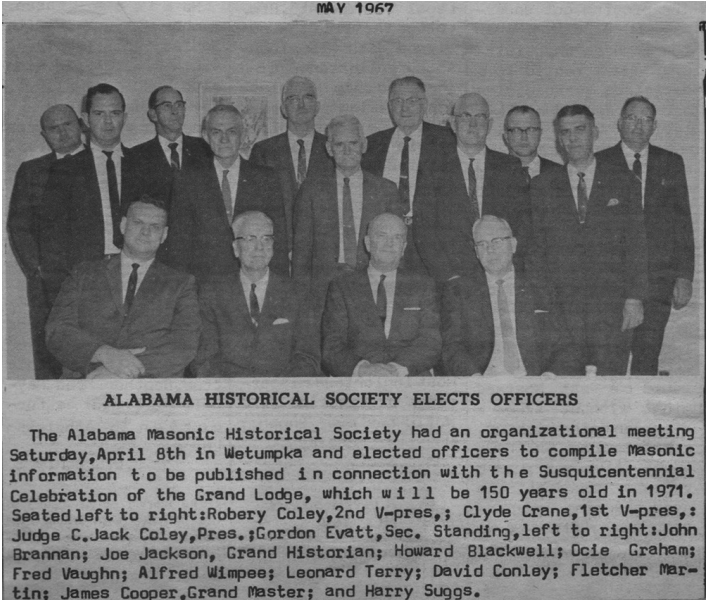


A Glance Into the Past



By LARRY W. STINSON, PGM
Alabama Lodge of Research,
President

We, like these Brethren, could pass into the night without much being known about us. A flip of a switch on the right server and little would remain of our having passed this way. The men in the picture above are members of the Alabama Historical Society. The Society ceased to exist in the in the early 1970's. To my knowledge, there is only one member still living. The

only readily available asset we have from the Historical Society that is a book by Joseph Abram Jackson, "Freemasonry in Alabama."

Forty years later another attempt to preserve and share our history came into existence. I hope we do not share the same destiny. Brethren as we approach our 200 year anniversary we need to try and bring our 150 year history book up to date. If you have any contributions to add or replace, finish them up and lets share them with the State.

Masonic Renewal

By RONALD THOMAS, JGW

Is your Lodge looking for something to do at meetings other than reading the minutes, paying the

bills, and discussing poor attendance? Do you need something further to offer an eager young man who has just been raised? Do you need an informational program for a meeting that includes families and friends? Are you looking for ways to make your Lodge more visible and more meaningful in the community? If your answer to any of these questions is yes, MASONIC RENEWAL can provide an answer.

Provided by the Conference of Grand Masters of North America's committee on Masonic Renewal, the web site is:

www.masonicrenewal.org

It is a treasure trove of articles, videos, graphics images, podcasts, and programs for Masonic

District News

This section features news, events and accomplishments from Lodges across the state. If your district or lodge has any events or news that you want to publicize, contact Phillip Sherman (philsherman4016@gmail.com) with details and any images you have and we will try and put it in our next edition of the Masonic Messenger. It's time to spread the word and get involved.

UPCOMING EVENTS

District 27, Gordo Lodge 564



12TH ANNUAL GORDO GOSPEL SINGING

Gordo Lodge 564 will host the 12th Annual Gordo Gospel Singing on May 03, 2014. We will have 3 - 4 groups and a couple of Soloist. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year. Admission is free, but we do pass the hat for donations. Singing will be held at the First United Methodist Church Family Life Center in downtown Gordo. Proceeds from the singing go towards supporting community projects such as, Gordo High School Football, Gordo High School Band, Gordo High School Senior Award, Widows, Senior citizens, and other worthy causes

PAST EVENTS

District 27

Three lodges in District 27, Carrollton 214, Fellowship 172, and Gordo 564 recently held our first ever "Past Masters Memorial Golf Tournament" held at Knoll's Country Club in Reform. Each lodge chose a Charity to donate the proceeds to. Recipients of the proceeds were, Pickens County Disaster Relief Team, Carrollton Food Bank, and Gordo Senior Center.

lodges. If you forget the name of the site, just type "Masonic Renewal" into your browser, and it will guide you to the site, which is very user-friendly and chock-full of useful material.

Across the nation, there are reports of growing interest in Freemasonry among younger men, who seek out the fraternity with more prior knowledge about it than men in earlier times. The media, particularly via the internet, has opened our doors for a look at, if not for admission to, our lodges. Satisfying this real need

for "further light" among the newly raised, as well as more seasoned members, is important for a fraternity which need to keep its good men involved.

I encourage every lodge leader to investigate and put to use this valuable resource for further Masonic light. I encourage every member to explore it on his own. Think of this collection of Masonic knowledge as one of those "well-informed brethren" to seek out in your leisure hours, because it is indeed always "as ready to give as you are to receive."



The Masonic Messenger

The Official Publication of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Alabama
VOL. 3 - NO. 1 GRAND LODGE OF F. & A.M. OF ALABAMA SPRING 2014



“MASONRY UNITED”

By LANE WEATHERBEE
Grand Master

I am really amazed at the demand for this year's Grand Master's pins that bear the words, "Masonry United."

I would like to take a moment to explain the origin and the intent of these words.

I became a Mason in November, 1969, in Piedmont, and since then, I have become a member of the Eastern Star, York Rite, Red Cross of Constantine, Scottish Rite, Shrine, Grotto and Royal order of Scotland.

I'm not mentioning these organizations for any personal recognition, but rather to explain that I have a pretty good working knowledge of a number of Masonic bodies. After I was elected as



a Grand Lodge officer, I began looking around and found there was one concern among all the Masonic bodies. That concern was, of course, membership. The Shrine was worried about Shrine membership, and the York Rite was concerned with membership in those bodies. The same was true with the Eastern Star and Scottish Rite.

After talking with a friend and brother from Kansas, I found that his Grand Lodge had conducted

a program to bring together all the Masonic bodies into one large force to improve membership. The concept is so simple. As Blue Lodge Masons, we are not allowed to invite people to join our organization. With this taken into consideration, isn't there a better way of doing things? I believe that if our appendant bodies (including the Shrine) will join in a cooperative effort to recruit members, it is bound to have a positive effect. Just look around. The York Rite Bodies have their colorful coats, hats (Chapeaus) and regalia, the Scottish has its own brand of uniforms, as does the Shrine. For instance, when the Scottish Rite does its children's shoe program, the members should always be on the alert for any prospective Masonic

(See UNITED on Page 2)



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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

MILLBROOK, AL 36054

P.O. BOX 1070

GRAND LODGE OF F&AM OF ALABAMA



Stand Up For Your Beliefs

By R. W. HICKMAN, JR. LTC (RET)
Senior Warden, Athens Lodge

During the pre-Revolutionary War period in our nation's history, churches, masonic lodges and taverns were the kind of places where our forefathers gathered to formulate and refine the guiding principles which were adopted by our great nation. In America's more recent history, such meeting places were instrumental in lobbying for the end of slavery, women's right to vote and later civil rights for all.

Today, our military, schools and most other public institutions have been stripped of God, any reference to religion and are prohibited from making value judgments regarding individual behavior. In this "new normal" world even our churches are fearful of pointing the traditional finger of commendation and calling out behavior we once labeled as sinful or wrong. It has become unacceptable to call attention to an individuals' actions which common sense would identify as clearly destructive to

the individual and society. As a result the line bordering acceptable and unacceptable has been all but eliminated to the point where almost any behavior is deemed acceptable.

In this new world, we stand at another crossroads of history as our nation is torn between the concepts of personal responsibility and socialism. It is clearly time for us to no longer stand silent. Our fraternal obligation teaches tolerance; however, as we practice tolerance in our daily lives we must also be reminded that our obligation teaches us to provide good countenance to a brother who is making bad decisions. The balancing act between tolerance and providing advise is a tough place to be. By saying nothing we passively approve and support the conduct which we know in our heart to be destructive. By speaking from our heart we risk alienating a brother and being labeled a "busy-body".

We find that by holding our tongue we promote that which we believe is wrong. When lodges

withhold the black ball and accept a man whose character or lifestyle might be questionable we degrade the Craft we are obligated to protect. Just as in historical times we must now take a stand and not be ashamed that we still believe in time

proven sound traditional values. In this age when no one is allowed to say "no" we must be known as men who are part of an organization which is not afraid to say no. Either we stand for principles or we stand for nothing.

The Importance of the Royal Arch Degree to the Master Mason

By EMORY J. "SMOKEY" FERGUSON,
Past General Grand High Priest
General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons International

To those of you who are already Royal Arch Masons you know the importance of the Royal Arch Chapter degrees to you as a Master Mason. But are you aware that the four degrees of the Chapter answer many of the questions that go unanswered in the three degrees of the Blue Lodge? Have those of you who do not belong to the Chapter ever thought and wondered about the many unanswered questions in your three degrees? Have you ever thought about the fact that in the second section of the Master Mason Degrees you are no longer referred to as Brother but have suddenly become referred to as Companion?

In the Fellowcraft Lodge opening the Senior Warden speaks of obtaining wages. Do you know

what those wages were, how much they were and how they were obtained? Do you know that the lost Master's word was found? Where it was found and how it was determined what the true word was? Most importantly do you know what the word is?

These mysteries, and many more, can be answered in the beautiful and wonderful degrees of the Chapter of Royal Arch Masons. To those who do not belong to the Chapter please consider petitioning for membership, and even though you may not choose to petition for all the degrees and orders of the York Rite, know that on receiving the degrees of the Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, you will have at least completed your Master Mason Degree.

Widows Sons Masonic Riders Association



Zach Ashley, Alabama State President of the Widows Sons Masonic Riders Association, along with fellow bikers, presented Grand Master Lane Weatherbee with an honorary membership patch during a recent gathering at the Grand Lodge Office in Millbrook.

Social Media and Freemasons

By JOHN R. STRICKLING
Deputy Grand Master

Having recently attended the Conference of Grand Masters of North America held in Baltimore, MD., I had the opportunity to attend a "Breakout Session" on the topic of "Social Media & Grand Lodges." Assuming that something was to be learned on how Grand Lodges could take advantage of the various social media sites, I enthusiastically headed for the meeting room where the class was to be held. In only a few minutes after I was seated, the Moderator started and a few minutes later the realization that this was not what I "assumed" it to be settled in.

Instead of how the Fraternity could benefit from social media, the Brethren in the room were discussing the abuses! How members in various Grand Lodge Jurisdictions were posting photographs depicting scenes and behavior that was anything but Masonic, making slanderous comments about Brother Masons, revealing topics that were discussed in a tiled lodge meeting, etc., etc.. One Grand Lodge Officer told of a Brother, when warned that what he was posting was unacceptable, telling him that he could not infringe

on his right to "free speech." Being technology backward I did not realize that this sort of thing was going on as I am not into facebook, twitter or any of the other social media sites. To me cell phones, email and texting are still a wonder! I have no doubt that in 24 months my 2-1/2 year old grandson will exceed my abilities in all things electronic.

Back to the discussion. After 45 to 50 minutes the general consensus was that the various Grand Lodge Jurisdictions needed to adopt "Social Media Guidelines" so that the Brethren might know what is acceptable behavior on the internet. After agreeing with the "guidelines was a good idea," it was at this point that my "two cents" were added into the mix. The opinion offered was that whether it be the spoken word, written word (as in newspaper, letter or note) or the electronic word, a Mason should know how to treat his fellow man; and should know the difference between what is acceptable behavior in our society and what is unacceptable behavior. If he does not know this then someone, somewhere did a poor job on the investigating committee! As to the Brother resting on his right to "free

speech," I reminded the group of our obligations and commitments made to the fraternity and that as far as our Craft was concerned "free speech" is restricted to the rules, laws, constitutions and guidelines set down by the various Grand Lodges. Also, that there exists, in most jurisdictions, especially the Grand Lodge of Alabama, methods and procedures to remedy any unmasonic behavior, infractions, perceived slanders or injustices.

The room fell silent, the two brothers from Kentucky gave me a thumbs up, a few nodded in agreement and the majority simply stared. Maybe it was the comment "especially the Grand Lodge of Alabama!"

The Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts was kind enough to send me a copy of the "Social Media Code of Conduct for Massachusetts Freemasons," part of which follows:

- A Mason should conduct his Social Media activities in a way that reflects his membership in the Craft. He should act in a way that presents a positive image of his membership in Freemasonry to the world.
- As a Mason, he must be aware that his postings are a permanent record; therefore, his conduct may influence the world with a positive or a negative opinion about him personally and also about any organizations to which he belongs.
- His actions on the various Social Media outlets should reflect the highest standards of morality and integrity he would practice within the Lodge.
- To insure our fraternity represents itself to the high standards we

believe in, we must regulate our actions through Brother-to-Brother intervention. As a Mason, you should advise a Brother if you feel that what he has posted is improper within the framework of our Grand Constitutions, rules, regulations, and edicts.

- Do not identify any Freemason as a member of the Craft unless he has provided his consent, or has already identified himself as such.
- There should never be discussion related to the application, background or investigation of an applicant.
- There should never be discussion regarding the ballot of an applicant. There should never be discussion related to the business of a Lodge and what is discussed within our tiled doors.

This represents approximately one-half of their guidelines. To the average person all of this is common sense and I have no doubt that the vast majority of Alabama Masons already adhere to these guidelines and more. As the social networking continues to grow there is wide concern, as evidenced in the "Breakout Session," that these kind of issues and problems will continue to become more numerous.

Being angry or being stupid is a different thing when writing a letter, you have time to rethink before it hits the mailbox. This is not so with the internet; once you push the send button it is like shooting a bullet, it can't be recalled, but unlike the bullet it stays out there for all time for someone to see!

Let us all hope and pray that Alabama Masons will not have to adopt a "Social Media Code of Conduct."

The Bridge Builder

By Will Allen Dromgoole

An old man, going a lone highway,
Came at the evening cold and gray,
To a chasm, vast and deep and wide,
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.
The old man crossed in the twilight dim-
That sullen stream had no fears for him;
But he turned, when he reached the other side,
And built a bridge to span the tide.

"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near,
"You are wasting strength in building here.
Your journey will end with the ending day;
You never again must pass this way.
You have crossed the chasm, deep and wide,
Why build you the bridge at the eventide?"

The builder lifted his old gray head.
"Good friend, in the path I have come," he said,
"There followeth after me today
A youth whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm that has been naught to me,
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.
He, Too, must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building the bridge for him."

This poem appeared in the Jan./Feb. issue of the "Beacon," a bi-monthly publication of the Grand Lodge of Ohio.

The Masonic Messenger

The Official Publication of the Grand Lodge of F. & A.M. of Alabama

Published Semi-Annually at Millbrook, Alabama



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