

Grand Lodge of Alabama Schedule of Events

by TEDDY R. GROGAN JR., PGM, Grand Secretary

Brethren, I would first like to say how much I appreciate this opportunity to serve you as your Grand Secretary. I would like to thank our immediate Past Grand Secretary, Brother Jerry Underwood, PGM, and our Grand Lodge office staff for making it such a smooth transition. Lynn and I really enjoy living in Millbrook. If I can ever be of assistance to you or your Lodge, please don't hesitate to call.

The annual meeting of the Grand Lodge is coming up November 11-12, 2014 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in downtown Montgomery. If you have never attended the Grand Lodge Annual Communication, you should consider doing so. If you are not a Lodge Officer with Grand Lodge credentials, you can be seated as a non-voting Master Mason.

You can bring a paid Lodge dues card and present it to the Credentials Committee on arrival. The Communication activities actually begin on Sunday, November 9th. All activities take place in the Embassy Ballroom of the Embassy Suites Hotel.

A brief overview of the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge is as follows:

Sunday, November 9th, 2014

2:00 PM Committee on Work Practice of the Third Degree
5:00 PM Religious Worship Service

Monday, November 10th, 2014

9:00 AM Committee on Work Exemplification of the Alabama
Masonic Degree Rituals
7:00 PM Grand Lodge Banquet

Tuesday, November 11th, 2014

9:00 AM Opening of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of
F&AM of Alabama
First Session Business
Lunch
Second Session Business
5:00 PM From Labor to Refreshment for the day

Wednesday, November 12th, 2014

8:00 AM From Refreshment to Labor
Third Session Business
Election of Officers
Installation of Officers
Closing of the 2014 Grand Lodge Annual Communication

Two New Masters Make History

On June 24th History was made in Alabama. A father and son were simultaneously installed as Lodge Masters. Brother Jerry Charlie Ogletree was elected as Master of Capitol Lodge # 923 in Montgomery and his son Jeremy Chad Ogletree was elected as Master of Ware Lodge # 435 in Alexander City. The dual installation was conducted at Capitol Lodge on the night of June 24th by Past Worshipful Grand Master Jamie Smith and Past Worship Grand Master Jerry Underwood.

Past Grand Master Jamie Smith currently serves as the Sovereign Inspector General for Alabama for the Southern Jurisdiction of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. Past Grand Master Jerry Underwood is also well known for his many years as the Grand Secretary.

Brother Jerry Ogletree serves as the District Lecturer of District 30 which includes Tallapoosa and Chambers Counties. In the Scottish Rite he services as the Bearer of Beausant in the Council of Kadosh, the Prelate in the Consistory, and Director of Public Relations. In the York Rite he serves as the Captain of the Host in the Chapter, the Principle Conductor of the work in the Council, and the Junior Warden in the Commandery. He is appointed, as an aid, to the Most Illustrious Grand Master Ron Thomas, Grand Council, Royal and Select Masters.

District News

This section features news, events and accomplishments from Lodges across the state. If your district or lodge has anything to share, contact Phillip Sherman (philsherman4016@gmail.com) with details and any images you have.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Pleasant Grove Lodge #909



Jeffrey Patterson is a 12 year old boy from Mulga, Alabama. His parents found out he had Type 1 Diabetes when he was just 11 months old. The use of an insulin-pump has made life easier for Jeffrey but he has had problems with seizures over the past few years due to low blood sugar. Diabetic alert dogs are trained to sense and alert a diabetic of highs and lows before they reach critical stage. The dog is donated but the training is \$20,000. We want to help Jeffrey and his parents with their fundraising so that Jeffrey has all the help and protection he needs.

To donate to this worthy cause, make a check or money order payable to:
Jeffrey Patterson Diabetic Alert Dog Fund
P.O. Box 702
Pleasant Grove, AL 35127

J. Collier Foster Lodge #906

2014 CHARITY MOTORCYCLE RIDE

Brethren, Come join and support *J. Collier Foster Lodge # 906* in their 8th annual motor cycle ride to help support EAGLE WINGS.

The ride will be held November 1st 2014 in Northport, AL. Registration will start at 9:00 a.m. and the ride will leave out at 10:00 from Eagle Wings on Hwy 82 West in Northport and return around noon where we will have hamburgers and hot dogs plus homemade ice cream along with door prizes. The registration fee is 25.00 per bike. For more information contact Greg Durr 205-292-7305, or any member of J. Collier Foster Lodge # 906

What Then

A Young man and an old man talked one day.
Said the boy, "I think I'll go away,
From Fathers old farm....don't know just when."
The old man listened and asked, "what then."

"I guess I'll have some fun in town
The first few years...then settle down
And get a job and earn a lot."
The old man smiled and asked, "Then what?"

"Why then I'll meet the girl of my dreams,
Whose folks have money; and then it seems
I'll buy a fine home with everything new."
The old man queried, "Then what will you do?"

"I guess I'll invest in bonds and stocks;
That's where they say opportunity knocks.
Maybe by that time I'll be governor."
And the old man asked "And then, what more?"

"I guess I'll retire if I please
and travel and live a life of ease."
The old man thought as he scratched his head;
"Then what will you do, my son?" he said.

For a moment the lad made no reply.
Then he answered slowly, "I guess I'll die."
A deep silence followed as both of them thought.
Then the old man asked softly, "My boy, then what?"

Where will you be when you get where you're going?



The Masonic Messenger

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Inside this edition...

IN CLOSING, a retrospective of the past two years of the Grand Lodge under the guidance of Lane Weatherbee, WGM.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR MASONRY? Get involved and get your brethren involved!

RESURRECTING MASONRY IN ALABAMA, an examination of the state of Freemasonry today.

HELP WANTED, we need volunteers to help a number of Masonic Programs and Committees throughout the state.

DISTRICT NEWS a look at what is happening throughout the districts and lodges of Alabama.

HISTORICAL MARKER DEDICATION



By CLAUDE NEAL HUDSON
Rising Sun Lodge No. 29

It was a sight to behold as the city of Decatur, AL was descended upon by 100's of Masons marching in a procession up Bank Street led

by sweet sound of "Dixie" from the bagpipe of Brother Jim MacRae. Masons representing over 25 Lodges, 3 states, and the Alabama Grand Lodge were in attendance.

The 3rd Friday Downtown

Decatur event, on August 15, 2014, held a dedication ceremony of a historical marker commemorating Rising Sun Lodge No. 29 for over 188 years of contributions to the river city. The marker was sponsored by the Alabama Historical Association, endorsed by the Morgan County Archives and donated through the generosity of former WWII POW, Purple Heart recipient and American Hero, Brother George Mills, PM.

MWGM Lane Weatherbee was the keynote speaker with Senator Arthur Orr, Decatur Mayor Don Kyle, and Archivist John Allison taking the podium and Brother Judge David Breland emceeding the event. After the dedication ceremony the Lodge hosted an Open House with

(See MARKER on Page 3)



SHOW YOUR PRIDE AND SUPPORT FREEMASONRY
BY PURCHASING A MASONIC LICENSE PLATE

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

MILLBROOK, AL 36054

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GRAND LODGE OF F&AM OF ALABAMA

Resurrecting Free Masonry in Alabama

By R. W. HICKMAN, JR. LTC (RET)
WM, Athens Lodge #16

I recently finished reading the book “Autopsy of a Deceased Church” by Thom S. Rainer. While Free Masonry is neither a church nor a religion, I found many similarities between our fraternity and the dying churches investigated by the author. He outlines several critical factors leading to the decline of a church including a significant drop in membership over time. Masonry in Alabama certainly meets that criterion, as we have gone from approximately 75,000 members in 1960 to less than 26,000 today.

Another factor he describes is the loss of contact between the churches in the local community. Today many of our lodges’ only contact with their local areas is when they perform fundraising activities; and those are centered around making funds for the lodges versus performing a service “for” the community. As the author says, “when a church ceases to have a heart and ministry for the community, it is on the path toward death”. Lodges once had musical bands; they marched in parades and participated in many other community activities; as such they were fixtures in their local communities and anyone could tell a visitor to town where the local lodge was located. While we no longer have evening concerts in the park or parades to march in, we are also no longer participants in the activities of the community. Worse still, when we do involve ourselves in activities within the community, those events are sponsored by us for our own self-recognition and glorification.

Many of our members look back to the old days and wish things could be the same today as they once

were. The days when our lodges and appendant bodies were flush with money and members are long gone. That past can be recreated but it requires a redefinition of our goals and objectives. It will take a commitment of sacrifice from the brethren. Like the early churches, it can be done if our brothers are willing to go into the community, work and provide the financial resources required to support that effort. The early churches were gospel-centered activities. In describing modern failing churches Mr. Rainer writes: “Routines and traditions and rituals replaced the original purpose of being a gospel-driven people.”

If we mustered our brothers together today and asked all 26,000 members “what is the purpose of masonry?” Would we get a clear and concise response? I suspect that if Mr. Rainer evaluated our fraternity he would say that we had no clearly defined common purpose, as the answers provided by our brothers would be neither clear nor concise. To remain a viable organization, there should be one universally understood response from each and every Mason. Our doctrine states that we provide aid and assistance to those defined in our obligations; strive to better ourselves; and, to be a positive force in our community and the world thereby making each a better place for all mankind. That should be our purpose. The local communities surrounding our lodges must also know what we stand for as demonstrated by our actions. To lose sight of such a goal is to withdraw into our lodges, hide in the past and await the inevitable demise of our fraternity.

Help Wanted and Needed!

Brothers, there are Masonic Committees and Programs that are in need of our help! If you have the time and/or skills, please consider donating your services to any of the following:

Masonic Education & Public Relations Committee:

Motivational Speakers for Speaker’s Bureau
Instructors/Presenters for Leadership Program
Contact Phillip Sherman: philsherman4016@gmail.com

Grand Lodge of Alabama Child ID Program:

Supporters to spread the word about the program
Volunteers to help with ID Events
Contact John King: JohnKing0154@icloud.com

In Closing

By LANE WEATHERBEE
Grand Master

Brethren, this will be the last article I will write as Grand Master in a publication that began when I was Senior Grand Warden. It has been a long journey, longer than you or I expected, but through your love, your kindness and support, we have arrived at the conclusion of my term. Without you, I could not have completed the task that was unexpectedly laid before me.

On February 6, 2013, at 4 AM, I received a call from MW Jerry Underwood, PGM, informing me that MWGM Charles Booker had passed away. The call came on Tuesday, and RWDGM John Strickling and I had been with Charlie only two days before. To say I was shocked is an understatement. To say I was prepared is another understatement.

I had begun to make my plans for the 2013-2014 year, but they were only preliminary mental sketches of what I intended to do. Suddenly, I was asked to make decisions as Grand Master.

To give you an example of what faced me, in April 2013, I was told that I was the chairman of the Southeastern Masonic Conference. That conference was a success because of our Grand Secretary (Bro. Underwood), his wife, Linda, our office staff and our First Lady, Pat Booker.

Thanks to the Grand Secretary, our Grand Lodge officers and our Grand Lodge staff, I made it through until last November when you were kind enough to elect me as the Grand Master. I guess I hold several unsolicited records. First, in recent history, I am the first Grand Master to have served for 21 months. There is another record, but I will discuss that in a separate story.

I am proud to have been responsible for creating our Masonic

Veteran pins. I had no idea how it would be received, but I was convinced our veterans needed recognition. I am delighted to report that the pins have been in great demand, and we have re-ordered to meet that demand. MW Frank Little, PGM, has served as our chairman for veterans’ recognition, and I thank him for the job he has done.

I really can’t count the number of decisions I have made for the past 20 months, but many of them would not have been necessary if the Masters of the lodges involved had taken the time to read our Masonic Code. I am delighted to report that only a very small percentage of our lodges have required an action or a decision from the Grand Master. Even these could have been avoided by simply reading the Masonic Code.

To our Masters and Wardens, I ask that you remember your obligations and the promises of a Master when he is installed. We are all bound to uphold and obey our constitution and edicts. It would be beneficial to your lodge and the Grand Lodge to consult that blue, 5x6-1/2 inch binder before undertaking any situation with which you are not familiar.

If you are not familiar with the Masonic Code and how it is organized, ask your District Lecturer for help. Neither I, nor the code, nor the Lecturers are your enemy. We are here to assist you in governing your lodge and avoiding problems.

Finally, thank you for your hospitality wherever I have gone. Thank you for your friendship and brotherly love whenever we have met or talked. Thank you for the smiles and brotherly grips...the words of encouragement. Thank you for allowing me to be your Grand Master for the past 20 months.

God bless each of you; God bless our great fraternity, and God bless the United States of America.

The Masonic Messenger

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F. & A.M. of Alabama*

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*Please send all changes of address
and membership status to your
Lodge Secretary*

The Public Image Of Masons

By JOHN R. STRICKLING
Deputy Grand Master

I received an email a few months back from a Brother in North Alabama stating that he had been researching the Constitution and Edicts looking for a dress code for members attending Lodge. He wrote that he could not find any mention of it and asked why the Grand Lodge did not have some type of a dress code. He also wrote that he thought it was disrespectful the way some were attired when attending Lodge.

My response was to inform him that he had come to the right conclusion, that there is no dress code mentioned in our Constitution and Edicts. It is up to each Lodge to address this issue and that my Lodge had adopted a minimum dress code several years ago prohibiting shorts, t-shirts and flip-flops in the Lodge Hall, and that he could discuss this matter with his Lodge Brethren. I also informed him that if he would look at when our Constitution was written and last amended, the possibility that anyone would ever come to Lodge dressed as they do now, never entered their minds!

In my 67 years I have seen a lot of change, some good and some not so good. As a society we have gone from proper attire for Church, Business and Social functions to casual Friday’s, then casual Monday’s to casual everyday! It is not uncommon to see folks wearing shorts and flip-flops to God’s house on Sunday. It may be my age, but I have the feeling that instead of striving to maintain our dignity, our status as a “special” fraternity, we have been lowering our standards or discarding them altogether. I have been sitting in a Lodge, in a suit, and have someone walk in through the door with shorts, t-shirt (with holes in it) and flip-flops. The question that went through my mind was “does this person have no respect for himself or the Lodge?”

It is not my intent to imply that everyone should wear a coat and tie to Lodge (although it isn’t a bad idea), but is it unreasonable to expect khaki slacks and a collared shirt? If you take your wife out to a nice restaurant for dinner would you wear shorts,

flip-flops and a t-shirt? There are places and occasions to wear shorts, as well as hunting clothes, or even swim trunks, but the Lodge Hall is not one of them.

Before retiring, if I knew that there was a Lodge meeting that I was going to attend, and there was a possibility that I would not have time to go home and change clothes, I would put a clean shirt and coat in my car. Everyone could do that, if their appearance, and its effect on others were important to them when coming to Lodge! The kind of image we project to others will reflect the image others have of us!

One of the basic principles of life is the fact that people like to associate with successful people, or those they perceive to be successful. Everyone has heard the saying “dress for success.” People want to do business with places that appear successful; they like to shop, work and eat in nice places. People want to live in nice, clean, attractive homes. If two restaurants have the same fare but one of them looks rundown and unkempt while the other is in an attractive, well maintained building, who would you think is going to succeed?

What kind of image do you and your Lodge present to the community? We are Masons, we are a special group of men, we even think of ourselves as being in an elite fraternity. Isn’t it about time we started acting that way!

When a prospective member looks at a Lodge and how the membership is attired, what will be his first impression? Most of the time the first impression we have determines what our commitment will be, whether it be of a person, place, or thing. A poor first impression is difficult to overcome.

Finally let us look at ourselves: What kind of image do we project? You are the fraternity, each one of you. When you are in the world and people know that you are a Mason, they will judge us all by your appearance, words and actions. Unknown to us all, there are those who are watching and trying to emulate what we do. Let us set a good example so that we may continue to make “Good Men Better.”

What Are You Doing For Masonry?

By GREG DURR
Senior Grand Warden

Brethren, as I sit here thinking about our great fraternity, I think where Masonry will be twenty years down the road. Brethren as I travel across this great state visiting other lodges and other jurisdictions we hear the same thing, declining membership and how to retain members. Brethren have you ever asked yourself what you personally could do for your lodge or for your Grand Lodge.

Brethren I received an email back in February of this year that has me asking, WHAT IS NEXT AFTER BEING RAISED TO A MASTER MASON? Brethren you have heard as well as I have, after a master mason degree, we tell the brother that he is now entitled to all the light in masonry, that he is entitled to wear Masonic jewelry, and that we want him to attend lodge as much as possible, to learn the work and participate in the degrees.

MARKER

tours and refreshments.

Does your Lodge meet the criteria established by the Alabama Historical Association to qualify for a historical marker? The AHA Historical Marker Program can now recognize a civic or fraternal organization for its integrity and significance even though it is not in a historic building per se.

Probate Courts, libraries, internet searches, your county Archives and historical societies are great sources of information about your Lodge and its members. The Grand Lodge has begun to distribute to each Lodge Secretary a DVD of their yearly returns that will provide wealth of history as well as a who’s who of notables in your area. For more information on how to have your Lodge commemorated with an AHA Historical Marker, visit the AHA website: <http://www.alabamahistory.net/historical-marker-placement-information.html>

With the exception of funerals, occasions to assemble the Craft

Brethren while all these things are true don’t you think we are selling ourselves short, are we setting our standards to low. Brethren I would encourage you to get your lodge involved in the community, be part of something, pick you a charity that you can get the brothers and their families involved in. Brethren I can tell you from experience and from observing the Lodges that are doing well they are involved in the community doing fund raisers for charity, scholarships, and becoming financially sound. Brethren, I am proud to say seven years ago my Lodge, J. Collier Foster # 906, got involved in a fund raiser that has become an annual event and we have raised over 23,000.00 dollars for Eagle Wings Inc. Brethren, why can we not encourage our newly made Master Masons that we want their ideas, and get them involved in the community. Let’s get Masonry out in the public eye, then, we can show people by our actions what being a Master Mason is all about.

(Continued from Page 1)

and display the pageanties of Masonry in a public procession are seemingly few and far between. We should work toward having more dedication ceremonies for Masonic Halls and historical markers as well as work with our local, city and state officials to have more cornerstone laying ceremonies on public buildings, schools, churches, etc. requested and approved. It is indeed a sight to behold.

