



THE MASONIC MESSENGER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GRAND LODGE OF FREE & ACCEPTED MASONS OF ALABAMA



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GRAND LODGE OF F&AM OF ALABAMA

FALL 2015

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**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!
SEND IN PHOTOS, NEWS AND
EVENTS AND WE WILL TRY TO
PUBLISH THEM IN THE NEXT ISSUE
OF THE MESSENGER!**

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

By JOHN STRICKLING, MWGM

The theme of my Group Meetings this year has been "Preparing for the Future." Interestingly enough, that phrase is one of the constant objectives of this Grand Lodge.

This article though, is going to start off in the opposite direction. I would like for you to take a look at our past. Remember the time, for those who are old enough, when one of the most important things that this Fraternity was known for was "taking care of its own". That was not only what we were known for, that was one of our chief objectives. What about today?

Today, we do an extremely poor job of even keeping track of our elderly Brothers, those who can't drive at night or come to Lodge. When it comes to those confined to their homes, or in Nursing homes, assisted

care or in hospitals our record is even worse and I haven't even mentioned Widows or those orphaned. Oh, and let us not forget those Brethren who have fallen on hard times; worked at places that "downsized" and have no job. The excuse I hear is that "Brother Jones might get offended if we offered assistance". Might we not ask Brother Jones and get his opinion before discounting assistance out of hand? I am not talking about charity here, I am merely talking about Brothers helping Brothers.

This year we expanded the "Social Services Program"; changing the rules for application, simplifying the process, and then placing \$75,000.00 in the Budget. This Program permits Lodges to draw up to \$1,500.00 per year to assist those in need who are members of their Lodge, their widows

or orphans. Would it not be terrific if we had \$250,000.00? Unfortunately, we do not, because we take approximately that amount of money out of the Masonic Home Endowment each year to help pay the Grand Lodge expenses! If we paid our own way, like we did for 180 years, and we had that money available, what a difference we might make in the lives of our Brethren who are in need.

Our numbers continue to decline and as we are all aware, this has been the trend for the past 55 years. This year we will have another estimated loss of 1,000, which will put our numbers around 24,000 members. With fewer members, the financial burden falls on fewer shoulders, yet expenses continue to climb to pay for our basic needs. This is not only true for the Grand Lodge, but

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RAISING A GRANDSON

By EDWARD E. LUSK
Loop Lodge #895

When I opened my Spring 2015 edition of The Masonic Messenger two things on the front page hit me! The first was in the sidebar box and simply said, "We want to hear from you"! And the second was in the third paragraph of the Article "THE PASSAGE OF TIME" by John Strickling, MWGM, where he stated "....I love this Fraternity and it is my earnest desire that it survive so that our grandsons and their sons can have the opportunity to become Masons."

Why did these entries have such a profound effect on me? First, because on the 10 of March of this year I had the opportunity to help raise my oldest grandson, Ronald D. Kent Jr., age 21, into the fraternity at Tyrian Lodge #111, here in Warner Robins, Georgia. And second, this would be an opportunity to tell about it. If you haven't had such an experience as raising a family member yet you are in for a great thrill and a very up lifting event in your life.

Ronnie has had some problems in his young years in communication. At first it appeared he was deaf because even at 3 years old he wasn't speaking. One of the local doctors told his parents that if they were saving for his college they should go ahead and spend the money because Ronnie was mentally impaired and would need a group home. A family friend, a Mason and Shriner, recommended that Ronnie be taken to the Scottish Rite Hospital in Atlanta for an examination. Local Shriners help his parents fill out the paper work, make appointments, and offered transportation to Atlanta.

During the initial examination the Doctor said something to the effect that that's as much as I can do until we clean his ears out. An operation was performed that cleaned harden wax, polyps and other trash out of Ronnie's ear canals and now he could hear!

Further hearing exams confirmed that his hearing was near normal. But he still didn't speak!

His mother ran across Thomas Sowell's article on Late Talking Children and the work his friend Dr. Stephen Camarata was doing at Vanderbilt University. She phoned for an appointment and told the receptionist that she had checked with her insurance company and they would not pay for an out of state doctor but that she had a credit card. The receptionist laughed and said "Mrs. Kent, if we accept your son as a patient he will be funded by the Scottish Rite." Ronnie was accepted and Dr. Camarata devised training for the local school board to provide. Ronnie had been placed in Special Education Kindergarten and Dr. Camarata wanted him out of that and that Vanderbilt University would back him on that call. At a local School Board meeting to discuss Ronnie's case there was some descent then someone said that the local board wasn't big enough to take on Vanderbilt University so Ronnie got what he needed from then until he graduated from high school with honors.

Along the way Ronnie was into scouting where he earned the rank of Eagle and the DeMolays where he attained Master Councilor and held State office and now he has stepped up to Master Mason. Earlier we mentioned Ronnie having Communications Problems but over the years since he went to the Scottish Rite Hospital, work with Dr. Camarata and others he has overcome most of his difficulties. In fact, he was his Masonic class spokesman in all three degrees and his dissertations were so flawless that he has already been identified by Tyrian Lodge as an instructor and he is now with his first class.

Can you imagine the lump in my throat when I raised him? It was not a lump because this was to be a

culmination event for Ronnie, like the Boy Scouts at 18 and even DeMolay at 21, but a start in the whole new world of the Masonic Fraternity, at the ripe old age of 21, that will be a journey which will last him and benefit him the rest of his life. Ronnie realizes how much the Fraternity has done for him and now he desires to begin payback.

I was raised in 1968 at Loop Lodge No 895, Mobile, Alabama where I am still a member but don't have continuous service. During an Air Force change of duty station I let my membership dues lapse and had to be reinstated and the clock started over on my longevity. I confess I haven't been as good a member as I should have been and I think that my inactivity in the Lodge resulted in neither of my sons wanting to take part.

Contrast that with me and my dad, who was raised in 1941 at Fairfield Lodge No 749, Fairfield, Alabama and was a faithful member until he died some 58 years later. As a kid when he would go to Lodge meeting I would ask him what they did and his standard answer was "ride the goat backwards". I once asked him why he had joined the Masons and his reply has always stayed with me. He joined because his Dad had been a Mason, as had his granddad, and that he was a young man with a wife and 2 children to take care of and he knew that if something happened to him the Masons would provide for his family. It

is, however, ironic that it was him that the Fraternity provided for. He became demented and in a nursing home he had a confrontation with an attendant and his record was then changed to indicate him as a belligerent and no other home in the Area would take him in. I appealed to the Masonic Home in Montgomery and they took him in and his last days were comfortable because of the outstanding service the Home provided him.

This started out to tell about the thrill of raising one of your grandsons, or other family member, and how exciting it is. I have three more grandsons, two of whom are in DeMolay, and it is my hope that all of them follow Ronnie's example but at my age I doubt that I would get to see their raising if it should happen. But I did see one and I will cherish that event the rest of my days. Hopefully, you too can experience that same thrill!



FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY

By BOBBY PITTS, RWJGW

Three of the most important words in Masonry in my opinion are Faith, Hope and Charity, which admonish us to have Faith in God, Hope in immortality, and Charity to all mankind.

The greatest of these is Charity; for faith maybe lost in sight; hope ends in fruition; but Charity extends beyond the grave through the boundless realms of eternity. All Masons have heard this throughout their Masonic life. All dependent bodies of Masonry are based on Charity. We are taught early in our Masonic walk that taking care of our own is important and that it is the duty of each Lodge to give special attention to the widows and orphans of deceased and indigent worthy Master Masons.

This also must extend to our community as well but it seems that we as Masons have gotten away from most of our Charity work and focused mainly on ourselves. We as Masons should be a

beacon to our community so that good men would become better men.

Many Masons have asked how Freemasonry affects them. They want to know how they can use Masonry to improve their lives and the lives of their families. We need to have more family functions in our lodges to create more interest. By going to your lodge and practicing the three words of Faith, Hope and Charity, we can encourage the community to look up to Masonry and bring in good men to become Masons.

We should take advantage of the Masonic Education committee and learn how to better masonry and its members.

Remember, One of the most important words in Masonic teaching is the word Charity. Masons that are well educated in Masonic works will stand out in the community as will Freemasonry

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www.alafreemasonry.org/emasons



YOUNGER SOLUTIONS TO OUR LOW MEMBERSHIP

By WILLIAM CLARK, JD
Howard Lodge No. 69

Hello, my name is William Clark, and I am the Junior Deacon for Howard Lodge 69 in Mobile, Alabama. I joined the lodge last year at 25, and was raised on January 20th of this year. Recently, I read the conference bulletin produced by our Most Honorable Grand Master and was made aware of our tragic decline in membership. I thought lodge membership in Alabama was higher than average. The reality brought with it a resolve to find a solution to this problem. We have a duty to keep our order alive and flourishing for the next generation.

While the solutions brought forth in the conference bulletin were excellent and should be implemented immediately, I would like to offer a few observations from a more youthful perspective. If we want Freemasonry to survive in Alabama, we need younger brothers, and we need to lower our average attendance age. I do not advocate asking people to become masons. However, I believe the distribution of facts about freemasonry is necessary in this digital age, where the general public is constantly bombarded with misinformation about our organization.

To attract younger members, we need a presence at Alabama universities and colleges, both four and two year institutions. This can be done very inexpensively and to great effect. At the University of South Alabama, I regularly see the Gideons handing out pocket copies of the New Testament. Most are discarded, but if one person in a hundred actually keeps the bible and reads it, then I'd call that a victory. Those Gideons answer any and all questions that might be asked of them. They provide information and guidance, nothing more. We need to do the same. We must post flyers, educational handouts, and contact information. Most young men have no idea what Freemasonry is. They have been exposed to the propaganda of modern culture which is often unfavorable to freemasonry. They must be educated with facts and receive information about how to join.

Our lodges should employ social media outlets to reach and educate a wider group of potential members. Our Facebook presence is a good start, but we need to expand our efforts. I think a YouTube channel that posts regular videos on the topics of Freemasonry is essential. Whatever media we upload

to the internet would need to be short, funny, and to the point. Otherwise we will not maximize our views. The videos can correct misinformation that has been previously distributed. The following are ideas for videos:

- A five minute discussion on why Freemasonry is not a religion.
- A video about the differences between our fraternity and the common college fraternity.
- A video tour of the lodge, which will include interviews of lodge members.
- Discussion of Masons in History. Very few people know about the links between Freemasons and our Constitution, or events like the Boston Tea Party.
- A video explaining the principles of Freemasonry, placing emphasis on Friendship, Morality, and Brotherly Love.
- Discussions about the aid brothers provide to each other, and to the community.
- Discussions addressing the gossip surrounding hazing rituals.

Whatever we post on the internet will expose us to social media attack. People can be pretty brutal in the comments sections of face book and YouTube. But this can be handled by a lodge moderator who answers comments in a clear, calm, and informative manner. This is a job that could be filled by retired lodge members who have time to work for the good of the order. Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and even Myspace are all areas where brothers can get the word out. Twitter may turn out to be an excellent way for lodges to communicate in our home state.

Most of the brothers that I have met are pretty conservative men. Most conservative men listen to local talk radio. A short radio broadcast can target men who are looking to better themselves. In these broadcasts we never actually come out and ask, but explain how to become a mason and provide contact information. Radio is significantly cheaper than billboards or television spots. If the University of South Alabama Drama Department (who is broke) can get a radio advertisement, then so can we.

In Mobile, we have an artistic night where our downtown area becomes a social festival. I see information booths for churches, atheist groups, the Socialist Party, and Libertarian causes, so why can't we have a booth for Freemasonry? We need to get out

into our communities, and have booths and flyers at every social event, from 5-k runs, supplying water and snacks, to public concerts. Not only will this get information out to the public but it will also bring us closer to our communities. Above all, we as brothers need to DISCUSS these issues in our lodges. When I became a mason, I believed I was joining a brotherhood of GREAT men whose principles would endure the test of time. If present trends continue, there will be no Alabama Freemasons in about thirty years. We must not let this happen.

These suggestions may create problems. Social media means a lot of personal time spent maintaining the videos and answering comments. Lodges would need access to video editing software and hardware. We open ourselves to attack, and we must be ready to meet these challenges.

If our information campaign is successful, we will be receiving a new type of candidate. These will be men who have not been recommended by an existing brother, nor will they be coming from a family tradition of masonry. Our lodges will need new ways of vetting incoming initiates. Hopefully by the time the newcomers become candidates we will know for sure if they are good brothers. This consequence is simply the result of the wide exposure social media will afford us. Whoever is in

charge of contact information must be prepared to receive higher than normal volume. It is essential that we make personal contact with every man who expresses interest in our organization.

The decline in our membership must stop if we have any hope of keeping Freemasonry in Alabama alive and well. We have a duty to ourselves, as well as brothers past and future, to do what we can to save our order

IT'S TIME TO ACT!!

How would you reach out to the upcoming generation and educate them about Freemasonry and what it means to be a Mason?

If you have ideas on how to raise Masonic Awareness throughout the state or your community OR if you have a proposal to implement any ideas presented by your brethren, we want to know!

It's time to educate the public about Freemasonry in Alabama and reinvigorate our fraternity so that it will once again thrive!



Find us on:
facebook®

The Masonic Education and Public Relations Committee, in order to create a social media presence and provide a new means for our brethren to keep up to date on the happenings of the Grand Lodge and Lodges in other districts throughout the state, created a Facebook page for the Grand Lodge of Alabama.

Visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GLofAL> and be sure to 'Like' our page. We encourage you to invite your friends and brethren to 'Like' our page as well. For those Lodges who already have a presence on Facebook, please link to the Grand Lodge page (directions can be found in the help section of Facebook under Pages > Managing A Page). To those Lodges who have yet to establish a

Facebook presence, we hope that you will take the leap and join us by creating a page for yourselves!

Our hope is to reach out to people throughout the state and try to generate interest in Freemasonry. Our page will not only be a means of showcasing what is happening throughout our state but a means of educating the public about our great Fraternity and showing them what it is that we, as Masons, do for our brethren and our communities. Please share any events, past or upcoming, that your Lodge has held or taken part in and be sure to send us pictures!

Remember, this is a way for the Masons of our great State to reach out to the public, educate them and show them the impact that we have on our communities!

FUTURE (Continued from Page 1)

for the Subordinate Lodges as well. Yet we must not forget the obligations that each of us have made.

As such, one of the Constitutional Amendment proposals is to increase our per capita. At present our per capita is \$8.00 (\$3.00 of which goes to the Masonic Home). The last time per capita was increased was 1997 and that amount was \$2.00. The proposed amendment would raise per capita from \$8.00 to \$13.00 in 2017, from

\$13.00 to \$18.00 in 2019 and from \$18.00 to \$23.00 in 2021. This would, eventually, allow the Grand Lodge to pay its bills without money being taken from the charitable side and it would permit charitable money to be spent for charitable purposes.

Let us prepare for our future by once again doing what was so admirable in our past.

Please, do the right thing and vote for the per capita increase!

WHAT ARE SMART GOALS?

By MIKE FELD,

Education & Public Relations Committee

"In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable."

—President Dwight D. Eisenhower

Plans rarely survive first contact with resistance. A successful strategy must be adaptable; but, for your strategy to adapt, it must have a starting point. It is like setting up for a game of chess or football players coming to the line of scrimmage. How many times in a football season does a broken play result in a first down or a touchdown?

What is a SMART goal?

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Results-focused
- Timely

Specific: K.I.S.S. Complex goals are difficult to communicate and difficult to define. How do we meet the goal? Why should we meet the goal?

Measurable: you have to have a score board. Think of touchdowns, field goals, etc. Number of fundraisers, number of events, number of degrees, number of attendees, etc.

Achievable: don't set goals you know you don't have the resources to accomplish. Unattainable goals are worse than having no goals. Don't try a Hail Mary pass every down. "Take what the defense gives you."

Results-focused: set goals that do align with your long term strategy. If you get 20 EAs but only raise 10 MMs, what should your goal be? Getting more EAs or teaching the ones you have? Check the Grand Lodge proceedings. If we have 781 EAs in a year and only raise 480 MMs (61% efficiency), what should our goal be? Should we get 1,000 EAs to get 610 MM at the 61% efficiency rate? Or should we get more teachers to meet schedules and learning styles (increase efficiency to 79% x 781 = 610)? Or both (1,000 x 79% = 790)? If

your strategy is to "make good men better," use that as a benchmark. How do your current activities "make good men better?" How do you help a man display the beauties of Holiness to the honor of God's holy name? Make sure you can Measure it. (How often does he help someone in need? How often does he attend a funeral? How often does he assist his church, community, or the lodge?)

Timely: When is the completion date? Set daily goals, monthly goals, and yearly goals. It is not unreasonable to plan out to 5 years. Plans and goals can always be modified. The long term strategy is "making good men better." Teach a good man to use Masonry to display the beauties of Holiness to the honor of God's holy name.

What is an example of a SMART goal for a lodge?

- 4 public events per year
- 4 petitions per year
- 4 Master Masons per year

If every lodge did this, there would be 1,160 new Master Masons per year.

What do you need to meet those goals?

- 4 individuals to coordinate community events, i.e. take part in a local charity walk, fund raise for the fire department, support a local sports team through the Grand Lodge Youth Sports program, etc.
- 4 petitions by handing out business cards with the lodge contact information to individuals you think might be good masons. Perhaps consider putting on the card "Have you ever considered petitioning for membership in Masonry?" (See Edict 15.2)
- 4 teachers to teach the new members the EA and FC lessons.

Or make your own SMART goals. Whatever you do, keep it simple. Make sure it is attainable. Maybe your lodge says "Four?! We can do _____!"

ALABAMA'S "CIVIL WAR" / "WAR BETWEEN THE STATES" DEGREE

By KENNETH A. CARPENTER, PM
Helion Lodge No. 1

On the morning of Saturday, 4 April, 2015, approximately sixty-nine Brothers, including MW Grand Master John Strickland, assembled at Leighton Lodge No. 43, Leighton, Alabama, to assist in the initiation of Bro. Andrew J. Quinn Ball to the degree of Entered Apprentice; and to witness what was perhaps the first "Civil War" or "War Between States" theme degree conferred in the Grand Lodge of Alabama. This degree team consisted of members, associate members, and one guest of the Northwest Alabama Proficiency Club (charter 1972).

The creation of such a degree team in Alabama was the concept of MW Past Grand Master (1978) Gerald Borden, a charter member and past president of the proficiency club. Degree team members included Brothers: MWPGM Gerald Borden (Russellville No. 371 & Sheffield No. 503), David Jordan (Littleville No. 881 & Newburg No. 388), Drew White (Killen No. 788), and Ricky Sparks (Washington No. 36), District Lecturer Terry Crosswhite (Lloyd O Glenn No. 6 & Courtland No. 37), District Lecturer Mark Waddell (Killen No. 788 No. & Florence No. 14), Craig Skinner (Nunn Oden No. 398), RWR Grand Chaplain Herschel Quinn, and District Lecturer, Lloyd Staggs (Leighton No. 43), and club guest, K. A. Carpenter (Helion No. 1).

In the true spirit of our Fraternity, a "Brotherhood undivided", as depicted in the meaningful "Friend to Friend" Masonic monument adjacent to the National Cemetery at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, (showing Union Capt. Bro. Henry Bingham supporting fallen Confederate Brig. Gen. Bro. Lewis Armistead), both Confederate and Union men were represented by the degree team. The occasion was particularly authentic of the 1861 to 1865 period. Large battle flags, Union and Confederate were posted behind the Master's station. Natural light came through the second story windows, and the tapers were candle lit. Bro. Crosswhite gave the lecture from an actual chart, while Bro. Waddell used his cavalry saber to "point out" the chart illustrations. Furthermore, the team represented the vast array of uniforms and accoutrements of the war, from elegant dress uniforms which would have been seen of senior staff officers, to worn or tattered Tuscaloosa gray and

butternut Confederated enlisted; and battle worn Federal cavalry enlisted, and infantry officer uniforms. Even the candidate was dressed in period clothing. The battle flags and many of the Confederate enlisted uniforms were provided by Bro. Waddell, a "veteran" Civil War re-enactor. Brothers Waddell and Carpenter, whose only wartime ancestors honorably served the Confederacy, represented the Union contingent. It is well to remember that in this terrible war which divided families and neighbors, more than 2,500 north Alabamians and 42,000 Tennesseans served in the Federal army.

This memorable occasion was enhanced by the conference of the degree by RWR Grand Chaplain Herschel Quinn on his grandson, Bro. Ball. Bro. Ball was presented with special certificate depicting the grand monument, "Alabamians", located at the Gettysburg National Battlefield Park.

Also, of memorable interest, was the reading by PGM Borden of the 1861 letter sent from Virginia to the Grand Lodge of Alabama, by the Grand Master of Alabama, Stephen Foster Hale (for whom Hale County, Alabama is named) explaining his absence from his duties as Grand Master while serving as Lt. Col of the 11th Alabama Vol. Infantry Regt. Bro. Hale was mortally wounded while recovering the fallen battle flag of the gallant 11th, at the Battle of Gaines Mill, Va. (27 June, 1862). He was well represented by PGM Borden, dressed in the uniform of a Lt. Col. (CSA).



Of additional historic interest, Leighton, Alabama was founded by Past Grand Master (1833 - 1834), and charter member of Leighton Lodge No. 43, William Leigh. Brother Leigh (1790-1873) is buried in the nearby Leigh family cemetery. His only grave monument was erected by the Masons of Alabama in 1931.

FREEMASONRY: YOUR RETURN ON INVESTMENT

By MOHAMAD A. YATIM

(This essay was originally published in The Journal of The Masonic Society.)

As Freemasons travel in and about the Temple, one of the many important questions that are being regularly asked and discussed by members is: have we cheapened our Fraternity? When speaking about this topic, these brethren are not only referring to the cost of membership in our fraternity, but also to the Masonic experience that is being offered by lodges not only to new candidates but also to existing members.

Brethren who receive their dues notice in the mail once a year typically ask themselves "is it worth it for me to maintain my membership in this Lodge?" Their answer to this question will determine whether or not the lodge will be able to keep this member or lose him. The reality is that members who take time out of their busy lives, and money out of their thinning bank accounts to invest in their Masonic membership, are now demanding to know what is their return on investment? Before continuing further, and as a disclaimer, this article is not a call for a dues increase, but a suggestion to lodge officers to have an honest discussion among themselves, and decide as to whether or not their lodges' current fee structure makes sense.

From a purely historic point of view, let us first examine the historic cost structure of joining Freemasonry.

A random sample of a few Lodges from the U.S. and Canada, lists their historic fee structure. These fees have been converted into today's equivalent prices using labor value appreciation formulas. From a cursory look at the summary table, it is instantly noticeable that Broad Ripple Lodge No. 643 of Indiana, was charging candidates a \$100 for initiation and \$4 in annual dues back in 1904. In today's equivalent dollar costs, using simple calculations that take into consideration inflation and labor prices, these figures translate into an initiation fee of \$11,500 and annual dues of \$459.2. Of course this may be a statistical outlier, owing to the fact that a random but very small sample is being used.

However, other lodges in our sample are still quite expensive in today's dollars. In 1918, Atlas Pythagoras No. 10 in New Jersey charged an initiation fee of \$100, with annual dues set at \$7. In today's money, this would

be the equivalent of \$5,070 for initiation fee, and \$355 for annual dues. The actual Lodge fees for 2014 are \$400 for initiation and \$100 for annual dues (both figures were raised this year). Using the small random sample presented in this table, the median cost of initiation is \$2,725 in today's money, with an annual dues rate of \$264. Clearly this cursory look at lodges is by no means authoritative, but it is suggestive that lodge dues and fees today are obviously "cheap" when compared to where they had been in the past.

Lodge Name	State	Year	Fees	in Today's Money*
Geneva Lodge No.139	IL	1854	initiation: \$15 Dues: \$1.50	initiation: \$2960 Dues: \$296
Selma Lodge No. 320	NC	1872	initiation: \$20 Dues: \$1	initiation: \$2490 Dues: \$232
Eureka Lodge No. 283	ON Canada	1873	initiation: \$65 Dues: \$0	initiation: \$8500 Dues: \$0
Broad Ripple Lodge No. 643	IN	1904	initiation: \$100 Dues: \$4	initiation: \$11500 Dues: \$459
Mineral Lodge No. 311	VA	1913	initiation: \$21 Dues: \$4	initiation: \$2090 Dues: \$398
Atlas Pythagoras Lodge No. 10	NJ	1918	initiation: \$100 Dues: \$7	initiation: \$5070 Dues: \$355
Geneva Lodge No. 139	IL	1950	initiation: \$50 Dues: \$10	initiation: \$750 Dues: \$150
Eureka Lodge No. 283	ON Canada	1955	initiation: \$100 Dues: \$10	initiation: \$1120 Dues: \$112

So, what happened? Masonic membership in the U.S. reached its peak nationally in 1959 at 4.1 million.³ Membership has since fallen off dramatically, owing to various reasons beyond the scope of this article. However, it appears that in the 1950-60s, Masonic lodges stopped increasing dues - or at least, the rate of increase slowed dramatically. As the macroeconomic and socio-political environment eventually improved, it seems that Masonic Lodges did not increase their fees to keep up with the cost of inflation. As a result, Freemasons find themselves today unable to support their lodges financially from dues payments. As a sidebar, it is also notable that Masons typically willed a portion of their estate to their Lodges which, unfortunately, we see much less of today.

In order for lodges to operate properly and fund meaningful programs for their members, they must insure that their initiation fees and annual dues are high enough to cover their costs so that their budget is balanced. It is striking that many members feel that raising dues is not an option, and then find themselves forced to cut costs by

severely limiting spending on building maintenances and cheapening food quality (if the lodge even serves food any longer), not to mention limiting Masonic education programs for their membership. As expenses continue to rise, simply due to an increased cost of living, the short-sighted maneuver of "cutting costs" becomes less and less effective. Do lodges, at some point, stop serving meals? Do we suspend needed maintenance on our buildings? Do we turn all our programs into fund raising events? In many cases, the answer is yes.

you are providing in your meetings is not the same quality as the food you would eat at home, then it shouldn't be served at your lodges.

Again, this is not a call to blindly increase dues, but to urge you to take the time to analyze your lodge budget, to discourage you from balancing it by simply cutting costs, and to direct your attention to the importance of creating an intrinsic value for your members that will make them want to maintain their membership. Furthermore, I ask you to imagine how proud you would feel, when you invite a prospective candidate to come to lodge to meet your brethren and partake in the dinner, if the food being offered is mediocre? What sort of reaction would you expect from the candidate or any other visitor, when the appearance and condition of your Lodge is unimpressive and unappealing? What message are you conveying when the attire of your members is inappropriate and unprofessional? Is the fellowship first class? Are we living up to the reputation (and the candidate's expectations) that Freemasonry is the most prestigious fraternity to ever exist, and that its members consist of the cream of the crop of our society? In short, do you really think you will ever have to worry again about membership retention, if all the answers to the above were not an issue?

If we view the Lodge as a financial investment and if the members are stakeholders - in essence shareholders - we should apply investment strategy to the problem. It is axiomatic that savvy investors tend to avoid investing in companies that try to increase profit by cutting costs. Instead, Wall Street looks to invest in companies that increase profits by growing revenues while creating value to shareholders. Masonic lodges are no different, and our respective Lodge budgets and balance sheets must be sound and solid for our fraternity to grow and prosper. We must invest in this Fraternity in order for future generations to enjoy the returns it has given us for 300 years.

NOTES

- 1 Data obtained from the Lodges themselves.
- 2 Labor Value and Inflation growth formulas used by measuringgrowth.com.
- 3 Masonic Service Association of North America.

Yatim, M.A. "Freemasonry and your Return on Investment." *Journal of The Masonic Society*, No. 26 (Fall 2014) 2223.

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DISTRICT NEWS

We want to hear from you! This section features news and events from Lodges across the state, so if your Lodge or District has any upcoming events or news to share, contact Parker Moore at pdmoore1@gmail.com with details. If you submitted an article or event but do not see it here, visit the Grand Lodge Facebook page at www.facebook.com/GLOFAL. We will update the page as often as possible, posting district news, past events, upcoming event information and photos that you submit. **Get involved today and submit to the Masonic Messenger and the Grand Lodge Facebook page!!**

A RARE HONOR: 70 YR. PIN AWARDED

Brother Earl Leon Stewart received a rare honor recently when he was awarded with his 70 year pin on July 28, 2015. He was born December 25, 1914 and will turn 101 at the end of this year. He was initiated an EA on May 11, 1945, passed to FC on June 15, 1945, and raised to a MM on July 13, 1945.

With our sincerest admiration and deepest respect, we congratulate you and thank you for your dedication to our fraternity!!



Left to right: Bobby Pitts, Earl Leon Stewart, Leo Scarbrough P.M.

SOCIAL SERVICE PLAN AT WORK



Work In Progress

By **TEDDY R. GROGAN JR., PGM**
GRAND SECRETARY

Brethren, the pictures show a before and after view of how the Charitable Outreach Social Service Plan can be a huge benefit to one of our Brothers in need. A member of Talladega Lodge No. 261 had suffered a stroke that left him confined to a



Completed Wheelchair Ramp

wheelchair. The VA Administration had furnished a ramp for the Brother, but he still had trouble getting to his mailbox. Talladega Lodge was able to provide the paved sidewalk, and now the Brother is able to get to his mailbox. The cost of the sidewalk was \$1550.00. With the \$1500.00 from the Social Service Plan, it only cost the Lodge \$50.00.

COOK-OFF FOR CHARITY



By **JERRY BURPEE, PM**
Lunar Lodge #918, Helion Lodge #1

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in unity" and that is what happened at Sausage-Fest 2015, a sausage cooking competition sponsored by Blue Pants Brewery on August 22. The Brewery elected to have Cahaba Shriner's Hospital Transportation Fund as their charity and allowed Lunar Lodge #918 of Madison, AL to participate as a Lodge fundraiser by stuffing sausages and selling People's Choice tickets at the event. Cook teams prepared sausages the day of the event and a panel of eighteen certified judges evaluated the entries based on appearance, taste, and texture. The cook teams then provided the public samples of their culinary skills in a Peoples' Choice competition. The event surpassed last year's inaugural event and exceeded this year's expectation.

from different Lodges to assist and support each other? Though Helion didn't win, they came in a respectful sixth place; but from their enthusiasm and attitude everyone knew that they were champions.

Cook Teams made donations to volunteers from Lunar Lodge to stuff their sausage. They say "You don't want to see sausage being made;" however it is entertaining to see Brethren crank out hundreds of links of sausage. Brother "Weedy" Weidenthal, only one of four Brew Masters in the great state of Alabama and the Brew Master at Blue Pants Brewery, instructed the craft on how to properly stuff seasoned ground pork into sausage casings. The judging was certified by Judgeology Research Institute (pronounced 'judge-ol-ogy' which is the study of judging). Judgeology Research Institute was founded by Brother Jerry Burpee.



At the event one cook team member requested a petition, and a week after the event one of the participants of the event approached a member of Lunar Lodge and said that he really appreciated what Masonry stood for, especially Lunar Lodge and their contributions to the community. He then proceeded to give a donation to Lunar Lodge.

Lessons Learned: Have fun, get involved within the community, participate in community events, assist other Lodges not for your benefit, but for their benefit, what comes around goes around, have fun.



One of the cook teams this year was some of the officers from Helion Lodge #1 of Huntsville, AL. They participated with the hopes of placing so that they could donate their winnings to the Lunar Lodge fundraising effort. Is it not like Brethren

SEMME'S LODGE #878 DONATES AR BOOKS

By **WILLIE GRAY**
(Image and excerpt taken from the 'Call News', Citronelle, AL)

Semmes Lodge has teamed up with the public charity Give-A-Book, for the second annual event in providing 100 Accelerated Reader library books

to Allen Town Elementary School. The books are part of the AR program that has been mandated by the Mobile County Public School System. "We, as a lodge, are extremely proud to have been able to do this for our local community as well as our local elementary schools"

said Owen Tanner (Master) with Semmes Lodge. "This is something that the lodge hopes will become an annual event. We are hoping that other organizations will also contribute to their local school library due to the lack of state funding for several years."



GRAND LODGE OF ALABAMA LIGHTS IT UP **BLUE** FOR AUTISM AWARENESS!



York Rite Metro Lodge

By **MIKE FELD**,
Education & Public Relations Committee

Lodges across Alabama took part in the April 2015 Light It Up Blue for World Autism Awareness Day. During this event, we learned that many brothers have friends and family that are affected by autism. Thanks to the lodges that hosted guest speakers, we also learned that there are as many types of autism as there are autistic people. Each one is a unique person with special talents and love.

The several Light It Up Blue photos that were taken are available on the Grand Lodge Facebook page. Special thanks to Brother Joel Bryant of the Internet Committee for making an Autism Awareness theme for the Grand Lodge website home page.



Rising Virtue Lodge

Our Most Worshipful Grand Master John Strickling received a special letter of thanks from Autism Speaks for promoting statewide support of World Autism Awareness Day. This letter is available to view on the Grand Lodge website.

What is World Autism Awareness Day? The United Nations General Assembly unanimously declared 2 April as World Autism Awareness Day to highlight the need to help improve the quality of life of children and adults, who are affected by autism, so they can lead full and meaningful lives.

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that manifests itself during the first three years of life. It results from a neurological disorder that affects the functioning of the brain,

mostly affecting children and adults in many countries irrespective of gender, race or socio-economic status. It is characterized by impairments in social interaction, problems with verbal and non-verbal communication and restricted, repetitive behavior, interests and activities.

The rate of autism in all regions of the world is high and it has a tremendous impact on children, their families, communities and societies.

A special thanks to the lodges that displayed the blue light bulbs in the lodge, held open events with special guest speakers, and volunteered and donated to local Autism support groups in their area.

Masonry made a strong impression of our ability to lead, serve, and show compassion and, in the words of our friend, Brother Ray Tanner, Past District Lecturer of District 2, "Do whatever you need, Worshipful."



Ashville Lodge

Participating Lodges:
Alexandria Lodge



Oak Grove Lodge

Andrew Jackson Lodge
Arab Lodge
Ashville Lodge
Attalla Lodge Coffeerville Lodge
Florence Lodge
George U Potter Lodge
Helion Lodge
Howard E Palms Lodge
Killen Lodge
Lillian Lodge
Mt Pinson Lodge
Northern Lodge
Oak Grove Lodge
Perdido Lodge
Rising Sun Lodge
Rising Virtue Lodge
Roanoke Lodge
Sawyer Lodge
Stephens Lodge
Winston Lodge
York Rite Metro Lodge

To see the rest of the images submitted by participating lodges, visit the Grand Lodge of Alabama Facebook page.

The next Autism Awareness Day will be April 2, 2016. For more information on Autism Awareness Day, visit:

<http://www.un.org/en/events/autismday>

FIRST EVER MULTI-STATE CHILD ID EVENT



By **MATTHEW B. STRICKLAND**,
Child ID Committee, Group 4

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Alabama held a child identification event on April 18, 2015 at Idle Hour Park in Phenix City, AL during the Gospel Jubilee. As part of their ongoing community outreach program, the area Masons partnered with the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Georgia to provide a free safety ID opportunity for parents and caregivers for a digital ID

of children, teenagers and others. This program is recognized as part of the Amber Alert Program in conjunction with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Masons from southeast Alabama and southwest Georgia worked together to prepare Child ID Kits for the children of this community.

In 2014, there were 466,949 children reported missing under the age of 18. Our efforts make a huge difference. Let not a river stand between the greater good that we can accomplish together. The coming together of Masons from the two states was monumental in our efforts to "dwell together in unity" and support of our common goal. Planning the event was no easy task. With the anticipation or over 200 kits being given out, the Most

Worshipful Grand Lodge of Alabama requested the assistance of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Georgia to work outside of their jurisdiction, to help provide man power and computers. After a day of friendship and comradery the event was a huge success. Not only was the Child ID successful but the parents were pleased with our combined efforts.



Many special thanks to Crawford Lodge #863 and Bro. Sid Cooley for

orchestrating the event. His valiant effort should not go unnoticed for the work he has done for this community and the fraternity. Also special thanks to Most Worshipful Grand Master of Alabama, John R. Strickling, Most Worshipful Grand Master of Georgia, Douglas W. McDonald, State Director - GACHIP, Bro. Harold Culpepper, Director - GACHIP - District 4, Bro. Darryl Moye.



DISTRICT NEWS

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 3, 2015

J. Collier Foster Lodge # 906 (Northport), Annual Eagle Wings Charity Motorcycle Ride. Contact: Greg Durr, 205- 292- 7305

October 24, 2015

Ashville Lodge #396, Boston Butt Sale (\$30 each)

October 31, 2015

Falkville Lodge #396, Cornerstone Laying, 10:00 AM.
Refreshments & Fellowship to follow.

CHILD ID EVENTS:

October 3, 2015

The Frog Festival (Sumiton, AL), 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Sponsor: Brooklin Lodge #704, Contact: Bruce Patterson

October 10, 2015

Rogersville Fall Festival/Car Show (Downtown), 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Sponsor: Rogersville Lodge #147, Contacts: Len Brown & Janna Whitley

Police and Patriots Car Show (Gurley, AL), 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Sponsor: Gurley Lodge #521, Contacts: Tobin Morgan, WM,
David Weaver, or Mike Feld

October 31, 2015 & November 1, 2015

Double Springs Public Safety Gun Show (Double Springs Municipal Building)
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM (Oct. 31) & 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM (Nov. 1)
Sponsor: Winston Lodge #877, Contacts: Len Brown & Danny Snoddy

CORNERSTONE LAYING & DEDICATION AT RISING SUN LODGE #29



Grand Lodge Officers attended the Cornerstone Laying & Dedication ceremony at Rising Sun Lodge #29 in Decatur on May 16, 2015. Cornerstones were also laid at Hatton Lodge #879 on May 2 and Albertville Lodge #430 on Saturday June 6.

BROTHER FRANK LEWIS ROTON



Our beloved Past Grand Treasurer, Brother Frank Lewis Roton, was born January 3, 1928 in Montgomery, Alabama.

Brother Roton received his Masonic Degrees in Oak Park Lodge No. 864 in Montgomery. He was initiated an Entered Apprentice on August 22, 1950, passed to the degree of Fellowcraft on September 5, 1950 and was raised to the degree of Master Mason September 12, 1950.

He served as Worshipful Master of Oak Park Lodge. On July 3, 1974 Frank demitted from Oak Park and became a charter member of

Capitol Lodge No. 923, where he was serving as the Lodge Secretary.

Brother Roton was an active, longtime leader and member of many Masonic affiliated organizations. He was a pillar of support and served his Grand Lodge continuously throughout his Masonic career. He served as Grand Treasurer from December 1981 to September 2001. He received his 50 yr pin at the Grand Lodge session in 2000 and his 60 yr pin at the Grand Lodge session in 2010. He departed this Earthly Lodge for that Glorious Celestial Lodge above on September 4, 2015.

He combined energy and zeal with judgment, common sense, and a great knowledge of Masonry. He was a beloved and faithful servant of our Gentile Craft. His absence will create a void in the Fraternity of Masons that cannot be filled and he will be greatly missed by all.

Friend and Brother, we bid thee a last, a long farewell. Thou art at rest from thy Labors: may it be in peace!

GRAND LODGE EVENT SCHEDULE

By TEDDY R. GROGAN JR., PGM, GRAND SECRETARY

Brethren, before I give you the information about the upcoming Grand Lodge Session, I would like to tell you about a special project that will begin in September. The Grand Lodge has contracted with Harris Connect to produce a hardbound coffee table book which will include a biographical section on every Alabama Mason. Harris Connect will be sending out postcards to every member asking for the member to contact them if you are interested in purchasing a copy. If you do not want your name in the book, please contact Grand Lodge and let us know.

The biographical section will contain each member's name, highest Masonic degree and year conferred, highest Masonic honor received, highest Masonic office held, and up to three Masonic affiliations. These will be provided by you. There will also be a Member Showcase Section where you will be able to provide a photo and/or essay describing your Masonic experience. The Grand Lodge will receive a commission for each book sold.

The annual meeting of the Grand Lodge is coming up November 10-11, 2015 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 8th. 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 08

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

Monday, November 09

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

Tuesday, November 10

- 8:00 AM Introduction of Distinguished Guests
- 9:00 AM Opening of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of F. & A.M. of Alabama

- First Session Business
- Lunch
- Second Session Business

- 5:00 PM From Labor to Refreshment for the day

Wednesday, November 11

- 8:00 AM From Refreshment to Labor
- Third Session Business
- Election of Officers
- Installation of Officers
- Closing of the 2015 Grand Lodge Annual Communication



WE HAVE A NEW MASONIC TAG!!

The new tags will be available for purchase beginning in January 2016

Show your pride in the fraternity and purchase a Masonic Tag at your next renewal date.

"Taking Care of Our Own" - Social Services Program

Financial assistance is available to our Brethren and Widows who are in need!!! Contact the Grand Lodge for more information on the program or visit the website to download program details:

www.alafreemasonry.org/committees/coprog