

GRAND MASTER’S MESSAGE

Who is Guarding the West Gate

I was attending the Conference of Grand Masters of North America and one of the topics was “Who is Guarding the West Gate. It is you, my Brother, who is guarding the gate?” If someone should ask you for a petition or someone you know asks for one, would you sign that petition without knowledge of his background or would he uphold and conform to our Code and Constitution? In past years everyone lived in the community in which they were born and everyone knew of their character. Most of the time members of the Lodge knew the petitioner’s family and could give a favorable opinion of that person. In today’s transient society, you may have known a person that moved away for several years and returned. We can’t possibly know that person’s action in the years he was away. It is therefore necessary to have a criminal background check into their character by a reputable company. It is also necessary to visit the petitioner’s home and get the wife’s opinion of Freemasonry. If we let one man in with bad character, we may lose many good men who refuse to join because they will not associate with the questionable member. As a member of an investigation committee, you are obligated to complete an extensive background check on the history of an applicant. Any member who knows something concerning the applicant has a duty to convey the information to the Worshipful Master or the investigation committee. You are the Guard at the West Gate.

In a few days we will observe the Thanksgiving Holiday. In America, we have so much for which to be grateful. God has blessed us as a Fraternity, as a nation, as well as a family. We are able to wake each morning and greet a new day in good health. We are able to go where we want and do as we please—to church to worship, school to learn, or work to provide for the needs of our families.

We take so much for granted. Why are we free as a nation? It’s because we have a military who volunteers to leave family, businesses, and homes to defend our nation if necessary, so that we won’t be in bondage like so many other countries. Many of them have never known how wonderful it is to be free. Many of our men and women in Armed Services sacrifice so much for us. Some of them come home without limbs, blind, burned beyond recognition and others never see America again because they have paid the ultimate sacrifice with their lives.

Share Thanksgiving with others this year to show how much you appreciate what you have. Make a contribution to feed the homeless. Give them clothing to keep them warm in all kinds of weather. Many churches have ministries to donate food and clothing for the needy. They also need to hear and know that someone loves and cares for them.

And, above all, as you gather around a bounteous table of food with your families and friends, remember to thank God for His blessings and live a life of gratitude each day.

Fraternally,
William B. Rogers
Grand Master

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MASONIC EDUCATION CORNER

Financial Leadership Beyond 2020

Happy Holidays to all of you and may you recount your richest blessings from this year! We have much to be thankful for and much more yet to accomplish in the coming year! I wish you peace, joy and happiness in 2016!

Brethren, we now engage the need for Financial Leadership, as we begin our ensuing Masonic Year with new leaders and officers as our next Masonic Education topic. If you have not yet discussed the first 3 lessons in the “Lodge of the Future” series of Lesson Plans and Lodge Education Topics, you may find these at www.scgrandlodgeafm.org under the Resources Tab.

Lesson 4. Financial Leadership and Stability.

Recently, Most Worshipful, William B. Rogers, asked me, MW Gerald Carver, PGM and MW G. Kent Elkins, PGM to form an Insurance Committee and investigate the status of insurance coverage for our Lodges in South Carolina. Preliminary results from our survey, which was sent to all Lodges, have found that a significant number of Lodges do not have insurance nor the financial stability to address the risks. This will continue to increase unless we sincerely address our financial future and implement a planning process on an annual or regular basis.

From the travels of our Grand Lodge Officers, District Deputy Reports and discussions, it is obvious that we need to address our financial future and plan for success.

Is it possible we have neglected to effectively plan for the financial of our Lodge?

Solid Financial Leadership is a critical item for us to consider for the Lodge of the Future and requires a consistent long term approach to understand our income and expense. By planning for future needs that we will encounter, we are building a better value for our members. As an example, in our survey, the average Lodge is nearly 50 years old and 25 years old roof on average. This indicates major expense will come to many Lodges in the next 5 -10 years. Will we have to live with patches, pass the hat or begin to plan now for the needs?

The 2 most commonly heard excuses for not increasing dues? We can’t raise dues because the members will drop out! How many members drop out because the quality of their Lodge experience has dropped so low that they stop coming or they simply got tired of the Lodge placing the financial burden on those that attend? The other one, we have money saved so we can’t raise dues if the Brethren see that we have some savings. Certainly building a strong financial footing is there to help when emergencies hit, but you cannot fund your regular operations with fundraising or deficient spending from savings.

Also you need to determine if your members are at risk by not being incorporated. If your Lodge has a legal issue in the coming years, your incorporation can protect your officers and members. This is not only prudent but delivers additional value

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to members by protecting them as well. This is also a critical issue to review and determine your best path forward.

Finally Brethren, this is both difficult and necessary to engage with the membership of your Lodge. We all want our Lodges to be successful and being financially sound will lay a solid foundation for the future and also allow us to advance toward being a successful Lodge of the Future! Come to your instructional meetings for more information and support.

The Lodge of the Future program is designed to build a great value for our members and to have the means and capability to create a meaningful and longlasting relationship with our members.

The Grand Lodge Officers are here to assist you as you and your Lodge members embrace the 21st Century and strengthen our Fraternity by serving not only this generation, but those yet to come. These will be our sons, grandsons, family and friends.

Sincerely and Fraternaly,
Michael D. Smith
Senior Grand Warden

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SPECIAL COMMUNICATION OF GRAND LODGE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2015, CROSS HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA:

For the purpose of Laying a Cornerstone and Rededicating Cross Hill Lodge No. 159, AFM. Lunch will be served at 11:30 AM at the First Baptist Church at 761 North Main Street, Cross Hill, South Carolina. The Grand Master with the assistance of the other Grand Lodge Officers, will open the Grand Lodge and Cross Hill Lodge No. 159 AFM at the Lodge Hall at 12:30 PM. The Ceremony of Laying the Cornerstone will begin at 1:00 PM. The Ceremony of Rededication will follow. Cross Hill Lodge No. 159 is located at 1064 Highway 39, Cross Hill, South Carolina. These Ceremonies are open to the public, visitors, and all Brethren including Entered Apprentices, Fellowcrafts, and Master Masons. All Grand Lodge Officers are expected to be present and all Past Grand Masters are requested to attend.

IN MEMORIAM

MARION LEE JACKSON, JR.
Past District Deputy Grand Master

August 22, 1949 Sumter SC
November 9, 2015 Florence SC

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ATTENTION: BROTHER SECRETARIES

Your Lodge’s 2015 Annual Report Form will be mailed to you on or about December 15th. If you do not receive your Lodge’s 2015 Annual Report Form shortly after December 15th, contact the Grand Lodge Office immediately.

The Annual Report in many cases is the only permanent record of a Lodge’s membership activity. It is essential that the report be completed legibly, neatly, and accurately. The report must be typed in black font or printed legibly in black ink only. The names on all of the Annual Report Listings must be listed by last name in alphabetical order.

Section 141 of the Code of the Grand Lodge requires every Lodge’s Annual Report to be correct and accompanied by the Grand Lodge Dues and in the hands of the Grand Secretary on or before **February 1st**. In accordance with Section 141 of the Code, failure to file a **correct** Lodge Report on time will result in the **Lodge paying a 10% penalty**. An **additional 10% of the dues and penalties** owed will be added to the amount owed by the Lodge **every 15 days** after the initial 15 day penalty period. If a report is not received until the February 1st deadline and errors are on the report, penalties will occur because the reports cannot be corrected by the Lodge Secretary prior to the February 1st due date. To avoid penalties, the Lodge Secretary should complete and mail the Annual Report promptly after December 31. If a Secretary needs help with the report, he should get in touch with the Grand Secretary very early in January. We will be glad to help our Brother Secretaries over the phone, by Email, or here at the Grand Lodge Office in order to avoid the Lodge incurring penalties as prescribed by Masonic Law.

I would like to thank all of the Secretaries attending the November 7th Secretary’s Workshop for their attendance and for their enthusiasm regarding the Grand Secretary’s Office adopting the Automated Grand Lodge Reporting System presented. The total attendance at the Secretary’s Workshop was 156 which is the largest attendance of a meeting held at our Grand Lodge Office in Lexington. A delicious hamburger and hot dog meal was prepared by the Brethren from Boyleston Lodge No. 123, AFM. The implementation of the Automated Grand Lodge Reporting System will eliminate the manual Annual Report filing requirements.

Brethren, January – March is an extremely busy time in the Grand Lodge Office with the Annual Returns, preparation for year-end Grand Lodge Reports and Annual Communication preparations. During that January-March period, it is difficult to clear service awards on a timely basis. We would appreciate it if all service awards during that period could be cleared during December or in April. In those cases where it is urgent that a Brother be cleared due to age or illness, we will prioritize those clearings. The new automated Grand Lodge Reporting System being considered would be implemented beginning in May, 2016 if selected. The automatic clearing of Brothers by service dates should speed up the Service Awards process greatly.

Sincerely and fraternally,
Gerald L. Carver, PGM
Grand Secretary

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INSTRUCTIONAL MEETINGS

Saturday, January 2, 2016, 5:00 PM, 25th District, RW Brother Danny E. Johnson, Jr., DDGM, Hartsville Lodge No. 173, 437 West Home Ave., Hartsville, SC. Supper will be served.

Friday, January 8, 2016, 6:30 PM, 22nd District, RW Jerry Smith, DDGM, Philanthropic Lodge No. 32, 91 Stoneybrook Drive, York SC. Supper will be served.

Friday, January 8, 2016, 7:00 PM, 12th District, RW Brother Troy W. Shealy, DDGM, Little Mtn. Lodge No. 281, 848 Main Street, Little Mtn. SC 29075. Supper will be served.

Friday, January 8, 2016, 6:00 PM, 15th District, RW Brother Cecil Calvin Conyers, DDGM, Seneca Lodge No. 185, 205 North Townville Street, Seneca, SC 29678. Supper will be served.

Saturday, January 9, 2016, 6:00 PM, 29th District, RW Brother Gordon W Best, DDGM, Grand Strand Lodge No. 392, 916 6th Ave. South, North Myrtle Beach. Supper will be served.

Saturday, January 9, 2016, 6:30 PM, 26th District, RW Brother Jack L. Davis, Jr. DDGM, Sumter Lodge No. 364, 215 Alice Drive, Sumter, SC. Supper will be served.

Saturday, January 9, 2016, 9:00 AM, 4th District, RW Brother G. Ray Christian, DDGM, Hardeeville Lodge No. 348, # 1 Boyd Street, Hardeeville, SC. Breakfast will be served.

Monday, January 11, 2016, 6:30 PM, 23rd District, RW Brother B. Daniel Bishop, DDGM, Great Falls Lodge No. 277, 1 Masonic Ave. Great Falls, SC. Supper will be served.

Thursday, January 14, 2016, 6:30, PM, 20th District, RW Brother Guy L. Burrell, DDGM, Lone Oak Lodge No. 372, 7234 Fairfax Ave. Spartanburg, SC. Supper will be served.

Friday, January 15, 2016, 6:30 PM, 24th District, RW Brother Brian F. Steele, DDGM, Barron Lodge No. 261, 100 Cauthen Street, Heath Springs, SC 29058. Supper will be served.

Friday, January 15, 2016, 6:30 PM, 3rd District, RW Brother Mitchell H. Bryan DDGM, Cottageville United Methodist Church, 44 Peirce Road, Cottageville, SC. 29435. Supper will be served.

Saturday, January 16, 2016, 6:00 PM, 30th District, RW Brother Phillip P. Cockfield Jr., DDGM, Harpers Lodge No. 225, 11 Main Street, Andrews, SC. Supper will be served.

Saturday, January 16, 2016, 5:00 PM, 27th District, RW Brother Donald James Cribb Jr, DDGM, Hampton Lodge No. 204, 206 South McQueen Street, Florence, SC 29501. Supper will be served.

Saturday, January 16, 2016, 2:00 PM, 10th District, RW Brother C. Ray Boland, Jr. DDGM, Scottish Rite Temple, 7230 Garners Ferry Road, Columbia, SC. Refreshments will be served.

Saturday, January 16, 2016, 7:30 AM, 8th District, RW Brother James Dean Strickland, DDGM, Elmore Lodge No. 288, 936 Pine Street, Pelion, SC. Breakfast will be served.

Monday, January 18, 2016, 7:00 PM, 5th District, RW Brother Donald Kirby, DDGM, Harmony Lodge No. 17, 646 E Epworth Avenue, Barnwell, SC. Supper will be served.

Wednesday, January 20, 2016, 6:00 PM, 17th & 18th Districts, RW Brother Terry King, DDGM 17th and RW Brother Scott A. Matheny, DDGM 18th, Scottish Rite Center, 817 Cleveland Street, Greenville, SC. Supper will be served.

Thursday, January 21, 2016, 6:30 PM, 11th District, RW Brother G. Walker Moore, DDGM, Clinton Lodge No. 3, 300 Brooks Street, Abbeville, SC. Supper will be served.

Thursday, January 21, 2016, 6:30 PM, 19th District, RW Brother Jack Fawcett, DDGM, Crescent Lodge No. 245, Crescent Lodge Road, Woodruff, SC 29388. Supper will be served.

Saturday, January 23, 2016, 9:30 AM, 16th District, RW Brother Dwight A. Yates, DDGM, Bates Lodge No. 189, 439 NE Main Street, Easley, SC 29640. Refreshments will be served.

Monday, January 25, 2016, 6:30 PM, 14th District, RW Brother Claude Anthony Turpin, Jr., DDGM, Ruff Lodge No. 240, 611 Piedmont Avenue, Anderson, SC. Supper will be served.

Monday, January 25, 2016, 6:30 PM, 7th District, RW Brother Joseph Wells, DDGM, Vance Lodge No. 230, 1316 Camden Road, Vance, SC 29163. Supper will be served.

Tuesday, January 26, 2016, 7:00 PM, 9th District, RW Brother Sean Burch, DDGM, Travis Lodge No. 241, 200 Ramage Street, Saluda, SC 29138. Supper will be served.

Thursday, January 28, 2016, 6:30 PM, 28th District, RW Brother Thomas H. Lee, DDGM, Dalcho Lodge No. 160, 102 North Mauldin Street, Latta, SC. Supper will be served.

Thursday, January 28, 2016, 6:30 PM, 21st District, RW Brother Robert W. Culp, DDGM, Masonic Temple, 190 W. Main Street, Spartanburg, SC. Supper will be served.

Thursday, January 28, 2016, 7:00 PM, 6th District, RW Brother Jon Majerus, DDGM, Aiken Lodge No. 156, 443 Laurens Street, Aiken, SC 29801. Supper will be served.

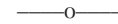
Thursday, January 28, 2016, 6:30 PM, 1st & 2nd Districts, RW Brother Roger Viduya, DDGM, 1st & RW Dale A. Schumann, DDGM 2nd, Charleston Masonic Temple, 1285 Orange Grove Road, Charleston, SC 29407. Supper will be served.

Saturday, January 30, 2015, 9:00 AM, Grand Master's Workshop for Worshipful Masters, Scottish Rite Temple, 7230 Garners Ferry Road, Columbia, SC. Lunch will be served.

Monday, February 1, 2016, 6:30 PM, 13th District, RW Brother Robin Entrekin, DDGM, Palmetto Lodge No. 19, 316 Hillcrest Drive, Laurens, SC 29360. Supper will be served.



The "Put George Washington back in our Schools" Team headed up by RW Sam Turner, PDDGM and RW John King, PDDGM present the Grand Lodge with a George Washington Portrait, which will be hung in the Main Entrance Foyer of the Grand Lodge Building. Pictured above from left to right, RW Johnnie F. James, PDDGM, Grand Tiler, Edward S. Hershberger, Junior Grand Deacon, RW O. Bruce Smith, PDDGM, Senior Grand Deacon, Ronnie P. Richards, Junior Grand Deacon, RW AC Flora, PDDGM MSA Committeeman, MW Gerald L. Carver, PGM, Grand Secretary, MW William B. Rogers, Grand Master, MW Jack A. Marler, PGM, Grand Treasurer, RW Sam Turner, PDDGM, RW John King, PDDGM, RW J. W. Benny Hammond, Jr., PDDGM, Grand Marshall, and RW, James "Chico" Mathis, PDDGM, Senior Grand Deacon. Photo by Mrs. Susan King.



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR



We wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Blessed New Year. As we celebrate this most special time of the year with our families, let us remember in our thoughts and prayers our beloved men and women in our Armed Forces who are separated from their families. Many of our Armed Forces members are in harms-way so that our great Nation might remain free and the other People of the World might remain free or have the hope of freedom. In a very bleak and dark world over 2,000 years ago came a great light with the birth of the Prince of Peace, the Savior. That same great light continues to shine in the hearts of every believer today.

*Jerry Carver, Grand Secretary,
Debbie and Connie*

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