



The Masonic Messenger

The Official Publication of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Alabama

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GRAND LODGE OF F&AM OF ALABAMA

SPRING 2012



Helion No. 1 Plans 200th Anniversary Celebration Of Masonry In Alabama

**BY BRO. KEN CARPENTER
BICENTENNIAL CHAIRMAN**

Saturday, Aug. 25, Helion Lodge No. 1, "The Birthplace of Freemasonry in Alabama", will celebrate the Bicentennial of Freemasonry in Alabama.

The original charter was granted to Madison Lodge No. 21 of Huntsville by the Grand Lodge of Kentucky on Aug. 28, 1812. "This Lodge ... still exists as Helion No. 1," according to Masonry in Alabama by Jackson.

Event plans include the dedication of the 1917 temple building by the Grand Lodge of Alabama and the erection of a stone monument plaque commemorating the history of the Lodge. Kentucky and Tennessee brethren will be invited.

On Aug. 20, 2011, Helion, began

its celebration of 200 years of Freemasonry in Alabama by recognizing the Bicentennial of the Dispensation

of Madison Lodge No. 21 of Huntsville, Mississippi Territory, granted by the Grand Lodge of Kentucky on

See complete history of Helion No. 1 on Page 2



Historic Helion Lodge

Aug. 28, 1811. This Lodge would become Madison Lodge No. 1 of the Grand Lodge of Alabama, later united with Alabama/Bethesda Lodge No. 2 of Huntsville, as Helion Lodge No. 1. Ninety-three Master Masons from Kentucky and Alabama assembled at Helion's Masonic Hall to honor this historic occasion by conferring the Master Mason Degree on two Kentucky brethren, Jerry W. Ford Sr. and Jerry W. Ford Jr., and Helion brother Arthur Johnson.

The flag of Alabama, flanked by the flags of Kentucky and Tennessee, representing Helion's origins in these states, flew between the grand columns of the hall portico to welcome our guests. The Kentucky degree was

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A History Of Helion Lodge No. 1

BY BRO. K. CARPENTER

In 1811 the "New Orleans" was the first steamboat to land at a Louisville wharf, thus beginning the birth of that city as a great center of commerce and culture. In August of this same year the Kentucky brothers established

HELION

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conferred by the brothers of McNeil Lodge No. 586 of Lebanon Junction, "The Traveling Lodge," and the home lodge of MWGM Donald Yankey. The wardens' pillars used by the Kentucky brethren were those once used by Helion,

WM Kachelhofer opened the lodge. Helion's original 1811 Bible was upon the altar. Hon. Ray Tanner, District Lecturer, introduced the Grand Lodge officers of Alabama, who received private grand honors, after-which the Grand Lodge Officers of Kentucky, led by MWGM Yankey, were received.

SW Carpenter made appropriate remarks recognizing the fore-brothers of Madison Lodge No. 21, who began the practice of Masonry on Sept. 6, 1811, and among whom were the leading political, agricultural, and commercial, leaders of not only Huntsville, but of Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

The Alabama Master Mason degree was conferred upon Bro. Arthur Johnson by PM Tanner. PGM Larry Hancock represented the East for a portion of the degree. Prior to the Kentucky degree, Bro. Carpenter introduced the theme of the bicentennial program, the recognition of the development of Freemasonry in Alabama. Brothers of Helion, Rising Virtue No. 4, St. Stevens No. 616, and Solar No. 914 read brief histories of 36 early Alabama lodges.

Grand Lodge officers, Grand Lodge of Kentucky in attendance were: MW Grand Master Donald H. Yankey, RW Grand Senior Warden Chris L. Stout, Grand Senior Deacon Donald M. Moore, Grand Junior Deacon Michael Yount, Grand Tyler, G. Michael Miller Sr., Dep. District Grand Master Bob Neal, Deputy Grand Master Terry L. Bowman, Dist. Dep. GM Mickey Cheatham, MW Past Grand Master Curtis Johnson, Howard Cross (Bio. Comm. Chair), PM J. William Riggs (Keepers of Work Comm.) and Cory Stovall Sr. (Comm. on By-Laws),

Alabama Grand Lodge officers in attendance were: Deputy Grand Master C. Sterling Hughes, Grand Secretary Jerry M. Underwood, PGM; Junior Grand Warden Lane Weatherbee, Senior Grand Deacon John Bradshaw, Junior Grand Deacon Jimmy L. Holt, Junior Grand Steward Winston Each, Grand Orator Karl Reed and PGM Hancock

All assembled departed in the spirit of friendship and brotherly love. It is the opinion of Chairman Carpenter, that our fore-brothers of Madison Lodge No. 21 would be well pleased by the manner in which they had been honored and remembered on this occasion.

Helion Bicentennial Committee members were Chairman Ken Carpenter, SW; Ed. Kachelhofer, WM; Jerry Burpee, PM; Vern Shakel, Rick Storey, Jim Blanteno, PM; James Henley, Sec. Garry Smith, PM; and Michael Feld, PM.

Rising Sun To Host Fishing Tourney

Rising Sun Lodge No. 29 is hosting a fishing tournament on June 2 to benefit the Wounded Warrior Project.

The "Hooked on Decatur" bass fishing team tournament will be limited to 100 boats (teams) and will launch from Ingall's Harbor on beautiful Lake Wheeler. Start time is at safe light and weigh in is at 4 p.m. The top five weights will receive cash prizes.

The entry fee is \$100 per boat (team) if registered prior to June 1, and \$125 for the day of the tournament. Anyone who would like to fish in the tournament or provide much needed assistance for this event please contact tourney officials at hookedondecatur@risingsun29.org.

For more information visit HookedOnDecatur.com, RisingSun29.org or woundedwarriorproject.org.

Freemasonry in Huntsville, Mississippi Territory, by granting a dispensation to the brothers of Madison Lodge No. 21, Grand Lodge of Kentucky, receiving its charter in Aug., 1812. These brothers would be among the leaders of this city as a center of commerce and culture. The brothers of Madison, Alabama/Bethesda, and Helion lodges are found among the prominent leaders of government, trade and commerce, medicine, education, and the arts throughout the history of Huntsville and Madison County, as well as Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

Trade and business brothers included operative masons, Thomas and William Brandon (natural and Masonic brothers of Madison Lodge), Historian Judge T. J. Taylor refers to them as, "the builders of the city, had come here (from Franklin, Tenn.) in 1810 with no property except their trowels and great skill in their trade, and from a straggling wooding village they made a city of stone and brick."

Helion: of Helios, Greek Titan God of Light

In 1824 Helion Lodge No. 1 was established by the Grand Lodge of Alabama by the union of Alabama Lodge No. 1 (Est. 1821, formerly Madison No. 21 of Kentucky) and Bethesda Lodge No. 2. Bethesda was formerly Alabama Lodge No. 21 of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee in 1818, becoming Alabama No. 2 of Ala., in 1821, and later Bethesda No. 2 of Ala. Thus, as the great Tennessee River unites the Commonwealth of Kentucky with the states of Alabama and Tennessee, so also is Helion Lodge a symbol of Masonic brotherhood among these great states.

Brother Founding Fathers of Huntsville, and the Establishment of the Lodge Hall

Tradition holds that the founding fathers of Huntsville, John Hunt and Leroy Pope were brother Masons. Col. Pope's grand mansion, "Poplar Grove", one of the earliest brick structures in Alabama, was built in 1814. In 1823, he sold a lot fronting this grand estate (sale price of one dollar) that "the three Masonic Bodies now constituted and subsisting in Huntsville, Eunomia Chapter V, Madison Lodge I, and Bethesda Lodge II or such... regularly constituted Masonic Body or Bodies... to... cause to be erected and finished Building and Improvements..."

Thus began the first Lodge building, Eunomia Hall (Eunomia: Greek Goddess of law and legislation). On Nov. 22, 1823, the brothers of Madison, (Bethesda), and "a number of visiting brethren from neighbor lodges... forming procession in order to lay the Corner stone of Eunomia Hall..." The first floor served as the school of Mrs. Jane Childs (1848- 1853), a meeting place for the Baptist Society, and as the synagogue for the congregation B'nai Shalom from 1876 to 1898. Five congregation members were Helion Brothers. This building remained until 1920, and was attached to the north wall of the present 1917 temple.

War Between the States

During the War Between the States, Helion was a Lodge Divided, as some of its Brothers served the forces of the Confederacy, while other Brothers were prominent Unionist leaders. Huntsville was occupied by Union forces beginning in April of 1862 to the end of the war. With death and destruction throughout the Tennessee Valley, unlike other Valley Lodges, Helion's Eunomia Hall escaped destruction.

2012 Dates To Remember

•**ELECTION OF AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS**-The Masonic Code states that officers will be elected at the regular Communication preceding June 24, and be installed as soon as practicable after the election, but in no case longer than 45 days after the election.

•**ANNUAL LODGE REPORTS**-Each lodge must file all annual reports with Grand Lodge no later than Aug 14. A complete list of the reports may be found in A6-S2 and report dates in 8.13 of the Alabama Masonic Code.

•**COMMITTEE ON WORK WORKSHOP**-The Grand Lodge Committee on Work will conduct a workshop at Coosa Valley Lodge in Sylacauga on July 21. The committee will meet from 8-10 a.m., then open the workshop from 10 a.m.-noon.

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Please send all changes of address
and membership status to your
lodge secretary.



A Report From The Grand Master

By **STERLING HUGHES**
MW GRAND MASTER

I hope this newsletter finds you well and in excellent spirits. We have much to be thankful for. We live in the finest country the world has ever known, are residents of the great state of Alabama and are members of the world's greatest fraternity.

Your Grand Lodge is financially sound, and our membership decline of



MWGM Sterling Hughes

the past several years has slowed and is showing signs of improvement. We may still have some challenges ahead of us, but I am convinced that by working together we can turn these challenges into opportunities and accomplish any goal we set.

Speaking of opportunity, let me call your attention to a few important programs your Grand Lodge has in progress:

- The Charitable Outreach Program for 2011 -2012 consists of the Alabama Masonic Scholarship Plan, Matching Fund Plan, Catastrophic Relief Plans, Scholarship Matching Fund Plan, Youth Sports Assistance Plan and Social Service Plan. Information on these programs may be obtained from the Grand Lodge website "alafreemasonry.org" or by contacting your Lodge.

- Alabama Masonic License Plate Program: By purchasing a Masonic Tag for your car or truck you will accomplish three things. First you let everyone know that you are a Mason. Second, you are displaying the square and compasses for the world to see,

and by your actions in your community someone may want to emulate you by becoming a Mason. Third, \$42.50 of the tag purchase price goes into the Charitable Outreach Endowment to fund the various programs.

- E-Masons: I am encouraging each of you to sign up on the Grand Lodge E-Masons list.

You will have access to all posted Grand Lodge information; Lodge meetings, degrees, etc. It is our goal to have all our members signed up as E-Masons.

For information on any of these or other Grand Lodge programs, please contact your Lodge Secretary, your District Lecturer, or the Grand Lodge Office.

Let me close by saying that being your Grand Master is the greatest honor of my life. As I travel around the state visiting the various lodges, I am treated with the utmost courtesy and respect. I am appreciative of the friendship, brotherly love and affection shown to me and my wife, Shirley. I ask for your continued support and prayers throughout the year.

We Need Your Help

By **LANE WEATHERBEE**
SENIOR GRAND WARDEN

Greetings, brethren. We, your Grand Lodge officers, need your help. Many Grand Lodges across the country publish newsletters for their members.

At the suggestion of Junior Grand Warden John Strickling, a newsletter for Alabama Masons has been discussed. The format is as you see it, based on a template I created for the "Masonic Messenger." It was suggested that we publish two editions per year, one in the spring and the other in the fall.

From this template we were able to obtain quotes on printing and mailing this newsletter to our nearly 28,000 members.

The lowest quote came from davisdirect, a Montgomery company with whom the Grand Lodge has done business several times. The original quote for printing, addressing and mailing was \$5,854.

As usual, our Grand Secretary did an outstanding job in reviewing the budget and finding the funds for this project. After a few weeks had passed, we received notification from davisdirect concerning a postal increase. The increased mailing cost and new regulations boosted the price to \$7,317.90.

The Corporate Board has published this first edition as a test. The cost of this single issue is within budget parameters, a second edition would exceed the existing budget. While it would certainly not cause bankruptcy, it would be an unexpected, unbudgeted expense.

Here is where your opinion is needed:

- Do you think a semi-yearly newsletter would be beneficial to the brethren of Alabama?
- Do you think the benefit to the brethren would justify the cost of publication (\$14,634.80).
- While we will be posting an electronic copy of Masonic Messenger at the Grand Lodge web site, do you think this would be an acceptable method of communication, rather than the cost of printing or mailing?
- Would emailing an electronic copy of Masonic Messenger to all eMasons be an acceptable alternative?

Please consider these questions, formulate your opinions and let us know. You can do this by contacting your Worshipful Master, District Lecturer or Committee on Work member.

Thank you, and we will be awaiting your opinions.

A Grand Lodge Website Report

By **JOEY D'ANDREA**
ASST. WEBMASTER

2011 was a very productive year for the Internet Committee and the Grand

Lodge website. Lets go back to the first days of the Grand Lodge website in Alabama. The site was a hand-written in HTML code which had lots of

information, links and pictures. It was reviewed by an independent reviewer (for lack of something better to call it) and was rated very positively. They wrote "The website is very straight forward in that most of the active links live right on its front page. The plus is that if there is a desire to add something, it just needs to be hand-coded. The down side is that it needs to be hand-coded, which can be time consuming for the coder." They commended the person who maintained the website, who was at that time, Bro. Butch Taylor.

Hand-coded! Truer words were never spoken. When I came on board in 2009, that's the way it was. Everything, all the information, all the links, pictures and files had to be hand-coded using HTML. For those of you who have knowledge about HTML, you know what I'm talking about. For those of you who have no clue, let me just tell you that if you miss one single period or quote mark among hundreds, or even thousands of characters on a single web-page, you won't see what you're supposed to see. It literally took hours to place events on the events page or input the Grand Lodge officers' itinerary and committee pages. It remained that way for the following two years.

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Membership Matters

By **JOHN R. STRICKLING**
JUNIOR GRAND WARDEN

Membership numbers have been of concern to the Grand Lodges throughout North America for several years. Various methods have been tried to increase the number of candidates receiving degrees, and hence more Masons. Instead of worrying about the numbers, our concern should be about the quality and how we can put to use what we have.

Opportunity! Freemasonry is not, and never was intended for the masses. Freemasonry is for men of good moral and ethical character who believe in God, and who have a strong desire to better themselves by associating with men of like-minded will and character. We have 28,000 of these men. Do you see the opportunity we have before us? I challenge you to get involved in this fraternity, if not in the ritual or an elected office, then by attending meetings; leading and helping your Lodge in civic projects; aiding local charities; helping in youth sports or anything that the brethren can think of to publicly contribute to your community and state. .

Thank God in heaven for our present members and know we can and will make a difference. At some point in time there was only one Freemason in the territory that was to become Alabama, so don't dwell on past numbers. Our future lies with our current membership and when our participation increases, and I know it will, prospective members will come in greater numbers.

If you have any ideas or suggestions as to how we can get more of our members involved please share them with me. My email address is "john.r.strickling@gmail.com".

Please go to the Grand Lodge website and sign up on E-Masons. This will allow you to view all the events throughout the state and receive important announcements.

An Update On Your Grand Lodge Building

By **JERRY M. UNDERWOOD, PGM
GRAND SECRETARY**

Here's an update on your new Grand Lodge office building. Most of you know our Grand Lodge office is located in Millbrook, approximately 15 miles north of Montgomery. The address location is 341 Monument Drive, Millbrook. The building is on the left behind the MAX Credit Union, approximately 2.3 miles east on Hwy 14 from Interstate 65, Exit No. 181. The building is easily accessible and will become a landmark for Masons of Alabama for years to come.

It took several years of property search and presentations to the Brethren to produce this fine building. The Brethren and Lodges gave final approval to build the new building at the Grand Lodge session of 2007. The Masons of Alabama took possession of the property in November 2009 and actually performed a cornerstone ceremony during the 2009 Annual Grand Lodge communication. This ceremony was conducted with many in

attendance during the passing remnants of Hurricane Ida, which had just come out of the Gulf of Mexico.

Your Grand Lodge office was designed and constructed with unique features for comfort and long-term use. The structure has over 5,700 SF on the main level with offices, conference area and library. The Library has a dedicated HVAC system with an additional dehumidifier for the many books and articles that number better than 5,000. The structure has 1,490 SF on the lower level which has a dedicated climate control system for storage of old Grand Lodge archives and regular use items. The lower level is also considered a safe area concerning bad weather issues.

The Grand Lodge Office building belongs to all the Masons of Alabama. Many of the Brethren have toured the building facility since its occupancy. You are always welcome to come by and see your Grand Lodge office. We feel you would be proud and impressed with the facility.



You are welcome to visit the new Grand Lodge Headquarters



Thousands of books, articles in Grand Lodge Library

Decatur Masonic Lodge Receives National Award For Its Excellence in Programs, Communications



The Masonic Information Center (MIC) has awarded Rising Sun Lodge, Decatur, one of just 18 national Mark Twain Awards for demonstrating excellence in 2011 Masonic activities.

The award recognizes Rising Sun Lodge's planning, execution, and communication in activities that both invigorate Freemasonry's identity throughout the community and enrich the quality of educational and fraternal experiences within the lodge.

WEBSITE

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With the addition of Jeff Rutledge and Joel Bryant for the 2010 - 2011 calendar year the MWPGM Brother Ron Andress gave us the green light to up-date the Website and up-date we did. It was given a face lift with a new web interface in the fall, making the website look modern, up-to-date and easier to navigate. Several additional hurdles had to be addressed after the launch; getting the old pages working in the new format but the feedback has helped and been overall positive.

We automated more functions this year, to include the officers' itineraries, eMasons, Events and Committee web-pages and converted those all to their own databases. Also, by creating the databases it gives us the ability to mass e-mail select groups of Masons, i.e. just the members of the Scottish Rite, or just the members who have signed up for death or sickness notices or just one particular lodge. In the Future we will be able

to mass mail district lectures by group or district, and the committee's by their separate committees. Changes have also been made to the Lodge location database. You can now search for Lodges by inputting the

City, County, group or district. There are now GPS coordinates of over 269 Alabama lodges. Upcoming changes will allow you to see upcoming work for a particular Lodge, district, or group, and be automatically emailed notifications of that upcoming work as soon as it is posted. Speaking of events, more than 1000 events were posted last calendar year on the events page.

The Internet Committee has been hard at work and continues to do so for the 2011-2012 calendar year. By the time you read this article the Trestleboard, the Grand Lodge of Alabama's message board will have already been in operation. It gives the Masons in Alabama a website for real-

time messaging to chat about anything they want to. A way to keep in touch with brethren regardless of where in the state they reside. The only requirements are that you have to be a MM in Alabama in good standing, register as an E-Mason and sign up for the message board. The forum was launched and in less than 24 hours we registered more than 140 forum members. That number has grown since it was first launch.

Regarding E-Masons; at the time of this writing we have about 2,300 registered E-Masons. Our goal is to register all masons in Alabama who have a computer or who have access to one. There are about 27,000 Masons in the State of Alabama, and as such, we have our work cut out for us. Please, pass the word, inform the brethren in your lodge. It's easy, it's free and it holds the key to our future. The website is your tool. Use it as often as you can. It's here for you. Thank you for allowing us to work for you.

strengthened our lodge. As lodge activity intensified, Masonic values have radiated out in to our local community."

The Masonic values, he noted, are the historic Masonic emphasis on importance of education, self-improvement, good works, and fellowship.

"There are some 10,000 Lodges across North America, and Decatur Lodge should be very proud of being selected part of the elite group of Mark Twain Award winners this year," said

George Braatz, Executive Secretary of MSANA.

"The Twain Award encourages Lodges to make Freemasonry relevant to the diverse backgrounds and ages of its members and its communities," he added. "We feel public interest in the Masonic Fraternity is on the rise, and Lodges like Rising Sun are making significant contributions to the growing interest in Masonry that we see throughout North America."

Most historians believe that Freemasonry arose from stonemasons' guilds in the Middle Ages and began to flourish in the 1700s in Europe, the American Colonies, and Canada. Today, North America's Masonic Fraternity provides fellowship for more than 1.4 million members. Go to www.msana.com for more information about Freemasonry and the Mark Twain Award.



MSI's Mark Twain Trophy