



Valley of Alexandria, Orient of Virginia  
AlexandriaScottishRite.org

# Scottish Rite Bulletin



November–December 2020

## *Personal Representative's Message*

Edmund Cohen, 33° — Personal Representative of the Deputy in Alexandria

### **Circles of Influence**

It is no surprise to any of us that a number of serious problems confront our world. There is concern about the vagaries of Mother Nature with greater awareness of deforestation, desertification, and habitat destruction, and more immediately worries about the growing frequency of “100 year” storms, more floods, and devastating wildfires.

In the less developed world there are serious issues of poverty, disease, a lack of safe drinking water and malnutrition, and too many youths without jobs or prospects. All of which is made worse by regional conflict, which affects us because it feeds terrorism and leads to mass migration.

In the more developed countries there are issues associated with an aging population with too few younger workers to support them. In the U.S. there is growing income inequality that has left many of our citizens without jobs, and little margin to deal with any emergency. Many formerly middle class citizens have found themselves losing jobs as they get older and facing what used to be called the “golden years” without the pensions or savings they had hoped to have.

As if this were not enough, 2020 has been particularly challenging. In January we had our first case of the CORONA virus and by the time this issue was being edited, there were over 7,698,358 cases and 214,007 deaths. The economy shut down, jobs were lost, and companies went out of business. Worse yet, persistent problems long ignored has led to social unrest and upheaval.

As Masons we should focus on problems, but, more importantly, we should think about solutions and what we can do to help.

Even a small pebble thrown into a large lake will generate a series of expanding ripples moving across the surface of the water. And it is no different with each of us. If we will engage, we can generate circles of influence that can make a difference.

Using the insights in our ritual, we can incorporate Masonic values into our lives in a way that helps us better deal with adversity and empathize with the misfortunes of others. Becoming morally self-centered prepares us to develop the healthy social relationships that inform the way we deal with family and friends, assist our Brethren, and develop a sense of community that works to repair the ruptures and reduce the frictions that have come to divide us.

Our Valley has a program to call our members to check on them, but each of us can play a part in this effort by calling a couple of our Brethren who we have not heard from in a while to see how they are doing and to have a conversation. I know this will be most welcomed and you will benefit as well.

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### **See Secretary's Corner on Page 11.**

Make a nomination to acknowledge a Brother's work in the Valley.

Also, help us increase our monetary donation when we recognize local food banks with the Community Service Award. Send your donation to the Secretary at P.O. Box 174, Alexandria, VA 22313

**HELP**



## *Personal Representative's Message*

*(Continued from Page 1.)*

We also need to see if we have the time and resources to share some of our blessings with others. Consider what kind and friendly acts might be within the length of our cable tow, because even a small action or a little gift can brighten someone's day and help in a significant way. Remember, just because we cannot help everyone does not mean we cannot help anyone, and because we cannot solve all problems does not mean we cannot ameliorate some of them.

People notice our behavior and how we make them feel. Civility is contagious, but so is the reverse. It is our choice and our obligation to be a good neighbor and to set an example of the conduct we would expect from others. This is how we can generate circles of influence that will spread across our community.

Sincerely and Fraternaly,

*Ed Cohen*

## *Gnosticism and Freemasonry*

Brian M. Walaszczyk, 32<sup>o</sup>

Freemasonry derives its allegories and lessons from many religious and philosophical teachings, particularly within the "high degrees" taught in the Craft's appendant bodies such as the Scottish Rite. Its teachings contain allegories and symbols derived from such sources as the Kabbalah, Christianity, Egyptian mythology, Chivalric orders, and other ancient mystery traditions. For example, in the 20th Degree, Master of the Symbolic Lodge, as conferred in Southern Jurisdiction, the candidate is exposed to knowledge taught by great sages such as Zarathustra, Hermes, and Confucius, and in the 31st Degree, Inspector Inquisitor, the candidate is exposed to certain lessons found in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. In this article, however, I will explore Gnostic influences and some possible Gnostic interpretations of Masonic symbolism.

Gnosticism is a name given to numerous religious and philosophical movements that flourished in the first and second centuries of the Common Era. Gnostic sects had different beliefs and legends just as Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal, and other churches which interpret the Christian faith differently. The name Gnosticism is derived from Gnosis and means "knowledge," or "insight." Although Gnosticism's exact origin is unknown, it is believed that some of Gnosticism's early influences include the Corpus Hermeticum, the Jewish Apocalyptic writings, Platonic Philosophy, and the Hebrew Scriptures (Moore, 2020).

Basic Gnostic concepts are found in the Coptic text titled, *The Allogenes*, which translates to *The Foreigner* (note: "The Foreigner" is both the name of the book and the central character in the book), that was discovered in the upper Egyptian town of Nag Hammadi in 1945. It is believed that the visionary protagonist of the *Foreigner* was Seth, and according to tradition, every Gnostic is a follower of "Sethian knowledge" (Barnstone, 2003). The first-century Romano-Jewish historian Flavius Josephus states that Seth's children invented the wisdom concerned with the heavenly bodies and their order. Josephus wrote that "so that their wisdom would not be destroyed based on Adam's prediction of the world being destroyed by fire and water, they erected two pillars, one of brick and one of stone. They inscribed their knowledge on the pillars so that if one were destroyed their knowledge would be discoverable" (D.D., 1823). Masons are taught the importance of the pillars at the entrance of King Solomon's temple. These pillars may be symbolic of that knowledge that was preserved by the pillars erected by the children of Seth, which were created to withstand the destructive forces throughout the ages.

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There are additional references to Sethian knowledge within Freemasonry. In the first Constitutions of the Freemasons, written shortly after the official formation of the first Grand Lodge of Freemasonry in 1717, James Anderson provided the first modern compilation of the history of the craft. In this official work, which was written by order of the Grand Master at the time, it was noted that Seth was the “prime cultivator of astronomy,” and he taught his children “geometry and Masonry.” This portion of the text is significant. According to the Constitutions, Seth’s ninth son Noah, and his sons Shem, Ham, and Japhet, were “all Masons true,” who brought anti-diluvium arts and traditions with them after the flood. Here we have a foundational document from the inception of organized Freemasonry stating that Sethian knowledge was passed down through Masonry via Noah and his sons, who were all Masons (Anderson, 2020). As noted below, it may be that Sethian anti-diluvium knowledge influenced the Kabbalah, Gnosticism, and in turn Freemasonry.

Additionally, the Graham Manuscript written circa 1726 indicates that the original Master Mason’s Degree dealt with Noah and not Hiram Abiff. Additionally, the term Noachide means “the descendants of Noah, and this was a term applied to Freemasons on the theory, derived from the 'legend of the Craft,' that Noah was the father and founder of the Masonic system of philosophy. And hence the Freemasons claim to be his descendants, because in times past they preserved the pure principles of his religion amid the corruptions of surrounding faiths” (Travers, 2020). Could this be interpreted that Masonry was derived from a Gnostic Sethian tradition passed through Noah and his sons?

An examination of the statement that Seth was the “prime cultivator of astronomy” may reveal a Gnostic interpretation of the Sethian legend that was deposited directly from Gnostic beliefs into Masonic ritual which is influenced by a study of the stars. Astrological symbols are gently hidden within the craft, and some of these ideas are explained in depth in our degree lectures. The comprehensive symbolism of Masonic Lodges, including their actual layout, the discussion of the sun’s travel throughout the day, the celestial and terrestrial globes, and the starry decked canopy, all demonstrate the importance of astronomy. Additionally, astronomy was important in the development of geometry, which is vital in Masonry.

There also seems to be a relationship between Gnosticism and the Kabbalah, which as pointed out above, is discussed in the higher degrees of Freemasonry. Kabbalah, an esoteric Jewish mysticism, as it appeared in the 12th and following centuries, was also termed as the “tradition of the children of Seth, carried from Chaldea by Abraham, taught to the Egyptian priesthood by Joseph, recovered and purified by Moses, concealed under symbols in the Bible, revealed by the Savior to Saint John, and contained entire, under hieratic figures analogous to those of all antiquity in the Apocalypse of that Apostle” (Arturo De Hoyos, 2013). In this sense we have reference to Sethian knowledge, but passed through Kabbalah. Although the theory of Kabbalah and Gnosticism’s relation is debated, and the validity of this claim cannot be verified, Albert Pike stated that Kabbalah was “the key to the occult sciences and that the Gnostics were born of the Kabbalah” (Arturo De Hoyos, 2013).

Looking specifically at the text of the Foreigner, there is further information that may help us to interpret Freemasonry from a Gnostic perspective. The Foreigner claimed he was visited by an angel who told him that he would receive a revelation after 100 years. After the time passed, the Foreigner received the vision in which he learned the nature of the unknowable God. The Foreigner then revealed this vision to his son. According to the text, the Foreigner received his vision, or revelation, by luminaries, who told him that he has done enough to “hinder the inactivity” within him by searching for the incomprehensible (Barnstone, 2003). Using a Gnostic analogy, the Mason has “hindered his inactivity” by knocking on the door of the Lodge and thus actively began his search for light. The text details part of the revelation, which involved a dialog that explained the impossible ability to know all aspects of the infinite one and defined the “ineffable” God as the mediation of the “triple power” (Courses, 2015). Freemasons are familiar with the ineffable name of God, or lost word, and the utilization of the number three throughout our ritual.

## *Gnosticism and Freemasonry*

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The triple tau is also a well-known symbol of the Royal Arch. Thus, a way to interpret the symbolism within Masonry in a Gnostic context is to use the number three as a symbol of the triple power of the unknowable deity.

One overarching concept, common in most Gnostic sects, is the belief that the Gnostics were children of light who still contained a spark of the divine. Their goal was to become aware of the light and reintegrate with the infinite one in order to obtain a “Gnosis” or an awareness of their part of the divine (Courses, 2015). Pursuit of light is also an essential theme of Freemasonry. Masons are initiated and “brought to light” and continue in their constant search for more light. Viewed from a Gnostic perspective, the goal of attaining more light in Masonry is an attempt to better understand and become aware of a personal relationship with God. There are many parts of Masonic ritual that may be interpreted this way, including the fact that early in his Masonic journey, a candidate depends on others to assist him with communicating with God, but eventually he must do it on his own. This personal connection with Deity may be viewed as the same desire for light that the Gnostics sought, Just as The Foreigner became active in his search for God, so, too, the Mason, using the symbolism and allegories of the Craft becomes active in his search for light or the lost word.

The revelation that the Foreigner informs his son about the infinite God as self-knowledge, “Unknowable, and it is greater than what is good in its unknowability, having blessedness and perfection and silence - not blessedness or perfection or stillness, but something that is, that no one can understand, being at rest” (Courses, 2015). The revelation of self-knowledge is the same as the Delphic saying “Know Thyself,” which was proclaimed by many great sages, including Pythagoras, who is honored by Freemasons. This saying, often found at the entrance of ancient temples, is carved into the Tyler’s chair at the entrance to the temple room of the Scottish Rite Supreme Council, 33°, Southern Jurisdiction. Indeed, Masonic Constitutions outside of Virginia use the theme “Know Thyself” in the Entered Apprentice Degree, and a portion of the Fellowcraft Degree’s ritual instills an immensely powerful lesson to the candidate, which cannot be revealed here. A Mason contemplates his own interpretation of the rituals and lessons of the degrees he has received to become a better man by better understanding himself. This may be interpreted as the Gnostic principle whereby the Foreigner obtains knowledge of the ineffable God through contemplation and self-reflection.

As with the Gnostic Foreigner, Masons are travelers in foreign countries who have the right to receive master’s wages. Therefore, one may view Masons not only as travelers but foreigners. Operative masons travel to foreign countries to build beautiful cathedrals and structures using elaborate geometry, but speculative Masons travel in a more symbolic sense. While a Mason has the right to travel to visit foreign Lodges, including those located in foreign countries, a deeper meaning may be that Masons are travelers into foreign or new territories of personal understanding of the knowledge taught to them in the Craft and the geometry crafted throughout nature by the Great Architect of the Universe. They fit their minds as living stones in a spiritual sense, and throughout their Masonic journey, they are tasked to contemplate the beautiful ritual, lessons, and symbols presented to them in the ritual. By his own study and contemplation, each Mason will come to his individual interpretation of these allegories and symbols and, thus, smooth out the rough ashlar of their own being. They polish this stone with the working tools of the Craft. One example is mastering the ability to subdue their passions through temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice. They learn to control their innate animal passions and desires in order to live a more moral life suitable for that house not made with hands eternal in the heavens. This is where the true work of a Mason is conducted, and wages paid, and is a lifelong process. Therefore, we may view ourselves as foreigners just as the title and character of this ancient Gnostic text.

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# *Gnosticism and Freemasonry*

(Continued from Page 4.)

To summarize, we have interpreted many symbols and lessons in Freemasonry based upon a basic understanding of Gnostic principles and the text of the Foreigner. We found similarities in that the Gnostics were children of light searching for more light or Gnosis, while Masons are travelers in foreign countries searching for light and the lost word, which is to say, a deeper knowledge of one's self in order to build one's spiritual temple. This Gnostic interpretation of Masonic symbolism is one of many possible interpretations of our system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols, but each Mason must individually contemplate and interpret the symbols and allegories presented throughout their Masonic journey and may draw their insights from many different philosophies and traditions.

## References

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Sincerely and Fraternaly,  
Brian Walaszczyk

## *Venerable Master's Message*

Donald Leo McAndrews, KCCH, Venerable Master, Alexandria Lodge of Perfection

Fraternal Greetings as we approach the close of 2020. This year has presented us with many difficulties and challenges. But I believe, in the long run, this has given rise to many good things.

We started the year off normally, then along came COVID19 which has changed everyone's lives. Our first virtual meeting was primarily educational, but it was so good to see everyone's face on Zoom. We then had an Executive Board meeting via Zoom prior to our educational meeting at which we approved the purchase of video conferencing and projection equipment to replace our old digital projector. This will allow for large screens with much greater clarity and more reliability. It also can be used to host Zoom meetings with a much greater capacity and more capabilities.

Even after we are back to meeting in person, we have a significant number of older members who don't drive at night and members who live far enough away from Alexandria that coming to meetings can be difficult. We even have one member who lives in Ireland who attended our first Zoom meeting. Using Zoom, these members can now all be included.

At our September virtual meeting, we celebrated the Feast of Tishri. I must admit that I thought this would be difficult, but it actually worked quite well. Being September 11, we took a moment of silence to remember those who lost their lives in 2001. We started with an excellent explanation of this ancient Jewish Feast by Ill. Sheldon Richman, followed by the traditional Feast of Tishri toasts offered by the officers of the Alexandria Valley. Although we were lacking an actual feast, the commemoration was excellent.

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## *Venerable Master's Message*

We then had an excellent program by Brother Keith Gawrys, KCCH, which was enhanced by his ability to share his computer screen with everyone. This makes the Zoom meetings much more interesting and engaging.

Brethren, we are now firmly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century! We may need to adjust our program agenda when meeting in person again. By starting with our educational programs and comments from our Personal Rep III. Edmund Cohen and any committee reports, we can include all those remote members through Zoom, saving only the necessary business proper for the tiled meeting.

As we approach the end of another year, we can be proud that we not only survived, but we have advanced in our ability to maintain better contact with all or our Brethren, wheresoever dispersed. I am convinced that in the future, we will not remember the frustrations of isolation, we will remember that this was the year we engaged technology to be more inclusive and better connected than at any time in our past.

Finally, I want to thank my Brethren for the opportunity to serve in this leadership position this year. Each of our four bodies have excellent officers to guide us into the future. There is much for which we can be thankful. We may have to endure more months of what is now semi-isolation, but we will emerge stronger, better equipped, and more connected than ever before. Sometimes clouds do have silver linings.

Fraternally,  
Don McAndrews

## *One-Day Virtual Reunion on Saturday, 5 December 2020*

Edmund Cohen, 33°

Because of COVID we were not able to have our Spring and Fall Reunions, but we do have an opportunity to increase our membership this year as a result of a decision by the Supreme Council to authorize a one-day virtual Zoom Reunion. Under this authorization, the SGIG or Deputy can communicate the five mandatory degrees that ordinarily must be conferred, and the Valley, using slides prepared by the Supreme Council, will communicate the rest of the degrees. This removes the concerns about how the class, a stage crew, and the large cast of the 32nd degree, can practice social distancing and stay safe.

We selected Saturday, 5 December, because it is sufficiently removed from our Christmas preparation and celebrations, and also allows sufficient time for the new Master Masons raised during the Grand Lodge of Virginia's one-day conferrals in October to complete the additional work necessary to obtain a dues card.

For this Reunion to be a success it is urgently necessary for each of us to approach these new Master Masons, and other Blue Lodge Brethren tell them about Scottish Rite and have them sign a petition and become part of our 2020 Reunion class.

The slides prepared by the Supreme Council are very thorough and, while short of the experience you would get watching a well-performed degree conferral, will provide a very interesting and beneficial exposure to all of our degrees. I mention this because if you recently have been unable to travel to our Temple to be a part of our Reunions, here is an opportunity to be a part of this event from the comfort of your home. You and the class will be safe and this will be a great experience.

So the takeaway is please help us recruit a large December 2020 class and sign on to be a part of this unique Reunion.

S&F  
Ed Cohen

## Secretary's Corner—Part 1

Ill. David C. Morris, General Secretary

## 2021 Proposed Valley Budget

J. Patrick Weyant, Jr., 33<sup>rd</sup>, Chair, Valley Finance and Budget Committee

At the October Executive Council and Valley meetings, a proposal was submitted by Mike Bible, KCCH, Chair of the Valley Membership Committee – that the Valley institute an autocall program as part of our overall communications strategy. The proposal was approved.

The autocall program would place a call to our participating members with a pre-recorded message to alert the membership to meetings and other important events, and it also would generate an email with the same message. We would be charged 5 cents for each call answered in person or by an answering machine, but not be charged for any call that was not completed. Anyone at any time can opt out and stop receiving autocalls.

Committee chairs and Scottish Rite clubs will be able to use this service to alert all or a subset of the Valley membership.

In order to ensure that the autocall program is used sparingly, any requests for and the text of a autocall should be sent to me; Dave Smith, our Assistant Secretary; or Ed Cohen, our Personal Representative; for review and approval. It will then be sent to John Suit, KCCH, Chair of our Communication and Outreach Committee, to do a final review and approval, record, and send the message.

We intend to start this program in December and ask anyone who does not want to be part of this program to call me and I will remove your name from the list and you will not receive autocalls.

### Alexandria Valley Scottish Rite – Office

The Valley Office is “open” and we are maintaining our regular hours. Monday – Friday 10:00am until 3:30pm. Please call if we can help you (703 998-9044).

### MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS - ON-LINE

#### “ZOOM” Meetings

Email is how we send invites to on-line meetings and keep our membership up to date on all the **Latest News**. We have about 1200 Active Members and only 850 E-mail addresses **Please be sure we have your current email address.**

### Alexandria Scottish Rite Proposed Operating Budget for 2021

Category	Approved	Projected	PROPOSED
	Budget	(9+3)	BUDGET
	2020	2021	2021
<b>Estimated Income</b>	<b>\$217,825.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$ 213,185.00</b>
Dues	\$103,200.00		\$ 101,360.00
Fees	\$ 7,625.00		\$ 8,525.00
Rent	\$ 80,000.00		\$ 78,000.00
LMIP interest	\$ 18,500.00		\$ 18,000.00
Dinner	\$ 3,500.00		\$ 3,300.00
Misc	\$ 5,000.00		\$ 4,000.00
<b>Admin. Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 71,300.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$ 69,250.00</b>
Salaries	\$ 31,000.00		\$ 31,000.00
Payroll Taxes	\$ 3,200.00		\$ 2,600.00
Telephone + IT	\$ 9,000.00		\$ 8,500.00
Postage and Mailing	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 2,200.00
Printing	\$ 12,000.00		\$ 12,000.00
Audit	\$ 4,500.00		\$ 3,300.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 2,500.00		\$ 2,500.00
Taxes-Stormwater Utility Fee	\$ 7,100.00		\$ 7,150.00
<b>Building &amp; Operating</b>	<b>\$ 83,200.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$ 83,400.00</b>
Insurance	\$ 13,600.00		\$ 14,600.00
Utilities	\$ 32,000.00		\$ 30,000.00
Security	\$ 15,600.00		\$ 13,800.00
Maintenance & repairs	\$ 22,000.00		\$ 25,000.00
<b>Philanthropic</b>	<b>\$ 2,650.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,250.00</b>
Education	\$ 200.00		\$ 200.00
Teacher of the Year	\$ 1,650.00		\$ 1,650.00
Members - dues remitted	\$ 800.00	\$ -	\$ 400.00
<b>Contributions &amp; Fees</b>	<b>\$ 29,440.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$ 31,325.00</b>
Supreme Council - Cap	\$ 27,200.00		\$ 29,190.00
Supreme Council - Candi	\$ 1,050.00		\$ 1,050.00
SR Fund, VA(CLD) - Cap	\$ -		\$ -
SR Conf of VA	\$ 1,000.00		\$ 900.00
GWMNM	\$ 190.00		\$ 185.00
<b>Dinners/Refreshments</b>	<b>\$ 16,050.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$ 14,850.00</b>
Meetings & Installation	\$ 5,000.00		\$ 4,500.00
SR Conf & Workshops	\$ 3,000.00		\$ 3,000.00
Feast of Tishri	\$ 300.00		\$ 300.00
Blue Lodge Relations	\$ 1,050.00		\$ 1,050.00
Reunions	\$ 5,000.00		\$ 5,000.00
Ladies Nights	\$ 700.00		\$ 500.00
Special Events - Picnic	\$ 1,000.00		\$ 500.00
<b>General Items</b>	<b>\$ 9,800.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$ 11,360.00</b>
Degrees, Robes, etc	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 1,500.00
Transportation	\$ 4,800.00		\$ 4,800.00
33 & KCCH investiture	\$ -		\$ 1,800.00
SR Conference Host	\$ 700.00		\$ 700.00
14th degree rings	\$ 2,300.00		\$ 2,560.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$212,440.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$212,435.00</b>
<b>Income over Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 5,385.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$ 750.00</b>



Don't forget the Alexandria Scottish Rite meeting on Friday, November 13 at 7:30 p.m.

## ***The State of our Temple Building***

David H. Smith, Sr., 33°, Chairman, Trustees. and David C. Morris, 33°, General Secretary

Despite the best efforts of the Coronavirus to stop us in our tracks, building maintenance and improvement projects have moved forward thanks to the efforts of our General Secretary, Ill. David C. Morris, 33°. In the May-June 2019 Bulletin, the Trustees reported a long list of completed projects, on-going projects and future project ideas.

While our income is down, we were still able to complete several projects during the virus shutdown and started rethinking how we would operate in the future. Those completed items include:

- Replacing all self-actuated urinal flush devices with automatic devices.
- Replacing toilet flush devices in the men's, women's, and robing room with automatic devices.
- Upgrading the electrical plug wiring in the auditorium.

Because of the social distancing and sanitizing requirements brought on by the Coronavirus and to keep everyone safe and healthy, our General Secretary developed requirements for safe entry into the building. This required the purchase of thermometers, spraying equipment, wrist tags, hand sanitizing units, masks and gloves.

We realized that Zooming would be an important part of our meetings in future if we wanted to continue communicating with the membership who don't drive at night and those living out of state. We, therefore, developed a plan to install Zoom equipment in the large and small Lodge rooms and in the auditorium. The plan and equipment requirements were presented to the Executive Council, approved and the membership briefed at a Zoom meeting. It consists of:

- Large Lodge Room: 4 Samsung 65" TV screens, PTZ Optics camera, streaming device, smart panel, and amplifier.
- Small Lodge Room (Executive Board Room): Portable equipment: 1 Samsung 65 TV screen, PTZ Optics camera, conferencing cart, streaming device, smart panel, microphone mixer, 4 microphones and audio interface.
- Auditorium: Renewed Projection Screen, laser projector, PTX Optics camera, joystick controller, and smart panel.

Some projection booth upgrades will be included as we start on this project.

Other projects in various stages of completion are:

- Sweeping and restriping of parking lot and curbing.
- Trimming shrubbery and trees and some tree removal.
- Designating handicap parking in the driveway near the elevator entrance.

The Trustees continue to assess upkeep and maintenance needs for the building and grounds in coordination with the General Secretary and Personal Representative.

Of course, maintenance never ends and there are still many issues that need monitoring and future repair, so we very much thank you for including the building fund when you pay your dues each year.

Sincerely and fraternally,  
Dave Smith and Dave Morris

## ***The Scottish Rite Fellows' Program***

Brian Walaszczyk, 32°, 2020 Alexandria Valley Scottish Rite Fellow

In even numbered years, Valleys around the Southern Jurisdiction have the opportunity to nominate one or more of its younger members as Scottish Rite Fellows. The Fellows are then selected by the various Sovereign Grand Inspector General (SGIG) or Deputies to the Supreme Council. In the past 30 years, approximately 1,000 Scottish Rite Brethren have become Fellows.

The Fellows program provides an additional communication link between the Valleys, Orients, and the Supreme Counsel. To promote this communication, the Fellows meet with the Sovereign Grand Commander and participate in special meetings and workshops.

It was my honor to have been selected as the 2020 Alexandria Valley's Scottish Rite Fellow, but this year, as a result of the COVID pandemic, the meeting was on Zoom rather than in-person. Nevertheless, it was a great opportunity and I want to share with you some of what I learned. I also must report that, as a result of an unexpected job opportunity, I will be relocating to Pittsburgh. But I assure you that I will continue to assist the Alexandria Valley in as many ways as possible. I will miss you all, and while distance may separate us, our obligations join us together for life – and with Zoom we are closer than ever.

The 2020 Grand Commander's Scottish Rite Fellows meeting was held virtually on 14 August 2020, with over 50 participants in attendance. Sovereign Grand Commander (SGC), Illustrious James Cole opened the meeting from the House of the Temple and provided a description of the Fellows program. He explained that the mission statement and details of the Fellows program are available on the Scottish Rite Supreme Council's website [[www.scottishrite.org](http://www.scottishrite.org)].

III. Cole noted that the Fellows provide different perspectives, and he welcomed our questions and input during the meeting. With that encouragement, we asked a significant number of questions and I wanted to share some of his responses.

Q: How does one balance the lessons of philosophy and action as taught in our degrees?

A: It is important for individuals to achieve balance. Balance is important in our organization. We need to live a Masonic life; that is the best way to act, to communicate our values, and to defend our institution.

Q: What is the current impact of COVID to the Scottish Rite?

A: COVID is an opportunity. While we cannot be together physically, we have grown our ability to utilize the internet and have ZOOM meetings. This allows us to reach out to people who are not able to make meetings.

Q: What is the next big thing in advancing Masonic education?

A: The Master Craftsman program has transitioned to an online program and, various videos have been integrated into the Scottish Rite website. Additional courses and videos are in development, and the website is being enhanced so visitors can interact with videos posted. In sum, the Scottish Rite is attempting to leverage technology in order to expand education.

Next spring, there will be officer training for the Valley's Personal Representative, Treasurer, Secretary and Assistants. The training will focus on their jobs and encourage a proper succession plan.

Q: What are the current metrics for VMAP?

A: During the last two sessions, statistics showed the Valleys that engaged with VMAP had higher initiation rates and lower net membership loss with some Valleys showing a net gain

Q: Are you concerned that VMAP had become a certification checklist rather than a tool?

A: There have been updates to the VMAP notebook to address some of these concerns.

*(Continued on Page 10.)*

Q: Why are people not engaging in the Scottish Rite?

A: This could be related to poor communication and public relations. Valleys need to have activities that the members want to engage in, and then must publicize these activities.

Q: Is there a unified stance on how Valleys are to proceed with COVID in future?

A: COVID is affecting every community differently. Each SGIG and Deputy will decide what approach would be best for the Valleys in their Orient based on local government health advice and consistent with the guidance of the Grand Master of that jurisdiction.

Q: How are per capita dues used?

A: Our Supreme Council has a two-year budget of approximately \$10.5 million dollars. 60% is spent on personnel costs. \$1.2 to \$1.5 million is expensed for meetings (i.e., conferences, sessions, travel, and training). It also covers the expenses for the House of the Temple.

Q: What initiatives are currently underway?

A: There is a plan to change the biannual assessment of the Scottish Rite to an annual assessment. This assessment looks at new programs and changes to current programs, ceremonies, and other activities.

Q: What is the plan to address declining membership and have we completed any membership projections?

A: The biggest impact on membership numbers is the death rate, which is approximately 4%. Initiation rates are approximately 2%. A good scenario would be to double the initiation rate to 4% in next few years. In Virginia, it is forecasted that the membership decline will bottom out over the next decade and then it will begin to gradually grow.

Q: Has there been any discussion on improving the delivery of ritual?

A: The Supreme Council recently put out a standardize approach to communicating of all the degrees, including mandatory degrees. The Valleys now have an option to have a virtual Reunion utilizing approximately 170 slides. At least five Orients will be utilizing the virtual Reunion in the next 90 days. This decision is up to the SGIG or Deputy.

Q: Are there any discussions on publicity and marketing?

A: The most recent action is our partnership with bea Freemason.org.

Q: What strategies beyond Rite Care have been developed for community impact?

A: There is an effort to seek funding to write grants for individual Rite Care Programs. There also is a plan to host a Rite Care Conference with the Northern Scottish Rite Jurisdiction.

Q: What is that status of the Acacia Guild Program?

A: It is doing very well. More information will be coming out in the next Scottish Rite Journal.

Following the question and answer session, SGC Cole encouraged Valleys to have a Zoom agenda for their meetings. After the opening ritual is complete, the Valley can open the meeting for ZOOM attendance. This will allow members who live at considerable distance from the Valley, can't leave their home due to age, or are taking care of children, to continue to engage with their Brethren and the Rite. As you know, Ill. Cohen, our Personal Representative, is exploring how this can be done in the Alexandria Valley.

The SGC closed the meeting by thanking the Fellows for taking their time to join the meeting with other competing family and work duties.

Fraternally,  
Brian Walaszczyk

## Secretary's Corner—Part 2

III. David C. Morris, General Secretary

Although 2020 was an unusual year, so many of our Brethren stepped up to the challenge and did extraordinary work on behalf of the Valley and the Rite. We show our appreciation to these Brethren at our January 8, 2019, Award ceremony when we present them with a Certificate of Appreciation or a Certificate of Merit to commemorate their efforts.



We consider your recommendations at our December 11 Executive Council meeting when we make our award decisions, so it is important that you communicate your recommendations to the Personal Representative, the General Secretary, or the Head of one of the four Bodies before the December meeting.

This year the Executive Council reached a decision on our 2020 community service award at our August meeting when we selected one or more food bank(s) to receive this award.

We were motivated by the degree of food insecurity in our community as a result of the COVID epidemic and the long lines at food banks. And we wanted to make this decision early because in addition to the check for \$1500 we will present, we wanted to ask if each of you would consider making a contribution, no matter how small the amount, so that at our award dinner, we would be able to donate much more than \$1,500 to the selected food bank(s).

If this is within your cable tow, I would ask you to send a check payable to the Alexandria Valley, and on the memo line write "charity contribution for food bank." Please send the check to Alexandria Scottish Rite, P.O. Box 175, Alexandria VA 22313.

This will be a tax deductible donation for you, and the money we will be able to donate will be of significant help to our neighbors who are without jobs, without funds, and without food.

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

### NOVEMBER 2020

November 7  
Grand Lodge Of Virginia  
Grand Annual Communication  
Richmond, VA

November 11 –  
Veterans Day



November 13 – 7:30 p.m.  
Valley Meeting – 7:30p.m.  
(Chapter, Council & Lodge of Perfection)  
Elections of 2 bodies.

November 18 – 7:00 p.m.  
Loudoun SR Club  
If ZOOM – 7:00pm  
If in person 7:30pm @  
Ashburn-Sterling Lodge

November 21 - time TBD  
Grand Chapter Royal Arch  
Masons in Virginia  
Grand Annual Communication  
Alexandria Valley SR & other locations

November 26 – HOLIDAY  
Thanksgiving Day



### DECEMBER 2020

December 5—One Day Reunion Zoom  
Ask a Brother and Get a Petition

December 11 – 7:30 p.m.  
Valley Meeting – 7:30 p.m.  
(Consistory & Lodge of Perfection)  
Elections in the 2 bodies

December 25 – HOLIDAY  
Christmas Day



### JANUARY 2021

January 1 – HOLIDAY  
New Years Day

January 8 – 6:00 p.m.  
Annual Awards Banquet  
Installation of Officers at 7:30 p.m.  
(Short) Valley Meeting follows  
(Lodge of Perfection)

January 20 – 7:00 p.m.  
Loudoun SR Club  
If ZOOM – 7:00pm  
If in person 7:30pm @  
Ashburn-Sterling Lodge

January 28 – 6:30 p.m.  
Shenandoah SR Club  
Spurmont Lodge  
Strasburg, VA

### 2021 DUES UPDATE

All of the Dues Notices should have been received, along with your 2021 card. If you have not received your notice and card, please contact the Valley office.

**SCOTTISH RITE BULLETIN**  
Valley of Alexandria, Orient of Virginia

Illustrious David H. Smith Sr., 33°, Editor  
Editor@AlexandriaScottishRite.org

TBD, Content Coordinator

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**CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

Please notify the Secretary immediately of any change  
of address, phone number, or email address. This is  
very important so that you may receive The Scottish  
Rite Journal and other publications and correspond-  
ence without delay.

**THE SCOTTISH RITE CREED**

Human progress is our cause, liberty of thought our  
supreme wish, freedom of conscience our mission, and  
the guarantee of equal rights to all people everywhere  
our ultimate goal.

**ILLUSTRIOUS JAMES DEAN COLE, 33°**  
Sovereign Grand Commander

**ILLUSTRIOUS ALAN WAYNE ADKINS, 33°, G. L. C. L.**  
Deputy of the Supreme Council in  
the Orient of Virginia

**ILLUSTRIOUS EDMUND COHEN, 33°**  
Personal Representative of the Deputy in Alexandria

**STATED MEETINGS**

**Alexandria Lodge of Perfection**

Second Friday of each month  
DONALD L. MCANDREWS, KCCH  
Venerable Master

**Alexandria Chapter of Rose Croix**

Second Friday  
February, March, July, November  
THOMAS E. GOOLSBY, KCCH  
Wise Master

**Alexandria Council of Kadosh**

Second Friday  
February, April, July, November  
RICK A. CADY  
Commander

**Alexandria Consistory**

Second Friday  
April, August, October, December  
RONALD J. LEIBFREID  
Master of Kadosh

