Renovation Complete & Grandeur Restored to Masonic Temple
Brethren:

Over the holidays, even amidst the financial conundrum that affects not only our nation but our world, I reflected on just how fortunate we are to live in this blessed country, to have homes to live in and family to love and a large network of Masonic brethren who support one another during the most somber and celebratory times. Our forefathers have been through even more distressing hardships, and yet they remained committed to advancing the values and expanding the legacy we continue today.

The “Change for the Troops” has been the most emotional thing I’ve been involved with since becoming a Mason. The entire Masonic family in Pennsylvania – the York Rite bodies, Scottish Rite Valleys, ladies of the Order of the Eastern Star and Masonic youth – has supported the program. Our Masonic Villages have contributed substantial amounts from collections made in their cafes and through various resident recreational clubs, and it’s growing in awareness throughout our communities as others unrelated to our Masonic family wish to support the effort.

I am proud to report that the Masonic Temple in Philadelphia is now in pristine shape. My lovely wife describes it as, “glistening like a brand new sand castle.” Thank God the original builders selected the stone they did – it looks magnificent now that it has been re-pointed and cleaned, and the windows have been restored. The overall transformation of this beautiful building is powerful; you owe it to yourself to check it out!

Those who know me know that I have a somewhat adventuresome spirit and am always looking for a challenge. I’ll admit that I was truly tested when I attended the recent reunion for the Valley of Allentown. I was received as the class honoree… but left the class clown. (One might say I’ll do just about anything to raise funds for charity!) When Commander-in-Chief Ill. Brother Doug Robinson asked me to the lectern for a presentation by Ill. Brother Maurice “Benny” Heater, I naturally became apprehensive. After presenting to me, on behalf of himself and his lovely wife Carol, a $1,000 personal contribution for the Temple Initiative, Bro. Benny flashed me a mischievous smile and put on his red Shrine clown nose. Pulling an identical nose out of his pocket, he announced that if I would be willing to wear it, another brother in the Valley would match his contribution. As you can see, I obliged, and true to his word, Ill. Brother George Nakonetchny, Past Commander-in-Chief for the Valley of Allentown who had contributed $5,000 to the “Change for the Troops” program at the Annual Communication Inaugural Ball, came up on stage and presented me with yet another $1,000 check for program. Later on, Ill. Brother Robinson asked me to don the nose one more time in exchange for his own $100 donation for “Change for the Troops.” How could I turn down such fraternal generosity?

Events such as these demonstrate the meaningful bond we share as Freemasons and the opportunities we enjoy to mingle solemn ritual with friendly frivolity, while remaining true to our call to help others in need – to Preserve Our Heritage for Future Generations.

As of the end of December, the Unity Gavel and Box met its goal of visiting half of the lodges across the state, as well as additional events such as the December Quarterly Communication. It’s amazing to consider the actual number of touches it has received as it traveled around the state. To me, it is a continuous reminder of the incredible feats we can accomplish when we labor in unanimity and give selflessly of our talents, our friendship and our wealth for the betterment not only of our Family of Freemasonry, but for our nation and our world. Whether it’s our goal to bring our Masonic Temple back to its original glory, to increase officer proficiency, to support the troops who guarantee our freedom, to assist a Masonic charity or a widow in need, it’s up to us to Earn it Again… and again… and again.

Even if it means temporarily trading your dignity for a big red clown nose!

Sincerely & fraternally,

R.W. Grand Master

R.W. Grand Master Stephen Gardner presented the Grand Master's Outstanding Service Medal to three brethren whom he considers “benevolent ambassadors in the community.” The award, which is presented to honor Masons who have distinguished themselves through service to their community, lodge or Grand Lodge, was presented to Brothers Larry R. Christenson, Thomson Lodge No. 340, Paoli; Col. (Ret.) Harris H. Brooks, Brotherhood Lodge No. 126, Philadelphia; and John E. Goodman, Greenleaf Lodge No. 561, Allentown.

Bro. Christenson was recognized for his dedicated work for the Masonic Charities' Capital Campaign around the state, and for epitomizing Masonic goodwill and values within the community.

Grand Master Gardner expressed his sincere appreciation to Bro. Brooks for being the “magic link” that brought his vision for the “Change for the Troops” to reality. “The logistics are staggering,” Grand Master Gardner said, referring to the connections required to get the calling cards into the hands of troops serving in the desert. “I wanted to target troops departing from Pennsylvania so we could give back to our neighbors, co-workers, family members and friends who live in the communities where our lodges meet.”

Grand Master Gardner also conveyed his gratitude to Bro. Goodman, Grand Lodge Organist-East, for sharing his outstanding musical talent at Masonic functions across the Commonwealth. His dedication was evident when, despite a fractured hip, he insisted on playing at the 2007 Annual Grand Communication.


The award is named for Bro. John Thomson, Past Master of Lodge No. 51, Philadelphia, who served as R.W. Grand Master in 1861-1862. He was the only individual to ever serve in all six elected offices of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, and was publicly acclaimed and cited by the Humane Society of Philadelphia for saving several persons from drowning in the Delaware River. The handcrafted sterling silver cup was designed by the direction of Bro. Robert L. Dluge, Jr., R.W. Grand Master, 2000-2001.

Bro. Charles McHenry pulled over on his way to work when observing a car that hit a tree on the side of the road. The driver’s feet were trapped, and she was unable to exit the car. Bro. McHenry, without regard for his own well-being, used a pocketknife to cut the seat belt from the woman’s neck and extricated her from the vehicle seconds before it was engulfed in flames. He carried her to his vehicle until medical help arrived.

Bro. Ronald Goodman acted heroically when he heard his neighbor’s wife calling for help late one evening. Upon discovering a fire in the master bedroom, his neighbor attempted to rescue his pets, but on his way out his prosthetic leg became caught between some furniture. Bro. Goodman ran across the street and into the house, freed his neighbor and lifted him to safety while smoke poured out the front door.

Bro. Robert A. Di Palma, Sr., Senior Master of Ceremonies of Bluestone Lodge No. 338, Hallstead, received the Collar and Jewel of a Master Masonic Scholar from the Pennsylvania Academy of Masonic Knowledge. This medallion honors brethren who complete all three certification levels and may be worn to any Masonic meeting.
Most Worshipful Jeffrey B. Hodgdon, Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, presented Grand Master Gardner with a replica of the original Jan. 30, 1783, warrant of Lodge No. 4, a Pennsylvania lodge, that was discovered in the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts’ archives.

Brothers Larry Christenson, John Goodman and Col. Harris Brooks (Ret.) were presented with the Grand Master’s Outstanding Service Medal.

Grand Master Gardner presents the Collar and Jewel of a Master Masonic Scholar from the Pennsylvania Academy of Masonic Knowledge to Bro. Robert A. Di Palma, Sr.

Representatives from the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine: Brothers Richard A. Belmont, Past Potentate, Irem Shrine; Harry L. Reiter, Recorder/Past Potentate, LuLu Shrine; and Jack Jones, Imperial Recorder, Imperial Shrine


Walter G. Smith, R.W. Grand Secretary of Prince Hall, and Charles A. Bishop, M.W. Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania

Retiring District Deputy Grand Masters received recognition from Grand Lodge: Robert A. Ciampitti, Sr., Dist. A; Raymond T. George, Dist. E; Robert S. Conway, Dist. 1; Kenneth E. Beard, Sr., Dist. 2; Alvin W. Hollister, Dist. 14; James A. O’Connor, Dist. 21; Jack E. Flaugh, Dist. 25; Barry L. Wheeler, Dist. 31; Thomas Gamon, IV, Dist. 40; and Victor J. Capooci, Dist. 59.

Thompson Cup recipients Brothers Charles D. McHenry and Ronald D. Goodman receive their awards from Grand Master Gardner.

Grand Lodge Officers recessing after the Quarterly Communication Session
The “Change for the Troops” program continues to reach out and touch the lives of thousands of servicemen and servicewomen protecting our freedom overseas. The program has raised more than $162,419 through the generosity of lodges, brethren and other Masonic groups. Almost as quickly as the money comes in, cards are distributed to deploying units.

On Aug. 20, 2008, 176 members of the U.S. Army Reserve’s 320th Military Police Battalion, headquartered in Ashley, departed for a four-to-six-week training at Fort Dix, N.J., and then a 12-month deployment to Iraq. Nearly 600 people attended the official departure ceremony, including Wilkes-Barre Mayor Thomas Leighton and state Rep. Eddie Day Pashinski. Many Masons from the area attended the ceremony. Col. and Bro. Harris Brooks (Ret.) and Bro. Jay W. Smith, R.W. Senior Grand Warden, presented each soldier with a pre-paid calling card. The unit will operate a military prison holding 8,000 al-Qaeda and insurgent detainees. The Commander, Lt. Col. G. Scott Carlson, and most of the leadership of this unit are Pennsylvania Masons.

In September, Bro. Brooks delivered 180 calling cards to members of Stryker Brigade, Company C of the 1st Battalion of the 111th Infantry (1/111th) out of Kutztown, at a send-off ceremony for the troops and their families. He and several other Masons attending the ceremony were approached by members of Charlie Company who identified themselves as Pennsylvania Masons. “We appreciate all that Pennsylvania Freemasons are doing in support of the Charlie Company,” Capt. Peter Muller, Company Commander, said. “These cards are so important for our soldiers to be able to stay in contact with their families while they are deployed.”

On Nov. 10, 2008, senior leadership from the Willow Grove Air Reserve Station, including the Wing Commander Col. Paul Comtois and Senior Staff Officers, paid a visit to the Masonic Temple in Philadelphia. Following a private tour of the National Historic Landmark, the guests joined members of Brotherhood Lodge No. 126 for dinner prior to the lodge’s business meeting. Once the brethren closed the lodge, the guests joined them in Egyptian Hall, where they showed their appreciation by presenting R.W. Grand Master Stephen Gardner with a polished chrome bullet from the A-10 aircraft and, on behalf of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, a certificate and an American flag that the 111th Fighter Wing flew on a combat bombing mission over al-Qaeda targets on Sept. 11, 2008.

Since that meeting, Col. Comtois has received his first degree. It was through his involvement with the Grand Lodge’s “Change for the Troops” program that Bro. and Col. Comtois became interested in the fraternity, and he is now a proud member of Brotherhood Lodge No. 126.

This past summer, the Grand Lodge purchased 600 calling cards for battle casualties and troops injured in war zones who are recovering at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. Crews from McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., hand-delivered the cards to Ramstein Air Base in Germany, from which the cards are disbursed to the recuperating troops. For the days prior to their transportation to a stateside hospital, the troops are able to use the cards to call home from the hospital.

On Jan. 13, Grand Master Gardner and Bro. Brooks presented 3,825 calling cards to Col. Marc Ferraro, Commander of the 56th Stryker Brigade, for soldiers of the brigade deploying from Fort Dix to the war zone. Col. Ferraro presented Grand Master Gardner with a Liberty Bell plaque and unit coin, as a token of the unit’s appreciation. Among the soldiers present were several Pennsylvania Freemasons. They were given lapels to distribute to fellow brothers while deployed.

Maj. and Bro. James Fluck, Teutonia Lodge No. 367, West Reading, member of the 56th Stryker Brigade, told the Post, a newspaper published for the Fort Dix Community, this type of generosity is typical of Freemasons and is greatly appreciated. “Deployment is tough enough. The biggest complaint in the unit was the lack of communication back home,” Bro. Fluck said.

Continued on page 13
At the Aug. 14, 2008, Stated Meeting of Jerusalem Lodge No. 506, Philadelphia, members met Ms. Jennifer Johnson, daughter of then-Junior Warden Robert Johnson. Ms. Johnson is the Assistant Director of the Holmesburg Baptist Summer Camp, an eight-week program of the Holmesburg Baptist Church in Philadelphia that serves approximately 80 children. Each year, their mission is to obtain money, food or other items for those in need. After Ms. Johnson's father told her about the “Change for the Troops” program, and reading more about it in “The Pennsylvania Freemason,” she decided this would be a great idea for the campers' activities last summer. The campers subsequently collected $600 that Ms. Johnson presented to the lodge for the program.

Above: The campers of Holmesburg Baptist Summer Camp


HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

’Twas days before Christmas when the troops’ plane touched down
But alas they were unsure they’d make it home safe and sound
Suddenly through the clearing, two headlights shined
A bus arriving in the nick of time!
The weary soldiers would not have to wait
They’d be home for the holidays thanks to Lodge No. 358.

Much to the delight of the 26 National Guard soldiers returning from five months of training at Fort Polk in Louisiana, they arrived at Fort Indiantown Gap four days before Christmas. As of midnight, they would have a full 10 days to spend with their loved ones before deploying to Iraq. Shortly after their arrival, however, they learned they would have to find their own transportation home. With little time or money to make arrangements, the troops faced spending part of their leave at the military base.

Bro. James Holiday, P.M., Somerset Lodge No. 358, and other members of the lodge have a close relationship with the staff at Fort Indiantown Gap. For the past four years, to give veterans an opportunity to enjoy coffee, donuts, friends and good conversations, they have opened their lodge as a canteen on Veteran's Day. Sgt. Dean Nist, from Fort Indiantown Gap, knew he could turn to Somerset Lodge to deliver the soldiers a Christmas miracle. He phoned Bro. Holiday and asked if the brothers could help.

“They knew we’d do it,” Bro. Holiday said, “even if we had to pay full cost for it. My motto is, ‘We can do it because we can.’”

A few phone calls later, through the assistance of Griffith Transportation and Brian Walker, transportation director of the Somerset Area School District, Bro. Holiday found a bus and a driver. He quickly collected funds from lodge brothers, District 41 and friends. Some of the troops would be dropped off at the Bedford Interchange and the rest would meet their family members at the Somerset Lodge. Despite it being 5 below zero that night, several of the brothers and their ladies went to the lodge to wait along with the troops’ family members.

“Standing there at 3 in the morning and seeing the wives and girlfriends all waiting with their red roses made it well worth what we contributed,” Bro. David Neal, W.M., Somerset Lodge No. 358, said.

Far left, Dave Neal, W.M., Somerset Lodge No. 358, and James Holiday, P.M., also of Somerset Lodge, stand with the National Guardsmen they helped bring home.

“It’s the greatest thing we ever sponsored.”

Once the bus arrived, the lodge members served coffee and donuts and talked with the soldiers and their families until 5 a.m.

“We threw everything together in a big hurry but it worked out very nice. It was a blast,” Bro. Holiday said. “We never went to bed that night.”

The lodge is making an active effort to become more involved in their community, according to Bro. Neal. They’ve established separate accounts for different projects, whether it is helping a needy family or benefiting the “Change for the Troops” program to support local soldiers.

Due to its support of servicemen and servicewomen through the “Change for the Troops” program, the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania also received requests from military officials to help units on leave return home quickly. Deborah O’Connor, of the Family Readiness Group for Company C of the 1st Battalion of the 111th Infantry, Kutztown, asked if the Grand Lodge could help with bus transportation for units of the Stryker Brigade training at Fort Dix in New Jersey. The Grand Lodge was able to provide the funds (separate from the “Change for the Troops” contributions) to obtain buses for the troops’ safe return home to northeast Philadelphia, West Chester and Kutztown.
On Nov. 1, 2008, 223 brethren, their ladies and guests gathered at the newly restored Masonic Temple in Philadelphia for the 2008 Stars & Stripes Gala to benefit the continued preservation of this National Historic Landmark. The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania's focus during the event was to honor and pay tribute to the five branches of the armed forces.

Each of the evening's distinguished honorees represented his respective branch of the military and received an award from Grand Master Stephen Gardner for his service to our country. They are shown with Grand Master Gardner in the top left photograph below, from left-right: Stephen J. Harmelin, Esq., U.S. Coast Guard; Brother and Colonel (Ret.) Phillip M. DeHinnis, U.S. Army; Lieutenant General Ronald S. Coleman, U.S. Marines; Rear Admiral (select) Kenneth J. Braithwaite, II, U.S. Navy; and Colonel (Ret.) Harris H. Brooks, U.S. Air Force.

In addition to the opportunity to view the restoration work on the exterior of the Masonic Temple, guests participated in a silent auction and cocktail reception and enjoyed dinner and entertainment by Jonathan and His Fuzzy Navel Swing Band. Two DeMolay, Andrew Richards and Paul Stults from the Chester Pike Chapter, served as footmen for the arriving guests.

The evening's events had a patriotic flavor with an emotional touch, including the presentation of colors, a powerful POW/MIA prayer and inspirational remarks by the honorees. The event raised $84,000.
On December 19, Masons from Regions 4 and 5 and their ladies met at the prestigious Oakmont Country Club for the annual Jingle and Mingle Gala.

In the splendor of the Grand Ballroom, surrounded by photos and relics of the famous club’s storied past, guests kicked off their holiday season with a chance to renew friendships, greet R.W. Grand Master Stephen Gardner and his lovely wife, Patricia, and enjoy the delicious food highlighted by chef-carved filet mignon.

Guests were entertained by both a strolling quartet of a cappella singers including Gail Roup, wife of District Deputy Grand Master P.J. Roup, as well as by Bro. Eric Waggoner on piano. Their holiday music blended perfectly with the ambiance of the elegantly decorated room.

There was also a silent auction of items donated by some of the District Deputy Grand Masters and generous Masons felt moved to support this most worthy charity. The items included food and wine baskets, handmade jewelry, Lenox, gifts and sports memorabilia.

Not only did those in attendance have the opportunity to get into the holiday spirit, but through their generosity, the event raised $5,000 for the Masonic Villages at Sewickley, showing once again that Masons answer the call to “Earn it Again.”

A quartet of carolers including Gail Roup, (far right) wife of District Deputy Grand Master P.J. Roup, entertained the guests throughout the evening.

Bro. Mark Nord, District Deputy Grand Master for District 26 and Region 5 co-chair of the event and his wife, Kelly, pose with R.W. Grand Master Stephen Gardner and his wife, Patricia, in front of Oakmont’s grand fireplace.

Bro. Jesse Stoltz, P.M., W.M., Avalon Lodge No. 657, Pittsburgh, and his wife, Valerie, catch the holiday spirit.

Brothers Jim West and Jim Eckert, and Donna Martha enjoy the festivities with R.W. Deputy Grand Master Thomas K. Sturgeon and his wife, Joan.

Brothers Bruce Robinson, W.M., Ligonier Lodge, and Rodney Boyce, District Deputy Grand Master for District 30, pose for a picture.
As of the end of November 2008, 337 lodges were participating in the Call ‘em All program. During the first 11 months that the program was made available to lodges, participants made 5,028 broadcasts which generated 760,207 individual calls.

Many lodges have become great advocates of Call ‘em All as an easy, quick and effective communication tool. Bro. Bill Kingsbury, District Deputy Grand Master, attests that it’s a valuable tool for the brethren of District C. “We’ve had great success with very active members reaching out to one another and getting to meetings as well as fun, interesting and provoking programs. I’ve seen revitalized interest in participation across the district,” he said. “Call ‘em All played a big part in all of that.”

For example, the district held an enjoyable, low-cost “Masons Night Out” by inviting brethren from across the district to the LuLu Temple to play some pool, ping pong and pinball. “Everyone was having a blast when I showed up. They were enjoying pizza, soda and just hanging out,” Bro. Kingsbury said. “Events like this help brethren get to know one another and make it more likely they’ll attend lodge meetings. The format of Masonic meetings is not conducive for a lot of conversation, and nobody wants to show up to a room full of strangers.” By building and strengthening relationships outside of lodge, brethren feel more comfortable knowing they have friends to sit with during meetings.

Members of District C have also hosted a bowling night, a family night out to a Phantoms game and other activities to get to know one another in a less formal setting. “The goal is just to keep the activities coming!” Bro. Kingsbury emphasized.

And it’s all possible through Call ‘em All!

CALL ‘EM ALL… IT DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE!


Bro. Anthony J. Bateman, who is a police officer in Upper Darby Township, was able to attend the meeting and congratulated his brother after his installation. There are four generations of Freemasons in the Bateman family. “Freemasonry is truly a family, more than words can express,” Bro. Robert J. Bateman said.


Also installed that evening were Brothers Gary W. Metz as Senior Warden and Edward E. Dillon as Junior Warden. The installing Master for Bro. Metz was Bro. David R. Lewis, P.M., and the installing Master for Bro. Dillon was Bro. Metz.

The following brethren took part in Bro. Bateman’s installation: Brothers Ricky L. Swalm, District Deputy Grand Master for District 36 as Senior Deacon; Lynnwood J. Dixon, P.D.D.G.M., as Junior Deacon; David R. Lewis, P.M., as Senior Master of Ceremonies; David W. Parker, P.M., as Junior Master of Ceremonies; Raymond W. Unger, P.M., Pocono Lodge No. 780, Cresco, as Pursuivant; James F. Atkinson, P.M., as Chaplain; David J. Coffman, P.M., as Treasurer; and Charles J. Dalrymple, P.M., as Secretary. Bro. Richard M. Caruth, P.M., Lansdowne Lodge No. 711, assisted with the investiture.

Other brethren in attendance were: Brothers John A. Rose, Regional Instructor, Region 1; S. Curtis Barrett, Principal of School of Instruction for Masonic District 36; Raymond W. Bryant, W.M., Penn Lodge No. 709, Concordville, and Instructor; as well as visiting brethren from District 36 and other districts.

INSTALLING THE 4TH GENERATION OF BATEMANS

Left to right: Brothers Anthony J. Bateman; Robert J. Bateman, R.W.J.G.W.; Robert J. Bateman, Jr., Worshipful Master; and Stephen Gardner, R.W.G.M.

The Pennsylvania Freemason
R.W. Grand Master Stephen Gardner was the honored guest at the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry in the Valley of Harrisburg during the Fall Reunion held at the Scottish Rite Cathedral in Harrisburg, Nov. 20-21, 2008.

During the two-day reunion, the members of the “Stephen Gardner Class” received 13 Scottish Rite Masonic Degrees, including the Friend and Brother Eternal, 26°, during which the Civil War story of the strength of Masonic ideals was magnificently portrayed. Historical figures, representing both the Union and Confederate Armies, faced the challenges that the Civil War presented for Masonic brethren who found themselves on opposing sides of a major war.

At the conclusion of the degree, Frank J. DeStefano, Jr., Commander-in-Chief of the Valley of Harrisburg, presented Grand Master Gardner with a specially engraved Civil War Officer’s Sword in commemoration of the class that was named in his honor.

**SCOTTISH RITE CLASS HONORS GRAND MASTER**

**UNITY GAVEL IMPRESSES EVEN JUDGES**

Barry L. Wheeler, District Deputy Grand Master for District 31, held an official visitation for Brownsville Lodge No. 60 for the presentation of the Unity Gavel and Box on Nov. 3, 2008. Bro. Ernest G. Bradmon, P.M., Worshipful Master, used it in the closing of the lodge.

Fayette County Masons are proud to have four out of five County Judges who are Masonic brethren participating in the symbolic lodge or Uniontown Lodge of Perfection.

The brethren were amazed at the intricate detail of the Unity Box and were honored to share in the passing of the Unity Gavel.

Left-right: Brothers Judge Steve P. Leskinen, Laurel Lodge No. 651, Uniontown; Prothonotary Lance Winterhalter, James Cochran Lodge No. 614, Connellsville; Judge John F. Wagner, Jr., Senior Deacon, King Solomon Lodge No. 346, Connellsville; Barry L. Wheeler, D.D.G.M-31; Ernest G. Bradmon, P.M., Worshipful Master, Brownsville Lodge; and James R. Ziglear, P.M., Brownsville Lodge.

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**Schedule for the Travel of the Unity Box and Gavel**

| Jan. 2 | - Open Dist 37 No. 229, Close Dist 37 No. 662 |
| Jan. 5 | - Dist 53 No. 290, Dist 53 No. 389, Dist 25 No. 408 |
| Jan. 6 | - Open Dist 37 No. 259, Close Dist 37 No. 701 |
| Jan. 7 | - Open Dist 37 No. 791, Close Dist 27 No. 805 |
| Jan. 8 | - Open Dist 27 No. 272, Close Dist 27 No. 577 |
| Jan. 9 | - Open & Close Dist 27 No. 694 |
| Jan. 12 | - Open & Close Dist 53 No. 575 |
| Jan. 13 | - Dist 26 No. 243, Dist 37 No. 483, Dist 26 No. 599 |
| Jan. 14 | - Open & Close Dist 23 No. 363 |
| Jan. 15 | - Dist 23 No. 434, Dist 53 No. 517, Dist 23 No. 550 |
| Jan. 16 | - Open & Close Dist 37 No. 672 |
| Jan. 19 | - Open Dist 27 No. 239, Close Dist 27 No. 769 |
| Jan. 20 | - Open & Close Dist 26 No. 433 |
| Jan. 21 | - Open Dist 52 No. 277, Close Dist 52 No. 522 |
| Jan. 22 | - Open & Close Dist 53 No. 910 |
| Jan. 26 | - Open Dist 52 No. 599, Close Dist 53 No. 623 |
| Jan. 29 | - Open & Close Dist 26 No. 411 |
| Feb. 2 | - Open Dist 52 No. 520, Close Dist 52 No. 521 |
| Feb. 3 | - Dist 25 No. 424, Dist 25 No. 498, Dist 23 No. 550 |
| Feb. 4 | - Dist 24 No. 347, Dist 24 No. 399, Dist 23 No. 483, Dist 56 No. 726 |
| Feb. 5 | - Dist 25 No. 234, Dist 24 No. 366, Dist 56 No. 547 |
| Feb. 6 | - Open & Close Dist 23 No. 316 |
| Feb. 9 | - Open & Close Dist 56 No. 557 |
| Feb. 10 | - Dist 24 No. 392, Dist 24 No. 416, Dist 25 No. 473, Dist 23 No. 754 |
| Feb. 11 | - Open Dist 23 No. 363, Close Dist 24 No. 708 |
| Feb. 12 | - Open Dist 24 No. 362, Close Dist 23 No. 434 |
| Feb. 16 | - Open & Close Dist 25 No. 258 |
| Feb. 17 | - Open & Close Dist 25 No. 304 |
| Feb. 18 | - Open & Close Dist 25 No. 790 |
| Feb. 19 | - Open & Close Dist 56 No. 241 |
| Feb. 21 | - Open & Close Dist 26 No. 804 |
| May 4 | - Open & Close Dist 41 No. 554 |
| May 5 | - Open Dist 20 No. 490, Close Dist 20 No. 220 |
| May 6 | - Open & Close Dist 19 No. 319 |
| May 7 | - Open & Close Dist 41 No. 538 |
| May 11 | - Open Dist 20 No. 282, Close Dist 34 No. 302 |
| May 12 | - Open Dist 19 No. 203, Close Dist 19 No. 381 |
| May 14 | - Open & Close Dist 19 No. 324 |
| May 15 | - Open & Close Dist 34 No. 524 |
| May 18 | - Open Dist 20 No. 574, Close Dist 20 No. 494 |
| May 19 | - Open & Close Dist 20 No. 281 |
| May 21 | - Open Dist 20 No. 166, Close Dist 20 No. 539 |
| May 26 | - Open & Close Dist 34 No. 572 |
| June 2 | - Open Dist 39 No. 617, Close Dist 39 No. 411 |
| June 6 | - Open & Close Dist 19 No. 371 |
| June 9 | - Open Dist 41 No. 278, Close Dist 41 No. 312 |
| June 11 | - Open & Close Dist 39 No. 355 |
| June 13 | - Open & Close Dist 34 No. 589 |
| June 18 | - Open & Close Dist 34 No. 688 |
**MEET YOUR NEWLY APPOINTED DISTRICT DEPUTY GRAND MASTERS**

**District A**

**Bro. Robert Joseph Burns**, Past Master of both Equity Lodge No. 591 and Lodge No. 9, Philadelphia, has been appointed District Deputy Grand Master for District A. Bro. Robert is engaged to marry Debra Condon, and has two daughters, Jamie Lynn and Lauren Nicole. Raised on June 30, 1976, Bro. Robert resides in Abington and is a field clinical consultant for Boston Scientific, St. Paul, Minn. He enjoys golfing, woodworking and restoring his 1976 Mustang to enter it into various charitable fund raising car shows.

**District E**

**Bro. Charles Holloway**, Past Master of Richard Vaux-Ivanhoe Lodge No. 384, Philadelphia, has been appointed District Deputy Grand Master for District E. Bro. Charles resides in Philadelphia with his wife, Janice. Raised on April 19, 1979, Bro. Charles is a member of Mozart Lodge No. 436, Philadelphia. Retired, Bro. Charles spends 10-15 hours per week teaching the ritual to brethren unable to attend the School of Instruction and is passionate about raising funds to support veterans. He enjoys golf, woodworking and restoring his 1976 Mustang to enter it into various charitable fund raising car shows.

**District 1**

**Bro. Larry Arthur Der**, Past Master of Casiphia Lodge No. 551, Mount Joy, has been appointed District Deputy Grand Master for District 1. Raised on Jan. 11, 1974, Bro. Larry resides in Mount Joy with his wife, Rochelle (Shelley). They have a son, Dustin. He works as general superintendent of construction for Caretti, Inc., Camp Hill, and his hobbies include golfing, walking, gardening, swimming, yard work, traveling, hunting and fishing.

**District 2**

**Bro. Scott Thomas Matincheck**, Past Master of Prince Edwin Lodge No. 486, Middletown, has been appointed District Deputy Grand Master for District 2. Raised on Feb. 27, 1995, he resides in Middletown with his wife, Lynn Anne and daughters, Sarah and Jessica. He is a bank officer-branch manager for M&T Bank, Middletown, serves as a board member of the American Red Cross Middletown Chapter and enjoys golfing, sports and Masonic research.

**District 14**

**Bro. Charles Walter Grimm**, Past Master of Waymart Lodge No. 542, has been appointed District Deputy Grand Master for District 14. Raised on Oct. 10, 1988, he resides in Waymart with his wife, Marilyn, and has three daughters: Dawn, Ellen and Jaclyn. Bro. Charles is president of Waymark Building Center and an active community and church volunteer. He enjoys auto racing (NASCAR and local dirt modified), traveling to other lodges, supporting local fund raisers and spending time with his grandson, Nathan.

**District 21**


**District 25**

**Bro. Bernard David Hanmore**, Past Master of Crawford Lodge No. 234, Meadville, has been appointed District Deputy Grand Master for District 25. Raised on Jan. 12, 1984, Bro. Bernard lives in Conneaut Lake with his wife, Lori, and two children, Holly and Mark. He is a superintendent for Erie Construction Company, Inc., and his hobbies include model railroading, woodworking, hunting and fishing.

**District 31**

**Bro. Robert Allison Farquhar**, Past Master of Gummert Lodge No. 252, Fayette City, has been appointed District Deputy Grand Master for District 31. Raised on March 22, 1997, Bro. Robert lives in Perryopolis with his wife, Margaret (Peggy), and has two sons, Robert II and Heath. A retired teacher of chemistry and psychology from Belle Vernon Area School District, Bro. Robert’s many interests include hunting, fishing, target shooting, and collecting coins, guns, Star Trek, Star Wars and World War II memorabilia. He is involved in Boy Scouts and his church.

**District 40**

**Bro. Philip Terry Green**, Past Master of Pickering Lodge No. 446, Upper Uwchland, has been appointed District Deputy Grand Master for District 40. Raised on Sept. 9, 1996, Bro. Philip resides in Chester Springs with his wife, Margot, and children Nicholas and Rachel. A senior IS systems administrator for GSI Commerce, King of Prussia, Bro. Philip is an Air Force history buff and enjoys boating, music and working on computers and classic Ford Mustangs.

**District 59**

**Bro. George John Butcher**, Past Master of Moscow Lodge No. 504, has been appointed District Deputy Grand Master for District 59. Raised on Jan. 12, 1999, Bro. George lives in Madisonville with his wife, Beverly, and has three children: Barbara, Jay and Loreen. He works as a Multi-Family/Commercial Division sales manager for Simplex Industries, Scranton. His hobbies include golfing, fishing, gardening, hunting and restoring antique cars.
Many Masonic lodges, including our own Grand Lodge, have music played during the course of their meetings. This practice goes back a long way, and some may be aware that Brothers Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Jean Sibelius, Irving Berlin and Franz Joseph Haydn composed music for use within a Masonic lodge meeting.

In an article on “Views From The Past,” in the February 2008 issue of “The Northern Light,” the publication of the Scottish Rite, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, there was an article from the Nov. 15, 1854 issue of “The American Freemason” of Louisville, KY by distinguished Brother Robert Morris, commenting on his observance of “the general practice in the [New York] city lodges of accompanying the ceremonial of each degree with appropriate music.” Bro. Morris quoted an article from another Masonic publication, “The Masonic Signet and Journal,” which commended this practice, stating, “We are convinced that it [music] would impart an interest to the work and solemnize the feelings of brethren, so that we should not so often hear complaints of want of proper solemnity during lodge work. It would have a beneficial influence in extending and improving the taste for this most delightful and refining science.”

Bro. Morris quite agreed with this, stating that “it [music] does elevate and refine [the degree]. It fixes the ceremonial in the memory by the same means that the tender mother teaches her offspring the elements of religion; it sweetens the temper, prevents weariness, so apt to steal upon the senses, especially of the laboring man, in the hours of night. Its uses are well nigh innumerable.”

In closing his article, Bro. Morris says, “Nothing is more appropriate, either, to the ceremonials of Freemasonry, for music is one of the seven liberal arts and sciences, necessarily alluded to by every brother who attempts to confer the Fellow Craft’s Degree, but beautifully expanded and expounded by him who confers it right.”

Music within a lodge meeting has a way of setting the mood, serving the moment and assisting the brethren in the enjoyment of the lodge meeting. How much better we sound, when singing the “National Anthem” or “Happy Birthday” than if there were no accompaniment. Many thanks to those skilled brethren who provide their musical abilities for the enjoyment and enlightenment of our Masonic fraternity.

We, as Masons, have each pledged to pursue Masonic knowledge. The Pennsylvania Lodge of Research stands as a fountain of Masonic knowledge to all who would attend. Any Pennsylvania Freemason, in good standing, may join the Pennsylvania Lodge of Research, and any Freemason, in good standing, may attend any of its meetings. For further information on how you can join or when and where the next meeting will be held, just go to the Grand Lodge Web site, www.pagrandlodge.org and click on the PA Lodge of Research link. You can also contact its Secretary, Bro. James F. Standish, 1 Pierce Court, Glen Mills, PA 19342-1787 or jstandish@thirdageconsulting.com.

The Academy of Masonic Knowledge will hold meetings on Saturday, March 14 and Saturday, October 24. The meetings will be held in the Deike Auditorium of the Masonic Cultural Center on the campus of Masonic Village at Elizabethtown. Registration will open at 8:30 a.m., with the program beginning at 9:30 a.m. A free lunch will be served at noon and the program will be completed by 3 p.m. All Masons are welcome to attend. Dress is coat and tie.

Twice a year, the Academy invites renowned scholars to discuss a Masonic subject in their field of expertise. The great objective in Freemasonry is to gain useful knowledge, and the Academy provides a great opportunity for brethren to learn and to understand more about the significance of the Craft.

Plan to attend and bring a brother or two along with you. Pre-registration is required. To pre-register, simply e-mail Brother James F. Standish at jstandish@thirdageconsulting.com or write him at 1 Pierce Court, Glenn Mills, PA 19342-1787. Include your name, address, lodge number, telephone number and e-mail address.

The Pennsylvania Army National Guard’s 4,000-member Stryker Brigade makes up the largest contingent from the Pennsylvania Guard to deploy to a combat zone since World War II. The brigade has ties leading as far back as the American Revolution. The group deployed to Iraq around Jan. 20.

“I’m glad that so many brothers from Masonic lodges around the state have been able to attend these ceremonies at the different units and experience first-hand the appreciation from these soldiers and their families,” Bro. Brooks said. “It is almost like you’re part of the soldiers’ families. The sense of pride you feel in seeing these fine men and women as they prepare to defend our country is just overwhelming.”
60+ YEAR SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS IN 2009

The following list recognizes and congratulates those brethren who have received, or who will receive, a 60, 70 or 75-year service award during 2009. Those receiving a 50-year service award will be honored in the May issue.
A TRIBUTE TO AMERICA
AND MASONIC UNITY

On Nov. 17, 2008, at a Stated Meeting of Oakdale Lodge No. 669, a Veterans Day Program titled “A Tribute to America” was presented by Bro. Charles Karcher, P.M., E. Liverpool Lodge No. 681, E. Liverpool, Ohio, and the E. Liverpool Area Veterans and Masons.

The program originated as a one-time presentation after the attacks on 9/11/2001 to give recognition to those who lost their lives, those who attempted rescues, those who survived and those who continue to protect our rights and freedoms by helping to make this a better and safer world. It has now been presented 18 times in nine different cities and has received great support and recognition.


Bro. James L. Rohbeck, Sr., District Deputy Grand Master for the 47th District, was pleased to make an informal visitation to the lodge and spoke on the origin, purpose and travels of the Unity Gavel and Box, which he brought with him and used in the closing of the lodge.

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

Bro. Richard E. Whitman, Jr., Event Manager for the Masonic Villages, was named “Mason of the Year” by Lawrence R. Ebersole, W.M., at Abraham C. Treichler Lodge No. 682’s 93rd Annual Banquet on Nov. 13, 2008. In presenting the award, Bro. Ebersole noted that Bro. Whitman was extremely worthy of the recognition because of his untiring efforts in working with the lodge to ensure that the many lodge meetings, activities and events are professionally, promptly and efficiently organized and executed.

FORGING A MASONIC BOND

Bro. Christian Danninger received his Master Mason Degree on Sept. 17, from Bro. Alfred Much, P.M., Teutonia Lodge No. 367, West Reading, in his native language, German. Bro. Danninger is from Austria and lives and works in the York area. A fellow employee of his, Bro. John J. Evans, Jr., P.M., Howell Lodge No. 405, Honey Brook, was instrumental in orchestrating this event with Bro. Raymond M. Sheaffer, W.M., Zeredatha Lodge No. 451, York.

At the September stated meeting of New Temple Lodge No. 720, Allentown, Bro. James G. Ernst, P.M., was honored for his 50th year as a Past Master (he served as Worshipful Master in 1958). Worshipful Master Jeff Moser presented Bro. Ernst with a Certificate of Appreciation from the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania for his many years of outstanding dedication and service to the lodge. Bro. Ernst served as chairman of the instruction committee for 23 years, as chairman of the Trustees for 18 years and as lodge secretary for eight years.
In September, members of King Solomon's Lodge No. 346 became aware that a widow of a Past Master of Marion Lodge No. 562 was in danger of losing her homeowner’s insurance because of the need for a new roof on her home. Recently, she has been battling a brain tumor and has suffered hard times since her husband died suddenly two years ago. The family was able to gather enough money to purchase the needed materials, but was in need of help for demolition of the old roof and installation of the new one.

Members of the lodges quickly spread the word, and many brethren came forward to offer their assistance. On the sunny morning of Oct. 12, 2008, 14 brethren and five non-Masons gathered at 7:30 a.m., with tools, equipment and dump trucks to remove the old roof and replace it with a new one. By 3:30 p.m., the task was accomplished, and the new roof was finished. Participating from Marion Lodge No. 562 were Brothers Michael C. Snyder, J.W., and Raymond E. Oldland, Sr.; from King Solomon’s Lodge No. 346 were Brothers Jeffrey M. Wonderling, P.D.D.G.M.; David C. Coughanour, W.M.; Charles G. Etling, P.M.; Alan R. Sandusky, P.M.; James R. Higgins, P.M.; Tim Shumar, P.M.; James C. Mayes, P.M.; Joshua L. Miller, P.M.; Nick Mellon and David J. Panzella; from Waynesburg Lodge No. 153 were Rodney Ansell, District Deputy Grand Master of the 30th Masonic District. The group also included five non-Mason friends and family: Chad Ansell, Ben Dillon, Chuck Frye, Ron Kerns and Randy Pilarcik.

The family was overwhelmed by the support of the fraternity and expressed their sincere appreciation. In a letter to R.W. Grand Master Stephen Gardner, the widow's daughter wrote:

“I am writing to tell you of a wonderful gift that some fine and outstanding gentleman of Masonic District 30 of Western Pennsylvania gave to my mother, Kathryn Ansell.

“When my mother was faced with the letter from the insurance company telling her that the insurance of her home would be canceled if a new roof was not put on, she was distraught. She is on a fixed income and the bid from a local contractor was not one that she could afford. She told my uncle, Rodney Ansell, and he got in touch with his friend and brother, Jeff Wonderling, and they came up with a solution. What these men pulled off with fellow brothers in less than a month’s time was truly amazing.

“The comment was made, ‘Everyone I asked said, I will be there.’ And they were. These men gave their time and energy to putting on a roof for a woman who has suffered bouts of breast, lung and brain cancer and is a survivor and miracle. There was no monetary gain for them. It was, as the Masons are so good at, giving to others in need.

“The Masons are so good at giving to others in need. I know in my heart of hearts that (my mother) truly was moved and greatly appreciated all that these men did. I can tell you on behalf of my sister and our families, we could never fully express our gratitude to these men for all that they did.”

In Job’s Daughter friendship,
Rhonda Pilarcik

Bro. Timothy A. Brooks is a hero in every sense of the word. He risks his life every day as a police cyclist with the city of Bethlehem and serves as the Emergency Management Coordinator in Hanover Township, Northampton County. This summer, following an 11-month tour of Iraq as a Major with the 213th Area Support Group of the Pennsylvania National Guard, Bro. Brooks and his family celebrated his safe return home by, once again, helping others.

A member of H. Stanley Goodwin Lodge No. 648, Bethlehem, since 1995, Bro. Brooks and his wife, Judi, and 11-year-old son, Jared, were part of a bicycling team that raised almost $20,000 to benefit the National Multiple Sclerosis Society-Greater Delaware Valley Chapter. On July 19, 2008, they rode 50 miles with the Saints Cycling Team in the PA Dutch MS 150 Bike Ride. Bro. Brooks rode an additional 75 miles the next day, Jared earned the title of VIP Cyclist for raising more than $1,000 on his own. The story of the family coming together to honor Bro. Brooks’ return from overseas was shared at the awards ceremony and the family was introduced to the audience.

Bro. Brooks has been bicycling/fund raising for the MS Society for three years, biking more than 450 miles and raising more than $3,000. This summer, his family also participated in the Rock and Ride at Long Beach Island, N.J., to benefit the American Red Cross. He became interested in benefit bike rides while taking a local spinning class. His instructor was involved with a team from St. Luke’s Hospital in Bethlehem and invited Bro. Brooks to join.

“It is a great way to do what I love to do, ride and help raise money/ awareness for Multiple Sclerosis,” he said.

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In Job’s Daughter friendship,
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For the last several years, Doylestown Lodge No. 245 has been experiencing significant growth in its membership. Social historians spend their lives studying social and community dynamics, but you only have to attend one of the lodge's Stated Meetings to see why the lodge is so vibrant.

On the second Friday of the month, their humble dining hall is quite lively, bustling with laughter and welcoming fellowship. The brethren here resemble ambassadors for Freemasonry in general, and for Doylestown Lodge in particular. If you were to ask the members and visitors, “What is it about this lodge?” you would hear several answers which could be summarized into a few things: friendly, fun, well-run meetings, quality ritual and a unique retreat from the outside world.

The ritual quality of this lodge is primarily due to the champion efforts of Bro. Ralph Wagner, P.M., coupled with an active Past Master corps. All the masters of this lodge, as far back as memory serves, have known two, if not all three, degrees as trained by Bro. Wagner. This is something Doylestown Lodge views as a requirement. Looking to the future, two of their next four members in line for the Junior Warden’s chair have already conferred all three degrees.

Their stated meetings are well attended, averaging 65 members and visitors present. It is often humorously noted by Bro. William A. Wetterau, now the Past District Deputy Grand Master of District 8, that the candidate balloting period at Doylestown Lodge is like a social gathering. While the formalism of the ballot is always strictly observed, there is a convivial roar of social activity within the lodge room.

When visitors are recognized, they are always offered a transfer petition. This is typically followed with an outburst of laughter in the meeting. It is a running joke within the lodge, and they have fun with it. The lodge membership is getting younger with each passing month. The majority of the petitions for membership received have been from men between the ages of 20 to 45 years old. The current officer corps in line for the chairs is also from this age group.

Doylestown Lodge holds two extra meetings each month when called on to labor. They have been doing this for several years now in addition to having two separate groups of appointed officers and an eager group of Past Masters to share in the labor. Additionally, what is becoming a tradition is a Master Mason Day held at the Grand Lodge in Philadelphia, initiated in 2006 by Bro. Randolph Scott, P.M. In that year, Bro. Scott hosted six Master Mason degrees, which was followed in 2007 by Bro. Charles Hollowell, P.M., hosting nine Master Mason degrees.

The third annual Master Mason Day was held on Saturday, Dec. 13, 2008, when seven Master Mason degrees were conferred. This was followed by all the members reconvening in the Ionic Hall where Bro. Carl Swope, District Deputy Grand Master for District 8, delivered the Ancient Charge at Raising to the new Master Masons. The proud new Master Masons are Bros. Andrew Bergstresser, Gary Bergstresser, Jr., Kevin Barry, John Oehler, Colin Phelps, Paul Gourley and David Christian.

The conferring masters for the degrees, all from Doylestown, were Brothers Emery Kohut, W.M.; Kent Baird, S.W.; Albert McDevitt, Jr., J.W.; Gary Schuyler, P.M.; James Dowling, P.M.; and Hurley McBrierty, P.M.


The guest speakers were State Representative and Bro. Robert Mensch, Perkiomen Lodge, and County Commissioner and Bro. Bruce Castor, Charity Lodge No. 190, Jeffersonville. The chairman of the building dedication was Bro. Paul Decker, Perkiomen Lodge. Mayor David Schiffgens, in his welcoming speech, gave the analogy of having Freemasons participate in the dedication of Red Hill’s new Municipal Building to that of Bro. George Washington and other brethren laying the cornerstone for our nation’s Capitol building in 1793, with both events symbolizing the hopes and expectations of our nation.
For 11 years, Bro. Larry “L.C.” Christenson, Thomson Lodge No. 340, Paoli, gave everything he had as a pitcher for the Philadelphia Phillies. His hard work, and that of his teammates, earned them several division and league championships, and of course, the World Series in 1980.

Today, Bro. Christenson dedicates his life to family, friends, clients, his personal company, charitable endeavors and the Masonic fraternity.

“I would love to do more if I could find the time,” he said. “I do the best I can.”

He became involved in the Masonic fraternity after discussing business with the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania and forming a relationship with Bro. Thomas W. Jackson, R.W. Past Grand Secretary. The more he learned about the fraternity, the more interested he became in joining. In 2001, he and Bro. Walter Dunkle, Dietrick Lamade Lodge No. 755, Williamsport, were invited to attend a special Mason-At-Sight ceremony held at State College.

The rarely bestowed honor of being made a Mason-At-Sight entails all three degrees being performed on one day and in the presence of the Grand Master, who in 2001 was Robert L. Dluge, Jr.

“I’ve had some very wonderful moments in my life including meeting Pope John Paul II in a private audience and being part of the 1980 World Series Championship team, but the honor bestowed on me of being Raised as a Master Mason definitely ranks right up there,” he said.

On Saturday, Dec. 6, at the Quarterly Communication, Bro. Christenson received the Grand Master’s Medal, given to members of the fraternity who have distinguished themselves through service to their community, lodge or Grand Lodge.

“As a Freemason, I realize I’m in a very special, charitable fraternity. There have been hundreds of former major leaguers who were Freemasons: Richie Ashburn, Cy Young, Ty Cobb and the list goes on – a lot of great old timers from back in the day. I’ve enjoyed meeting so many other good men along the way.”

His official job is president and CEO of Christenson Investment Partners, but he spreads his time between his company and numerous charitable efforts. In addition to working with the Masonic Charities’ Capital Campaign, Bro. Christenson is involved in charitable work with the ALS Foundation, Phillies Charities, American Heart Association, Tug McGraw Foundation for brain cancer research, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and Fighting Blindness working alongside his friend Wayne Gretzky.

“Working with these charities has grown to be a very important part of my life,” he said.

In his seven years as a Mason, Bro. Christenson has also joined the Scottish Rite and the Shriner’s. He traveled to Moscow with Bro. Jackson as part of an Eastern European Conference hosted by the Grand Lodge of Russia. He recalls that in all of Russia, there were only 263 members and he and Bro. Jackson were guests at their Annual Communication. It was with great pride that the members and their guests were able to walk the streets of Moscow in their ties to attend the meeting.

“They had recently come from operating underground and no longer had to conduct their business in secrecy,” Bro. Christenson said. “In receiving us as guests during the Communication, you could look in their eyes and see tears of happiness.”

Bro. Christenson is a strong advocate for the Masonic Temple in Philadelphia. “It is absolutely a national treasure,” he said. “I take visitors there all the time. It is such a unique place with so much history. I’m impressed with how quickly the restoration process got underway. It is remarkable how Joseph Murphy [chief executive officer, Masonic Villages], his staff and the Capital Campaign Committee came together for this accomplishment.” He has taken both his daughters, Libby, 16, and Claire, 14, to see the Temple.

Before he became actively involved in the Masonic fraternity, Bro. Christenson’s life revolved around athletics. As a child, he had either a basketball, football, baseball glove, tennis racket or track shoes within his reach at all times. He and his older brother, Gary, played sports day in and day out with neighbors, stopping only when it was too dark to see. He always played on teams a level higher than his age group in little league and in high school, and was named to the All-America teams in baseball and basketball his junior and senior years.

As a pitcher in high school, he threw back-to-back no-hitters and consistently hit balls out of the park. Hailing from Everett, Wash., known for its cold and rainy climate, however, Bro. Christenson anticipated he would be a college recruit to play basketball. During his senior year playing baseball, he noticed more than 50 scouts at a time at his games. This number dwindled to a handful throughout the season because he looked to be an extremely high draft choice.

The day after graduating from high school in 1972, he was chosen in the first round of the amateur draft by the Philadelphia Phillies, which had the number three pick in the country.

“We didn’t have a lot of baseball in the northwest,” he said, “and I’d never really left the state of Washington. When I heard the Phillies drafted me, I thought the Phillies were horses. I never really followed professional baseball because my sport was basketball.”

That night, Phillies’ scouts came to his house and Bro. Christenson negotiated his own contact. He packed up and headed for Philadelphia with some family members. He worked out at Veterans Stadium and watched Steve Carlton throw a three-hit shutout against the Pirates that night. Roberto Clemente was at right field for the Pirates.

That summer, he played in the rookie league where he pitched in only six games. He made the major league roster in spring training and won his major league debut at age 19 on Friday night, April 13, 1973. He pitched a complete game victory, beating the Mets 7 to 1. At the age of 19, he was the youngest player in the major leagues that season.

With the Phillies, he went on to win three straight National League East division titles, 1976 through 1978, and won the World Series Championship in 1980. In 1977, he had an overall record of 19 wins and 6 losses. In 1983, the Phils battled the Dodgers to win the National League Pennant and returned to the World Series, losing to Baltimore. Bro. Christenson was successful off the mound as well. With 11 long balls, he holds the record for the most career home runs by a pitcher in the history of the Phillies.

Throughout his 11-year career, his toughest opponents were pain and injuries. Born with a bad back, his doctors told him “to take up the violin” instead of sports. He played through the pain. His catcher, Bob Boone, could tell when he was hurting and would come out and talk to him on the mound to delay the game. Overall, he had five elbow operations, three shoulder operations and many pulled muscles.

“I was hardly ever 100 percent pain-free while playing,” he said. “But I wasn’t the only one. You’d just tape on a Band-Aid, take an aspirin and go get ‘em. It was such an honor to play professional baseball for
the Phillies organization.”

“I played in a great era of baseball. I would do it all over again, although I’d do things differently. My era is over, but I feel fortunate to still have friends and teammates who I see quite a bit. I’m proud of our team and the organization.”

The list of players he was honored to play with and against includes legends of the game, those who took him under their wing and who he greatly admired such as teammates Steve Carlton, Tim McCarver, Jim Lonborg and Jim Kaat, along with Mike Schmidt, Tug McGraw, Garry Maddox and Pete Rose. Others he had the pleasure to play against were Willie Mays, Hank Aaron, Willie Stargell, Tom Seaver, Jim Palmer and Bob Gibson.

For the first time in 28 years, there is a new Philadelphia Phillies World Championship team – a victory the fans, including R.W. Grand Master Stephen Gardner and his lady, Patricia, are still celebrating. For a man who once stood on the mound with the best baseball team in the world, Bro. Christenson feels the current team’s elation.

“I’m so happy for the organization, the fans and the players,” he said. “I’m so proud of them. The last few years with all the camaraderie, rivalries and other fun stuff that goes on – it all came together. And I think they can do it again.”

When asked how his 1980 team would fare against the 2008 Phillies, Bro. Christenson didn’t hesitate to say his own teammates would have swept the new generation.

“They would have been scared to death of Steve Carlton,” he said in jest. “Larry Bowa and Pete Rose would have been screaming into their dugout. We would have knocked their hitters on their rear ends because we were fierce and competitive.”

These days, when he finds time, Bro. Christenson enjoys playing golf (despite its frustrations), fishing and hunting. “I wish I had time to do more,” he said. “My business keeps me busy. Someday, I would like to quit being a 100-m.p.h.-person and be able to relax and spend time with family, friends and do more traveling.”

While he may not be throwing fastballs on the mound anymore, Bro. Christenson has a lot on his plate with plans to continue growing his business, supporting a seemingly endless list of charities and increasing his involvement in the Masonic fraternity.
Every day, people come up with brilliant ideas. Many times, no one acts on those ideas. In his poem, “A Dream Deferred,” Langston Hughes asks, “What happens to a dream deferred?” He answers, “Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun... Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or does it explode?” Every once in a while, a rare few put in the effort to make their ideas explode into something great and will see their dreams come to life.

Bro. Raymond Bush, a dual member of the Kite and Key Lodge No. 811, Allentown, and H. Stanley Goodwin Lodge No. 648, Bethlehem, and Bro. George Radecsky, a dual member of Huguenot Lodge No. 377, Kutztown, and H. Stanley Goodwin Lodge No. 648, had an idea that would become something great.

“It was an idea born from the fact that as you do re-enactments, you meet many brothers – and sisters actually – from the Order of the Eastern Star,” Bro. Radecsky said. “We started out wanting to be a lodge, but realized that wouldn’t be possible because we wanted to include brothers from different states.” Undeterred, together they co-founded the Revolutionary Sons of the Compass and Square, Inc.

This organization, incorporated on Oct. 10, 2006, allows 18th century living historians to meet at historic sites and battlefields during Revolutionary War events to share in the brotherhood.

“We portray what life was like during the founding of our great nation from 1774 to 1783, when we struggled to give birth to the ideals of freedom for all. What makes this very special for me is that so many of our Founding Fathers were Freemasons. It is an honor to be walking in the footsteps of Bro. George Washington and Bro. Ben Franklin,” Bro. Radecsky said.

Though gathering with brothers from many states is a major aspect of the Revolutionary Sons of the Compass and Square, Inc., it is also about promoting the fraternity and educating the public about the important roles Freemasons played in forming the nation.

“In contrast with the term re-enactors, who simply play at re-enacting historical events, we educate the public in all aspects of life during the Revolutionary War and avoid any anachronisms or 21st century displays of living while in sight of the public,” Bro. Bush explained.

“In the process of our show of fellowship at these shows, a few of our fellow historians have joined lodges so as to become members of ‘the Sons,’ which gives me great pride and a feeling of accomplishment that a simple idea can still make a difference,” Bro. Radecsky said.

With the help of Bro. Mark A. Haines, R.W. Grand Secretary, and several others from the Grand Lodge who gave approvals and direction, Bros. Radecsky and Bush recognized their dream. R.W. Past Grand Master Ronald A. Aungst, Sr., approved the Revolutionary Sons of the Compass and Square, Inc., to form under the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. On July 12, 2006, the Revolutionary Sons of the Compass and Square, Inc., was incorporated.

The first meeting of the Revolutionary Sons of the Compass and Square, Inc., took place at the 225th anniversary of our nation’s victory at the Yorktown battlefield in Virginia.

“Yorktown was a momentous affair, including [thousands of] Revolutionary War re-enactors from all over the country, many of whom are members of the Craft and have expressed an interest in being a participant in the Revolutionary Sons of the Compass and Square, Inc.” Bro. Bush wrote in a letter to the Grand Lodge. After “battle” one day, a group of men from the Revolutionary Sons of the Compass and Square, Inc., held a meeting at the peace memorial where local brethren were waiting to join them. The local brothers thanked the men for remembering what happened at Yorktown and for commemorating Freemasonry’s contribution to the Revolutionary War victory. “They also welcomed us and other members and brethren to join them at their regularly scheduled meetings and breakfast at Williamsburg,” Bro. Bush wrote. The men saw an original silver piece owned by one of the lodges that Bro. Paul Revere crafted. Bro. Bush described his Yorktown experience as “a truly remarkable event to remember and one that will not die after Yorktown.”

Another event took place when the Continental Line, a large organization of living historians, celebrated its 20th anniversary at Mount Vernon. On the Sunday morning of the event, the brethren were able to hold a meeting at the grave site of Bro. George Washington. “The thrill of kneeling at the Altar with the Bible, Compasses and Square with so many of our Masonic brothers from all of the 13 original colonies was a priceless experience. All that could be heard was the sound of the wind in the trees and words of our prayer for all of our fallen brothers and the sacrifices of the fraternity over the history of our country,” Bro. Radecsky said.

“The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania only grew in Masonic rapport, brotherly love and honor for recognizing this – ‘The Sons,’” Bro. Bush concluded. A simple idea, spawned from an interest and lifestyle, was allowed to grow into something great.

Deferring an idea and watching it melt away takes little work and is therefore unrewarding. Fulfilling a dream may be easier than anticipated. “Never let your dream die, because then, it’s never going to happen,” Bro. Radecsky asserted. “There was no heartache or tears... The Grand Lodge worked with us so nicely that it was a great experience.” The steadfast work of people like Bros. Bush and Radecsky helps to “Protect Our Heritage for Future Generations.”
MASSONIC BLOOD DONOR CLUB: GIVING SO OTHERS MAY LIVE

Donating blood can help save the lives of multiple strangers, and is an act that can be repeated over and over again. As a member of a fraternity devoted to the welfare of mankind, Masons are the ideal candidates to make such a sacrifice. It is no surprise to hear that the Masonic Blood Donor Club, started more than 40 years ago, has grown to include more than 32,000 members.

The Masonic Blood Donor Club is not a blood bank, but a blood assurance plan, which is a group of people who join together and agree to donate blood on a routine basis in anticipation of the future blood needs of the group's members. Participation offers members cost-free blood replacement on a nationwide basis, as long as the hospital is a member of the American Association of Blood Banks. This offers valuable protection for members and their families, since most health insurance policies may not pay for all the blood required.

Membership in the Masonic Blood Donor Club provides coverage for the member, his spouse and all children up to 18 years of age. The applicant or a substitute (family member, friend or neighbor) is required to donate one unit of blood to join; however, there is no financial cost to become a member. Voluntary financial donations would be accepted.

Any time a blood donation is made, whether at a blood drive affiliated with a Masonic organization or a public event, donor should tell the staff they are donating for the Masonic Blood Donor Club and give the member's name. Some, but not others keep records. If a brother passes away, his wife retains his membership.

For a new membership form, visit the Grand Lodge Web site at www.pagrandlodge.org and select Blood/Organ Donors from the left panel.

If you would like more information, if your lodge, valley or shrine wants to set up a Bloodmobile, or to participate in a Bloodmobile with a local church, school or business, please e-mail Bro. Norman A. Fox, Hackenburg-Mt. Moriah Lodge No. 19, Philadelphia, at normfox@aol.com, or contact Bro. William Gottschalk, Frankford Lodge No. 292, Philadelphia, at (717) 361-4067 or bng5650@dejazzd.com.

THIRTY-FOURTH DISTRICT LODGE PAST MASTER BECAME ORGAN DONOR


Bro. Hoover had expressed interest in becoming an organ donor upon his death. In fact, he had signed an organ donor card requesting that any viable organs or tissue be used to help those who were waiting for life-saving transplants. Bro. Hoover realized the importance of service to his fellow man through organ donation.

Upon his death, Mrs. Linda Hoover was contacted by CORE, the organ procurement agency in Pittsburgh. Since permission from the next of kin is required, CORE called Mrs. Hoover to secure her permission to proceed with organ and tissue donation. She readily agreed, knowing that this was her husband’s request. CORE explained that Bro. Hoover could possibly help over 200 people through his donation.

Mrs. Hoover felt this would be a final act of charity on Steve's behalf.

CORE has notified Mrs. Hoover that both corneas were used to restore sight to a 64-year-old man and a 74-year-old woman. In addition, bone, ligaments, tendons and skin will be used to help countless individuals up to five years from the date of Bro. Hoover's donation.

Bro. Rick Knepper, P.M., Cromwell Lodge No. 572, Orbisonia, Past District Deputy Grand Master for District 34 and Chairman of the Masonic Organ Donor Program, emphasizes that all Masons should follow Bro. Hoover’s example. Organ donation is vitally needed to save the lives of thousands of individuals each year, and the quality of life of others is greatly enhanced through the tissue transplants. As a Freemason, if you have never considered organ donation, today is a good time to take that step.

For information on the Masonic Organ Donor Program contact:

Rick Knepper
1461 Hospitality Drive
Chambersburg, PA 17202
Phone: (717) 263-1189

NATIONAL CAMPING TRAVELERS INVITE BROTHERS & SISTERS TO STATE RALLY

The 37th Annual State Rally of the National Camping Travelers will be held at the Grange Fairgrounds, Centre Hall, Pa., June 25-28, 2009. Themed “Our Brothers and Sisters,” this year’s rally will include meals, morning hospitalities, a pancake breakfast, games, an ice cream social, seminars, canned goods, bingo, nightly entertainment, a youth program, crafts/flea market, a chapter parade and memorial and church services.

National Camping Travelers is a camping organization composed of Master Masons and their families offering opportunities to make friends with fraternal brothers and sisters from all over the U.S.A. and Canada.

If you are a Master Mason who would like your family to participate in these events and fraternal fellowship, please contact State Director Bro. Jim Donnon, Community Lodge No. 744, Broomall, at (610) 356-1401. He will be glad to supply you with the information and forms needed to attend this rally.
The Masonic Temple is showing off its fresh new “face” now that all the scaffolding, which has encompassed the 135-year-old National Historic Landmark since August 2007, has been removed.

From the sidewalk to the roof, the building has been cleaned and re-pointed to its original appearance. Windows have been restored and weather stripping was added. The roof was repaired and all paint has been stripped and re-glazed.

The work is mostly complete with the exception of the cast iron fence. The historic posts are being restored and a fresh coat of grey paint is being applied to cover the old black layer. Based on research by DPK&SA Architects, LLP, the new look of the fence will respect the historical aspect of the building, while appearing more welcoming to visitors.

The interior of the Temple is also receiving its share of updates. In March 2008, a vast network of scaffolding constructed high above the staircase inside the Broad Street entrance greeted visitors. This structure was erected to accommodate painters restoring the great murals displayed here which had suffered water damage over the years.

These vast oil-on-canvas paintings are the work of Brother George Herzog (1851-1920), a German-born and trained interior decorative painter, who, according to a contemporary source, “guarantees satisfaction over all work executed.” A member of Lodge No. 51 (now University Lodge No. 51, Philadelphia), he was responsible for nearly 80 percent of the Temple’s mural art.

His great murals above the western staircase are: “Demeter Greek Goddess of Agriculture” in her splendid lion-drawn cart (North wall); “Bringing in the Harvest” (South wall); “Woodlands” (West wall); and “Singers praising God for the bountiful crops at harvest time” (East wall).

Much of the water damage not only affected the surface of the paintings, but also the plaster behind the murals. The canvas had to be cut or peeled back to expose the damaged plaster. In the areas where the canvas was partially peeled back, the backside of the mural was cleaned and re-secured to the wall surface. The damaged surfaces were meticulously restored and touched up to blend in with the existing undamaged sections of the painting.

In the areas where the loose canvas was cut out to expose the water damaged plaster, the plaster was repaired and covered by a new piece of primed canvas that was then attached to the main body of the mural. The missing painted artwork was recreated on the new canvas patch and blended into the existing mural. The damaged surfaces surrounding the canvas areas were scraped and touched up as required in colors that matched the preexisting ones. Meticulous attention was paid to ensure the new paint blended in with the undamaged portions.

The mural restoration was made possible thanks to a generous donation from Concordia Lodge No. 67, Jenkintown. The restoration of the entire Masonic Temple would not be possible without all the generous donors who have supported this project and made the Temple a landmark of which the entire fraternity and community can be proud.

See the Masonic Temple in a new light. It is open for tours Tuesday through Friday, beginning at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. (additional tours may be added at 4 p.m.), on Saturdays at 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. (there may be an additional noon tour), or at other times through advance arrangements. Pennsylvania Masons (with ID cards) and active military are admitted free. For additional information, call (215) 988-1900 or visit online at www.pagrandlodge.org.

Explore New Items and Old Favorites from the Masonic Library & Museum’s Gift Shop

The Temple Treasures gift shop stocks over 700 items, including three colors of golf shirts with embroidered Square & Compasses, six shades of ball caps with embroidered Square & Compasses and Pennsylvania Past Master emblem, and nearly 100 book titles. There is an extensive array of Ben Franklin books and items, including the exclusive Byer’s Choice figure. Reproductions from the collections of the Masonic Museum are always being introduced. Of special interest are the new Support Our Constitution Flag wooden collectibles by The Cat’s Meow Village and B. Hometowne Designs, and the exclusive miniature Charity by William Rush.

The shop’s Web site is updated regularly and offers new items, as well as sale items, throughout the year.

You may place your order on-line at www.masonicmuseumgifts.com or by calling the Temple Treasures Museum Shop at (800) 336-7317 or (215) 988-1973 using a credit card. Please call prior to ordering, as several items may be combined in one carton, reducing the UPS shipping charges.
ADVANCED MEDITATION ON MASONIC SYMBOLS

By John R. Heisner — Reviewed by Charles S. Canning, MMS, Academy of Masonic Knowledge

In the introduction, Heisner informs us that these are personal reflections on the relationship to God and His creation. He asks the important question, “What is God’s plan for you in your lifetime?” There are innumerable partial truths that remain concealed to those who are closed-minded in their quest for knowledge. Heisner presents 57 Masonic symbols, which he relates to Scripture. These personal reflections are given in contemplating divine truth. We are reminded of Rick Warren’s “The Purpose Driven Life” and keeping God always in view. The process is likened to the pathways of the Kabbalah.

His fifth meditation is introduced by scripture from I Kings 8:61 and is related to the Chamber of Reflection, which is used in some American lodges. Surrounded by various symbols, the candidate contemplates in silence the significance of his pending Masonic journey. He is, “led to reflect upon where he is in his own life…” Heisner suggests, for those who did not have the opportunity of experiencing the Chamber of Reflection before receiving the degrees, to do so through prayer and meditation, contemplating one’s life goals. The Masonic degrees are meant for reflection, and the beginning of one’s journey needs to emphasize serious meditation.

The subject of death is central to much of Freemasonry. Many of the symbols in “Advanced Meditations” are not found in our Pennsylvania ritual. In one chapter, the candidate is divested of minerals and metals, and the relationship to the science and philosophy of alchemy is addressed. Indeed, “if one lifts the veil of Masonic mysteries high enough, he will see beneath it an alchemical formula that is fundamental to all of the Third Degree.” The lodge room is Freemasonry’s laboratory.

Pennsylvania Masons will be familiar with many of the symbols discussed but may question reading about the clouded canopy, Jacob’s ladder, the pot of incense, the anchor and ark, the weeping virgin, the beehive and other elements. All these are genuine parts of Masonic ritual, but are not found in Pennsylvania’s Ancient work. “Advanced Meditations” provides a different perspective to the concepts and symbols found in our Masonic experience. The key to finding new meaning to your Masonic journey for light is meditation. Heisner gives us much to contemplate and, in so doing, each one may find the true secret that is hidden for him within Freemasonry.

Each thought and meditation which the author presents looks at Freemasonry with a serious spiritual focus. The thrust of the experience is to see the larger picture and improve ourselves through self-evaluation. The text is recommended reading as every Mason can benefit from it. As I approach my 50th year of Masonry, I found much to think about in these readings. “Advanced Meditations on Masonic Symbolism” is a second publication by the author; the first is titled “Meditations on Masonic Symbols.”

ONE GREAT INTERNATIONAL LANDMARK HELPS ANOTHER

If anyone had not previously heard of Scotland’s Rosslyn Chapel, the publication of Dan Brown’s “Da Vinci Code,” and other significant books and films thrust this beautiful 15th century building into the international spotlight, bringing with it great acclaim and literally thousands upon thousands of visitors. In addition to being architecturally and artistically unique, as is the much younger 1873 National Historic Landmark Masonic Temple in Philadelphia, Rosslyn has legendary ties with Freemasonry and the Knights Templar. Last October, the paths of these two historically significant structures converged. The two nonprofit organizations charged with their preservation, the Rosslyn Chapel Trust and the Masonic Library and Museum of Pennsylvania, joined for a special one-evening Oct. 27th lecture program entitled, “Rosslyn Chapel: Fact and Fiction,” held at Philadelphia’s Union League. This lecture was part of an on-going series sponsored and coordinated by the Library Committee of the Union League and the Royal Oak Society (the American membership affiliate of the National Trust of England, Wales and Northern Ireland).

Lady Helen, Countess of Rosslyn, a well-respected historian, curator and a member of the family which has owned Rosslyn for centuries, with Colin Glynne-Percy, the Director of the Rosslyn Chapel Trust, delivered a memorable talk on the history of the historic edifice and the international fund raising efforts to return it to its former glory. The Masonic Library and Museum of Pennsylvania was pleased to play a small role in this program as a co-sponsor for this event by assisting with the promotion of the lecture in the local media and to Pennsylvania’s Masonic community. The lecture was a total success as it was completely sold out with approximately 40 percent of the 130 attendees having connections with Pennsylvania Freemasonry.

The next day, Masonic Library and Museum Executive Director Andrew Zellers-Frederick, with Curator Bro. Dennis P. Buttleman and Senior Librarian Glenys Waldman, had the honor of taking Lady Helen, Colin Glynne-Percy and members of their party on a special guided tour of the Masonic Temple. A highlight for these important guests was viewing the painting of Rosslyn Chapel and Gothic Hall. At the end of the tour, Lady Helen graciously presented the library with a signed copy of her book, “Rosslyn: Country of Painter & Poet.” Since learning about Rosslyn Chapel’s renowned architecture and its ties with the Masonic fraternity, and following a heartfelt invitation from the Countess of Rosslyn, many of the lecture’s attendees have now communicated their desire to visit this Scottish historic site.
Hosting an induction class in honor of the Grand Master has been a tradition of Pennsylvania DeMolay for more than 25 years. The Grand Master's Class provides an opportunity for Pennsylvania DeMolay to show how much they appreciate the support of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. On Dec. 13, 2008, DeMolays and advisors gathered at the Masonic Conference Center-Patton Campus to honor Stephen Gardner, R.W. Grand Master.

Grand Master Gardner has been a long-time supporter of DeMolay, and his sons were both members of the Allentown Chapter. Currently his son John, Grand Sword Bearer, is Chapter Advisor for the George Washington Chapter in Chambersburg. Two Past Master Councilors of George Washington Chapter, Chad Reichard and Matthew Maple, had the privilege of conferring the degrees on a class of 29 members. These talented ritualists were assisted by members representing 18 of the DeMolay Chapters that meet in Pennsylvania.

Following a formal luncheon, the attendees were treated to one of the best DeMolay Degrees ever conferred by Pennsylvania DeMolay. This dramatic portrayal of the last trial of Jacques DeMolay was held in the William A. Carpenter Chapel, in full costume and make-up and under the direction of Joseph Chubb, a PMC of Pilgrim Chapter that meets in Harrisburg.

During the closing ceremonies, State Master Councilor Jeffrey Bortz presented Grand Master Gardner with the first "Legends of Jacques" t-shirt that went on sale at the class and a $500 check supporting the Masonic Temple Initiative. Following the presentations, Grand Master Gardner expressed his deep and sincere appreciation to Pennsylvania DeMolay for the class that was held in his honor.

Saturday's activities were concluded with a three-on-three basketball tournament, swimming in the pool and a dance with visiting Job's Daughters and Rainbow Girls. At the Sunday morning breakfast, State Sweetheart Mary Noble presented Grand Master Gardner with a $330 donation for the “Change for the Troops” program on behalf of the Chapters.

LINCOLN DE MOLAY’S THIRD ANNUAL COOKOUT DEEMED A GRAND SLAM

Three nights during the baseball season, the Pittsburgh Pirates have their annual Skyblast evenings including the baseball game with a live band and large fireworks display. Lincoln Chapter, Order of DeMolay, sponsored by Verona Lodge No. 548 and Plum Creek-Monroeville Lodge No. 799, Pittsburgh, held their annual tailgate cookout in a parking lot near the baseball park on Aug. 16, 2008. The chapter sold 250 tickets, 50 more than last year, to their members, families, friends, other DeMolay chapters and members from the local Masonic lodges.

Participants enjoyed an all-you-can-eat dinner, received a t-shirt souvenir and could bid on silent auction items. Everyone enjoyed fellowship and fun before entering the park for the 7:05 p.m. start of the game. Although the Pittsburgh Pirates lost to the New York Mets, the friends of Lincoln Chapter enjoyed a great game, fireworks and entertainment.
INFINITY LODGE NO. 546 HOLDS “100 MAN NIGHT” SUPPORTING YOUTH GROUPS

On Sept. 10, 2008, Infinity Lodge No. 546, Verona, invited the brethren of Masonic District 38 and Grand Lodge officers to demonstrate Freemasonry’s commitment to our youth by assembling 100+ brethren at their Stated Meeting. In return for the attendance of every Master Mason, the lodge pledged to donate $100, and $1000 for every Grand Lodge officer.


The following month at the lodge’s October stated meeting, the youth groups were invited to receive donations. Appreciative of the lodge’s support, the youth presented programs and information and answered questions from the brethren.

SUCCESSFUL PROJECT

Members of Manheim Lodge No. 587, with the cooperation of Lititz Springs Order of the Eastern Star Chapter No. 499 and Job’s Daughters Bethel No. 7, raised money for its Masonic CHIP program by selling food at the Lititz craft show last summer. The event was a success, and the groups plan to participate together again this year.

CHIP MILESTONE IN THE 15TH MASONIC DISTRICT

At the Penn State Cooperative Extension 10th annual Susquehanna County Health Fair, held Nov. 22, 2008, the 15th Masonic District CHIP team from Bluestone Lodge No. 338, Hallstead, processed the 10,000th child since starting the program in March 2005.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Over $100,000 was given out in 2008 by the Pennsylvania Masonic Youth Foundation through its Educational Endowment Fund. In 2009, it is estimated that between 50 and 60 students will be selected to receive awards ranging from $1,000 to $3,000, and including multi-year awards. The annual program runs through March 15, 2009, when applications may be submitted.

The Masonic Scholarship Resource Guide for the 2009 program and the 2009 application are now available online at www.pmyf.org or may be obtained by writing to:

PMYF Scholarships
1244 Bainbridge Road • Elizabethtown, PA 17022
Brethren, Ladies and Friends,

Like many other organizations, both for-profit and not-for-profit, the Masonic Villages of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania has been adversely affected by the downturn in the economic climate. As of this writing, our investments from endowments and other funds have decreased $175 million in market value, which obviously affects the means by which we provide top quality care and services to our more than 2,600 residents statewide. With the support and advice of the Committee on Masonic Homes, the Masonic Villages leadership team has been working closely with our residents, staff, volunteers, donors and others to devise operational changes that will allow us to best overcome the volatility of the financial market.

Our strong history and tradition of financial stewardship over the years has allowed us to carry out an extensive charitable Mission of Love that has, and will continue, to touch the lives of tens of thousands of seniors, children and their family members. Our commitment to such a benevolent mission, however, also presents a challenge in times like these, when the generous contributions we’ve carefully invested significantly lose their value and reimbursements from Medicare and Medicaid continue to decline.

Despite these setbacks, we are committed to placing resident care and services and our employees as our top priorities while we analyze revenue enhancement and cost savings opportunities. Some of the changes we have implemented include canceling most travel plans, including the Florida Masonic Reunions in 2009, placing all capital items in the 2009 budget on hold, eliminating overtime, employing staff in creative ways and leadership staff volunteering to suspend pay increases for 2009. We are confident that with these proactive steps, we will weather this storm and our investments will recover as the market starts to rebound over the next 12-18 months.

If you or your lodge would like to help one or more of our Masonic Villages by providing a donation or financing one or more of the capital items suspended in our 2009 budget, please contact our Office of Gift Planning at (800) 599-6454 or by e-mail at giving@masonicvillagespa.org. If you have suggestions to assist us during these challenging times, please contact me at (717) 367-1121, ext. 33262 or jmurphy@masonicvillagespa.org. Thank you.

Sincerely and fraternally,

Bro. Joseph E. Murphy, N.H.A.
Chief Executive Officer for the Masonic Villages

MASONIC VILLAGES’ ADMISSIONS POLICY

Admissions to the Masonic Villages are governed by the Committee on Masonic Homes, members of which are elected by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. The Committee on Masonic Homes approves or disapproves applications for admission primarily on the basis of need. Decisions concerning admission, the provision of services and referrals of residents are not based upon the applicant’s race, color, religion, disability, ancestry, national origin, familial status, age, sex, limited English proficiency (LEP) or any other protected status.

Children’s Home Wish List 2009:
1 Deck at Baehr Cottage .................$5,200
4 Office desks .................................$3,024
10 Chairs (Study) ..........................$2,000
9 Dining room chairs ....................$1,800
1 Locked cabinet ...........................$1,146
1 Stove and fan ..............................$600
2 Air conditioners (Study) ............$600
2 Paper shredders ...........................$100
1 Air hockey table .......................$600
$ toward vacation/day trips for the children

*Please note that the Masonic Children’s Home has added several important items to their Wish List. Due to a conservative Capital Budget based on the current economic environment, the Masonic Children’s Home is seeking donor support for these essential items needed for the daily operations of the children’s home. If you would like to contribute toward any of these items, please contact the Office of Gift Planning toll-free at (800) 599-6454 or by e-mail at giving@masonicvillagespa.org. Thank you!
The Bleiler Caring Cottage is a residential program on the campus of the Masonic Village at Elizabethtown designed to meet the needs of families with individuals who have mild to moderate developmental disabilities.

The cottage is home to eight adults, and services include meals, transportation, leisure and lifelong learning programs, social events and assistance with daily living. Staff, who are present 24 hours a day, seven days a week, provide an interactive and stimulating setting with the adults’ developmental goals in mind to enhance their self-esteem, recognize their talents and explore their creativity.

Residents of the cottage have access to the same amenities provided to those in our retirement community, including the wellness center, indoor and outdoor swimming pool, farm market, model railroad club, non-denominational church services and extensive outpatient clinics. They may also pursue their own career opportunities as they desire.

The Bleiler Caring Cottage environment encourages families to stay connected, while offering its residents independence and the freedom make new friends and explore new interests.

“It’s wonderful. Our daughter is very happy and in good health due to the care given to her by the staff. She enjoys going out to eat, swimming, singing – lots of things. The staff take the residents on trips, including Ocean City, Maryland, and they interact with other groups. We appreciate the Masons providing a safe and happy home for our daughter.”

- Mort and Miriam Weiman

We currently have two openings in our cottage. If you or anyone you know has a loved one who is 18 years or older and may be looking for a caring home for his or her special needs, or would like additional information about this unique program, please call the Outreach Program at (800) 462-7664. There is no Masonic affiliation required.

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**PENNSYLVANIA HOUSING MARKET OUTSHINES MUCH OF NATION**

A ray of sunshine in otherwise cloudy economic news is the fact that the real estate markets in several areas of Pennsylvania have suffered far less, or not at all, compared to other parts of the nation. This is especially positive news for those who are considering the move to a Masonic Village but have concerns about selling their current home.

Contrary to popular belief, now may be the perfect time to move to a retirement community! With one monthly service fee including your utilities, real estate taxes, a meal plan and transportation, retirement living at our Masonic Villages provides financial security at a time when the economy is fluctuating.

These should be your BEST years, so leave the home maintenance, landscaping and housecleaning to us, so you can pursue the things in life you’ve been waiting to enjoy. Considering the many amenities, conveniences and recreational opportunities the Masonic Villages have to offer, you owe it to yourself to explore this ideal lifestyle.

Living in a beautiful continuing care retirement community provides peace of mind in knowing that should you or your spouse ever need additional health care services in the future, the highest quality care will be provided by people you trust.

Experience first-hand the beauty, quality and friendly atmosphere of the Masonic Villages. Take comfort in knowing that no matter how the economy turns, your future is secure.

For more information, please contact:

**Masonic Village at Dallas**

Retirement Living Accommodations: (570) 675-1866 or (866) 851-4243

The appeal of our newest active golf community continues to grow, as residents have more educational, wellness and recreational opportunities available to them through partnerships with local organizations. The brand new Irem Shrine Center and Clubhouse will open in May, offering various dining options and other convenient services for residents of the community. Call today and ask about the cottages and apartments available for immediate occupancy.

**Masonic Village at Elizabethtown**

The brand new Sycamore Apartments offer immediate availability, as do the Buchanan Apartments, which connect to the Clubhouse and all of its amenities. These opportunities do not come around often; act now to reserve the home of your choice!

Retirement Living Accommodations: (800) 676-6452

Personal Care and Nursing Services: (800) 422-1207

**Masonic Village at Lafayette Hill**

A few apartments remain available, and plans are underway for potential expansion. If you haven’t visited recently, you’ll be impressed by the changes at this elegantly remodeled community!

Retirement Living Accommodations: (610) 828-5760

Personal Care and Nursing Services: (610) 825-6100

**Masonic Village at Sewickley**

Only a few homes are available at this award-winning community, and a waiting list is growing for many unit types. Don’t delay; call today!

Retirement Living Accommodations: (412) 741-1400, ext. 3530, or (866) 872-0664

Personal Care and Nursing Services: (412) 741-1400, ext. 3600
SYCAMORE SQUARE MARKETPLACE RECOGNIZED FOR SMART DESIGN

Sycamore Square, located on the property of the Masonic Village at Elizabethtown, received the 2008 Envision Lancaster County Leadership Award for a Large Project in the Sustainable Growth Category. The design of the four-building marketplace was recognized for its partnerships, effectiveness, degree of community involvement and its ability to be replicated.

Comprising 24 acres of the Masonic Village campus’ 1,400 acres, Sycamore Square was developed with the cooperation of Masonic Village, Elizabethtown Economic Development Corporation, Susquehanna Real Estate and Wagman Construction, Inc. The project achieves some important goals for the Masonic Village by providing convenient services to residents and staff while also enhancing the aesthetics of the front of the campus. Since the developer assumed the costs of renovating the buildings and marketing them to businesses, the Masonic Village benefits from the potential income from the leases without incurring any costs.

The marketplace consists of four buildings which originally housed a paint shop, garage, laundry and powerhouse. After renovations, the buildings offer 26,000 square feet of space for professional, restaurant, commercial or retail establishments. A separate endeavor to support the marketplace initiative and the need for more retirement living accommodations, the apartments were constructed in 2007 and 2008 and contain 126 units.

A business has signed a lease for one of the marketplace buildings and will move in between March and April 2009. To discuss leasing opportunities, please contact Jack Kay at (717) 852-2365 or via e-mail at jkay@susmedia.com.

WHITE ROSE LODGE DEDICATES CHAPEL IN MEMORY OF BRO. WILSON

On Oct. 28, 2008, officers and members of White Rose Lodge No. 706, York, dedicated the Meditation Chapel in the Masonic Health Care Center at the Masonic Village at Elizabethtown campus in memory of Bro. Victor H. Wilson. Bro. Wilson was Raised as a member of White Rose Lodge on April 22, 1924. After many years in the York area, Bro. Wilson moved to Nashville, Tenn., where he resided for the remainder of his life. Even though he never returned to the home of his roots, Bro. Wilson still had a strong affinity to his lodge in York and the charitable mission of the Masonic Villages in providing care for Pennsylvania brethren and their families. When Bro. Wilson passed away, he provided in his living trust that the remaining assets of his estate be distributed to White Rose Lodge for use at the Masonic Villages. The officers and brethren of the lodge determined that it would be fitting to recognize Bro. Wilson’s generous gift by naming the Meditation Chapel in his memory.

DISCOVER OUR YEAR-ROUND ONLINE CATALOG AT WWW.MVFARMMARKET.COM

The Pennsylvania Freemason
To celebrate the holidays with residents of the Masonic Villages, the lodges of District D continued one tradition and resurrected another one this past December.

Sixty-five members of Lodge 9, Philadelphia, arrived at the Masonic Village at Elizabethtown by bus, not by sleigh, on Dec. 7 for their 12th biennial holiday party. Santa and his elves did, however, have a hand in assisting the brethren with bringing holiday joy to 28 children of the Masonic Children’s Home and five residents of the Bleiler Caring Cottage.

The lodge members provided a buffet lunch in the Brossman Ballroom and then presented gifts. Two bicycles were given out, along with a variety of games, toys, electronics and other items. One of the kids’ favorite gifts was the night vision goggles which they could use to spot Santa and his reindeer on Christmas Eve.

“You people are awesome!” Eddie Drier, of the children’s home, said. “We appreciate you coming up here and doing this for us.”

The elves were indeed busy and returned to the North Pole by way of Philadelphia, but not before promising a special surprise for 2009 (look for details in a future issue of the “The Pennsylvania Freemason” magazine).

Residents of the Masonic Village at Elizabethtown, Lafayette Hill and Warminster enjoyed a sweet visit from the brothers of Frankford Lodge No. 292, Philadelphia, on Dec. 10, 11 and 12. Joined by District Deputy Grand Master of District D, Bro. David Tansey, Jerusalem Lodge No. 506, Philadelphia, members visited each village and handed out a total of 800 lbs.–yes, 800 lbs.–of candy to the residents. They also paid a visit to the Masonic Children’s Home and gave the youth $50 gift cards.

Bro. G. Walter Price, P.D.D.G.M., District D, dressed as Santa Claus for many years and shared candy with the residents of the Masonic Village at Elizabethtown. After his passing several years ago, the idea was retired. Upon hearing of several requests to resurrect the tradition, the lodge’s Charity Committee, along with past masters and lodge officers, revamped the idea for this past holiday season.

“We’ve come back as Santa’s elves,” Bro. Robert Walsh, of Frankford Lodge No. 292’s Charity Committee, said. “It’s a gesture of good cheer. With all this chocolate, it’s like going to Hersheypark!”

Thank you to George Bartram-Paul Sand Lodge No. 298, Springfield, for underwriting the cost of the repair and restoration of the shuffleboard at the Masonic Village at Lafayette Hill. Residents and Brothers Don Sirianni (left) and Norman Day (right) are seen in the photo.
IRA “ROLLOVER” GIFTS ARE AGAIN TAX-FREE

A federal law has been passed renewing the tax-free benefit of using IRA funds for charitable gifts. The original law applied to 2007, and the new law renews the benefit through 2009. What it boils down to is this: donors aged 70 1/2 with regular or Roth IRAs can again give to public charities from their IRAs without being taxed on the withdrawal.

Such gifts normally would count against Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs). However, another new tax law passed this past December suspends RMDs in 2009. Retirees are allowed to skip their RMDs from their regular “traditional” IRAs for this year. (Note that Roth IRAs never require RMDs.) While this removes the necessity of withdrawing from IRAs in 2009, the attractiveness of tax savings from using IRA funds as charitable gifts is still very much there.

Prior to the law renewing tax-free IRA gifts, if a donor wanted to use IRA funds for a charitable contribution the funds were taxable as a withdrawal. There was a charitable deduction for the contribution, but it may or may not have offset the tax. The new law simply eliminates the IRA gift amount from taxable income, in effect granting a 100% deduction – plus other benefits.

To gain the benefit allowed under the law, it is essential that the rules be followed:

(1) Gifts must be made by direct transfer (a “rollover”) from the IRA to the charity (donors do not withdraw the money and then write a check). The donor never touches the money.
(2) There is a $100,000 limit per year. The law is retroactive for 2008 and runs through 2009.
(3) The gift must be outright with no benefits to the donor (such as a Charitable Gift Annuity).
(4) There is no charitable deduction since the funds are not included in reportable income.

Who are especially good candidates for considering an IRA rollover gift?

(1) Non-itemizers, because the amount is excluded from income;
(2) Persons already giving at the 50% of adjusted gross income deduction limit;
(3) Persons whose income level causes the reduction of their itemized deductions or the phase-out of their personal exemptions;
(4) Persons for whom additional income will cause more of their Social Security income to be taxed; and
(5) Others who have other limits on their deductions that would prevent them from deducting all of their charitable contributions.

Note that it is more advantageous to make an IRA rollover contribution from a regular (“traditional”) IRA than a Roth IRA. The reason is the donor or their heirs can already take federal income tax-free withdrawals from a Roth IRA assuming the account has been open for at least five years.

These are the basics of the law renewing tax-free IRA gifts, and there may be other benefits to individual donors. Masonic Charities always advises anyone considering a planned gift to consult with their own professional advisor. The Office of Gift Planning has simple instructions for making an IRA rollover gift. For further information on this rare opportunity to avoid taxes on IRA funds, please call the Office of Gift Planning at (800) 599-6454.

For further information, contact the Office of Gift Planning nearest you:

Central Pennsylvania
(717) 367-1121, ext. 33437 or (800) 599-6454

Eastern Pennsylvania
(610) 825-6100, ext. 1348

Western Pennsylvania
(412) 741-1400, ext. 3011 or (866) 872-0664

Out-of-State
(717) 367-1121, ext. 33312 or (800) 599-6454

Financial information about Masonic Charities can be obtained by contacting us at 1-800-599-6454. In addition, Masonic Charities is required to file financial information with several states: Colorado: Colorado residents may obtain copies of registration and financial documents from the office of the Secretary of State, (303) 894-2680, http://www.sos.state.co.us/. Florida: SC No. 10774, A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE, WITHIN THE STATE, 1-800-Help-FLA. Georgia: full and fair description of the programs and activities of Masonic Charities and its financial statement are available upon request at the address indicated above. Illinois: Contracts and reports regarding Masonic Charities are on file with the Illinois Attorney General. Maryland: For the cost of postage and copying, documents and information filed under the Maryland charitable organizations laws can be obtained from the Secretary of State, Charitable Divisions, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401, (410) 825-4503. Mississippi: MICS No. 10796. Missouri: The official registration and financial information of Masonic Charities may be obtained from the Missouri Secretary of State’s office by calling 1-888-332-0999. New Jersey: INFORMATION FILED WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CONCERNING THIS CHARITABLE SOLICITATION AND THE PERCENTAGE OF CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED BY THE CHARITY DURING THE LAST REPORTING PERIOD THAT WERE DEDICATED TO THE CHARITABLE PURPOSE MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL BY CALLING (973) 504-6215 AND IS AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET AT www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/chsp/hp/charity. REGISTRATION WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT. New York: A copy of the latest annual report can be obtained from the organization or from the Office of the Attorney General by writing the Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271. North Carolina: Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at 1-888-830-4989. Pennsylvania: The official registration and financial information of Masonic Charities may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Virginia: Financial statements are available from the State Office of Consumer Affairs, P.O. Box 1161, Richmond, VA 23218. Washington: The notice of solicitation required by the Charitable Solicitation Act is on file with the Washington Secretary of State, and information relating to financial affairs of Masonic Charities is available from the Secretary of State, and the toll-free number for Washington residents: 1-800-332-4483. West Virginia: West Virginia residents may obtain a summary of the registration and financial documents from the Secretary of State, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305. REGISTRATION IN THE ABOVE STATES DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION OF MASONIC CHARITIES BY THE STATE.

COMPLETE AND MAIL THIS FORM TO:
Office of Gift Planning, Masonic Charities, One Masonic Drive, Elizabethtown, PA 17022

☐ Send me instructions on how to make an IRA rollover gift.
☐ Call me to discuss an IRA rollover gift.
☐ Send me information on how charitable giving can benefit me/my estate plan.
☐ Send me information on why IRA assets are ideal as a bequest to a Masonic Charity and “bad assets” otherwise in a will.
☐ We’ve put a Masonic Charity in our will. Please send us the immediate benefits of doing so.
☐ Contact me about a Charitable Gift Annuity.

Name: ____________________________

Address: __________________________

City: __________________ State: ______ Zip: ______

Telephone ( ) _______________________

E-mail Address: ____________________

(717) 367-1121, ext. 33312 or (800) 599-6454