



# FREE STATE Freemason

A PUBLICATION OF THE GRAND LODGE OF  
ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF MARYLAND



VOLUME 46, ISSUE 1

WINTER 2021

*And God said...*



*let there be Light...*



FREE STATE FREEMASON ARTICLES  
AND ADVERTISEMENTS

The *Free State Freemason* is published bi-monthly from September through June (there is no issue in July or August). Deadlines for submissions are the 1<sup>st</sup> day of February, April, August, and October for publication in the following issue. These dates **ARE FIRM** and can not be changed due to printing schedules.

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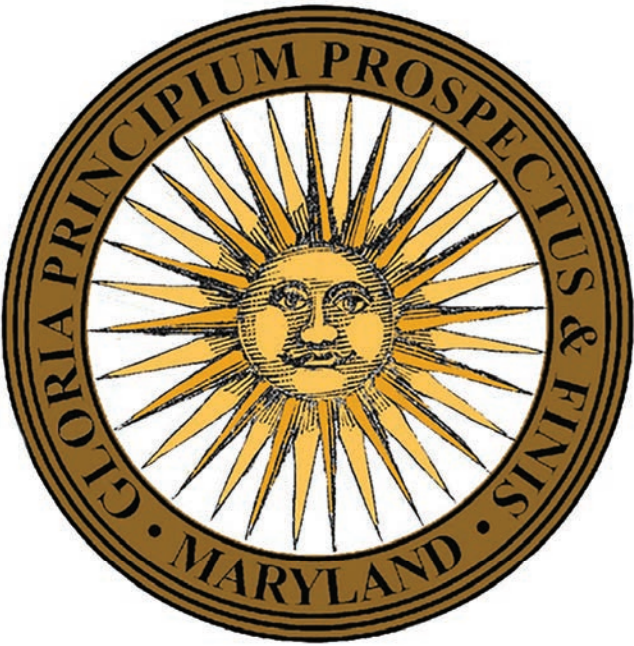
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\*five (5) issues



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# FREE STATE Freemason

A PUBLICATION OF **THE GRAND LODGE OF  
ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF MARYLAND**

**VOLUME 46 ISSUE 1**

**MAKING GOOD MEN BETTER**

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The stained glass window to the rear of the Grand East in the Corinthian Room at the Grand Lodge of Maryland.



FREEMASONRY is the oldest fraternal organization in the world. It is dedicated to promoting improvement in the character of its members. A Mason is taught to be a good citizen, to be of good character, to care for those less fortunate, and to give back to his community.

THE MASONIC FRATERNITY contributes over \$1 Billion each year to its philanthropic pursuits. Over \$750 Million of that in the United States alone. The Crippled Children's and Burns Hospitals sponsored by Shrine Masons are world famous for their ability to help those most in need.







## GRAND MASTER'S MESSAGE

*Dear Brothers and Friends,*

I hope this issue of the *Free State Freemason* finds everyone well and ready for the warmer days of Spring. I, for one, am glad the year 2020 is in the history books. Now we can all be ready for the new 2021 excitement. Even though the year is just months old, there is much taking place in lodges across Maryland. Our lodges managed to get their elections and installations completed by some new and innovative ways and I want to say congratulations to all our new officers in all the lodges.

I must say thank you to those who were able to attend our Grand Lodge installation in November. Many changes had to be made in order for all state and local requirements to be met and for those of you who were unable to attend, I thank you for your understanding and the kind words from so many. I want to especially thank your new grand line of officers. Three who were not in attendance due to illness were installed into their positions at a later date. Yes, 2020 was an unusual year from start to finish. Yet we made it and now we begin anew.

We have new masters for this year, and I hope each one has a wonderful year. To be elected as Worshipful Master should be the highlight of your Masonic travels. It took a lot of time, effort, and skill to meet the requirements as the leader of your lodge.

Now that you are "the man" your duties have just begun. It is your duty to prepare your line to move up in their stations and to do the best work possible in preparation for their next

new office. Membership is the life blood of your lodge. To reduce our losses is needed in all lodges and to obtain new members is another way to help keep a lodge active and alive. Doing good degree work will help keep your line active and new members interested. Poor work or no work tends to do just the opposite.

There are many plans in the works. With your help, we will reduce our tremendous budget, reduce our NPD's, increase our membership, increase new masters, improve our ritual work, start a ritual competition with cash prizes and Grand Lecturers will be sitting in the Chairs at Summer School of Instruction at Grand Lodge.

"Rebuilding from Within". A lofty idea some say. I have faith in you. Masons have done this for over 200 years. We have just gotten off track for a while. I have no doubt Maryland Masons can be the best anywhere when we all have the same goal in mind. Nothing is impossible. We just need to get back to basics and start rebuilding. I know together we can do it.

I know that together we WILL do it.

I stand ready to help anyone, any lodge, anytime or anywhere... All you need do is ask.

In closing, may I wish you and your families the blessing of good health and much happiness now and throughout the year.

Marlin L. Mills  
Most Worshipful Grand Master  
of Masons in Maryland

## Fathers and Grandfathers...



## Is your son or grandson a Mason?

**Family ties run deep in Masonry. If he is not yet a Brother, why not talk to him about what it means to you to be a Mason? Don't wait because you think he might be too busy or that he will not be interested; just talk to him.**

**Some of the happiest moments in the lodge are when a father or grandfather raises his son or grandson.**





Greetings Brethren,

I hope this note finds you all well and ready for a warm spring. It has now been a full year since our lives and our lodges were dramatically changed. Frankly, it got to the point where we seemed to have lost all sense of order.

It is time to return to a sense of normalcy, and that is the purpose of this message. Our Constitution, starting in the Twenty-five Landmarks and continuing in Article XVI requires that Masons “meet in lodges” and that “no lodge may change its place of meeting” without a dispensation from the Grand Master. We had so many changes and exceptions in 2020 that it seems there is no longer any consistency in how we are carrying out what we are doing.

Therefore, as of February 16, 2020 the following guidelines must be strictly adhered to!

1. Any Lodge that has the necessity to cancel a meeting for any reason other than weather related must request a dispensation and receive a reply from the Grand Lodge of Maryland before any announcement is made to the Lodge membership (Article XVI, Section 4). This request should be made as far in advance as possible by the Worshipful Master through the Secretary.
2. If a Lodge cannot meet due to State, County, or local restrictions the following may be done by advance dispensation request:

If restrictions prevent the use of the Lodge building, the Worshipful Master and Secretary should make every effort to meet in another lodge or location that meets the requirements (lodge rooms at the Grand Lodge will be available whenever possible).

A virtual meeting (on Zoom, etc.) may be requested only under adherence to the following guidelines:

Once dispensation is received, the meeting will be conducted by the Worshipful Master, or in his absence by the Senior or Junior Warden. No other member may conduct the meeting.

The elected officers of the lodge must be physically present IN THE LODGE AND NO OTHER LOCATION (unless otherwise permitted by dispensation).

The opening and closing of the meetings will be similar to that of an open installation of officers. No signs or passwords are to be given. The flag ceremony and prayers may be performed.

Only routine Lodge business may be conducted, such as paying the bills or planning an award presentation. There will be no balloting on petitions or anything else that requires the use of the ballot box. There will be no degree work, interviews, or catechism done virtually. Ritual work in any form or degree is strictly prohibited.

3. All Lodges must meet at least once each month except as provided in the by-laws of the Lodge and the Grand Lodge Constitution (Article XVI, Section 4a).
4. Until these restrictions are lifted, gloves and masks shall be worn when taking up the GMW, and by all participants when conferring any Degree.
5. Meals or refreshment may be served if all state and local government guidelines are adhered to (prepackaged food or food served by one wearing mask and gloves. No self-serve buffet lines.)

With an ever-increasing number of vaccines being administered in Maryland and across the country, we do seem to be getting ahead of the virus. I know we all look forward to the day when we can safely go about all the activities Masonic and otherwise as before. Until that time, I encourage everyone to continue to follow the precautions set down by State, County, and local governments. Wear a mask, wear your gloves, and by all means encourage any Brother who may have a pre-existing health condition NOT to attend lodge meetings until this threat has passed. I wish you all the very best.

Sincerely and Fraternally,  
Kenneth R. Taylor  
RW Grand Secretary

# ADVANCING THE CRAFT: THE STORY OF THE “PATIENT EIGHT”

by Mike Codori, PM | Montgomery-Cornerstone Lodge No. 195

The current pandemic has put a hold on our gatherings and connections, resorting to virtual communication and a cessation of normal in-person fraternal interaction. This problem has been particularly evident in the lessening in degree advancement and welcoming new members. No doubt, many Lodges have men interested in becoming Masons but the usual elections, investigations, and, especially, initiations that effectuate that desire have been interrupted. Further, those waiting for some manifestation of our willingness to move that process forward have probably even had some of them lose interest and determination.

However, I have a success story for all of us!

Apprentice degree conferral in April. We all know that didn’t happen. For more than eight months, these Masons-to-be waited patiently to take that first step. That time was filled with their personal connections, as they built a bond among them that would sustain their enthusiasm during those anxious months.

After being granted a dispensation from Grand Master Naegele to confer a multiple-candidate EA degree in our Lodge, we set out to accomplish this daunting task, made all the more challenging because of the state-wide Covid-19 restrictions and the meeting guidelines established by the Grand Master in June, 2020. Furthermore, Montgomery County had stalled its recovery at



ENTERED APPRENTICE DEGREE AUGUST 29°

Montgomery-Cornerstone Lodge No. 195

The “Patient Eight”: Bros. Isaac Diaz, Ivan Goranov, Marin Goranov, Justin Lawrence, Oren Levine, Michael Ogden, Brian Walker, Sydney Wallace

OFFICERS: WM Chris Hinkel, SW Ken Lonogan, JW David Durman, SD Adam Hinkel, JD Rhoy Oliveria, SS Michael Shuman, PM, JS Jean-Pierre Leduc, Secretary Mike Codori, PM, Treasurer/Photographer Bob Blanken, Candidate Assts: Randy Watson, PM, Jose Rivera

On December 3, 2019, eight men petitioned our Lodge and, after successful investigations, were elected to receive the first three degrees of Masonry on March 3, 2020. We all looked forward to an exciting multiple-candidate Entered

Phase Two, limiting persons in meetings to 200 sq. ft. each! Fortunately, our Lodge room is 3,000 sq. ft. in area, having been originally constructed to accommodate the York Rite. This would

continued on page 14



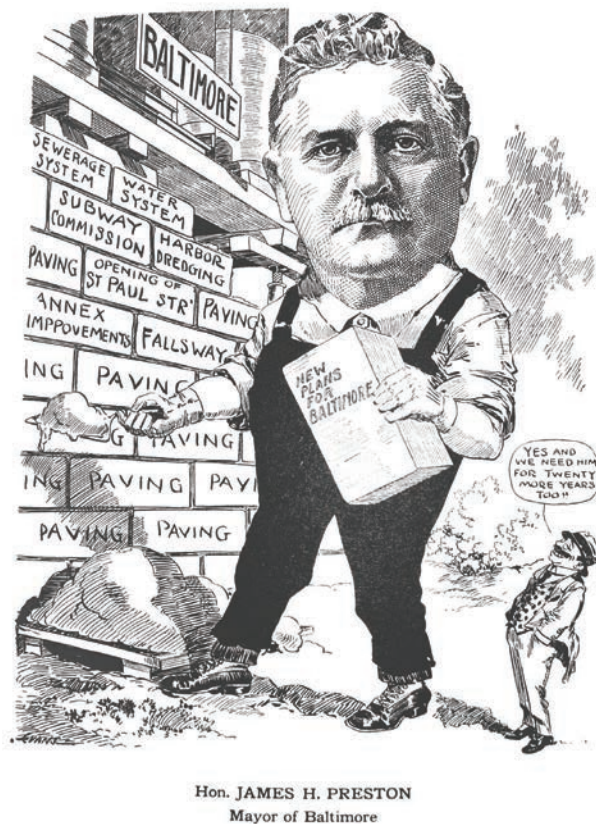
# PRESTON'S KEY GIFT

By Edward Heimiller, Curator Maryland Masonic Museum  
The Stephen J. Ponzillo, Jr. Memorial Library & Museum of the Grand Lodge of A. F. & A. M. of Maryland | [museum@glmd.org](mailto:museum@glmd.org)

James Harry Preston (1860-1938) is not familiar to many today, but his name was once nationally known and his involvement in and support of Maryland Freemasonry is particularly notable. Over the course of his life he made several friends, including Grand Master of Masons of Maryland from 1885-1918, Thomas J. Shryock (1851-1918). His involvement in Maryland politics and time as Baltimore City Mayor established his reputation that would ultimately lead to him being considered a viable candidate for Vice President of the United States.

Born near Deer Creek in Harford County, Maryland on March 23, 1860, he was the son of James Bond Preston (1827-1902), a member of Mount Ararat Lodge No. 44 under the Grand Lodge of A. F. & A. M. of Maryland (Initiated: April 17, 1855; Dropped: N.P.D. May 1865), and his first wife Mary Amelia Wilks Preston (1834-1873). The family moved to a farm near Bel Air in 1867, where he attended public school as a child. He later attended St. John's College in Annapolis prior to studying law at the University of Maryland, graduating in 1881. Following his father's example, he took an interest in Freemasonry and became a member of Mt. Ararat Lodge No. 44 (initiated May 15, 1888; Demitted June 17, 1890). He later became a member of Kedron Lodge No. 148 under the Grand Lodge of Maryland (Admitted by Demit: May 2, 1905 and remained a member until his death on July 14, 1938). His brother, Walter Wilks Preston (1863-1951), was also a member of Mount Ararat No. 44 (Initiated March 17, 1885; Raised: May 19, 1885; served as Master in 1889; and later Suspended for N.P.D. Jan. 4, 1944).

After establishing his law practice, Preston entered politics and was elected to the Maryland House of Delegates in 1889. He was re-elected in 1893 and briefly served as Speaker in 1894. He ultimately became involved in Baltimore City politics and was appointed to the Board of Police Commissioners in 1904. About this time, he probably developed his close friendship with Thomas J. Shryock, who was also appointed to serve as one of the three Baltimore City Police Commissioners from 1904 to 1908. In



1910 Preston ran unsuccessfully for Congress but won his bid for Mayor of Baltimore in 1911. He served as Mayor of Baltimore from 1911 to 1919.

As Mayor of Baltimore he oversaw several major civic developments. Alongside Shryock, who was an active member of Baltimore City's Sewage Commission, Mayor Preston diligently worked to develop Baltimore City and Baltimore County's public water and sewage treatment facilities. During this time, the Grand Lodge of Maryland performed numerous cornerstone-layings for the new pumping stations that still serve their communities today. The engineering marvel of the new sewage treatment system was exhibited and won the gold prize at the Anglo-American Exhibition held in London, England in 1914. This medal was presented to Shryock for his service on the Sewerage Commission and was later presented to the museum along with the trowel he used for the pumping stations' cornerstone-layings.

Mayor Preston also invited Shryock, as Grand Master of Masons of Maryland, and the Grand Lodge

to lay the cornerstone of the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute on North Avenue and Calvert Street in Baltimore at a special Communication held on May 30, 1912. The same year, Mayor Preston was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention held in Baltimore. While there, he received a few votes for the vice-presidential nomination, but lost to Thomas R. Marshall (1854-1925), a member of Columbia City Lodge No. 189 under the Grand Lodge of F. & A. M. of Indiana. At the convention Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924) was nominated as the Democratic Candidate for President, and later won with Marshall as his running mate. Wilson served as the 28<sup>th</sup> President of the United States (1913-1921). Interestingly, Shryock was a registered Republican and personal friend of both President Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919), a member of Matinecock Lodge No. 806 under the Grand Lodge of F. & A. M. of New York (Initiated in 1901), and William Howard Taft (1857-1930), a member of Kilwinning Lodge No. 356 under the Grand Lodge of F. & A. M. of Ohio (Made a Mason on Sight in 1909). Shryock nevertheless served on the Democratic National Committee, partially due to his friendship with Mayor Preston.

At the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Maryland in November 1914 Mayor Preston presented a bronze medal to the museum, known as the Star-Spangled Banner Centennial Medal and features a depiction of Francis Scott Key (1779-1843) on one side gazing at Fort McHenry. These medals were struck to commemorate the transfer of Fort McHenry from the Federal Government to the City of Baltimore. These medals were created by celebrated Maryland sculptor, Hans Schuler (1874-1951), a member of Fidelity Lodge No. 136 under the Grand Lodge of Maryland. From September 7 through 12, 1914, Baltimore hosted the Star-Spangled Banner Centennial week in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the Battle of North Point, in which the British were repulsed and during which Key penned "The Star Spangled Banner" off the shores of Fort McHenry, Baltimore.



As part of the celebrations several of the city's monuments, including the Francis Scott Key and the George Washington monuments, were illuminated with ornamental electric lights for the first time.

Mayor Preston also invited the Grand Lodge to assemble on July 5, 1915 for the unveiling of a tablet commemorating the centennial of the cornerstone-laying of the Washington Monument in Baltimore in 1815 (this tablet is still prominently displayed inside the monument today and acknowledges the role of Maryland Freemasons in the construction of the monument in 1815). A few years later in 1920 he served as the founding President of the Maryland Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution established in 1889. He would ultimately serve their national body as the 32<sup>nd</sup> President General of the Sons of the American Revolution. He died

on July 14, 1938 and is buried in Green Mount Cemetery, Baltimore City, Maryland. While no longer familiar to many, the Star-Spangled Banner Centennial medal and other mementos in the museum preserve his legacy as one of Maryland's foremost politicians and Freemasons.





# THE MARYLAND MASONIC ACADEMY HIRAM GUILD

## HOW DO WE FIT IN?

This question takes a myriad of forms in our lives, our occupations, our families, our relationships, our social groups, our communities and so forth. The salient point here stems from the question, “How do we fit in Freemasonry?” We each have a personal answer to that question and we may or may not be aware of what that answer actually is.

The answer is closely aligned with what Masonry is for each of us and its place in our lives. Undeniably, Masonry is complex, however if we were to boil it down to its irreducible essence, we will likely find that the overwhelming majority of our members align or affiliate into four groups. Certainly, some members may consider themselves a blending of the four. Regardless, these descriptions characterize most of the membership.

The first group believes that Masonry is a social club and a support group. They believe that the primary reason our Lodges exist is for the purpose of bonding through member-oriented and family-oriented events. These members are very much in favor of public relations and new member initiatives. They believe that the lessons we teach through our rituals are important and that our good works with benevolent causes and charities are commendable, but the main reason for Masonry to exist is so the members can enjoy fun and fellowship.

The second group believes that the single most important function of Freemasonry is to be supportive to our various philanthropies and to our community service initiatives. To them, the fellowship and the Masonic lessons and tenets are satisfying and absorbing, but they are also the means, justified by the end, and that end is the practice of charity, which they take the most seriously of all the Masonic teachings. They view Masonry as a structured organization, in place for the furtherance of charitable assistance.

The third group are the ritualists and the organizational structure of Masonry makes them the principal leaders of the Fraternity. Proficiency

with the ritual aspects of making Masons and the conferral of the degrees is their core competency. For the members in this group, their focus, their time and energy expended with the Fraternity centers around the ritual. They see Brotherhood and Charity as by-products of the lessons learned through the ritual teachings as illustrated in the ritual.

Maryland Masonry has devoted enormous resources toward the wants, needs and promotion of the above three groups. The Lodges’ leadership are taught the ritual and a structured method of demonstrating proficiency is in place. Social activities for members and families are encouraged, promoted and are used effectively as a channel to introduce prospects to Freemasonry. The practice of charity at all levels of Maryland Masonry needs no further elaboration.

All three are attractive, important, fitting and just. They also bear striking similarity to the three tenets of our profession, Brother Love, Relief and Truth.

There is a fourth group of members, who until now, have not enjoyed or benefited from an equivalent amount of resources as experienced by the other three. How do these members fit into Masonry? How does Masonry fit into their lives? When they ask themselves these questions, do they have answers that satisfy them? When they ask themselves those questions two years after being raised, what will their answers be?

This group of members enjoy socializing, but they have other outlets in their lives for that, too. They are charitable and generous, and they have places of worship and worthy charities where they contribute and other causes where they volunteer.

They appreciate the Masonic ritual, its lessons and those who conduct it, yet they have no interest or desire for memorizing and enacting ritual drama. Increasing membership either does not enter their minds or is not a priority to them.

For these members, the path forward in Ma-

sonry does not include increasing their efforts in the ritual, nor does it involve raising their contributions of money to charitable causes. Their discretionary time is limited and there are multiple social and recreational outlets competing for their time and entertainment dollars. Yet, these members will inevitably ask themselves,

To fulfill the needs of those members, The Maryland Masonic Academy introduces a new program for Master Masons seeking further light in Masonry. Inspired by the King Solomon Society, and intended for Master Masons who are not Past Masters, the Maryland Masonic Academy presents: The Hiram Guild.

The objective of The Hiram Guild is to offer Master Masons not only the opportunity to improve in Masonic knowledge, but also to inspire and advance its participants in Masonic scholarship, leadership, brotherhood and service. This is achieved through the successful completion of the three levels of the Hiram Guild; Apprentice, Journeyman and Master.

This program fulfills a need for an effective learning program that offers the participant self-understanding and self-improvement through self-paced Masonic education.

In the past 100 years, technological advancements have outpaced social improvements and our lives have swirled with the increasing pace of change. Men today struggle to perform all the life functions required and expected of them. The intent of the Hiram Guild is to provide its participants with a quality experience that does not intrude or encroach on their other responsibilities and commitments.

## HIRAM, KING OF TYRE

Hiram of Tyre was the reigning monarch in the kingdom north of Jerusalem. The Tyrians, also known as the Phoenicians, were well established in commerce. Their ships sailed the Mediterranean Sea and they established towns and ports around the region, including one near what later became known as Carthage, in North Africa.

Hiram allied with King David of Israel and his artisans built David’s Palace in Jerusalem using

cedar wood from Lebanon. Following the death of King David, Hiram continued his alliance with David’s successor, Solomon. Through this alliance, the trade routes across Israel to Egypt and Mesopotamia were assured, and both Kings profited from the agreement.

When Solomon built the first temple in Jerusalem, it was his friend and ally, Hiram, who sent architects, workmen, cedar wood, and gold for the purpose. Masonic tradition informs us that he was one of our first three Most Excellent Grand Masters and because of his assistance to King Solomon, The Hiram Guild is named in his honor.

The Hiram Guild program starts with The Fellow of the Craft and is followed by the Pillar of the Craft modules. When the participant has completed both of these self-paced educational programs, they will have completed the first section of The Hiram Guild, The Apprentice. This portion of the program is exactly the same as that accomplished by those who are pursuing the King Solomon Society.

The Hiram Guild participants will, with the guidance of a mentor, undertake an in depth study of the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences, associated symbolism, and write an essay of at least 1200 words, expressing their meaning, influence and interpretation in the life of the participant. The essay will be reviewed by a panel of King Solomon Society members appointed by the President of the Society. The mentor is appointed from the membership of the King Solomon Society. Upon completion, the participant will have achieved Journeyman of the Guild.

The finale of the Hiram Guild includes a series of video presentations covering summaries of Blue Lodge Masonry and the most recognized collateral bodies, York Rite, Scottish Rite and Shriners International. All are narrated by prominent Masons and experts on each.

The participant, with guidance from his mentor, will develop, launch and complete an Act of Service Project.

After successful completion, the participant will have achieved the Master of the Guild, and

*continued on page 21*





# GRAND LINE

## GRAND LODGE OF MARYLAND

Most Worshipful Grand Master Marlin L. Mills; R.W. Deputy Grand Master Frederick A. Spicer; R.W. Senior Grand Warden Thomas W. Foster; R.W. Junior Grand Warden Robert C. Candler; R.W. Grand Secretary Kenneth R. Taylor;  
 R. W. Grand Treasurer T. Scott Cushing, Sr.; W. Grand Chaplain David R. Sandy; W. Grand Marshal Tommy J. Morris; W. Deputy Grand Marshal William D. Dula; W. Senior Grand Deacon, Micahel S. Randow;  
 W. Junior Grand Deacon G. Wilson Tharpe; W. Senior Grand Steward Vernald D. Keen, Jr.; W. Junior Grand Steward Robin L. Summerfield; W. Grand Standard Bearer Shawn R. Winpiger; W. Grand Sword Bearer Robert C. Brown;  
 W. Grand Pursuivant Jamey S. Hill; W. Grand Director of Ceremonies Lee A. Ballenger; W. Grand Tyler Raymond E. Lewis, II; W. Asst. Grand Tyler Joseph E. Ries, IV; W. Asst. Grand Tyler William T. Ivy; W. Grand Lecturer Barry S. Bosley;  
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 W. Asst. Grand Chaplain Gerald F. Poe, Jr.; W. Asst. Grand Chaplain Randall A. Schoch; W. Grand Photographer Terry L. Royce; W. Asst. Grand Photographer Jason Q. Standish; President, Board of Grand Inspectors Robert W. Reynolds





limit us to no more than 15 persons there at one time. We also had to open in the EA degree, which required a minimum of seven (7) officers.

After two rehearsals, on August 29, with two groups of four candidates each and four (socially-distant!) altars (card tables), we conferred the Entered Apprentice degree on all eight of these patient, enthusiastic, determined men, now a band of brothers whose support of and reliance upon one another have created a “class” of Masons whose bond is the strongest I have seen in a group moving through the degrees in recent memory. In the ways they interact socially and express their mutual excitement for Masonry, they demonstrate what many of us search for—but seldom find—during our Masonic journeys.

The precision of floor work of the officers that

day was impressive and inspiring. Although not unexpected, I marveled at their flexibility to adjust to situations and their adherence to the integrity and solemnity of this ritual. It was a morning to remember!

As a Past Master always concerned about the future of our Lodge, when I left that day, I was convinced that our future was bright and in the capable hands of new, younger men who will carry the values, traditions, and enthusiasm for our Fraternity to encourage and mentor others who follow in their footsteps.

Their excitement and gratitude are all I needed to know how much this Entered Apprentice degree meant to our “Patient Eight.” They are the manifestation of our reason to exist as a Fraternity. The torch is being passed.



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# THE THREE CORE SECRETS OF FREEMASONRY

By Matthew Wilson, Worshipful Master of Highland Lodge No. 184

At the heart of Freemasonry, there are, in my view, three core secrets. One cannot read about them in an exposé, and no cipher could hide them from cowans and eavesdroppers. They have nothing to do with our modes of recognition, or the symbols and emblems of our degrees, or the obligations we have taken.

The first core secret of Freemasonry is something I realized in a flash one warm spring Monday evening in 2017. I was the Junior Deacon of Highland Lodge 184 and a member of the Board of Trustees. We were still meeting at the Scottish Rite Temple on Charles Street. I don't remember if it was a rehearsal or a Board of Trustees meeting — it was always the same group of brothers at either — but we were done for the evening and heading out. I was at the front of our group, so I held the door open for the others. They were all walking slowly, in groups of two, deep in conversation. No one was in a hurry, and no one really wanted to leave.

Maybe it was the soft light of the golden hour, or a warm spring breeze, or the satisfaction of time together well spent, but as I gazed on these brothers, I was stricken by the realization that I loved them, each and every one. It was a life-changing revelation.

In the years since, I've had that same intense experience a few more times. Most recently, one evening a few months ago when we raised four new Master Masons. By the time we had gone through the middle part of the degree for the third time, and all of us had screwed up at least once, and it was getting late, I had the thunder-clap experience once again that I loved these guys, all of them, and I loved this experience and was so glad it was a part of my life. If I had not been wearing a mask, you'd have seen me grinning stupidly from ear to ear.

We speak, in the first degree lecture, about the tenets of our profession. The first of those tenets is brotherly love, which the Greeks called *philia*. C.S. Lewis called *philia* "the least natural of

loves." It is not the love of a parent for a child, or vice versa. It is not the love between two lovers. And it is not the overflowing, unconditional love of the Grand Architect of the Universe for his creation. Neither is it acquaintanceship, if that's a word. *Philia* is the love of true friendship, freely chosen and freely given.

Its basis is complete trust. The question we keep asking in the three degrees of Masonry is, "Can we trust you? Are you trustworthy enough to keep our secrets?" Someone trustworthy enough to keep our Masonic secrets is probably trustworthy enough to whisper good counsel in your ear or to be there for you in a moment of despair or need.

It will not be found on some conspiracy theory video on YouTube, but the first of our core secrets is that *philia* love, or brotherly love. It may feel a little weird to talk about it. In our day and age, even with the tolerance of people being different, it's still hard to speak of brotherly love. But it's real, and it's good, and it's a big part of what keeps us active in Freemasonry and Freemasonry active in us.

The second core secret is related to the first, but it adds the dimension of time. When I'm alone in our beloved temple, invariably, I head upstairs to our lodge room to be still for a few minutes and kind of soak it in. A spiritual retreat center in Montgomery County, MD describes its grounds as "drenched in prayer." I like that. Our lodge room is drenched in our Masonic labors. Generations of Highland men sat in the same chairs, set the same Great Lights, recited the same words, executed the same movements. It's a well-worn lodge, made smooth by repeated use.

Recently we hung portraits of our Past Masters in the hallway and stairway leading up to the lodge room. I feel the eyes of those Past Masters upon me as I head up to the lodge room and as I leave it. Some of them look very stern, but I am pretty sure they're rooting for me and each of

us. Each of those men worked their way up the line, wore the Master's jewel and held the Master's gavel. They worried about the Lodge's finances and felt pride in their line of officers, and probably stumbled over their lectures. Looking at their faces, I know they're not so very different from me or any Lodge Officers, no matter how many years separate us.

That connection moves forward in time, as well. Like every one of those Masters on the wall, we work diligently to learn our catechism, to perfect our parts in the rituals, and find a way to fit in and help our Lodge. Through those efforts, we continue to chip away at our own rough ashlar, and it is a beautiful thing to see unfolding over the years.

And it does not end with us. Every time I check the Grand Lodge of Maryland's Membership Manager website, there is another name of someone interested in finding out more about us. I have a funny feeling that at least one of them is a future Master of this Lodge. He has not even met any of us face to face, but he has within him that kernel that could someday enable him to wear the Worshipful Master's jewel around his neck and hold the gavel in his right hand. And decades after he will have sat in the East, he will dutifully fall in with the Honor Guard and bow respectfully to a man who hasn't even been born yet, as he is proclaimed Master of his Lodge.

That Master and his officers will set the same Great Lights, recite the same words, and execute the same movements as we do and those who came before us did in their time. We stand on the shoulders of giants, and future Masons, not yet born, will stand on ours. We are linked by an *indissoluble chain of sincere affection*, as the old saying goes.

That connection between them and us, backward and forward in time, is both genuine and again very hard to describe to those who are not a part of our mysteries. And also, it's based on trust. Trust that our past and future brothers did their best to guard the West Gate, to learn and grow as they moved through the degrees and then the chairs, and keep intact the instruction



that Masonry offers.

The third core secret is one that has frustrated each of us. It begins its work on us the first time we open up that little yellow Entered Apprentice catechism book and struggle with those words and symbols.

The catechism of the first degree impresses upon us the importance of secrecy. As we say those words over and over until they flow naturally, we are also repeating to ourselves that what we are doing is, and ought to be, something apart from the rest of the world.

There is a word that appears twice in the Charge delivered to new Entered Apprentices — *inculcate*. It means "to instill by persistent instruction." As we struggle with the words of each catechism, and then with the words we repeat in the different officer roles, there is a little magic going on. The words and the layers of meaning embedded in those words start sinking in. We develop a vocabulary of words and phrases and movements that have a special meaning reserved to us and us alone. But something else is going on, too.

As I prepared myself to exemplify Masonry's three degrees, I must have repeated the lectures of each of those degrees hundreds of times. The struggle to commit them to memory is as real as that effort to learn the first degree catechism. But as those words sank in, it struck me how much wisdom is packed into the lectures.



I'll give an example. The theological virtues of *faith, hope, and charity* should be central to our lives. The cardinal virtues of *temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice* are crucial to living an ordered life. Sitting there in the chair absorbing the lecture as the youngest Entered Apprentice, hearing about those virtues kind of goes right past you. Later, when memorizing the lecture, one really has the chance to read, mark, and inwardly digest what was imparted.

Another catechism, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, defines virtue as "a habitual and firm disposition to do the good." We don't wake up one morning suddenly full of fortitude or decide on the spur of the moment to be hopeful. Virtue is a long-standing practice, a long-term commitment, an established ongoing pattern of being and doing that we must inculcate within ourselves. That's a hard lesson to learn but necessary if one wants to improve oneself.

And it is not just the tenets and virtues. All through the lectures of the three degrees, and in an even more distilled form in the Charges and catechisms of those degrees, we are given a seamless and extended lesson on how we should be as men and as Masons.

We like to say that Freemasonry makes good men better, and I have no doubt that we do just that, but exactly how we do it has always been a little bit of a mystery to me. I submit to you that *the how* is the third core secret of Freemasonry, and it has something to do with being around other good men whose expectations and very presence makes us better men in the way that steel sharpens steel.

It also has something to do with the work that we do by ourselves, in quiet moments we steal here and there, repeating those age-old words of our degrees to ourselves over and over until they become a part of who and what we are. There's a phrase in

Latin that comes to us from the ancient church, "lex orandi, lex credendi." Roughly translated, it means, "as we pray, so we believe." We repeat a prayer again and again to ask God for comfort and peace until the words themselves give us comfort and peace. In the same way, we repeat the words of Freemasonry again and again until we learn them by heart, and then, as natural as can be, we commit our heart to the message those words impart.

That, my brothers, I submit as the third core secret of Freemasonry and maybe its most important: the work we do as Freemasons works on us, transforming us into better men and better Masons. Maybe there is an easier shortcut, but after living with our words and what they teach, I'm glad to have done so and pleased to look back and see how Masonry has changed me for the better. It began the moment I was first received into Masonry. It endures to this very day, and I have no doubt that transformation will continue to unfold.

Editor's note: Adapted from remarks given by him at his installation as Worshipful Master on January 13, 2021



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# MCM'S ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Masonic Charities of Maryland (MCM) is again sponsoring its Annual Scholarship Program which awards more than one hundred college scholarships to graduating seniors from Maryland public high schools. Last year, over \$70,000 in scholarships were awarded, and a similar amount has been earmarked for 2021.

Every lodge in the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Maryland is provided with a \$500 scholarship to award to a deserving student from a high school in their area. The lodge has been responsible for dropping off scholarship packets to the guidance office of the school to which they are assigned. Then the lodge picks up the applications after the submission period closes, selects a winner, and forwards it to MCM.

In years past, a Scholarship Reception was held at the Grand Lodge in May and all lodges, the scholarship recipients, and their parents were invited to attend. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, these receptions were cancelled in 2020 and again in 2021. Scholarship checks are forwarded either to the lodge for presentation or directly to the student at the discretion of the lodge.

At the last meeting of MCM's Board of Directors, the Board voted unanimously to cancel the Scholarship Reception permanently. This will alleviate the burden on those who were required to travel long distances to attend. Attendance at the reception had been mandatory to qualify for additional scholarships that are available. This will no longer be the case. Lodges will now have the ability to attend the school Honors Day convocation and present the check in person. This will enable the lodge to be recognized locally in their community.



Ms. Yeongju Lee, 2020 winner of the Haack Scholarship.

The Board is also in the process of converting the scholarship application to an online platform. This is a standard for most scholarship programs nationwide. Students will be able to obtain the application from our website, fill it out, and return it via email. Lodges will still be required to select a scholarship winner from the applications sent in from their assigned school. This new process will be put into play for the 2022 Scholarship Program.

MCM will again be awarding six \$1,500 Steven J. Ponzillo, III Memorial Regional

Scholarships, which are based on geographic divisions of the state. These six students will be regional finalists. From them, one student will be selected to receive the \$5,000 C. David Haack Memorial Scholarship and one will receive the \$2,500 Vernon Mules Memorial Scholarship.

Last year's winner of the Haack Scholarship was Ms. Yeongju Lee from Salisbury, MD. She was originally selected by Centennial Lodge No. 221 in Delmar. She is currently a student at the University of Virginia. The Mules Scholarship went to Ms. Amelia Harman of Frederick, MD. She was selected by Tyrian Lodge No. 205 in Emmitsburg, and she is attending the University of Notre Dame.



Ms. Amelia Harman, 2020 winner of the Mules Scholarship.

## Hiram Guild Continued from Page 11

will receive a certificate and member's medal.

Becoming a member of The Hiram Guild is intentionally challenging and requires significant academic and service effort on the part of the participant. It is meant to be comparable to the effort required by those Masons who have served in the East and achieved admission into the King Solomon Society.

The Hiram Guild Development Committee encourages all Master Masons to consider this

program an integral part of their Masonic experience and growth. Guidance in getting started with the Hiram Guild is provided by Brother David Sandy, President of the King Solomon Society at davidrs1818@gmail.com or 443-821-4721, Brother Bob Brown, Vice President, brownbobpm@gmail.com and Brother Terry Royce, Secretary rolls88@aol.com.

We wish you all success and life enrichment through your participation.

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# Mark Your Calendars Now

## 2021 Events Schedule at The Grand Lodge

### Semi-Annual Communication

Saturday, May 15<sup>th</sup>

### Family Day Picnic

Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup>

### Grand Master's Ball

Saturday, July 24<sup>th</sup>

### Grand Master's Bull & Oyster Roast

Saturday, September 11<sup>th</sup>

### Harvest Home Day

Saturday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>

### Annual Communication

Saturday, November 20<sup>th</sup>