**Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons**

**Of the District of Columbia**

Annual Convocation Saturday March 16, 2013

Most Excellent Grand High Priest James Loudermilk presiding.

The one hundred and forty sixth Annual Convocation of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of the District of Columbia was opened in ample form by the Most Excellent James Loudermilk, Grand High Priest, at 9:02 a.m. on Saturday March 16th at the L’Enfant Plaza Hotel in the city of Washington in the District of Columbia.

(Attendance is reported in Appendix I)

Prayer was offered by the Grand Chaplain, Most Excellent Companion Daniel Darko and the sentinel was duly posted.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was led by M. E. Companion Robert B. Bussler, PGHP.

The Grand High Priest, M. E. Companion Loudermilk welcomed the companions present, reminding them to turn off cell phone, the proper manner to seek permission to speak and that all who are eligible to vote must obtain a proper ballot from the desk of the Grand Secretary.

Right Excellent Companion Marcus A. Trelaine moved to allow the Companions who are not members of the Grand Chapter to be present to this Convocation. The motion was seconded by M. E. C. Kenneth D. Fuller and passed unanimously.

***Approval of Revised Ritual and Ceremonies***

The Grand High Priest then noted that a pocket edition of the Ritual had been previously published as a service to the Craft by E. C. J. T. Feezell and distributed at cost. During that process it was discovered that additions to the ritual passed in previous years contained errors, particularly in the prayers. The errors were most frequently typographical, spelling or punctuation. He also pointed out that various ritual components necessary to our Craft had not been included in the officially published ritual. The Grand King, R. Ex. Com. Marcus Trelaine had been given the task of codifying, editing and distributing a unified ritual book to the Grand Visitor and Lecturer, past Grand High Priests and the chapters for their input. The Grand High Priest finally read the draft and suggested revisions and returned it to the Grand King with his own editorial suggestions incorporating the information gathered. The Grand King, then revised the official ritual, and resent it again to the Companions. The Grand High Priest gave his considered opinion that that the revised ritual included only the correction of errors and the inclusion materials previously omitted and should be adopted. No changes to the Code are involved. He then called on R. E. C. Marcus Trelaine to address the revised ritual after which the Grand Chapter will vote having had proper notice.

Marcus Trelaine, RE Grand King, thanked the Grand High Priest for the opportunity to speak. He pointed out that three years ago, M. E. C. Robert B. Bussler had proposed to include a lecture, in use by the Grand Chapter of Delaware, that had been informally included in the degree of Most Excellent Master, into the official Ritual of the Grand Chapter of DC. This lecture is the major item added to the ritual in this revision, as well as the correction of errors in previous editions. He also noted that rituals of Installation of Officers, reception of the Grand High Priest had not been codified. With these additions and correction, amplified floor work instructions have been included. These latter have been included as Ceremonies (not rituals) of the Grand Chapter of the District of Columbia in this revised edition now titled Rituals and Ceremonies of the Grand Chapter of RAM of DC. This is to be published as a spiral bound, pocket sized book.

Discussion ensuing included: R. E. C. Joel Kahn requested that previously proposed changes in sword work be included. Companion Kahn also noted that sales of the pocket ritual were to cover the cost of printing and requested that an electronic edition in an un-editable format be made available as well. The Grand High Priest responded that the sword work suggestions were considered and that a secure electronic edition is part of the proposal. The Grand King concurred.

After several questions of clarification were asked and satisfactorily answered, the adoption of the revision to the Ritual and Ceremonies of The Grand Chapter of DC in the formats proposed be approved by the Grand Chapter of the District of Columbia was moved by R. E. C. Trelaine and seconded by E. C. Peter Brusoe. The motion carried unanimously to applause. M. E. C. J. Loudermilk thanked the Grand King for his hard work.

M. E. C. Loudermilk requested that all dignitaries who are to be received to retire from the room and join the Grand Captain of the Host who will arrange them in proper order. The dignitaries retired.

The Grand High Priest then called on the Right Excellent Grand Secretary, M. E. C. Kenneth Fuller, R.E. Grand Secretary to make such motions as are appropriate while the Visiting Dignitaries are being prepared to enter.

Grand Secretary moved that M.E.C. Louis Bertrand, the Grand King of the General Grand Chapter of RAM, Int.; M. E. C. Richard Kessler, GHP of New York; M. E. C. James Maclay, Jr. GHP of Maryland; M. E. C. James Field. GHP of Virginia; and M.E.C. James Walsh of the Delaware be elected Honorary Members of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons of the District of Columbia and their names be forever entered into the Rolls of this Grand Chapter with those previously so elected and that a sign in sheet be present at the Desk of the Grand Secretary so that they may henceforth be so recognized and honored. The motion was seconded by R.E. C. Kahn. The motion carried unanimously.

M. E. C. Fuller, Grand Secretary, submitted the following Report.

***Report of the Grand Secretary of the Grand Chapter RAM DC***

Most Excellent Companion Loudermilk, Most Excellent Companions, Right Excellent Companions, Companions all.

It is with pleasure that my first year in this position is coming to and end. It has been a long and steep learning curve, but that was anticipated. Thanks are due to Most Excellent Howard Coleman for all his kind advice, timely help and hours spent training me and success is his and failures are mine. Thanks also to our Grand High Priest and Elected officers for hard work and all their help.

It can be reported that all dues are paid. Magazine subscriptions are not quite all in at the time of this writing, but I anticipate full payment soon from all.

Thanks to our Right Excellent King who has helped me with the Database. We have an accurate count to go to the RAM magazine and we have the database ready to move forward when the Knights Templar developed YRIS system goes on line for the other York Rite bodies. We have been asked to serve as a test Chapter.

Our Membership Summary for the year is as follows:

# Name Begin Additions Losses Total

1 Columbia 103 1 2 102

3 Mt.Vernon 158 0 2 156

4 Singleton 117 5 7 115

8 Wash Pot. 125 0 1 124

13 Mt Pleas. 195 8 19 184

17 Soj-Kil 73 4 1 76

18 M.E. Fowler 17 1 1 17

19 Fiat Lux 35 3 1 37

Totals 823 22 34 811

Respectfully submitted

Kenneth D. Fuller

Grand Secretary

The Grand Secretary moved that his report be accepted and spread upon the minutes. E.C. Brusoe seconded it and the Grand Chapter voted affirmatively.

The Grand Secretary informed the Grand Chapter that, in the future, instead of sending a book or a cd of the Proceedings of the GC, it might be more useful to send them electronically, perhaps making use of the System of Grand Representatives.

***Reception of Distinguished Guests***

The Grand High Priest with the Grand King and Scribe proceeded to the floor before the Grand East. The Grand Captain of the Host introduced the distinguished Guests as follows:

M. E. Companion James B. Walsh, Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of Delaware

M. E. Companion James B. Maclay, GHP of the GC of Maryland

M. E. Companion Richard Kessler, GHP of the GC of New York, accompanied by Past Deputy GHP, RW David Roebling

M.E. Companion James A. Fields, GHP of the GC of Virginia accompanied by RE Grand Scribe Don McAndrews, M.E. C. Howard Coleman, PGHP; M.E.C. Charles Wagner, PGHP and S.K. William T. Hargrove, Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Va.

Most Excellent Companion Louis Bertrand, the Right Excellent Grand King of the General Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons, International representing M.E. Companion Ted Harrison, the General Grand High Priest.

M. E. C. Loudermilk raised the Grand Chapter and led Grand Honors for our Visiting Dignitaries.

The Grand High Priest invited the Past Grand High Priests of the Grand Chapter of D.C. to assemble West of the Alter. Grand Honors were properly given. The following Past Grand High Priests were recognized; Robert B. Bussler, 1980, Scott M. Applebee, 1990, Lawrence N. Jolma, Jr. 2005, Kenneth D. Fuller 2007; Alwyn B. Taylor, 2008, Robert H. Star, 2009, James W. Mitchell 2010 and Daniel D. Darko 2011. (M. E. C. Teko A. Foly, 2006 arrived and was introduced later in the Proceedings.) The Most Excellent Grand High Priest welcomed them to the Convocation and noted that they are the Heart and Soul of Capitular Masonry. He then called on M. E. Comp Robert Bussler to respond for the Past Grand High Priests.

M. E. C. Bussler thanked the Grand High Priest for the privilege to respond and noted that it is always a pleasure to gather with distinguished Companions from our sister jurisdictions.

The Grand High Priest introduced the Most Illustrious Grand Master of Cryptic Masons of the District of Columbia, Phillip Palmer, Sr., our Grand Captain of the Host, and led the Grand Commandery in Grand Honors.

There being an alarm at the Door the Grand Captain of the Host through his proper officer, hailed the alarm and reported to the Grand Council that there was, in waiting, the Grand Master of Masons of the District of Columbia, the Most Worshipful Teko A. Foly. The Grand High Priest appointed a committee composed of PGHP M.E.C. Robert H. Starr, who is also a Past Grand Master of Masons of the District of Columbia, and R.E.C. Palmer to welcome the Grand Master and escort him into the Convocation.

The Grand High Priest raised the Grand Chapter. M.E. C. Starr introduced the Grand Master of Masons of the D. C., Most Worshipful Teko A. Foly, also a Past Grand High Priest of the District of Columbia, and the sitting Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of DC. Grand Honors were given. GHP Loudermilk welcomed the Grand Master to the East where he warmly greeted the Companions, noting that he had been delayed by the Marathon being held on this day. The Grand Master was then seated in the East and was then joined by The General Grand King L. Bertrand.

The Grand High Priest then noted that MW Foly would be the first “four star” since Marvin Fowler when he becomes the Most Illustrious Grand Master in two more years.

Most Excellent James Loudermilk, Grand High Priest, then gave the gavel to the Grand King so that he could preside during the Allocution.

***GRAND HIGH PRIEST’S ALLOCUTION***

Most Worshipful Brother Teko Anani Foly, Grand Master of Masons of the District of Columbia and our own Grand High Priest in 2006, Distinguished Guests from other Jurisdictions as well as those from the District of Columbia, and my Companions all. Good morning and welcome to our 146th Annual Grand Convocation.

It has been my great honor to serve as Grand High Priest this past year. I have been a very active mason for a number of years, and hope to continue as such for many more to come, but this year will certainly be the high point of my Masonic journey. Like so many of you I come from a Masonic family. My mother’s father was Grand High Priest in Kentucky in 1958-1959 and was active in many other bodies as well. His example kindled my desire to become a Mason, although that did not happen until 1985 when I was initiated in Kemper Lodge #64 in Falls Church Virginia. I was active in my Lodge and served as Master in 1991. That same year we had our third child and, after completing my year, I became less active masonically and concentrated on family and work. I joined the FBI in 1996 and that was to change my life both professionally and masonically. It was always my ambition to progress in the York Rite and the chance to do so came my way when Most Excellent Jolma joined the FBI and invited me to petition Washington-Potomac Chapter No. 8. I received the degrees in the spring cycle of 2000, immediately entered the appointed line and was High Priest in 2005. I served again as High Priest in 2010 and was also elected Grand Captain of the Host at the annual convocation in 2010. Last year our Grand King asked the Grand Chapter for the privilege of serving a second year as Grand King that he might complete a Capitular education program of great importance to the Grand Chapter; in consequence of which I advanced to the Grand Capitular East sooner than anticipated. So my journey to the East in our Grand Chapter has been swift indeed. I appreciate all the assistance and support from the Companions, this year and every year, and for your generous friendship. I plan to continue to serve the Grand Chapter actively for many years to come.

I will not plague you with a long list of my activities this past year, as I never enjoy that part of the allocutions of others, but will instead address a few important ones. I represented the Grand Chapter at the testimonial dinner for Most Excellent Edmund G. (Ted) Harrison our General Grand high Priest in Newark on March 24, 2012. As has long been our custom, we conducted a very successful spring degree festival, with Mount Pleasant #13, Washington-Potomac #8, Columbia #1, and Singleton #4 conferring the degrees. “DC Night in Virginia” was held at Sharon Lodge on 13 June. Attendance was down from prior years but we were still well represented. “Virginia Night in DC” was held at Singleton on August 6th. Again, attendance was down from prior years. We conducted a Capitular Training Conference at Takoma on 11 August for all Capitular Masons but especially the Chapter officers. It was well attended compared to the Grand Chapter School of Instruction but not as well attended as hoped or as the effort to prepare the conference deserved, about which a bit more later. I represented the Grand Chapter at the Northeast Regional Conference in Albany New York September 7th and 8th. This conference is focused on Grand Officer development and also has a track for outstanding masons early in their Capitular careers. DC was not otherwise represented at the regional conference. This is unfortunate as the opportunities to benefit from other jurisdictions experience and gain ideas for implementation in your own year are outstanding as is the fellowship. The Grand Chapter also took part in a fall Multijurisdictional Degree Festival in Newport Delaware on 29 September. Rather than form a degree team, I asked my mother Chapter to represent DC by conferring the Past Master degree and was honored with the role of Right Worshipful Master. In this paragraph I have focused, with one exception, upon recurring events that DC has actively participated in for many years for which attendance declines year after year. As we look at a general decline in Royal Arch knowledge, in personal relations with the members of other Chapters, and in our relations across the Grand jurisdictions a key component of the decline is a general decline in participation. I commend to my successors, which is all of you in the Grand and Chapter lines, attendance on these long traditional activities. You will both benefit from them and enjoy the process.

As mentioned earlier, our 2011 Grand King elected to continue in that office for a second year and not advance to the Grand East, as was our expectation, in order to concentrate on development of a Capitular Training Program and conduct the first sequence. We began the year with monthly sessions at the Grand Chapter School of Instruction. Attendance at the third Friday school was steady, and up from recent years, but far less than had been hoped. Taking a mid course correction, the program was repackaged into a daylong conference. What I hope will be the first annual conference was held on August 11. Participants all indicated they benefited from the event. It seems to me there has been a steady decline in Royal Arch years of experience among our actively participating members. With a decline in experience comes a decline in knowledge. We did not remedy the deficit this year, but we did begin the process. I have every confidence that our next Grand High Priest will continue and advance this important work.

I attended many Chapter meetings this year. Nearly every meeting opened and closed in full form; thereby reversing a trend toward reliance upon Grand officers, especially the Past Grand High Priests to open and close in ample form. Our ritual is beautiful and it serves the important purpose of effecting a transition from the stresses of the profane world into the companionship of the Chapter. After all, it is our ritual that sets us apart from all other organizations. We have subsisted from time immemorial by mouth to ear instruction. While at one time this was certainly due in part to a general lack of literacy, this is no longer the case. Most jurisdictions, including ours have written monitors or even complete rituals. My experience, and I am sure yours too, is that the material learned mouth to ear is better recalled and understood that that learned from a text. My further experience is that those chapters that do not have strong ritual also do not have strong Capitular knowledge. I count upon my successors to continue to emphasize the importance of ritual.

Standing resolution 2 of our Code authorizes the Grand High Priest to make up to three Meritorious Companion Awards, not more than one from any one Chapter, to Companions within the District of Columbia. This year it was my privilege to present these awards to Most Excellent Companions Fuller, Jolma, and Taylor all extremely active in DC York Rite masonry and all unaccountably overlooked during their rise to the Grand East. While not often done, nothing prevents our Past Grand High Priests from being so recognized and this year I chose to recognize a few exceptionally deserving of our companions. Most Excellent Jolma was also the recipient of the General Grand Chapter Bronze Medal this year.

Our numbers are much reduced from a few decades ago with many of our longest serving and most active members retiring and leaving the area, becoming unable to regularly attend on our assemblies, and departing for the celestial chapter a number of our Chapters struggle to fill their officer chairs or even to open at all. And yet, we have respectable numbers of petitions for our degrees and exaltation of new companions. We seem to fall short in the conversion of new members into active members. If each Chapter were to exalt and retain just one new member at each festival in a few years our meetings would be full again. We need to focus upon quality and not quantity and upon retention. Written notice must be provided before every meeting. There must be an interesting program and some time must be devoted at every meeting to Capitular education. Our companions have many alternatives to fill their limited leisure hours. Unless we provide a unique and valued experience they will not spend those ours in our meetings.

I thank my officers for their support throughout this year. Our elected line and my appointed line is filled with Royal Arch Masons of proven ability, fine ritualists all, with great knowledge of the Craft. The Grand Chapter is in good hands for the coming years. I know that each will make us stronger and I look forward to supporting them accompanied by all of you.

Right Excellent Grand King I submit this report on my tenure as Grand High Priest and move that its acceptance.

R.E.C. M. Trelaine, Grand King, called on M.E. C. Robert H. Starr, Chairman of the Jurisprudence Committee to comment on the Allocution and actions contained therein.

M. E. C Starr moved to receive the MEGHP’s Allocution.

He then commended M.E. Companion Loudermilk’s leadership during the year.

The Dispensations, while not in the Allocution, were provided to the committee by the Grand Secretary. All Dispensations, save one, were within the powers and prerogatives of the Grand High Priest. That one was a request by a High Priest to have a dispensation to open his chapter before the stated hour. This dispensation was not required, being within the powers of the Chapter’s High Priest, and was therefore null and void because unnecessary. He thanked his committee and moved that the report of the Jurisprudence committee be received and spread upon the minutes. E.C. Brusoe seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

The Grand King returned the gavel to the Grand High Priest who called on the Secretary to present the reports due and in his hand.

***Minutes***

The Grand Secretary reported that the Proceedings of 2011 are in the process of being produced for distribution by the previous GS, M. E. C. Howard Coleman. The Grand Secretary and others have reviewed the proceedings of the past several years and they were found to be complete and accurate. He then moved that all Minutes of the Proceedings not previously accepted up to 2010, be now received as distributed, and that the 2011 minutes be deferred to our next Grand Convocation. The Grand High Priest declared them accepted without objection.

***Necrology***

The Grand High Priest raised the Grand Chapter and asked for a moment of silence for all those Companions who passed to the Supreme Council of Heaven. (No Past Grand High Priest died during the proceding year.) Grand Chaplain and Rev. Canon Daniel Darko, PGHP lifted a prayer of memorial unto the Supreme High Priest on behalf of our departed companions.

***Reports***

M. E. C. Loudermilk called on the Grand Treasurer for his report.

The Grand Treasurer, R. E.C. Joel Kahn reported that it has been the custom of this Grand Chapter to report its finances on a Calendar year. This does not reflect the actual circumstances of the Grand Chapter during the Capitular year. He therefore recommended that the reports to the Grand Chapter be made on the Capitular year, while all reports to the IRS continue to be made on a Calendar year. On a Calendar basis we had earned revenue of $11,011.27 plus $1000 donation to the RARA for a total of 12, 011.27. Expenses, including passing the $1000 to RARA totaled 11,039.68 leaving a net of $971.59. This was first surplus in several years. Investments, including dividends and unrealized gains minus fees totaled $8,711.72 of which $7,790 was unrealized (paper) gains. This is the first positive result in three years. The checking account on Dec. 31, 2012 had a balance of $14,745 and the CD held by the trustees an estimated value of $5,331.13.

He noted that when he took over as Grand Treasurer from M. E. C. John Vergalla eight or nine years ago, there was approximately $7,000 in the checking account. The growth in that account is singularly due to the wise stewardship of the Grand High Priests and the assistance of the Grand Secretaries and Chapters.

R. E. Kahn noted that we are in good financial shape at the present time and again thanked both the immediate past Grand Secretary and the present holder of that office for their collaboration.

The Grand High Priest opened the floor to question and after a brief discussion of the timing of bank statements, M. E. C. R. H. Starr moved that the Treasurer’s report be accepted and spread upon the minutes and that the Grand Chapter Treasurer’s report be made on a Capitular year basis ending on February 28, seconded by the Grand King.

Discussion ensued concerning the timing of the end of the proposed fiscal year. M. E. Comp. Star withdrew his motion.

The Grand Treasurer’s report was accepted and spread upon the minutes.

***Budget***

The Grand High Priest called upon the Accounts and Budgets Committee, with the note that this committee had not originally been formed in accordance to code. As a result the Grand King, who chairs it, has had only three months to formulate his report.

The Grand King presented the proposed 2013 budget.

He noted several priorities in the budget about to be presented. The chapters do not have liability insurance, which becomes a problem when we have open programs. The committee proposes an umbrella policy for the Grand Chapter and all its Chapters rather than individual coverage paid for by each chapter. The printing of the Rituals and Ceremonies would be $15 per book for a total of $4500, the cost to be covered by sales of the books. We do not provide quality awards and certificates and we should move to do this. Convocations and training events are essential. Our regalia needs upgrading. We do not have a Grand Chapter pin. With the increased and new line items, there will be several new sources of funding, including cash and in kind donations.

The proposed Budget was then distributed. R. E. C. Trelaine discussed the proposed budget. (Appendix ii).

A detailed discussion ensued concerning various line items of the budget. Due to the lateness of the hour and the need to proceed with the order of the day, E. C. Brusoe moved to continue the 2012-13 budget until the semi-annual when the proposed budget will be presented after further review. After a second by M.E.C. Applebee, the motion passed.

E. C. Brusoe moved that all reports on the Grand Secretary’s desk that do not require action be accepted and spread upon the minutes. R. E. C. Joel Kahn seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

The Grand Representatives having signed in, they were duly recognized. (Appendix iv.) The GHP recognized them for their faithful service.

It was noted that Grand Representatives who have not been present for several years can be removed. The Grand Secretary invited all Grand Representatives to review the list, which includes a report of their attendance.

The Grand High Priest noted that M. E. C. Robert Bussler had been honored by his Chapter at the York Rite Banquet the previous night for his 50 years as Secretary of Mount Vernon Chapter #3.

The GGC Bronze Medal award was awarded to M.E.C. Lonnie Jolma at that Banquet.

The Grand Secretary reported through his pro temp assistant E. C. Peter Brusoe that there were 33 companions registered as eligible to vote in the Grand Chapter.

The GHP appointed the GHPs from New York and Delaware as tellers.

The Nominations for the Elected Officers were opened with the first nominations to be for the Grand High Priest.

R. E. Companion Joel Kahn moved that the Grand King be elevated to the office of Grand High Priest by acclamation. Seconded by M.E.C. Starr and unanimously voted.

Grand High Priest Elect Trelaine accepted the position of Grand High Priest with gratitude.

The M.E.C. Loudermilk invited the Grand High Priest Elect to take the gavel and proceed with the elections. The Grand High Priest nominated Philip J. Palmer, Sr. for the office of Grand King. It was moved and seconded that the nominations be closed. R. E. Companion Palmer was elected by acclamation and accepted graciously.

Right Excellent Companion Charbel Fahed, having expressed the desire to remain in that office a second year, the GHP Elect nominated him for Grand Scribe. Nominations were closed and R. E. Companion Fahed was elected by acclamation. He accepted with humility.

M. E. C. Kenneth Fuller was nominated and seconded for Grand Secretary. Nominations were closed. He was elected by acclamation. M.E.C. Fuller accepted.

R.E.C. Joel Kahn was nominated and seconded for Grand Treasurer. Nominations were closed. R.E.C. Kahn was elected by acclamation. He accepted with pleasure.

For the Office of Grand Captain of the Host nominees were E.C. Charles Phillips, and E.C. Peter Brusoe. There being no other nominations, the ballot was taken and the tellers retired to count the votes.

The Tellers returning reported two blank ballots, 19 ballots for Peter Brusoe and 12 ballots for Charles Phillips. E. C. Brusoe accepted the election.

The Grand High Priest Elect thanked the tellers. M.E.C Fuller moved that the ballots be destroyed and it was so ordered without objection.

M.E.C. Scott Applebee was nominated and seconded for the office of Grand Visitor and Lecturer. Nominations were closed. M.E.C. Applebee was elected by acclamation and accepted.

M.E.C. Robert B. Bussler was nominated and seconded for the office of Trustee for a term ending in 2016. He was elected by acclamation and accepted this honor, and noted it would be his last term.

(He rejoins M.E.C. Charles Iverson, 2014 and E.C. Theodore Khan, 2015 on that board.)

Most Excellent Companion Trelaine, GHP Elect, appointed the following officers

Grand Royal Arch Captain: Charles Phillips

Grand Principal Sojourner: Phillip J. Palmer, Jr.

Grand Master of the Third Veil: Merriman Parkinson

Grand Master of the Second Veil: Victor Petrossion

Grand Master of the First Veil: Benjamin Dacko

Grand Sentinel: Gerhard Meinzer

All of whom agreed to serve.

The GHP Elect also appointed the following companions to serve in additional appointed offices.

Grand Prefect: Harold Grainger

Grand Tribune: James Mitchell

Grand Chancellor: Carroll Collins

Grand Inquisitors-DC York Rite: Leslie Rogers-White, Paul Wallace and Sylvanus Newstead

Grand Inquisitor-Scottish Ritual: Immanuel Finley

Grand Inquisitor-English Ritual: Robert Macauley

Grand Orator: Walter Benesch

Grand Provost: Robert Haber

Grand Magistrate: John O’Hara

Grand Paladin: Bud Michels

Grand Imaginus: Burton Levy

Grand Chaplain: Daniel D. Darko

He then returned the Gavel to the Grand High Priest, M.E.C. James Loudermilk.

The Grand High Priest announced that a full form installation would be held on March 27th at Singleton Masonic Hall. There will be a pro-forma installation at the end of this Convocation.

The Grand High Priest then gave the floor to M.E.C. Louis Bertrand, the R.E. General Grand King of the General Grand Chapter, International.

M.E.C. Bertrand brought the greetings of the M.E.C. Edmund Harrison of New York who has been travelling widely. He commended M.E.C. Scott Applebee for his work. He noted the work of the Under 40s Committee. He highlighted the work of the Royal Arch Research Assistance program. The Royal Arch Magazine needs our input and he encouraged Companions to sign up for the E-Magazine. He called on those who have received the Bronze, Silver or Gold Award to stand. The General Grand King also spoke of the Sweetheart Award. Membership, he reported, has long been a problem. Helpful information is on the Gen. Grand Chapter, Int. website. The History of Royal Arch Masonry is available for $100. He thanked the Grand Chapter for the courtesies extended to him.

M.E.C. Loudermilk raised the Grand Chapter and welcomed our Grand Master of Masons of the District of Columbia, M.W. Teko A. Foly, who introduced his Grand Officers present: RWB K. Fuller, Junior Grand Warden; RWB Charbel Fahed, Senior Grand Steward; WB Daniel Darko, Grand Chaplain; WB Joel Kahn, Grand Lecturer Emeritus; and WB Gerhard Meinzer, Grand Tiler, Emeritus. He called upon the Grand Chapter Officers to work together. Others are ready to help and work with them. Don’t get caught working too hard elsewhere and forget your Blue Lodge.

We have young members ready to join and learn and have a truly spiritual experience. Plan together and plan ahead so that the destiny of the York Rite can be fulfilled. So next year may the Grand High Priest, the Grand Illustrious Master and the Grand Commander meet and work closely together. There are solutions. Let us find them. He thanked the Grand Chapter for its hospitality. And blessed them in their labors.

The Grand High Priest thanked the Grand Master for his dedication and leadership.

He then invited the newly elected and appointed officers to assemble according to their several places and stations.

M.E.C. Loudermilk installed the Grand Officers of 2013-14 in ample form.

M.E.C. Trelaine, Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of the District of Columbia, closed the Grand Chapter in ample form at 12:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth D. Fuller, PGHP

Grand Secretary

**Minutes of the Special Convocation**

29 June 2013

Takoma Masonic Center

Most Excellent Companion Marcus Trelaine, Grand High Priest presiding.

The Grand Chapter opened at 9:25am in ample form with Most Excellent Companion Marcus Trelaine presiding as Grand High Priest, Right Excellent Companion Phillip Palmer, Sr. as Grand King, and Most Excellent Companion Rev. Daniel Darko, PGHP as acting Grand Scribe pending arrival of the elected officer REC Fahed. Excellent Companion Peter Brusoe served as Grand Captain of the Host, and Companion Doug Cohen acted as Grand Royal Arch Captain.

The Grand High Priest expressed his sincere appreciation for the companions who arrived and their dedication to Royal Arch Masonry. The Grand High Priest called on Excellent Companion Bernard J. Michels for an overview of Hiram Takoma Masonic Center’s facility, the location of the men’s room, plans for the lunch and any other special rules governing the Grand Chapter’s use of the facility.

The Grand High Priest conducted a roll call of officers and welcomed the members present. They included the following Elected Grand Line Officers: Grand King Philip Palmer, Sr.; Grand Scribe Charbel Fahed; and Grand Captain of the Host, Peter Brusoe. The Grand High Priest than welcomed the following appointed grand chapter officers and special appointments:

Grand Chaplain: MEC Daniel K. Darko

Assistant Grand Chaplain: George S. Nichol

Grand Master Third Veil: Merriman Parkinson

Grand Chancellor: Carroll J. Collins

Grand Paladin: Bernard J. Michels

Grand Inquisitor: Sylvanus Newstead

Grand Inquisitor: Leslie Rogers-Wright

The Grand High Priest then called on Bernard J. Michels for a roll call of the chapters and officers present.

**Roll Call:**

Represented Chapters:

Columbia Chapter #1, Merriam Parkinson (High Priest)

William R. Singleton Chapter #4, Jack Hinman (High Priest)

Washington-Potomac Chapter #8, Roger Cundiff (High Priest)

Mt. Pleasant Chapter #13, Bud Michels (High Priest)

Sojourner-Kilwinning Chapter #17: Philip Palmer, Sr (Scribe)

Fiat Lux: Prosper Houssou (MEZ/High Priest)

Chapters not represented:

Mt. Vernon

Marvin Fowler

Excused members of the Grand Chapter:

MEC Scott Applebee, PGHP Grand Visitor and Lecturer; REC Joel Kahn, Grand Treasurer; MEC & Rev. Kenneth D. Fuller, PGHP Grand Secretary; EC Phillip Palmer, Jr. Grand Principal Sojourner; MEC Lonnie Jolma, Past Grand High Priest; MEC Robert H. Starr, PGHP

The Most Excellent Grand High Priest determined that there was sufficient number of chapters present to constitute a quorum.

**Budget Discussion:**

The Grand Chapter moved their attention to the budget. MEC Trelaine thanked Mt. Pleasant Chapter #13 for their pledge of $2,500 towards the publication of the ritual. The pledge is based on other chapters coming up with the remaining $2,500 total cost. The Most Excellent Grand High Priest then called upon the Right Excellent King to have a discussion of the budget. Right Excellent Companion Phillip Palmer, Sr began to present on the budget. This budget was extensively discussed at the Grand Chapter Officers meeting. REC Palmer Sr explained that the committee was unable to meet to go over the budget in full, what he was presenting was based on the extensive and comprehensive discussion at the Grand Officer’s meeting.

Excellent Companion Roger Cundiff raised an issue that a line item on the budget that was emailed is different than the budget being presented at the meeting specifically with the amounts of money on lines 1 and 3 reversed. MEC Marcus Trelaine explained the slight error and informed the body that they were corrected in the format presently before them.

EC Peter Brusoe asked if we had clarified who was paying for insurance on their own and who was not paying for insurance. MEC Trelaine reported that it shows a flat amount that will be adjusted with the better rate so chapters that are paying for their own insurance would not be charged any more than they are already paying. The amount on the budget will only cover half the year.

Merriam Parkinson asked if the amount was only going to cover half the amount how would we cover it. MEC reported that it would be done as a special assessment, and that it would be built into the cost of the pre-capita. Carroll Collins pointed out there are 8 chapters, that it would be basically a $100 a month. Roger Cundiff raised that Potomac Chapter pays $2,000 and includes liability for the chapter. Companion Austin **Esfandiary** asked if half the chapters carry insurance and half do not, isn’t that inequitable to charge all?

MEC Grand High Priest clarified if there is no need to charge insurance they won’t get charged. The $4,800 shows what chapters would need to pay if they don’t carry insurance. The amount would be reduced based on the number of chapters currently paying insurance.

EC Bud Michels rose to speak about the importance of having insurance. As we’re involving our families more we need to be aware of the risk liability. Even if your building carries insurance for your use of that building it will NOT cover the picnic down the street. MEC Trelaine thanked EC Bud for his point of view, and he commented that the other nice part of carrying insurance is that the insurance company will pay for both counsel as well as damages.   
  
EC Peter Brusoe raised a concern that came via email from MEC Robert H Starr about the honorariums. MEC Trelaine reported that he spoke with the MEC Starr about the issue of how the honorarium was calculated over fiscal years. Peter Brusoe moved the budget, seconded by EC Merriman Parkinson. EC Peter Brusoe called the question. Budget was approved unanimously.   
  
The chapter move from labor to recess for a period of ten minutes. The Grand High Priest gaveled the Grand Chapter into session.

**Code Changes:**

MEC Trelaine mentioned the issue of selling the Code and expressed a belief that the Code should be free to all Companions. There was general consensus that the Grand Chapter should stop selling the Code and provide it electronically for free. The MEC Trelaine discussed some concerns with section 29 that the report of the Grand Visitor and Lecturer shall be written and not verbal. MEC Alwyn Taylor stood to support the concept and offer his wholehearted agreement.   
  
EC Peter Brusoe stood to support the concept of the proposal. Brusoe also recommended that a preliminary report be given the first half of the term and the second half of the term.   
  
EC Carol Collins responded that he agreed and pointed out that already in Code they are required to visit twice a year. MEC Trelaine called upon EC Carroll Collins to continue the discussion on Grand Chapter Code. EC Merriman Parkinson asked to go back to look at section 12 and section 19. Section 12 and Section 19: EC Bud Michels raised a concern over the requirement that all appointed Grand Officers must be a Past High Priest. He feels that the elected officers MUST be a Past High Priest, but the appointed officers could be any Royal Arch Mason.   
  
Peter Brusoe expressed support for the idea, and suggested that it would be important to get the best person for the job. EC Sylvanus Newstead asked how Grand Chapter officers are appointed and expressed the opinion that it would be good to have applications for the positions. MEC Daniel Darko rose to discuss the selection of Appointed Grand Chapter officers and how important it was that people be appointed to these positions based on skills and qualities.

MEC Trelaine talked about some of the general philosophy about appointment of positions, and to make appointments to evaluate how committed and dedicated they are for a potential leadership position. To be Grand High Priest means that you want to say that you want to serve, not to be served, but to serve. When people show up as appointed officers it demonstrates to their companions that they are dedicated, motivated and here to serve. MEC Trelaine also asked if you should be able to serve as both an elected grand lodge officer and a grand chapter officer.   
  
EC Brusoe stood up and recommended that the governing documents that are the least restrictive are better. Let the grand chapter determine through an election if they think people are better and trust the position. EC Carroll Collins echoed the perspective of MEC Darko about the importance of appointments being a prerogative of the GHP. One the issue of serving in two grand bodies he pointed out that in the Scottish Rite Bodies in DC you can’t be an officer in two lines.   
  
EC Merriam Parkinson stood to discuss the issues in 12 and 19. A majority of the body did not see a conflict between those two sections. EC Leslie Rogers Wright stood up to discuss the difference between the serving 6 months and serving as a high priest. There was a conversation about requiring that you serve as both a king and a scribe before serving as a high priest. After a long conversation it was decided that rather than amend the code that the chapter should request for a dispensation from the Grand High Priest. The Grand chapter broke for a delicious lunch of pizza, salad and finished the remainder of doughnuts from the morning refreshments.

The grand chapter resumed labor at 12:20PM. There was a discussion of the amount of money needed to add a new chapter or council. Companion Cohen mentioned that it would be good to have some of the items not in the documents, and that it would be best to have in a standing resolution or a guidebook. Companion Collins mentioned that we should move the amounts to a standing resolution because it requires fewer votes and that it would recommend the amounts shall be amended. The general consensus was that yes there should be more of a financial commitment to start a new chapter but having it as a standing resolution. There was discussion on section 56 of the Code and the need to have language clarifying who the top 5 officers are.   
  
There was a discussion about the issue of unaffiliated masons. The body felt that there was a general consensus of what that passage meant and how it should be carried out. It was pointed out that it was necessary that the Jurisprudence Committee also understand the concept.   
  
Degree fees: There was a discussion about setting the fees for exultation. It was decided that the numbers should be pulled out of the governing documents and put in a standing resolution.   
  
Section 138: The jurisprudence committee has ruled that legislation can be enacted at a special communication, but the paragraphs need to be reformatted and clarified so that no confusion may arise in our documents. There was a discussion about opening up the Grand Chapter for voting by all Companions. There were some concerns that some people would be able to stack the voting. Others felt that it would encourage participation in the Grand Chapter events.

There was also a discussion about managing the discussion at the next Grand Chapter meeting. It was felt that perhaps the Grand High Priest would limit discussion for 3 for, or 3 against.   
  
EC Bud Michels discovered a directory from 1997 contained information on our chartering as a grand body, reporting the date of May 23, 1867 out of the Grand Chapter of Maryland. EC Michels digitally copied the information and emailed it to the attending members. A break was again called at 1:32.

The Grand chapter resumed labor at 1:45PM. The body discussed the requirements for Grand Visitor and Lecturer. The body agreed that there needed to be better codification and explanation of how one becomes qualified to become Grand Visitor and Lecturer and what MEC Trelaine was proposing was reasonable and made a great deal of sense.

EC Bernard J. Michels then discussed the role of communications and social media in lodges. EC Michels showed a series of slides of communications work that Hiram Takoma Lodge #10 did and how effective it was in communicating with the brothers. MEC Marcus Trelaine briefed the group about print media and how helpful that type of communication is. Under good of the order, Companion **Esfandiary** asked about how to best handle a large number of drops from chapter membership. Several Companions advised using telephone calls to try to bring them back to the fold, others talked about a special outreach committee to effect communication.   
  
There being no other business to come before the Grand Chapter the Grand High Priest thanked everyone for their active participation, with special appreciation to the Takoma Masonic Center for the use of their facility, and then moved to close in ample form. The Grand Chapter recessed at 2:39 Peace and Harmony prevailing.

Submitted by EC Peter Brusoe,

Grand Secretary, Acting on behalf of MEC Kenneth D. Fuller