonies, the companions and their ladies enjoyed a roast beef dinner. Bennie G. Owens, R.W. D.G.M. was the speaker and congratulated the council on its 175th anniversary. He urged the newly-anointed High Priests to work for the advancement of their chapters.

## Collington Lodge Helps Bowie School

Collington Lodge No. 230 of Bowie made headlines in *The Bowie Blade-News* when Glen Clary, Master, and Harold Whipp, Jr. Warden, presented a \$1,000 check to Dianne G. Thornton, principal of C. Elizabeth Rieg School. The school in South Bowie is part of the county public school system. Its Multi-handicap Program serves students, ages 5-21, with

multiple disabilities. The emphasis is on preparing students to be productive members of their community. This extra support from Collington Lodge will be used by the school buy special teaching equipment for the students.

Collington Lodge raises money at Bowiefest for the Rieg School. They also distribute masonic literature there and get some good community exposure for the lodge and masons in Bowie.

## Action on Grand Lodge Amendments

Three amendments to the Grand Lodge Constitution were considered at the semi-annual meeting in May. The amendment to limit the terms of the Grand Secretary and Grand Treasurer failed. The amendments passed 1) to allow Lodges to sponsor bull roasts and crab feasts and 2) to remove the prohibition against lotteries and games of chance.

## Handcrafts at Harvest Home Day

Bro. Joseph L. Edmonds, President of the Resident Council at Bonnie Blink informed the *Freestate Freemason* that the residents of Bonnie Blink will have available for sale handcrafted items, flowers, and books in the Grand Ballroom of the Grand Lodge on Harvest Home Day. One of the items offered will be a desk & pen set with a Masonic Emblem imbedded in a gold wreath and a plate reading "The Last 'Corn





Husking / Harvest Home Day' of the 20th Century. Bonnie Blink 18 September 1999." This is a brass plate affixed to the base and at the end of the plate is mounted a gold-plated pen and funnel. Another item that has gotten a good measure of attention is the profile of the Bonnie Blink Chapel. These are only two of some 30 different items hand made by the residents. They have indeed worked hard to produce these items and hope all attendees at the Harvest Homes Day will drop by and see their handiwork.

### Eblen's Cave Degree

Do those sultry days of August have you hot and bothered; are those Maryland Low Vales mosquito-ridden, warm and sticky? Do you just want to try a new Masonic adventure? Then cool it, in a cave!

Join Charity Lodge No. 134 next year on a trip to the 29th Annual Eblen's Cave Degree hosted by Union Lodge No. 38 F. & A.M. in Kingston, Tennessee August 18-20, 2000. Charity Lodge will raise a Maryland brother before several hundred Masons from across the nation.

A three day bus trip that includes motel accommodations and a day trip for Masonic Ladies to Pigeon Forge is included in the package for \$200 per person, double occupancy. The schedule also includes an E.A. degree by Cavins Lodge No. 226 F. & A.M. Woodruff, S.C., and southern hospitality, lunch, two dinners, and breakfast with entertainment host-

ed by Union Lodge No. 38. A history of the Annual Caves degree can be obtained at <http://www.gmwp.org/lodges/038.html>. For more information contact: Bob Franklin, P.M., 16609 Dubbs Road, Sparks, MD 21152, or email Fred Laser, S.W., [f.laser@usa.net](mailto:f.laser@usa.net).



Donald H. Knode, Sup. Tall Cedar

### Maryland Mason Heads Tall Cedars

At its Midwinter Conference held in Lancaster, Pennsylvania on January 15-17, 1999, Bro. Donald H. Knode of Bel Air was installed Supreme Tall Cedar of the Tall Cedars of Lebanon of North America. Bro. Knode is a member of Mt. Ararat Lodge No. 44 in Bel Air where he served as Master in 1982. Bro. Don joined Har Ce Forest No. 142, T.C.L. in 1976. In 1986 he served his forest as Grand Tall Cedar and has been Secretary of the Tall Cedar Foundation for Muscular Dystrophy. Congratulations Bro. Don!

### Solomon's Island Parade

The Grand Master of Masons in Maryland, Bro Francis E. Larrimore will march with his Grand Line, and Maryland Masons in the Patuxent River Appreciation Days (PRAD) parade at Solomon's Island, Md on Sunday October 10, 1999.

The Grand Master invites all Maryland Lodges and Masons to march with him as part of Maryland Masonry's Year 2000 Millennium celebration.

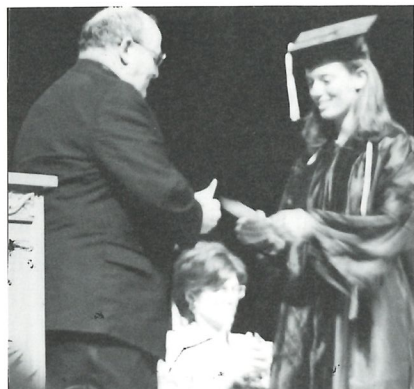
The parade is an annual event with the Pa-Po-Peake Shrine Club and most Boumi Temple units participating. Some 90 units, including marching bands and military units will parade.

Participants will gather at the south end of the island near Bowens Inn at 1:30 pm and step off at 2:00 pm sharp. The parade is one mile with free beer and soda at the end and food for sale. Bring the family as there's lots to see and do in the area. Directions from the Baltimore/Washington area: follow Md. Routes 2 and 4 south through Calvert County. Route 2 ends at Solomon's Island. Dress is white shirt (short sleeves preferred), dark tie, and dark trousers.

This will be a wonderful opportunity to bring Masonry before the public in a positive way and a fun way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

For more information, contact Al Lytle, Chairman, Grand Lodge Millennium Committee, 301-862-7041 (day) or 301-863-5593 (night).





W.M. William Davenport, Palestine Lodge No. 189, presents a scholarship to Rebecca Carter.



W.M. Shinnick, Corinthian Lodge No. 93, with G.I. Royal Pollokoff, makes an award to Ilia Harris while her mother looks on.



W.M. David Pierce, Aberdeen Lodge No. 187, congratulates Cynthia Howard of Edgewood H.S.

## Raising our Sights on a Brighter Future

Thousands of students in 24 separate school systems throughout Maryland are winning the battle against drug and alcohol abuse thanks to the Maryland Student Assistance Program funded by Masonic Charities of Maryland. This past spring 44 high school graduates in 21 counties and Baltimore City received a \$1,000 college scholarship from the Masonic Charities of Maryland. Three of these scholars are shown to the left.

## 10th Annual Golf Tournament

The MCM fund-raising golf tournament at the Talbot Country Club on June 7 again proved to be a financial and fun-filled success! There was a first with a ladies foursome, pictures on the right: Betty Brown, Kitty Clevenger, Mary Helen Frome, and Peggy Thompson. This was also the 3rd year that Ohr Lodge No. 131 in Cumberland had a foursome participate (pictures below). Why not plan on having your lodge enter a foursome next year?



## Testimonial Dinner

Put your Lodge in the picture. Focus on today's youth ... tomorrow's leaders!! Attend the MCM Testimonial Dinner honoring Maryland Lodges on October 27, 1999. Tickets are \$75 per person, of which \$40 is a tax-deductible donation. For tickets and details, call Fred Reitz, 410-997-6282, or write to Masonic Charities of Maryland, 309 Washington Ave., Suite 900, Towson, MD 21204.





## Blue Lodge Service Programs

A century ago Masons helped each other with a discretely delivered cord of wood during the winter. As we enter the 21st century Masons are still helping each other, but using the tools of modern commerce. The programs offered by Blue Lodge Services have been designed to serve the Masonic Family, to save its members money, and to assist the Grand Lodge of Maryland. For additional information on any of the programs contact Bro. David W. Wessel, 311 International Circle, Ste. 120, Hunt Valley, MD 21030, 410-785-3008 or 800-256-1428.

### Blue Lodge Investment Services

*Merrill Lynch*

Carla Fisher

800-937-0325

### Blue Lodge Credit Card

*Union State Bank*

Bro. Joseph N. Hoover, V.P.

800-887-8775

### Blue Lodge Long Term Care

Bros. D. Tully, P. Richardson, &

R. Mattern

410-785-3015 or 800-256-1428

### Blue Lodge Realty Services

*O'Connor, Piper, and Flynn*

Maggy Rosenberger

410-561-8806 or 800-444-5720

### Blue Lodge Insurance Services

Bro. Patrick Richardson

800-256-1428 personal & commercial

### Blue Lodge Travel & Tourism

*Round the World Travel Agency*

Bro. John Stathopoulos

410-276-7200 or 888-638-7471

www.netrip.com

### Blue Lodge Auto Tag Program

Bro. Ray Vogel

410-527-0600

### Blue Lodge Prescription Program

EPIC Pharmacy Network administers this program for qualified masons, their spouses, and dependents. The program offers discounts of 12% off of Average Wholesale Price on brand name drugs and up to a 25% discounts on generic drugs. For more information, contact EPIC Pharmacy Network at 800-876-3742.

## 20th Anniversary of Research Society

The Maryland Masonic Research Society will turn twenty this year. It all began with a luncheon meeting on Kent Island where a few dedicated Masonic students laid the foundation for regular gatherings to share their love of Masonic studies. It has evolved into an important part of the Maryland Masonic Family.

The Research Society meets 4-5 times a year at the call of the President. The meetings are held around the state, often on a Saturday afternoon. A typical meeting would include the presentation of one or more papers followed by a lively discussion. It is the intellectual stimulation that keeps up attendance.

During its twenty years the Research Society has served the Grand Lodge of Maryland with its informative newsletter which summarizes Masonic news from around the globe. The papers presented to the Society are informative and have been the source of many Lodge programs in Maryland.

The Maryland Masonic Research Society recognizes the achievements of its members in several ways. The Cyril H. York Memorial Award is given to the author of the best paper presented to the Society each each year. The Distinguished Author Award recognizes a member who has published a book or other significant work. The title of Fellow is bestowed rarely upon members for their exceptional service to the craft and signal contributions to the Society.

Bro. R. Frederick Lunn is the Society's president this year, and he has a special 20th Anniversary Banquet planned on Friday, October 29. Ms. Barbara Franco, Executive Director of the History Society of Washington, D.C. will be the speaker. She is a noted expert on early American Masonic aprons and will share excerpts from her book after dinner. Her talk is illustrated with slides and traces the development of decorated aprons from a home craft prepared by wives and female relatives of Masons to custom-made items manufactured by milliners to mass-produced factory aprons. The banquet is open to all. For details, contact Bro. S. Brent Morris, 410-796-7984, banquet chairman.





## A New Way of Life

Located atop a mountain, this real estate promises unending panoramic views of dense forests, elegant homes, and a growing economy. Timid wild life play amongst the trees as the Canadian geese arrive to announce the change in seasons. Daily strolls on pathways overlooking the hustle and bustle of the neighboring towns offer elements of both invitation and serenity.

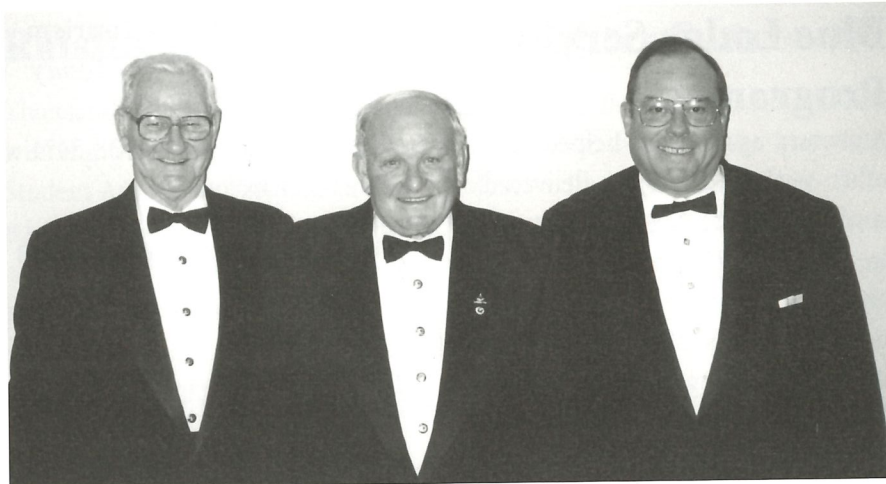
Sound refreshing? There's more.

An affordable stay here has been designed to meet everyone's finances. While here, join in the fun of entertainment, organized activities, spiritually enriched events, and brotherly love. Delicious food served by our accommodating staff will make you feel right at home. And you are!

Welcome to "Bonnie Blink," one of Baltimore County's premier Retirement Communities.

New opportunities await the eligible Master Mason and his family members. Apartment plans have been created for the active and independent guests while spacious Assisted Living rooms are tailored to meet your growing care concerns. Our Healthcare units boast clinically skilled care including rehabilitation, IV therapy, and much more.

Exciting *new* payment plans now offer affordable daily rates and a refund. Want to learn more about this *new* way of life awaiting you? Complete the pre-paid postcard in the attached brochure, or call Bonnie Blink today, 410-527-1111. We're waiting for you.



Herb Hull, P.G.I., Charlie Winebrenner, G.I., Fred Lunn, G.I. presided at a special meeting of Washington Lodge No. 3 on the Panama Canal.

## Special Meeting on the Panama Canal

On February 10, 1999, Washington Lodge No. 3 was opened at 3:00 pm under special dispensation while traversing the Panama Canal in an Easterly direction. The opening included the recitation of Maryland's Masonic Creed and the pledge to the flag. The "gold" square and compasses of Washington Lodge were placed upon the open Bible.

There were two members and ten visitors present. Bro. R. Frederick Lunn, W.M. of Washington Lodge presided, Charles E. Winebrenner, Jr. also of Washington Lodge was Sr. Warden, and Herbert F. Hull of No. 146 was Jr. Warden. The other chairs were filled by brethren from New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Delaware, England, Michigan, and North Carolina. The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm, peace and harmony prevailing, and the brethren retired for refreshments in the Adagio Lounge.

## Maryland Masonic News Wanted!

The *Freestate Freemason* wants to publish news about *your* lodge. What programs have you had? How are you working in the community? Have any of your brothers achieved some special recognition. Let us know so we can share it with the other Masons in Maryland.

Articles are preferred in an electronic format via disk or e-mail. We will accept typewritten manuscripts, hand written letters, but we draw the line at chiseled stone tablets. Photographs enhance any story, but they must be clear originals. Newspaper photos, photocopies, or computer printed images are probably not quality pictures. However, send us what you have, and we'll see what we can do.

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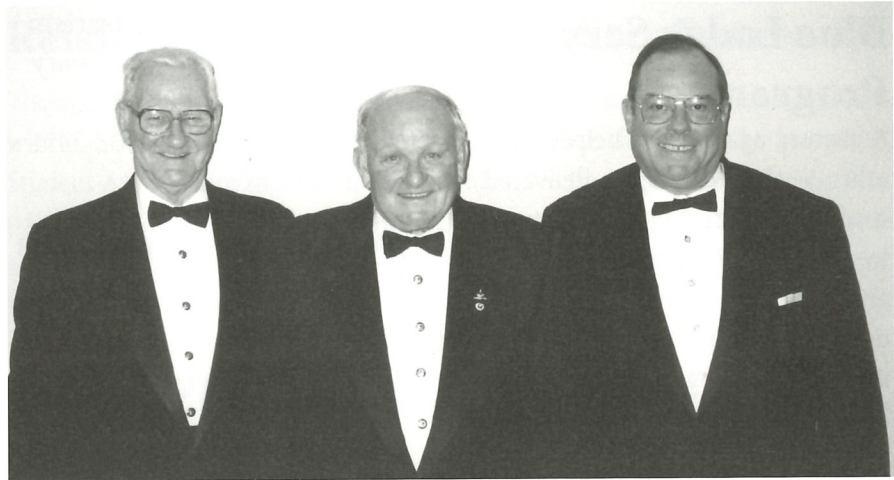
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## Ma to Pa

Author unknown

Said Ma to Pa, "Now tell me, John,  
the things you Masons do.  
I have no curiosity, but tell me, hus-  
band true."

Said Pa to Ma, "If you will swear  
you'll never tell on me,  
Their deepest secrets I'll reveal and  
pour them out on thee."

Ma, she crossed her heart three  
times with solemn nod of head,  
While Pa, he twisted off a chaw, and  
this is what he said:

"We take a fellow to a graveyard,  
where ghosts and witches are;  
And tell him he should mend his  
ways, 'cause he will soon be thar.

And when his jaw begins to shake  
and every Screech Owl hoots,  
He swears his wife can have her way,  
even tho' he wears the boots.

He swears he'll never take a nip,  
and never cuss an oath,  
And he'll take his wife to meeting  
and sing loud enough for both.

He'll chop the wood and milk the  
cow, look pleasant every day,  
Be handyman about the house, and  
do as wife shall say."

Said Ma to Pa, "I tell you John,  
there's nothing better, higher;  
But, John, they'll either kick you  
out, or else you are a liar."

*From the "Masonic Poetry Preser-  
vation Project" of Smithfield Lodge  
No. 455, A.F.&A.M. of Texas  
[http://www.startext.net/np/  
smithfield455/Poems.htm#Various](http://www.startext.net/np/smithfield455/Poems.htm#Various).*



CMSgt (Ret.) Ronald F. Perkins, S.W.  
Camp Springs Lodge No. 227

## Bro. Perkins Honored by ANG

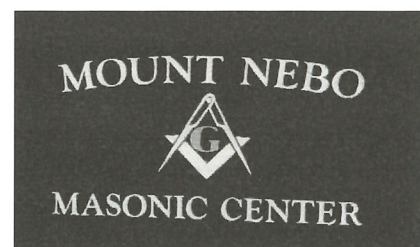
At a very impressive ceremony con-  
ducted on July 18, 1999 at the head-  
quarters building of the District of  
Columbia Air National Guard  
(DCANG) on Andrews Air Force  
Base, the command conference  
room was dedicated to and named  
for Chief Master Sergeant (retired)  
Bro. Ronald F. Perkins. Chief Perkins  
was the first Senior Enlisted Advisor  
for the DCANG. Bro. Perkins is cur-  
rently Sr. Warden of Camp Springs  
Lodge No. 227. He is also retired  
from his civilian employment with  
the District of Columbia Depart-  
ment of Public Works. A large  
bronze dedicatory plaque was  
placed on the wall in the conference  
room during the ceremony. The  
plaque bears the likeness of Bro.  
Perkins and is accompanied by a  
shadow box containing the rank  
insignia and military decorations  
earned by Bro. Perkins during his  
distinguished 32-year career with  
the DC Air National Guard in serv-  
ice of our country.

## Mt. Nebo Lodge is on the Grow!

In 1976, when Mt. Nebo Lodge  
moved to its present location at  
9420 Belair Road, Perry Hall was a  
rural community consisting of  
farmland interspersed with individ-  
ual housing. Today Perry Hall and  
surrounding communities are now  
among the largest growth regions in  
Baltimore County. The members of  
Mt. Nebo Lodge recognized the  
influx of new families into the com-  
munity as an opportunity to pro-  
mote and to help perpetuate  
Freemasonry.

The first step in the process was  
to change the identity from that of a  
lodge to a Masonic Center. A new  
highly visible marquee was erected  
prominently displaying the name  
"Mount Nebo Masonic Center."  
When the building expansion pro-  
gram began in 1997 four primary  
objectives were identified and have  
become the motivating factors  
behind their efforts to erect an attrac-  
tive and functional building. These  
objectives are: (1) Promote and con-  
tribute to the perpetuation of our  
Masonic Fraternity; (2) Establish an  
attractive and active Masonic

*See MT. NEBO, p. 13, col. 1*



Illuminated sign on Belair Rd.  
passed by 35,000 cars a day.





S. Brent Morris, P.G.D.C.

Historians must be cautious about many well-known "facts." George Washington chopped down a cherry tree when a boy and confessed the deed to his father. Abner Doubleday invented the game of baseball. Freemasons inserted some of their emblems (chief among them the eye in the pyramid) into the reverse of the Great Seal of the United States. These historical "facts" are widely popular, commonly accepted, and equally false.

The eye in the pyramid (emblazoned on the dollar bill, no less) is often cited as "evidence" that sinister conspiracies abound which will impose a "New World Order" on an unsuspecting populace. Depending on whom you hear it from, the Masons are planning the takeover themselves, or are working in concert with European bankers, or are leading (or perhaps being led by) the Illuminati (whoever they are). The notion of a world-wide Masonic conspiracy would be laughable, if it weren't being repeated with such earnest gullibility by conspiracists like Pat Robertson.

Sadly, Masons are sometimes counted among the gullible who repeat the tall tale of the eye in the pyramid, often with a touch of pride. They may be guilty of nothing worse than innocently puffing up the importance of their fraternity (as well as themselves), but they're guilty nonetheless. The time has come for us state the truth plainly and simply!

**The Great Seal of the United States is not a Masonic emblem, nor does it contain hidden Masonic symbols.**

The details are there for anyone to check, who's willing to rely on historical fact rather than hysterical fiction.

- Benjamin Franklin was the only Mason on the first design committee, and his suggestions had no Masonic content.
- None of the final designers of the seal were Masons.
- The interpretation of the eye on

the seal is subtly different from the interpretation used by Masons.

- The eye in the pyramid is not nor has been a Masonic symbol.

## THE FIRST COMMITTEE

On Independence Day, 1776 a committee was created to design a seal for the new American nation. The committee's members were Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams, with Pierre Du Simitière as artist and consultant.<sup>1</sup> Of the four men involved, only Benjamin Franklin was a Mason, and he contributed nothing of a Masonic nature to the committee's



The reverse of the Great Seal of the United States of America.





proposed design for a seal.

Du Simitière, the committee's consultant and a non-Mason, contributed several major design features that made their way into the ultimate design of the great seal: "the shield, E Pluribus Unum, MDCCLXXVI, and the eye of providence in a triangle."<sup>2</sup> The eye of providence on the seal thus can be traced not to the Masons, but to a non-Mason consultant to the committee.

"The single eye was a well-established artistic convention for an 'omniscient Ubiquitous Deity' in the medallion art of the Renaissance. Du Simitière, who suggested using the symbol, collected art books and was familiar with the artistic and ornamental devices used in Renaissance art."<sup>3</sup> This was the same cultural iconography that eventually led Masons to add the all-seeing eye to their symbols.

## THE SECOND AND THIRD COMMITTEES

Congress declined the first committee's suggestions as well as those of its 1780 committee. Francis Hopkinson, consultant to the second committee, had several lasting ideas that eventually made it into the seal: "white and red stripes within a blue background for the shield, a radiant constellation of thirteen stars, and an olive branch."<sup>4</sup> Hopkinson's greatest contribution to the current seal came from his layout of a 1778 50-dollar colonial note in which he used an unfinished pyramid in the design.

The third and last seal committee of 1782 produced a design that finally satisfied Congress. Charles Thomson, Secretary of Congress, and William Barton, artist and consultant, borrowed from earlier designs and sketched what at length became the United States seal.

The misinterpretation of the seal as a Masonic emblem may have been first introduced a century later in 1884. Harvard Professor Eliot Norton wrote that the reverse was "practically incapable of effective treatment; it can hardly, (however artistically treated by the designer,) look otherwise than as a dull emblem of a Masonic fraternity."<sup>5</sup>

## INTERPRETING THE SYMBOL

The "Remarks and Explanations" of Thomson and Barton are the only explanation of the symbols' meaning. Despite what anti-Masons may believe, there's no reason to doubt the interpretation accepted by the Congress.

*The Pyramid signified Strength and Duration: The Eye over it & the Motto allude to the many signal interpositions of providence in favor of the American cause.*<sup>6</sup>

The committees and consultants who designed the Great Seal of the United States contained only one Mason, Benjamin Franklin. The only possibly Masonic design element among the very many on the seal is the eye of providence, and the interpretation of it by the designers is different from that used by Masons. The eye on the seal represents an active intervention of God

in the affairs of men, while the Masonic symbol stands for a passive awareness by God of the activities of men.

The first "official" use and definition of the all-seeing eye as a Masonic symbol seems to have come in 1797 with *The Freemason's Monitor* of Thomas Smith Webb—14 years after Congress adopted the design for the seal. Here's how Webb explains the symbol.

"[A]nd although our thoughts, words and actions, may be hidden from the eyes of man, yet that All-Seeing Eye, whom the Sun, Moon and Stars obey, and under whose watchful care even comets perform their stupendous revolutions, pervades the inmost recesses of the human heart, and will reward us according to our merits."<sup>7</sup>

## THE EYE IN THE PYRAMID

Besides the subtly different interpretations of the symbol, it is notable that Webb did not describe the eye as being in a triangle. Jeremy Ladd Cross published *The True Masonic Chart or Hieroglyphic Monitor* in 1819, essentially an illustrated version of Webb's *Monitor*. In this first "official" depiction of Webb's symbol, Cross had illustrator Amos Doolittle depict the eye surrounded by a semi-circular glory.<sup>8</sup>

The all-seeing eye thus appears to be a rather recent addition to Masonic symbolism. It is not found in any of the gothic constitutions, written from about 1390 to 1730.

See EYE, p. 12, col. 1





# The Eye in the Pyramid

EYE from p. 11

The eye—sometimes in a triangle, sometimes in clouds, but nearly always surrounded by a glory—was a popular Masonic decorative device in the latter half of the 18th century. Its use as a design element seems to have been an artistic representation of the omniscience of God, rather than some generally accepted Masonic symbol.

Its meaning in all cases, however, was that commonly given it by society at large—a reminder of the constant presence of God. For example, in 1614 the frontispiece of *The History of the World* by Walter Raleigh showed an eye in a cloud labeled “Providentia” overlooking a globe. It is not suggested that Raleigh’s *History* is a Masonic document, despite the use of the all-seeing eye.

The eye of Providence was part of the common cultural iconography of the 17th and 18th centuries. When placed in a triangle, the eye went beyond a general representation of God to a strongly Trinitarian statement. It was during this period that Masonic ritual and symbolism evolved, and it is not surprising that many symbols common to and understood by the general society made their way into Masonic ceremonies. Masons may have preferred the triangle because of the frequent use of the number 3 in their ceremonies: three degrees, three original grand masters, three principal officers, and so on. Eventually the all-seeing eye came to be used officially by Masons as a symbol for God, but this happened towards the

end of the eighteenth century, after congress had adopted the seal.

A pyramid, whether incomplete or finished, however, has never been a Masonic symbol. It has no generally accepted symbolic meaning, except perhaps permanence or mystery. The combining of the eye of providence overlooking an unfinished pyramid is a uniquely American, not Masonic, icon, and must be interpreted as its designers intended. It has no Masonic context.

## CONCLUSION

It’s hard to know what leads some to see Masonic conspiracies behind world events, but once that hypothesis is accepted, any jot and tittle can be misinterpreted as “evidence.” The Great Seal of the United States is a classic example of such a misinterpretation, and some Masons are as guilty of the exaggeration as many anti-Masons.

The Great Seal and Masonic symbolism grew out of the same cultural milieu. While the all-seeing eye had been popularized in Masonic designs of the late eighteenth century, it did not achieve any sort of official recognition until Webb’s 1797 *Monitor*. Whatever status the symbol may have had during the design of the Great Seal, it was not adopted or approved or endorsed by any Grand Lodge.

**The seal’s Eye of Providence and the Mason’s All-Seeing Eye each express Divine Omnipotence, but they are parallel uses of a shared icon, not a single symbol.**

## NOTES

1. Robert Hieronimus, *America’s Secret Destiny* (Rochester, Vt.: Destiny Books, 1989), p. 48.
2. Patterson and Dougall in Hieronimus, p. 48
3. Hieronimus, p. 81.
4. Hieronimus, p. 51.
5. Hieronimus, p. 57.
6. C. Thomas and W. Barton in Hieronimus.
7. Thomas Smith Webb, *The Freemason’s Monitor or Illustrations of Masonry* (Salem, Mass.: Cushing and Appleton, 1821), p. 66.
8. Jeremy Ladd Cross, *The True Masonic Chart or Hieroglyphic Monitor*, 3rd ed. (New Haven, Conn.: By the Author, 1824), plate 22.

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The Masonic Service Association (MSA) is the largest organization of Masonic Grand Lodges in North America. MSA publishes the monthly *Short Talk Bulletin* and informational digests, coordinates disaster relief for Grand Lodges, and provides rapid, accurate responses to press inquiries through the Masonic Information Center. Their materials provide excellent information for lodge programs or those who want to know more about our fraternity. A free catalog of all MSA publications is available at no cost.





MT. NEBO from p. 9

Center within this high growth region; (3) Create a facility that will provide access and comfort to its members regardless of age or physical infirmities, to promote attendance and participation in meetings and other functions; (4) Promote a "family" atmosphere within the Masonic Center by bringing together members of Masonic Lodges, Eastern Star Chapters, and Youth Groups to meet, work, and play in harmony for the good of the themselves, the community, and the Fraternity.

A Ground Breaking Ceremony was held Saturday, April 17, 1999 at 11:00 AM. The Most Worshipful Grand Master, Francis E. Larrimore, and the Worthy Grand Matron of the Eastern Star, Adele W. Witmer, presided over the ceremony and "manned" the ceremonial shovels.

When complete the facility will become home for the office and state headquarters of The Grand Chapter of Maryland, Order of the Eastern Star. It will provide a social

hall capable of seating approximately 200, an Eastern Star Chapter meeting room and a Masonic meeting room. The basement will provide for a memorabilia room and a multipurpose room. Spacious and lighted parking areas are conveniently located adjacent to the building.

The most distinctive "Fraternal" aspect of this program is that Mt. Nebo is offering Masonic Lodges and Eastern Star Chapters an opportunity to purchase ownership in the Masonic Center. Mt. Nebo doesn't want organizations just to meet there and go home; they want Lodges and Chapters to feel like they belong. Mt. Nebo wants them to participate in the management and the activities of the Mount Nebo Masonic Center. They believe active participation within the community will we attract attention, interest, and membership. They believe this can only be achieved by extending an offer of "Pride in Ownership" to Brother Lodges and Sister Chapters who meet in the center.

## Chillam Castle Helps Youth Groups

The members of Chillam Castle Lodge No. 186 of Hyattsville recently closed the doors of their temple. This action was required because of the financial and other burdens of maintaining their building. Rather than slowly fade into a decrepit state, they decided to move forward and merge with Birmingham Lodge No. 188. The holding corporation had a rather substantial amount of money in their treasury after the building was closed. They, with the guidance of Bro. William ("Uncle Bill") Edwards, P.M., decided it would be a great idea to distribute their residual funds to the masonic youth organizations of Maryland.

The Chillam Castle Holding Corporation, through Bro. Bill and some of his family members, donated \$1,000 to each Job's Daughter's Bethel, DeMolay Chapter, and Rainbow Assembly in Maryland. In addition to these local organizations, their grand bodies were given a significant donation.

It is always sad to see a lodge or any other organization close, but Chillam Castle did it with dignity and pride. They followed the wise adage, "When given lemons, make lemonade." Their generosity will help the Masonic youth organizations of Maryland prosper and succeed. Thanks to "Uncle Bill," the Holding Corporation, and the members of Chillam Castle Lodge. You have demonstrated Masonry in Action.



Ground breaking ceremony for the Mt. Nebo Masonic Center, Perry Hall. From left to right: Frederick J. Ptasehek, W.M. of Mt. Nebo Lodge, Adele W. Witmer, W.G.M., O.E.S., Francis E. Larrimore, M.W.G.M. of the Grand Lodge of Maryland.





Left to right are W.M. Donald L. Himes, T.J. Shryock Lodge No. 223, CDR. Wayne Fisher, President Judy Penrod, Worthy Patron Jay F. McGrath, Julia Halla Chapter No. 107, Honored Queen Jessica Hassay, Bethel No. 42, I.O.J.D., and Venerable Master Alfred L. Girard, So. Maryland Valley, A.&A.S.R.

## Southern Maryland Masons Aid VFW

The California, Maryland VFW Post 2632 was recently destroyed by fire, and their fraternal neighbors came to their help. W.M. Donald L. Himes, Thomas J. Shryock Lodge No. 223 made a contribution on behalf of the St. Mary's County Masonic Association to help in the rebuilding. The presentation of the check was made during Ladies Night at the Hollywood Lodge to Commander Wayne Fisher and President Judy Penrod of the VFW as other members of the So. Maryland Masonic family looked on.

## Maryland Rainbow Foundation

The Maryland Rainbow Girls Foundation was established in 1997 to support the International Order of the Rainbow for Girls in Maryland. It meets both the federal and state guidelines and is qualified as a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization. The foundation is now conducting a capital fund-raising campaign. They hope to secure support from the Maryland Masonic family as well as parents, relatives, and friends of Rainbow Girls.

The foundation supports the Gayle Saks Scholarship Fund which provides financial assistance to Rainbow Girls desiring to further their education. Established in 1972 before the foundation, the Saks Scholarships have helped girls who have gone on to become physicians,

attorneys, dentists, teachers, nurses, graphic artists, and members of the business and financial communities.

It is hoped that the foundation can expand their scope and their work to support leadership camps, service projects, and other worthwhile philanthropic projects in keeping with the highest traditions of Masonic teachings.

A Rainbow Girl is the daughter of a Master Mason, Eastern Star, Amaranth, or majority Rainbow Girl. She can also join as a friend of a Rainbow girl if recommended by a Master Mason.

Rainbow was founded in 1922 in McAlester, Oklahoma by the Rev. W. Mark Sexon, P.G.M. The Order is based on the lessons of love, religion, nature, immortality, fidelity, patriotism, and service which are associated with the seven colors of

the Rainbow.

Girls are offered through their membership in Rainbow a character-building foundation, leadership opportunities, a chance to develop organizational skills, participation in service and charity projects, social activities, an opportunity to meet girls throughout the world, lasting friendships, and the opportunity to plan meetings and activities themselves.

The current officers of the State Executive Board of Maryland, I.O.R.G. are Calvin W. Parker, Chairman, Renee Calabrese, Secretary, Audrey Sauerham, Treasurer. Mary Adeline Bradford is the Supreme Inspector in Maryland. For more information on this great organization, contact the Maryland Rainbow Girls Foundation, Inc., 24 W. Furnace Branch Rd., Glen Burnie, MD 21061-2206.





## Accelerated Class A Success

Saturday, June 19, 1999, was a history-making day for Maryland Masonry. The Grand Master's Accelerated Class saw over 300 men raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason. The sense of accomplishment and the feelings of brotherhood made the class memorable for all.

The day began with coffee and buns in the Grand Lodge Ballroom. Candidates, who had been balloted upon in their own lodges, registered for the day and then received a Bible. Everyone present was charged with excited anticipation.

In all ways possible, the proceedings were just like those in a constituent lodge. During the pre-meeting period each candidate was asked the three essential interrogatories. The Grand Lodge was opened with more than 300 Master Masons in attendance. When the candidates were admitted, more than 600 were present for the solemn ceremonies.

Each degree was conferred on one "active candidate" while the other members of the class watched and participated when appropriate. Bro. Stuart Cordish of Amicable Lodge No. 25 presided over the Entered Apprentice Lodge. Bro. Jack Biggs of Charity Lodge No. 134 sat in the East for passing to the Degree of Fellowcraft Mason, and the Grand Lodge of Maryland conferred the Master Mason Degree. Bros. Francis E. Larrimore, M.W.G.M. and Bennie G. Owens, R.W.D.G.M. shared the

pleasant duties of presiding during the Third Degree.

One of the nice touches of the ceremonies was the presence of Steven J. Ponzillo, III as Master of Ceremonies. At a few critical times during the degree he would step to the podium and announce, "The degree pauses here." At this point an action would be illustrated on the lodge floor so it could be seen by all or a brief explanation of some part would be given. The Master of Ceremonies did much to clarify what could have been lost in so large a group.

Perhaps the greatest success of the day was the magnificent weather for the picnic lunch. The Weather Committee saw that everything was perfect for the barbecue beef, deli sandwiches, and fixings. It was universally agreed that the committee should be reappointed for the next outdoor meeting of the Grand Lodge.

The work was divided into morning and afternoon sessions, with the Master Mason Degree conferred in the afternoon. One of the very nice arrangements was the way each candidate individually participated in the essential Third Degree ceremonies.

The day was not without glitches, but all very minor. There were delays caused by moving around so many men, and some sight angles were difficult. The schedule for the day ran more than an hour over the planned time, and the air conditioning grossly inadequate for the afternoon heat.

M.W. Bro. Larrimore was obviously jubilant at the end of the day; he could hardly suppress his excited pleasure. He announced that there would be another accelerated class in December. Details will be sent to the lodges and included in the next *Freestate Freemason*.

The most interesting reactions came from the comments overheard as the Masons walked to their cars.

"I didn't think it would happen. I've never seen so many Maryland Masons so excited and so unified behind anything!"

"Well, what's next? Are lodges going to stop conferring degrees now? Will the Worshipful Masters just preside over minutes and bills? What's the point of going through the line!"

"I think this new way has some possibilities. But if it's good enough for the Grand Lodge, why can't my lodge do it? If a man can't find time for three evenings at his lodge, substituting the written exam for the first and second catechisms, then I don't see how doing it in one day makes anything better."

"I think we've been given a golden opportunity—a chance to regroup and to prepare for the future. But if all we're going to do is bring'em in faster, then we may as well go home now."

The success or failure of this bold experiment is up to Maryland Masons, the ultimate Masonic Authority.



# Maryland Masonic Calendar



## July 1999

- 24 Grand Master's Ball, 7:00 pm to 12:00 am. \$40.00 per person, dinner included

## August 1999

- 3 Summer School, E.A., Grand Lodge, 7:30 pm  
5 Summer School, M.M., Hagerstown, 7:30 pm  
5 Summer School, M.M., Upper Marlboro, 7:30 pm  
8 Crab Feast sponsored by John Coates Memorial Lodge on Grand Lodge grounds. Tickets available from your Lodge.  
10 Summer School, F.C., Grand Lodge, 7:30 pm  
12 Summer School, Special, Upper Marlboro, 7:30 pm

- 17 Summer School, M.M., Grand Lodge, 7:30 pm  
19 Summer School, E.A., Denton, 7:30 pm  
21 Maryland Masonic Research Society meeting, Hagerstown. Contact Don Miller, 410-285-5670  
24 Summer School, M.M., Grand Lodge, 7:30 pm

## September 1999

- 18 Harvest Home Day, Bonnie Blink, Maryland Masonic Homes, 6:00-10:00 am. Male family, friends, and neighbors are welcomed.

## October 1999

- 10 Patuxent River Appreciation

Day Parade, Solomon's Island, 2:00 pm.

- 27 Testimonial Dinner, Masonic Charities of Maryland. Contact Fred Reitz, 410-997-6282.  
29 20th Anniversary Celebration, Maryland Masonic Research Society. Barbara Franco will speak on 18th-century decorated Masonic Aprons

## November 1999

- 13 Maryland Masonic Research Society annual meeting, Mt. Moriah Lodge, Towson. Contact Don Miller, 410-285-5670  
15 Annual Communication, Gr. Lodge of Maryland, 2:00 pm.

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