

THE MASONIC FRATERNITY

The origin of Masonry began hundreds of years ago as a skill based upon a need. It then became a trade which was organized into a guild. It required diligence and a commitment to quality work. Not just any man was taken in as an apprentice. Men were asked to measure up for a job he sought before he was allowed to do it. More important, no man who was unwilling to work to learn how to produce good work was allowed to remain very long with the Craft.

Speculative Masonry also has the same requirements, but because the work expected is that of improvement of the individual, it is not as easy to evaluate the quality or the results. But here again, any man who is unwilling to learn to produce good work should also not be allowed to remain in our Fraternity.

For years we have been telling men who ask about the value of Masonry, that what you get out of it is what you put into it. I hear this almost everywhere I go. I have never told a Brother that what you put into Masonry is what you will get out of it. This is a lazy non-answer and the result of it has been that men have been allowed to bring anything they enjoy from their daily lives into the Craft and call it Masonry. The reasoning behind this appears to be that so long as what we are doing is good and will make the person a better man. Therefore, he believes this is what Masonry is all about. It cannot be just getting out of it what we put in, or we will have ended up nothing more than what we started with.

Undoubtedly, the world we live in needs more acts of loving kindness and concern for our fellow man. Masonry calls us to perform such as part of our obligation to humanity. However, this is no more the sum of Masonry that it is in math. Every human being should be called to display goodness and love toward their fellow man as it should be with every Mason, but what the observant Mason must ask himself is how Masonry distinguished itself from other Fraternal organizations. We must ask ourselves why seek membership in our Fraternity as opposed to any group of well intentioned people who do good things for humanity. When they do seek membership and have truly advanced beyond the door of the Lodge, it is our obligation to help them understand the teachings which they are receiving. We must start by understanding that Freemasonry, unlike other fraternities, is not for everyone, and should never be offered as such. Masonry is and was always intended to be an organization that an individual must seek to join. The quality of the individual far outweigh the number of men knocking at our doors, quality of character far outweighs quantity of candidates, and less is more. If we select ten exceptional men to whom he can teach the whole of the Craft, each of those ten men can in turn teach ten others. By working with fewer but dedicated men, the Fraternity gains substantially. We thereby gain the survival of the Craft. We have some who believe that more men are needed in order to save dying Lodges from extinction.

The man who knocks at our door, in full knowledge of both the risk that he may be rejected, and yet proceeds anyway because the search for light is that important to him. Only such a man is one who should become a Mason. Why? Because such a man will understand that as with all things worth doing or having, the “true knowledge of the art” takes time, and cannot be achieved in a day. It requires a sincere pledge

of time and effort. Men who should be Masons will make time for the Craft. They must not change its principles, methods or techniques in order to take all men at all cost, especially those who have told us that they do not have the time for it. Freemasonry does not offer itself to those who are outside the doors of the Lodge, or even to those who may simply be curious about its contents. The real reason for membership in the Craft is that it must be sought. The experiences of an Entered Apprentice’s and Fellowcraft’s first few months and a new Master Mason’s first years will determine how they view Freemasonry for the remainder of their lives. This is why our commitment to mentoring and the sustaining of fellowship is relevant, now more than ever. I believe our Lodges should strive for better Masons rather than more Masons.

Freemasonry is oldest Fraternal Organization in the world. We owe no explanation to anyone for who we are, what we do, why we do it or how we do it, and no one has the right to demand an explanation from us.

Fraternally,
William B. Rogers
Grand Master

MASONIC EDUCATION CORNER

The Future Begins Now With a New Year! - Fresh Start Initiatives

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL FREEMASONS!

As we begin the new Masonic Year, it is a great time to embrace and improve the Masonic experience for your Lodge Brothers. As previously stated, I believe that fear is the most crippling attitude that must be removed before our Lodges can progress and increase our member value. Often Lodges are crippled by fear of trying new things or trying to raising the quality standards of the Lodge, and it is true that not all will like changes, changes are needed to continue to improve our Masonic Experience for our current and future members. Indeed change is happening whether you plan for it or not! Men are changing. Complacency is our number one issue. Choose not to be complacent! It will take work and working together!

EMBRACING THE YEAR TOGETHER!

As we all begin our new year, with our officers taking their respective leadership roles in our Lodge, it is important that we take time to plan for this year! Will it be better than last year? Will our Lodge make a difference to our existing members?

Your Lodge can greatly prepare for success by ALL officers attending your District Instructional Meeting together. Your experience is important so that you can lead the Craft of your Lodge. To prepare for your Instructional Meetings, review 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. Use these for enhanced education, analysis with your officers to plan and lead discussion in your Lodge.

Several key events are planned for your Instructional Meetings with time set aside for your specific office and materials for your use this year. If you are a first time officer in any chair in the Masonic Lodge, your will get specialized training for your specific office. We

will also have time at your meetings to discuss common items, and some of the best instruction from the Masonic Education Committee on the standard Lodge practice and procedure.

Finally Gentlemen, remember that we learn best from each other, so offer to share your experience and your Lodge History with your members. After all, that is the way we have taught for centuries! Many great Freemasons have passed through your doors. Document and share your Lodge history before it passes another generation.

I hope to see many of you at your District Instructional Meetings, and Worshipful Masters, the upcoming Grand Masters Workshop for Worshipful Masters on January 28, at the Columbia Scottish Rite Center.

Chairman, Masonic Education Committee
Michael D. Smith, Sr., Senior Grand Warden

ATTENTION: SENIOR & JUNIOR WARDENS WORKSHOP

SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 2017

The Workshop for Senior and Junior Wardens will be held on Saturday, March 18, 2017 at the Scottish Rite Center, 7230 Garners Ferry Road, Columbia, SC 29209. Registration will begin at 8:30 AM and the meeting will commence at 9:00 AM. Lunch will be served. All Wardens are urged to attend.

IN MEMORIAM

BENJAMIN MCARTHUR AYER
Past District Deputy Grand Master

November 1, 1942
December 6, 2016

Charleston County, SC
Hampton, SC

Brother Harold David Brown, Past Grand Steward - 2004, passed away January 12, 2017

Brother Herbert Lee Marks, Sr., Secretary of Stonewall Lodge No. 124, AFM passed away December 1, 2016.

We wish to express our deepest sympathies, to the family, friends and Lodge Brethren of all above.

GRAND LODGE ANNUAL COMMUNICATION

The 280th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free Masons of South Carolina will be held on April 27th and 28th, at the Embassy Suites, Greenville Golf Resort & Conference Center located at 670 Verdae Blvd, Greenville, SC 29607.

The Religious Service will commence on Thursday, April 27th at 9:00 AM and will be conducted by Reverend and Right Worshipful A. Robert Nix, Grand Chaplain. Following the Religious Service, the Grand Lodge will be officially opened at 10:00 AM by Most Worshipful William B. Rogers, Grand Master with the assistance of the Grand Lodge Officers and Brethren. The Annual Banquet will be held on Thursday, April 27th at 7:00 PM in the Ball Room of the Embassy Suites, Greenville.

The Embassy Suites, Greenville will be the Headquarters Hotel. Those desiring to stay at the Headquarters Hotel are encouraged to make reservations as soon as possible since there is a limited number of rooms available. Elected Grand Lodge Officers, Appointed Grand Lodge Officers, Past Grand Masters, and Committeemen are requested to stay at the Headquarters hotel and to make their reservations promptly. Each person including Grand Lodge Officers, Past Grand Masters, and Committeemen are responsible for making their own reservations.

Reservations may be made by calling the Embassy Suites, Greenville at 1-864-676-9090. When calling, you must ask for group reservations and identify yourself as being with The Grand Lodge of Ancient Free Masons of South Carolina (code GRA) in order to obtain the special room rate of \$143.00 plus tax per night. Since the Headquarters Hotel will be unable to accommodate everyone attending the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge, the following is a list of nearby hotels for your convenience:

Holiday Inn Express & Suites
1036 Woodruff Road
Greenville, SC 29607
864-678-5555

Microtel Inn & Suites
1024 Woodruff Rd.
Greenville, SC 29607
864-297-3811

La Quinta Inn & Suites
31 Old Country Rd.
Greenville, SC 29607
864-297-3500

Comfort Inn Millennium
2756 Laurens Rd
Greenville, SC 29607
864-288-6900

LOCAL COMMITTEE

2017 Grand Lodge Annual Communication

WB Paul Nestberg, Chairman
864-275-5812

RWB O. B. & Debbie Smith
864-322-9077

R WB James “Chico” & Kelly Mathis
864-419-3451

WB John & Susie Leslie
864-304-8247

WB Mark Bennett & Andrea Bennett
864-414-0721

RWB Jonathan & Suzanne Sprinkle
864-304-1518

R WB Steve & Toni Hames
864-449-9803

WB Ronnie P. Richards
864-449-9803

WB Ed & Pat Brannen
864-979-9934

RWB Scott & Lorraine Matheny
864-363-1673

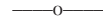
SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS OF THE GRAND LODGE

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2017, ST. GEORGE, SOUTH CAROLINA:
For the purpose of Rededicating Harmony Lodge No. 61, AFM in Celebration of the Lodge's 175th Year Anniversary. Lunch will be served at 11 :30 AM at the Lodge. The Grand Master, with the assistance of the other Grand Lodge Officers, will open the Grand Lodge of AFM of SC and Harmony Lodge No. 61, AFM on the First Degree at 12:30 PM. The Rededication Ceremony will follow at 1 :00 PM. Harmony Lodge is located at 5355 Jim Bilton Avenue, St. George, SC 29477.

SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2017, GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA:
For the purpose of Laying a Cornerstone and Dedicating the Lodge Hall of Walden Lodge No. 274 AFM. Lunch will be served at 11 :30 AM at the Lodge. The Grand Master, with the assistance of the other Grand Lodge Officers, will open the Grand Lodge of AFM of SC and Walden Lodge No. 274 AFM on the First Degree at 12:30 PM. The Ceremony of Laying the Cornerstone will follow at 1 :00 PM with the Ceremony of Rededication coming afterwards. Walden Lodge is located at 8551 White Horse Road, Greenville, SC.

SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 2017, IRMO, SOUTH CAROLINA:
For the purpose of Rededicating Boyleston Lodge No. 123, AFM in Celebration of the Lodge's 150th Year Anniversary. Lunch will be served at 11 :30 AM at the Lodge. The Grand Master, with the assistance of the other Grand Lodge Officers, will open the Grand Lodge of AFM of SC and Boyleston Lodge No. 123, AFM on the First Degree at 12:30 PM. The Rededication Ceremony will follow at 1:00 PM. Boyleston Lodge is located at 1310 Dutch Fork Road, Irmo, SC 29063.

All Brothers including Entered Apprentices, Fellow Crafts and Master Masons with their ladies and friends are invited to attend. All Grand Lodge Officers are expected to attend and all Past Grand Masters are requested to attend. All Elected Grand Lodge Officers and Past Grand Masters should wear their black tails with black bow tie and black vests. All other Grand Lodge Officers should wear black tuxedos with black bow ties, and black cummerbunds or black vests.



Ruby Lodge 314 presented George Washington picture to principal Caroline Miles of the Ruby Elementary School. Lodge members present WM Terry Williams, JD Robert Burr, Brother Larry Rushing, Brother William Short, Chaplin Junior Williams, and JW Gary Oliver.

60 YEAR AWARDS



Brother Ronald Howard Strickland receiving his 60 year pin on November 2, 2016. Left to Right are: William P. Breland, Sr., PDDGM, Center is Ronald Howard Strickland, Right is Brother John Allen Hart, WM of Bells Lodge No. 236. Brother Strickland is a 60 year Member of Bells Lodge No. 236 and is 84 years old. Presented by PDDGM, William P. Breland, Sr.



WB Phil Wilkerson received his 60 year service certificate and pin presented by WB Joe Whitener Jr. PJGW and RW Steven Hames PDDGM



12-16 RW Donald C. Kirby presents a 60 year certification and pin to Samuel Allen Rigby of Denmark Lodge 246.

70 YEAR AWARDS



70 year award presented to Dr. William Douglas Breland, Bells Lodge No. 236. on 9/19/16. Brothers Left to Right: William P. Breland, PDDGM, Dr. William Douglas Breland-96 years old, Shane Hudson, Secretary, Allen Hunt, WM.



Brother M.D. Floyd received his 70 year service certificate and pin presented by Jack Marler, PGM, Grand Treasurer and Stuart Floyd, PM (son of Brother M.D. Floyd).

FIVE GENERATIONS: SPECULATIVELY SPEAKING ...



(Left to Right) PM WBr. Earle Nichols, WBr. Alan Freezon, Br. Ben Price SW, Br. Johnathan Proctor Steward, and most recent Master Mason Br. Dalton Almond.

They are not related by blood, but they are Brothers ... on May 19th, 2016 the 5th brother in a string of Lugoff 411 Master Masons' received his 3rd Degree. Br. Dalton Almond (far right) received his Master Mason's Degree; his Coach was Br. Johnathan Proctor, who was Coached by Br. Ben Price, who was Coached by WBr. Alan Freezon, who was Coached by WBr. Earle Nichols (far left).

The "Coach" is a critical link in a Mason's path, and Lugoff 411 would like to thank all the coaches who give essential instruction to those entering into our incredible brotherhood.

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