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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!
SEND IN YOUR PHOTOS, NEWS
AND EVENTS TO PUBLISH IN THE
NEXT ISSUE OF THE MESSENGER!
DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 1ST

A MESSAGE FROM THE GRAND MASTER

BY VAN TIDWELL, MW GRAND MASTER

First, allow me to express my gratitude to each of my brethren for allowing me to serve as your Grand Master for the 2019 year. Thus far it has been a journey of enjoyment for my family and I to be allowed to represent our Great Fraternity within and outside of the State of Alabama. The experience has been rewarding, but humbling at the same time. Each of you know this, each time I make a decision and represent our Grand Jurisdiction of Alabama, it is keeping the Fraternity and its members best interest in mind.

As a follow up of the previous article that I wrote in the fall of 2018, I issued a challenge for the brethren to learn the Masonic Funeral Rites (as written in the Alabama Ritual Booklet). As a reward for doing so, I offered a choice of my Grand Master's tie or a Grand Master's knife and possibly both if you also learned the prayer. I asked everyone who wished to participate to contact me with your intentions of doing so, so that I could set aside these items for you. I have

only had about 6 people contact me about this challenge, but I have had others that have said they are working on it without giving me there names. If you are accepting this challenge, please contact me with your names so that I can set aside these items for you. I am about to run out of these and need to cover everyone if possible.

Brethren, I ask each of the lodges to do me a favor. My request is for each lodge to participate in at least one of the Charitable Outreach programs that the Grand Lodge has to offer. There are 5 programs that the lodges can currently apply for to help and promote Masonry to a Worthy Brother, their families and the communities in our State. These programs need to be exhausted each year by the lodges. We all have members and their families that could benefit from these programs. Brethren, keep in mind, that it is our responsibility and obligation to assist these worthy individuals when called upon. Also, ask

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GRAND LODGE OF F. & A. M. OF ALABAMA
P.O. Box 1070
MILLBROOK, AL 36054
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

GRAND LODGE OF ALABAMA CHARITABLE OUTREACH PROGRAMS

The Grand Lodge offers a number of Charitable Programs designed to provide financial assistance for Lodges and persons who apply and meet the qualifications as outlined by the requirements of the specific program. A basic description of the Programs available this year, is provided below. **Some programs have specific requirements that must be met for the applicants to be considered.** This information along with the all forms necessary to apply for these programs, can be found on the Grand Lodge website "Charitable Outreach Programs" page at www.alafreeMasonry.org/committees/coprog/

MASONIC SCHOLARSHIP

The purpose for the Alabama Masonic Scholarship Program is to provide financial assistance to university, college, or technical school students. Preference will be given, but not limited, to applicants who have a father, stepfather, brother, uncle, grandfather, or step-grandfather who is, or was at the time of his death, a Master Mason in good standing in an Alabama Masonic Lodge.

Awards scholarships to eligible applicants for up to \$1000. The same individual cannot receive this grant in conjunction with Scholarship Matching Fund plan.

SCHOLARSHIP MATCHING FUND PLAN

The purpose for this part of the Charitable Outreach Program is to provide supplemental financial assistance to Lodges under the jurisdiction of this Grand Lodge to encourage them to award a scholarship to a deserving student in their community. Local Lodges can apply for up to \$500 in matching funds on a first-come first-funded basis. Grants will not be approved to anyone receiving a COC Scholarship that year.

Matching Scholarship grants to a lodge will be for up to maximum of \$1,000 for the year. The maximum amount of money paid out per application cannot exceed \$500 and is subject to the availability of funds.

MATCHING RELIEF FUND

The purpose for the Matching Relief Funds Plan is to provide supplemental financial support to Lodges under the jurisdiction of this Grand Lodge who undertakes to render monetary assistance to worthy, specifically named individuals, families, or group of people who reside within the jurisdiction of the Lodge submitting an application.

Lodge may make more than one application for Matching Relief Funds but cannot receive more than \$1,000 from this plan each Masonic year

YOUTH SPORTS MATCHING SPONSORSHIP PLAN

The purpose for the Youth Sports Matching Sponsorship Plan is to provide supplemental financial assistance to Lodges under the jurisdiction of this Grand Lodge to encourage them to support community youth programs such as baseball, soccer, football, etc. Grants can be used for sponsorship of the team, team tournaments, or playoffs and for sponsor's signs.

Local Lodges can apply for one half of the sponsorship and tournament fee not to exceed \$500 in matching funds on a first-come, first-funded basis. Lodges can apply for one grant per year subject to the availability of funds.

GRAND MASTER'S EMERGENCY FUND

The Emergency Fund is expended under the direction of the Grand Master for the relief of distressed worthy Master Masons, their wives, widows, children and other dependent relatives who reside in their households. The Mason upon whose membership the claim is based **must** be or have been at the time of death and for four years prior thereto, a member in good standing in a subordinate Lodge of the Grand Lodge.

Lodge must submit, as their portion of the grant, a check for one third of the amount requested from the Grand Lodge but not more than \$250. The Grand Master may contribute up to three times the amount provided by the Lodge but not more than \$750.

SOCIAL SERVICES

The purpose of this plan is to assist our aging members and/or their dependents. It will allow local Lodges to identify and apply for grant (non-matching) funds to assist in providing devices or structures to allow beneficiaries to remain in their homes. This plan also assists our aging members and/or their dependents with monetary needs such as medical, prescription, utility bills, or other needs that have placed our members in financial straits.

Grant funds will be written for the amount requested by the Lodge but not exceeding \$1,500 total per Lodge on a first-come, first-funded basis. No one individual may receive Grants totaling more than \$1,500 maximum from the Social Services Plan per Grand Lodge year.

EIGHT STEPS TO EXCELLENCE: THE OBSERVANT LODGE

BY ANDREW HAMMER, PM
ALEXANDRIA-WASHINGTON #22

The growing popularity of the idea of 'observant' Masonry has found brethren in all corners of the Craft asking the question of what exactly an observant Lodge is, and how they might go about increasing Masonic observance in their own Lodges. This document offers eight basic measures which, if observed, should result in the development of an observant Lodge. Each of these steps is either entirely consistent with Anderson's Constitutions of the Free-Masons [the foundational document of the Premier Grand Lodge, published in 1723 and hereafter simply referred to as the Book of Constitutions], or historical Masonic practice in North America, or both. Nothing proposed in them is alien to our Grand Lodges or their respective histories. The success or failure of these steps is entirely up to the brethren of each Lodge.

First, however, it might be helpful to offer an answer to the primary question: what exactly does one mean by 'observant'? Simply put, observant Masonry means observing the intent of the founders of speculative Masonry. That intent was not to build a mere social club or service organization. While the Craft, like any other human organization, has always been burdened by men in its ranks who subverted the purposes of the fraternity to a more mundane or profane enterprise, that was never the intent of the institution.

That intent was to build an institution that calls men to their highest level of social being, in a state of dignity and decorum, which could serve as a place for serious, mindful discourse on the lessons and meaning of life, and search for the better development of oneself. That intent means building a space where such an experience can be created, and carrying ourselves in a manner that is consistent with our highest ideals and noblest behaviors.

Observant Masons believe that by observing what the history of our Craft tells us in regard

to that intent, we will find the optimal Masonic experience. We say observant, and speak of observance, because we seek to observe the blueprints of that intent to the best of our knowledge and ability. Even more simply, we want to do things right, and we don't want to settle for less. We want to pursue excellence in all aspects of our Masonic labor.

The eight steps offered here have proven to be successful in greatly increasing the experience of Freemasonry for brethren new and old alike. They serve as a quality control system for the operation of any Lodge, and when followed, result in a group of men who, regardless of the number of members in their Lodge, or the external nature of their temple, can find a sense of accomplishment and pride in what they have done, and who they have become. That too, is consistent with the intent of our founders.

Guarding the West Gate

This point is first among these, because we are nothing more or less than who we let in to our fraternity. Not every man should be a Mason, and not every man who should be a Mason belongs in just any Lodge. The brethren have a right and responsibility to determine the standards for their own Lodge, and to ask incisive questions of those men who knock on their door. Lodges should take time to first get to know the men who knock at their doors, and not simply sign any petition just because a man has an interest. Brothers who sign a petition for a man need to know who they are signing for, and more important, need to be willing to serve as his mentor. This is a fundamental point of responsibility for all brethren. Do not ask a brother in your Lodge to do the job of mentoring for you. If you are not willing to give that petitioner your time, how can you ask your Lodge to give theirs?

[SEE 'EIGHT STEPS' ON PAGE 4](#)

GRAND MASTER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

your lodges to participate in the Child ID program within your communities. This program has been energized with a team of brethren to supply knowledge, information and supplies to the lodges for a successful and enjoyable experience for the youth and elderly of our communities. Please visit the website (www.alafreemasonry.org) for information on each of these programs. You can also contact representatives from your respective Groups or contact me and I will be more than glad to assist.

In closing Brethren, one thing I always try to impress upon a newly made Master Mason, is the importance of the symbolic meaning of wearing

the white leather apron, the Badge of a Mason. In the Apron presentation in the Entered Apprentice Degree, it is explained that it is a symbol of "purity of life and rectitude of conduct," a never ending argument for nobler deeds, for higher thoughts, for purer actions. Brethren, many times we attend lodge and put on our aprons. When lodge is over, we remove it and put it back on the rack or table. I say to you this; we need to wear our aprons in our everyday lives. When we wake up in the morning, put it on (symbolically) and when we lay down to rest, remove it. Brethren, if we always wear our aprons in our everyday lives it will make us not only better Masons, but also better men.

HOW DO YOU DEFINE BROTHERHOOD?

BY AARON IRONS, GRAND ORATOR

For your consideration, the following is a list of definitions for the word "BROTHERHOOD" as depicted by different sources.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary:

- Feelings of friendship, support, and understanding between people.
- A group of people who are engaged in the same business or have similar interest.
- A group or organization of people who have the same interests, jobs, etc.
- The quality or state of being brothers.
- An association for a particular purpose.
- The whole body of persons engaged in a business or profession.

The Cambridge Dictionary:

- A feeling of shared interests and support among men, or more generally, among all humans.
- The membership of an organization of men, or the organization itself.

The Collins English Dictionary:

- The affection and loyalty that you feel for people who you have something in common with.
- An organization whose members all have the same beliefs, or the same job or profession.

The Urban Dictionary:

- A friendship unlike any other, out of respect and love, will always have each others backs.
- A group of close friends that will do anything for each other not matter what time of day or night it is and no matter how long it is since they have seen each other.

Your Dictionary.com:

- A relationship between brothers or close friends, or is a feeling of kinship with other people.
- A belief in or feeling of unity and cooperation among men or among all people.

Dictionary.com:

- The belief that all people should act with warmth and equality toward one another, regardless of differences in nationality, creed, ethnicity, etc.

The real definition is what it means to you..... and your fellow brothers.

EIGHT STEPS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Being Proficient in Masonic Ritual and Law

Proficiency is an essential function of any observant Lodge, because we must know both what we are doing, and why, if we seek to uphold the highest standards of our respective Grand Lodges. It does no good to claim the mantle of excellence if your Lodge is not well-versed in the ritual and the Masonic law of your jurisdiction. Masonry is a thing of order, not anarchy. If you wish to keep that order, as well as harmony between your Lodge and the Grand Lodge, you must learn and follow the rules that each brother has obligated himself to observe. An observant Lodge is not a renegade Lodge. It seeks to be an exemplary one.

A Commitment to Advance Brethren Through the Degrees by Mutual and Genuine Effort

Progress in the degrees requires a mutual commitment of time and effort from candidate and mentor alike. Some form of proficiency, be it the catechisms, or papers delivered before the Lodge, should be required before allowing any brother to advance. Otherwise the brother learns that his advancement has no measurable value, other than his mere presence. Certainly not every man can do memory work, and not every man is a writer. But if he is not willing to even attempt to do either, then perhaps he should simply not be a Mason to begin with. The same goes for the mentor, who, though he may be experienced, must not take the easy way out when it comes to the knowledge he has pledged to impart to his apprentice.

The Selection and Advancement of Officers Should be by Merit Alone

This step, while admittedly difficult for some, is firmly grounded in the Book of Constitutions, without question. Masonry has never intended the adoption of a progressive line. A progressive line should only function when the next man down has the full faith and trust of his fellows that he will rule and govern his Lodge properly, because he has properly learned the requirements of his office. Of course, human nature is what it is, and mistakes can always happen, but they can be mitigated if such a standard is put in place, because no one advances until and unless they are ready to do so. The only way to justify a progressive line is if every officer is carrying his weight to the extent of his office, while at the same time preparing himself diligently to advance to the next one. Lodges ignore this step at their own risk.

Dressing Your Best for Lodge

How one appears before the Lodge is a sign of how much you value both the brethren and the Craft. In most lodges in the world, a dark suit and tie is the minimum required to gain admittance. It's what the brethren expect from each other in an observant Lodge, and it certainly adds to

the notion that a Masonic meeting is not just another night out, but a special event, worthy of being considered as special as each of us should believe Masonry to be. Additionally, dignity expressed outwardly through dress, serves as a superstructure, helping to enhance that dignity that can only be created from within.

A Lodge Must Offer Quality Assemblies and Be Willing to Pay For Them

The dues of a Lodge should be set at a level which allows the Lodge to not only support and sustain itself, but enjoy a quality of experience which tells the brethren that their assemblies are opportunities to rise above the ordinary. Good meals, served at proper festive boards, are essential. The festive board conveys the sense of conviviality that helps build true brotherhood, and it is historically established in the Craft as not merely a simple dinner, but quite honestly the second half of a Lodge meeting. An observant Lodge cannot forgo it.

A Lodge must decide that Masonry is a thing of value, and properly determine that value in such a way that it allows the Lodge to work and assemble in a manner that clearly establishes that value. Our dining and social events should reflect the worth we place on ourselves. Excess is not the objective; quality is. The problem is that so many of us have forgotten what quality is to the extent that we consider any expenditure on ourselves to be pretentious. But if Masons are to be men of inner distinction, then we are fully justified in treating ourselves to the best we can afford in life. We cannot expect less from the Craft or ourselves.

The Return of a Sense of Awe to Our Ceremonies

We should bring back those things that once were found in our lodges, and which helped create a very unique, contemplative atmosphere for both the candidate and the Lodge. Among these are the use of music, the manipulation of light and darkness, the Chamber of Reflection, and the closing charge which forms what is known as the Chain of Union. Consider that the candidate preparation room is not and was never meant to be a mere dressing room. Consider that the notion of a 'sacred band of brothers' might allude to a physical manifestation of that sacredness. Consider that music has always been a part of our ceremonies, and that the Book of

Constitutions ends with a collection of songs. All these things are part of who we are; they are not innovations from later jurisdictions or borrowings from European Masonry. Even the use of incense is ritually alluded to in early exposures of the Craft. The idea is to stimulate and manage the sensory experience of the brethren, in the endeavor to create the sense of uniqueness one expects from a Masonic experience. Here again, there is nothing strange about employing the senses in a Masonic meeting. Our rituals teach the importance of each of those senses extensively; to not employ them in our meetings is the greater neglect and error. To refuse the restoration of awe to our rituals is to refuse to acknowledge our own heritage and history, and to deny the proper place and application of the pillar of Beauty to the Lodge.

Masonic Education at Every Meeting

The very origin of Freemasonry itself is in education. Whether it be the practical education in stone-cutting found in the operative craft of masonry, or the search for inner knowledge and science presented to us by the speculative Craft, the foundation of the art is inexorably based in teaching and learning. Without it, there is simply no Freemasonry taking place in a Lodge. Therefore, every meeting of the Lodge should offer some amount of Masonic education, be it through the degrees, or through presentations on the various lessons of the Craft. Even a ten-minute talk focused on the symbolic meaning of a single working tool is far better than a meeting where nothing but donations, dinners, and dues are on the agenda. An observant Lodge values the educational function of Freemasonry in its full bloom; the observant Mason holds the fraternity accountable to its promise to him to bestow light, and he means to receive it from the Craft in every sense: spiritual, literal, and intellectual. Numerous monitors and manuals from our Grand Lodges, spanning over at least the last two centuries, make plain the injunction to all Masons to seek knowledge. That same injunction extends by natural progression to each Lodge, and as a result, a Lodge without Masonic education cannot be an observant Lodge, and is arguably not any kind of Lodge at all. The search for more light is at the heart of Masonry. Observance is impossible without it.

THE MASONIC MESSENGER

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Stay up to date on all Grand Lodge and District news by sending changes of address and membership status to your Lodge Secretary and becoming an E-M@son, just visit: www.alafreeMasonry.org/eMasons



REAL FAMILY IS THE PEOPLE WHO STAND BESIDE YOU

BY BRO. BOB HICKMAN

The formal definition of brotherhood describes a relationship between brothers or close friends, or as a man's feelings of kinship with other people. When two men have a close and loyal friendship, it is an example of being brothers.

Those of us who sit in our lodges hear the word "brother" frequently. Our founding ancestors realized the importance of the lifestyle of brotherhood and knew if men did not consider themselves brothers they would not be close to one another. And, men who are not close to one another will have little or no interest in helping with their brother member's welfare. If we cannot contribute to our needy brothers and their families what is our real meaning? Therefore, the concept of brotherhood is and has always been critical to our fraternity. Without the closeness of brotherhood we might as well be a group who simply drink coffee together.

Our lodges today continue to use the word "brother" because it is a formal part of our ritual.

We oftentimes refer to others as "brother" when we speak and shake hands. Too often we then walk away and never speak to our members until the next time we attend a meeting. Further still, we have brothers we never see or know anything about. We don't know about our brother's widows and their orphans.

Within our ritual and the teachings of our fraternity we are committed to provide brothers and their widows and orphans aid and assistance. If we do not know the circumstances of their lives, the conditions of their families or recognize their faces, then how can we live up to the standards of our obligation?

Masonry was not established as a social organization without membership commitments. It was established as a fraternity with members who were meant to be "brothers" to all members. If we do not have frequent and meaningful sincere contact with our brothers, then how can we ever live up to our obligation?

BROTHER ROY V. "DICK" BELCHER BY JON MICHAEL TAYLOR, DGM A CORNERSTONE OF FREEMASONRY IN JEFFERSON COUNTY



From Left: Right Worshipful Brother Mike Taylor, Brother Dick Belcher, and Most Worshipful Brother Van Tidwell

On Sunday, February 23, 2019, the Brethren of Group 3, District 19 gathered together at Gardendale Lodge #907 to recognize, honor, and celebrate Brother Roy V. "Dick" Belcher on his 93rd birthday. Bro. Dick is beloved and admired throughout District 19, Jefferson County, Group 3, and the State of Alabama for his dedication and commitment to the Masonic Fraternity. Throughout his Masonic career, he has helped numerous lodges across the state with degree work, installation of officers, and 50 year pin presentations. He served as District Lecturer for District 19 for over twenty years and has taught the Masonic Ritual to hundreds of brethren. He has been a prominent and influential Master Mason in Jefferson County for over sixty years.

Bro. Belcher was initiated in North Birmingham Masonic Lodge #591 on July 21, 1952. He was passed to the degree of Fellowcraft on August 28, 1952 and Raised to the Sublime Degree

of Master Mason on October 4, 1952. He was examined for his Grand Lodge Certificate of Proficiency, which he was awarded on October 18, 1957. He served as Worshipful Master of North Birmingham Lodge #591 in 1960-1961. He was presented the Alabama Grand Lodge Award of Gold in recognition of his 50 years of faithful service to Masonic fraternity on October 4, 2002. He served as a District Lecturer for the Grand Lodge of Alabama in different Masonic Districts for over forty years and in November, 2005, he was appointed to serve as the Right Worshipful Grand Marshall by Most Worshipful Bro. Frank Little.

I can personally attest to Bro. Belcher's commitment to the Craft. While serving as an officer and eventually Worshipful Master of Dolcito Lodge #596 in the 1990s, I called upon him often for his knowledge of the Ritual and his experience in the Fraternity. He has conducted many Masonic Funerals for our lodge and was always present for Master Mason degrees, presiding in the East for the second section of most of them. As a young Mason attempting to learn the Adopted Work, he taught me much of the ritual but the most important lesson he taught me was not the specific verbiage or Lines of March, but how to actually conduct a degree. I can remember vividly the night he told me to slow down and not "repeat" the verbiage but "confer" the degree. What he meant was to not simply recite the adopted words but to convey the

SEE 'BELCHER' ON PAGE 7

DISTRICT NEWS & EVENTS

PREVENTION & PUBLIC SAFETY

BY GLEN THOMAS, ATHELSTAN #369

Mobile Police Officer Sean Tudor was killed on January 20, 2019 by a 19 year old to whom officer Tudor was serving a warrant. The police determined that the weapon used to commit the murder was a stolen weapon.

Mobile County Sheriff Sam Cochran and Mobile Police Chief Lawrence Battiste have started a public awareness campaign.

Chief Battiste stated that over 1,200 firearms were stolen in 2018. Sheriff Cochran stated that a large number of weapons making their way to the Black Market were stolen out of vehicles that were not locked. The Chief and the Sheriff are looking to reduce the number of these weapons that are falling into criminals' hands by getting the public to secure their vehicles and conceal any firearms if they are left in the vehicle.

Chief Battiste also stated that over 1,400 weapons had been recovered during 2018. Some of these weapons were stolen in a previous year. Of these weapons, only 92 were returned to their owners. The reason for this is that when the owners reported the weapons stolen, they were unable to provide a serial number for the weapon. A lot of these weapons are either sold back to the manufacturer or destroyed.

I wanted to make the brethren of the Grand Lodge of Alabama aware of this situation along with a couple of recommendations.

First, make sure you secure your vehicle when you leave it. Most criminals are looking for an easy target for theft. If you need to leave your firearms in your vehicle, be sure to conceal them. If they are visible, it makes for a more tempting target to the thieves.

Second, be sure to document your firearms by photographing them and recording the serial numbers. Store this information in a separate place from the firearms to prevent it becoming lost at the same time as the weapons. In the event that the firearms are stolen, it will allow the police to return them to you if they are recovered.

Brethren, let's take a few minutes to do some common sense things that will prevent more firearms from falling into the hands of the criminals and make it harder for law enforcement officials to do their very important job of keeping the public safe.

A STATE DIVIDED, BROTHERS UNITED

BY DANIEL ROBINSON, PM
TWIN CITY #76 & NOTALSULGA #119

On November 24th 2018, just hours before the kickoff of the Iron bowl, I stood on the steps of Bryant-Denny Stadium in Tuscaloosa chanting, "USA, USA, USA!!" While this may not seem to be a big deal to most people, to the student veterans of Auburn University and the University of Alabama, it was. Both student veterans associations had just completed Operation Iron Ruck, a 150 mile road march from Jordan-Hare Stadium in Auburn, to Bryant-Denny Stadium. You read that correctly, 150 miles.



Student Veterans from Auburn University and the University of Alabama who participated in Operation Iron Ruck

In the bright morning hours of Wednesday, November 21st, both universities met on the grass of Pat Dye Field to receive words of encouragement and participate in interviews from numerous media outlets. Why the 150-mile road march? Operation Iron Ruck was to serve one goal: raise awareness for the 22 veterans that commit suicide every day. Mission 22, which is a non-profit organization, serves on the front lines of raising awareness to the public for those veterans that succumb to their own personal battles every day.

Like most veterans, I am proud of my service to my country. I served in the United States Army as an Infantryman from August 2004 to March 2009. During that time, I deployed twice to Baghdad, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Even after being out of the Army for 10

years, I still have vivid memories of my service and friendships that will last a lifetime.

Participating in Operation Iron Ruck was no easy task. Long movements with little to no sleep can really take a toll on the body, especially the mental aspect. I, however, did this road march for a dual cause: raise awareness for Mission 22, and for my Masonic Brothers. Veterans have a tradition of carrying either the National Flag, or their respective branches colors, during events like these. I chose to carry a 3x5 Masonic flag, emblazoned with the Square and Compasses. I carried this flag for all veterans, and for all of my Masonic Brothers wherever dispersed. I received questions from veterans along the way. Most asked what the flag meant, and upon learning what it was, the normal questions about secrets and treasure followed. It was all in good fun.



To me, the highlight of this trip was when we finally made it to Tuscaloosa. After receiving a police escort to the stadium, I had the privilege of meeting up with life-long Alabama fan, and current Right Worshipful Senior Grand Warden Tommy Morrow for a photo opportunity (pictured above). He expressed how proud he was, and how the fraternity was proud to have me raise awareness for such a great cause. Our state may be divided in terms of college football, but under the banner of Freemasonry our state is united under the Brotherhood of man, and the Fatherhood of God.

MCANNALLY 60 YEAR PIN

BY BRUCE PATTERSON, BROOKLIN LODGE #704



Brother McAnnally receives his 60-year pin from his son, Brother Raymond McAnnally of Brooklin Lodge.

Brother Miles McAnnally, 85, received his 60-year pin at Brooklin Lodge #704 in Dora on Dec 3 at the lodge's Regular Communication. Brother McAnnally was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason on Dec 2, 1958. He is a plural member at Brooklin Lodge and Milton H. Fies Lodge #722 in Mulga.

Brother McAnnally is still very active in Masonry and rarely misses a meeting at Brooklin Lodge where he regularly fills in for absent officers and helps coach newer brothers. He still participates in degree work and also travels extensively to other lodges and participates in their work as well.

PENNIES PROGRAM

BY STAN WATSON, SR., PENNIES PROG. CHAIRMAN

Brethren, it is my distinct privilege and pleasure to serve our Most Worshipful Grand Master Bro. Van Tidwell. I sit in our home lodge together and I have observed Van since way before he was involved in Masonry. I have known his family all of his life. I say all of this to say, he truly cares about Masonic outreach. We pride ourselves on the tenets of the order; friendship, morality and brotherly love. If this be true and it certainly is, why do we balk at helping those associated with the Masonic fraternity?

The Pennies Program is an outreach program and a symbol of love for our brethren who are in need of help and we have a beautiful way to demonstrate it. How can we do this? The answer is simple, give a penny a day (\$3.65 per year). I encourage each of you to do more; I propose that each of us give \$5.00. We can certainly understand how this would add up as there are about 22,000 Master Masons in the State.

Outreach to Master Masons and their widows is something that we vowed and attested we would do when we entered Masonry. That has not and will not change, but it is up to each of us to carry out our duties and responsibilities. Sometimes we tend to have a memory lapse. While it is wonderful and helpful to those whom we give, it is more of a blessing to those who give. Remember the Bible says; "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Let us all be 100% and if we can give more that would be awesome!

MT. RUSHMORE



Recently, back in February, the Corporate Board along with the Grand Secretary and their wives attended the North America Grand Master's Conference in Rapid City, South Dakota. In between meetings, everyone had the opportunity to visit historical and monumental sites. The picture above is a visit to Mount Rushmore and we also got to see the progress of the Crazy Horse Monument, which is a "site to behold". The winter weather was indescribable, but the fellowship with each other and the sites were a warm and everlasting image.

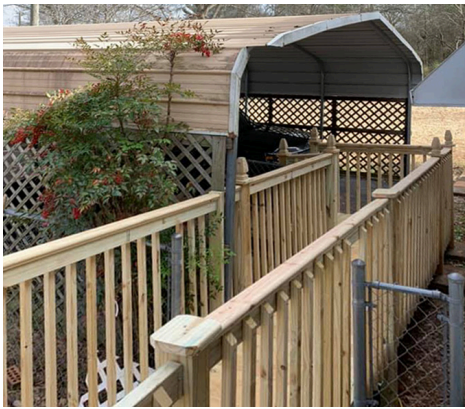
BROTHER 'BUD' 63 YEAR MASON AT 101



Brethren, on November 27th, at my home lodge (Falkville #396), we had the fortunate occasion to celebrate a Brother's birthday. While this is nothing out of the ordinary for most

lodges, this birthday was of particular interest to us because Brother Thomas "Bud" Hill turned 101 years old. Bud also happens to be my great-great uncle and is a 63 year mason. He still travels regularly and has sat in over 150 lodges in Alabama, and is also still an active deacon at his church. Below is a link to an interview I did with Uncle Bud earlier this year that includes him talking about his life during the early days and also his time as a merchant Marine during WW2 and his experiences at the D-Day invasion.
<https://youtu.be/y7qsOT8oTOI>

SOCIAL SERVICES PLAN AT WORK BY BRO. DONNY CANADA



With funding from the Grand Lodge Social Services program, the help of my brothers Ronny and Jeff Canada and my Masonic Brothers from Eastaboga Lodge #155, this handicap ramp (left) was constructed for my parents Blackie and Louise Canada. It is just a small token for the admiration, love, and respect we have for the elderly members and to see that they can receive a better quality of life. A special thanks to the Grand Lodge of Alabama for providing us with the social services funding and to my Brothers at Eastaboga Lodge #155 (Ray McBurnett and Daniel Carter) for their help and support.

SHADES VALLEY LODGE № 829



Over the years, Shades Valley Lodge 829 has been blessed with presenting many fine men with their Grand Lodge Awards of Gold. This past September, within a one week period, we presented Brother Fred Kusta with his 75 year pin and Brother James Keeton with his 70 year pin.

Left Picture: Brother Keeton with his daughter and wife.

Right Picture (from Left): Lenix Kusta (son), Fred Kusta, Ray Hogan, Morton Stern and David Bryant

RAY ROOKER NIGHT



On February 21, Locust Fork #481 hosted our second annual Bro. Ray Rooker Night. Bro. Ray's choice of attire was most always overalls, although he didn't care what you wore to lodge just as long as you were attending. So, each year on the third Thursday of February, we choose to honor the memory of our beloved friend and brother by wearing overalls.

BELCHER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

meaning of those words to the candidate in such a manner that it will leave a lasting impression on him and hopefully instill in him the importance of the degree which he was then taking. As I have progressed in Masonry over the years, I never forgot this most important lesson and I always strive to live up to the wise counsel Bro. Belcher shared with me.

Bro. Belcher and the Brethren of District 19 were honored to have our Most Worshipful Grand Master Bro. Van Tidwell, present for the celebration at Gardendale Lodge. Most Worshipful Bro. Tidwell shared his personal experiences with Bro. Belcher including how much of an influence Bro. Dick had been on him when he was a young Mason attending conferences in Jefferson County. As a token of his sincere appreciation of Bro. Dick's friendship

AMAZONSMILE

BY TEDDY GROGAN, PGM

A while back a Brother contacted us and told us he had been using the AmazonSmile website to do his shopping and had entered the Alabama Masonic Home as his selected non-profit.

How this program works is we can register with Amazon as a non-profit, and then people can shop through the AmazonSmile program as opposed to using the normal Amazon website. All the pricing and deals are the same as the normal Amazon, the only difference is that a portion of the sales will be donated from Amazon to our non-profit.

There is currently \$30.24 pending for us to receive after we complete the registration process. If everyone would use AmazonSmile and select the Alabama Masonic Home as their designated non-profit, we could see a huge benefit to our Charitable Endowment at no cost to our members.

All you have to do is sign into your Amazon account and do the following: Click on 'Account & Lists.' Under 'Your Lists' click 'AmazonSmile Charity Lists.' Under 'Or pick your own charitable donation,' click 'Search' and type in 'Alabama Masonic Home.' You will see Alabama Masonic Home, Millbrook, AL. Click on it. When you go back to do some shopping you will follow the same path as above, and when you get to the AmazonSmile Charity List, all you will need to do is click it. You can also type in 'smile.amazon.com' and sign in to your Amazon account through there. Please encourage your family to use this also.

What do you guys think? This would be a no cost process for us, and if people choose to use it, we get free money via direct deposit from Amazon's non-profit charity system.

and brotherly Love, Most Worshipful Bro. Van presented Bro. Belcher with one of his commemorative Grand Master's knives.

I want to personally express my sincere appreciation to Bro. Paul Thomas and all of the Brethren of Gardendale Lodge #907 for organizing the event for Bro. Belcher. Many times we unintentionally take for granted the dedicated men who serve our great fraternity daily. It is because of men like Bro. Dick Belcher that Freemasonry continues to thrive in our District. He has always answered the call when a lodge or group of brethren requested his assistance and as attested above, he has been a direct positive influence on Most Worshipful Bro. Tidwell and myself. Bro. Dick Belcher is most deserving of the honor which we have conferred because he has always been a true and faithful Bro. among us.

DISTRICT NEWS & EVENTS

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! EMAIL SUBMISSIONS FOR THE AUTUMN ISSUE OF THE MASONIC MESSENGER BY SEPT. 1ST.

If your Lodge has any events or news to share, contact the Grand Lodge or the Editor (jmsfineart@gmail.com) with details with details. Check out the Grand Lodge Facebook page for more news and events at www.facebook.com/GLofAL. Get involved today! Submit to the Masonic Messenger and the Grand Lodge Facebook page!!

RENAISSANCE No 933



The Officers and members of Renaissance Lodge #933 are proud to welcome their newest member, Brother Andrew B. Hickman, who was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason on Wednesday, March 13, 2019 by the Officers and Members with the assistance of Most Worshipful Grand Master Van Tidwell. Brother Andrew is the first Master Mason Raised in Renaissance Lodge #933.

ENDEAVOR DAY LODGE No 934



For only the second time in the last thirty years, a new Lodge has been constituted in our Grand Jurisdiction. On February 2, 2019, the Grand Lodge officers convened at Solar Lodge No. 914 in Huntsville to constitute Endeavor Day Lodge No. 934 into a regular Lodge. Endeavor day Lodge is the only daylight Lodge in our jurisdiction. The meeting days and times are the first and third Mondays of each month at 10:00 AM. Twenty-eight charter members from various Lodges in the Huntsville area came together to form this new Lodge. The day time meetings give those brothers who either no longer drive at night, or work a second shift job, the opportunity to still attend a Lodge meeting. Other States have had daylight Lodges, but Endeavor Day Lodge is our first. The picture shows the charter members along with the Grand Lodge officers.

FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND SECRETARY

BY TEDDY GROGAN, PGM

Brethren, first I want to give you an update on the new Grand View web-based database that we have implemented. The Lodge secretaries that are using it have been more than pleased with the database. They feel that it will make the secretary's job a lot easier. We do need for the secretaries to check their members addresses to be sure we have the correct address in the database. We send the Masonic Messenger to the address we have on file, so if the address is not correct, the brother's Messenger will be returned to us.

Next, I want to let you know that once again we are entering into a joint effort with the Prince Hall Grand Lodge to try to secure a sales tax exemption for both of our Grand Lodges from the State Legislature. If you know your state representative or state senator, especially if the representative is on the House Ways and Means Education Committee that controls this bill, please contact him or her for their support for HB65. We also need a State Senator to introduce it in the senate. If you know a State Senator, please ask if he or she would be willing to sponsor the bill in the senate. If we really work at this, we can make it happen.

I want to take this opportunity to remind you of the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) requirement that each lodge file Form 990-N or e-Postcard. Any lodge failing to file for three consecutive years will lose its income tax exempt status. Filing electronically is easy. You will need your EIN number. If you do not know what it is, you can contact us here at Grand Lodge. We have the number for each lodge in the state. Do not get your own.

We also have a link on the Secretaries page on the Grand Lodge web-site. For instructions on how to file, go to our Grand Lodge website www.alafreemasonry.org and click on the Lodge Secretary Resources link. On the next page look for "IRS e-Postcard Form 990-N."

That is a document with instructions on how to file. If you do not have a password, you can register as a new user. Once there, you will only need to answer a couple of questions and you will be finished.

You have four and a half months from the end of the fiscal year to file this report. Our fiscal year ends September 30th, so you have until February 15th of the next year to file. There is no penalty for filing late. However, if you lose your tax exempt status, the fee for getting it back is \$400.00 if your net assets are less than \$250,000 which includes your building. If your net assets are more than \$250,000, the fee is \$850.00. We have lodges in the state that have faced this situation, so please keep your e-Postcard current.

The final thing I want to remind you about is that it will soon be time for your lodge's Annual Communication. The Masonic Code states that officers will be elected at the regular communication immediately preceding June 24, and be installed as soon as practicable after the election, but in no case, longer than 45 days after the election. Also at this communication, you will vote on several proposed Constitution changes. We will send the proposed changes to you sometime around the end of April.

Each lodge must file all annual reports with Grand Lodge no later than August 14. A complete list of the reports may be found in Article 6-Section 21 of the Constitution and report dates in Edict 8.13 of the Alabama Masonic Code. There are five things we will need:

- 1) Your Master and Secretary (short form).
- 2) Lodge officers (long form).
- 3) Your vote on the proposed changes to the Constitution.
- 4) The Annual Report.
- 5) Grand Lodge dues.

Please remember to send these reports in on time.

FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND TREASURER

BY RON ANDRESS, PGM

GRANDVIEW DATABASE UPDATE: We are continuing to improve the database to meet the needs of both the lodges and the Grand Lodge. The secretary now has more options in the drop-down box for making entries when entering dues payment on a member's record. All of the Grand Lodge proceedings except for 2016 are now available for the lodge secretary to view. The bulk dues charge has been turned on so that the secretaries can prepare their member invoices. Don't forget to make sure that all of your members' addresses have been verified.

AMITY UPDATE: The number of Master Masons in Alabama using the Amity App continues to grow. It's great for locating lodges you want to visit and also to keep a log of those you have already visited.