



2010 Masonic Home Gala Featuring Illustrious Brother Roy Clark, GC



Roy Clark performing at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville on May 17, 2009. (Photo courtesy of Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. Photo by Ed Rode.)

Our Grand Master has planned a 2010 Gala for the benefit of the Masonic Home of Virginia. The festivities will include a catered dinner, entertainment provided by Illustrious Brother Roy Clark, and sponsorships of this event in a souvenir journal distributed to attendees and sponsors. The dinner will be held on Friday evening, July 30, 2010 in the dining hall at the Scottish Rite Temple for the Valley of Richmond, beginning at 7:00 PM. Only 400 tickets to the dinner will be available. Each ticket will cost \$50; at this point, it appears that half the ticket price should qualify as a charitable contribution eligible for deduction on your 2010 federal income tax return. The Masonic Home will notify each ticket purchaser on the exact sum eligible for deduction. Sale of dinner tickets will be on a strict "first-come-first-served" basis. Each table will seat 10 people.

After post-dinner brevities, the dinner party will assemble in the Temple's theater to be entertained by Brother Roy Clark. Due to the larger seating capacity of the theater over the dining hall, the Grand Master's Gala Committee will have an additional 250 tickets available for sale. For those unable to attend the dinner, we will have 250 tickets for the Theater available. Each ticket will cost \$25; the sale of the tickets will be on a strict "first-come-first-served" basis as are the dinner

tickets. At this point, it appears that half the ticket price should qualify as a charitable contribution eligible for deduction on your federal income tax return. The Masonic Home will notify each ticket purchaser on the exact sum eligible for deduction. All tickets must be purchased through your District Deputy to help avoid confusion.

The final segment of our Grand Master's 2010 Gala is publication of a commemorative journal. This Journal will provide an opportunity for special sponsorship and support of our Grand Master's efforts to benefit the Masonic Home of Virginia. Sponsorships are available to many different supporters of our Masonic Home. A partial list of eligible sponsors includes:

The sponsorships of the Grand Master's 2010 Gala will be available at four levels:

- Gold Page -- \$300
- Silver Page -- \$200
- White Page -- \$100
- Half White Page -- \$65.

Grand Master's Address



Virginia Masonic Herald Supplement

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The Virginia Masonic Herald has applied for registration with the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office. All original articles are subject to editing and, when published, become the property of the Grand Lodge. Direct all submissions to The Virginia Masonic Herald including photos, identifying subjects, to:

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Brethren,

I am fast approaching the midway point of my term in office. The friendship, fellowship, and hospitality I am experiencing are most enjoyable and greatly appreciated. You cannot imagine how humbled I am and honored it makes me feel to have so many folks coming out to the events on my schedule and have such a good time with each other. I am thrilled to learn in my travels of the many new members joining our Order. I have been told that the "Back to Basics" incentive is renewing the efforts to continue to purify our ritual, to providing short, informative Lodge programs, to reviewing the status of our Lodges using the SVR tool results, and to provide budgeting for our Lodges to follow. The results are overall strengthening of our craft Lodges.

I am inspired by the number of Brothers who were dormant but are now renewing friendships and are returning to becoming more active in their Lodges. I am encouraged by Brothers who are reaching out to members of the Craft, who have for one reason or another, gotten out of the habit of going to Lodge. Because of these contacts, these Brothers are now returning to become more active members once again. There is an excitement in the air and increased participation in many Masonic events that has not been seen in many years. The good things happening in the communities around the Commonwealth because of the efforts and support of Masons is very stimulating too.

I am pleased to hear that our Lodges are stepping up to the plate and embracing the use of new technology such as e-mailing and using phone trees to communicate and as a result of these efforts are saving a lot of money. We have also really been working on the Grand Lodge website to make it more informative and user friendly. I am also gratified to finally announce that our Virginia Masonic Child Identification Program has received a 501(c)(3) status as "Virginia CHIP, Inc."

The District Leadership Conferences have been well attended. I have enjoyed presenting plaques to the Lodges which are supporting our Masonic Home of Virginia and hope this will be a continuing trend. At these sessions, we learned more about the Masonic Home of Virginia, honored our veterans, faced the question of how much Masonry is worth to us, and were encouraged by a talk on how we are letting our Masonic light shine in the lives we live as Freemasons. The breakout sessions were lively with discussion, reflection, and success sharing.

In my session, we also discussed the worth of Masonry to us. Comments were often made about the friendships, the good times, and the fellowship that we would not have experienced if we had not joined the Fraternity. When I was growing up, I was reminded that we get out of something only what we put into it. I know that I personally have received far more from Freemasonry than I could have ever put into it, and I cannot possibly assess the value each of you my Brothers mean to me.

Forget-Not-The-Duties.



William E. Rorer, Jr.
Grand Master

Grand Master's Calendar

“Forget Not the Children”

APRIL

- 19 Herndon Lodge No. 264
- 24 James Monroe 252nd Annual Celebration, Birthplace - Colonial Beach
- 27 Seaboard Lodge No. 56
- 28 James Monroe 252nd Birthday Celebration Wreath Laying, Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond
- 29 Official Visit, Masonic District 27
- 30 Official Visit, Masonic District 21

MAY

- 1 Sandy Valley Lodge No. 17
- 2-5 Grand Lodge of Maine
- 6 Tuckahoe Lodge No. 347
- 7-8 Grand Commandery, Charlottesville
- 8 Testimonial Dinner, M.:W.: Larry D. Christian, Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of VA
- 11 Henry Lodge No. 57
- 12 MAHOVA Board Meeting
- 13 Mountain Home Lodge No. 263
- 14 Official Visit, Masonic Districts 5 & 6
- 15 MAHOVA Ambassadors Conference, Richmond
Official Visit, Masonic Districts 35-A & 35-B
- 16-17 Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star, Hampton
- 21 Official Visit, Masonic Districts 12 & 13
- 22 MacArthur Memorial Wreath Laying, Norfolk
Potentate's Ball, Kena Shrine Center
- 25 Mt. Carmel Lodge No. 133
- 26 Newport News Scottish Rite Bodies
- 27 Official Visit, Masonic District 8
- 28 Official Visit, Masonic District 18
- 29 Virginia CHIP, Inc. Luncheon, ACCA, Richmond

Dear Friends,

There will be a luncheon fundraiser entitled "Forget Not the Children" in the spring of 2010. The charitable donations will benefit the Virginia Masonic Child Identification Program.

This delicious luncheon will be held on Saturday, May 29, 2010 at 11:00 AM at the ACCA Shrine Temple located at 1712 Bellevue Avenue, Richmond, Virginia. Attire for the affair will be Sunday dress for ladies (hats preferred) and black tie for men.

Please consider being a hostess for this luncheon. As a hostess, we would like for you to sponsor a table and invite seven other people. Donations are \$30.00 a ticket. The hostess is asked to provide a theme for their table and to decorate it with a centerpiece and table favors. We would like for the hostess to provide an item for the silent auction.

The silent auction and jewelry sale will be supplied from the items donated by each participant.

We are looking forward to your attendance at the Spring Luncheon and hope you will consider being a hostess for this fabulous event.

Please contact me at 757.566.3342 at your earliest convenience.

Fondly,

Judith Rorer
Grand Master's Lady

Mission and Vision Statements of The Grand Lodge, A.F. & A.M., of Virginia

The **mission** of the Grand Lodge of Virginia is to teach and perpetuate a way of life that promotes the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God and to assist its Lodges to grow and prosper.

The **vision** of the Grand Lodge of Virginia is to be the premier organization composed of men of integrity and character, who are honest, true to their word, believe in God, are devoted to family, charitable in their community, and courteous and helpful to each other.

Lodge Happenings



Worshipful Ollie E. Wilkins, Jr.

Worshipful Ollie Eugene Wilkins, Jr. received his 60-Year Masonic Veteran's Award in a most auspicious ceremony at the December Annual Stated Communication of Owens Lodge No. 164 (Norfolk). Worshipful Brother Wilkins was made a Master Mason on November 17, 1949. Front (left to right): Wor. Joey P. Santos, Master, and Wor. Wilkins. Back: Rt. Wor. Patrick B. Miskill, Rt. Wor. Manuel F. Elefane, and Rt. Wor. Jun Mariano.

Worshipful Richard M. Hamrick, Jr.

At the December Annual Stated of Staunton Lodge No. 13 (Staunton) Worshipful Richard "Dick" Minor Hamrick, Jr. received his 60-year Masonic Veteran's Award from Mt. Wor. William E. Rorer, Jr. (right), our Grand Master and Rt. Wor. James A. Fields, Jr., Master of Staunton Lodge No. 13.



Masonic Ritual

There are times when ritualism can be allowed to become an end unto itself. Lodges can become factories turning out Masons. Lodges can become so obsessed with increasing their number of members that they lose sight of the fact that they are building Masons, not simply building membership. Oftentimes ritual suffers as a result. This is due partially to haste, and partly to indifference and ineffectiveness on the part of undedicated or overburdened officers.

Quantity should NEVER be allowed to outweigh quality; To believe and to act otherwise is to jeopardize the long term health of the Fraternity. It is irresponsible and unfair to the millions of Masons before us to the millions of Masons that will come after us.

We should consciously resist the tendency to exploit the ritual for the amusement of the Brethren at the sacrifice of the more important task of imparting knowledge to the candidates.

Let us not forget who the beneficiary of degree work is.

(Reprinted from the March 2010 Southern California Research Lodge, which was submitted by Dave Slack, in Connecticut Freemason, September 2008.)

Committee on Membership Report

By Rt. Wor. William E. Hershey, Chairman
Committee on Membership

This flyer, along with a personal invitation to attend the event has been mailed to every Worshipful Master, District Deputy Grand Master, and District Membership Coordinator in Masonic Districts 12, 13, 14-A, 14-B, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35-A, 35-B, 36, 56 & 57. I encourage you to attend this event and learn what we can do together to promote Freemasonry in Virginia.



Committee on Membership

Bring A Friend Event Workshop

Brethren,

The Grand Lodge Committee on Membership is hosting a Bring A Friend Workshop. There is no cost for attendance and refreshments will be served:

- When: Saturday - May 1, 2010
- Where: Newport News Scottish Rite Masonic Center
65 Saunders Road
Newport News, VA
- Registration: 8:00 – 8:50 AM – Coffee, juice, and pastries available
- Workshop: 9:00 – 11:30 AM
- Lunch: 11:30 AM

In order to adequately plan for this event, reservations are understandably a must. Please contact Right Worshipful Robert Holland (757.484.5311) (e-mail: rcholland3@gmail.com) or Right Worshipful Leroy Tarbox (757.855.5280). Please let one of them know how many members from the Lodges/District are planning to attend. The cut-off date for reservations is ***April 23, 2010***. Your promotion of this event in your Lodge/District will be greatly appreciated. The event is open to all Entered Apprentices, Fellowcrafts, and Master Masons.

ASK HIRAM

When the Worshipful Master is closing the Lodge, he may use the short closing prayer which states, "May the Blessing of Heaven rest upon us and all regular Masons...". Many Masters say "Blessings" (plural) instead of "Blessing" (Singular). What is the reason for using "Blessing"?

Why do we think that Heaven or God only has one Blessing to rest upon us? Think back to the Entered Apprentice Degree and the 133rd Psalm which states, "...For there the Lord commanded the Blessing (singular) even life forevermore." Well Brethren, there it is! "Life forevermore" is the one Blessing of Heaven which we desire to rest upon us, and there lies the explanation of the singular form of the word "Blessing" used by the Worshipful Master when closing his Lodge. (Edited from The New Mexico Freemason, Winter 2010.)

Why does the ritual use so many repetitions, as in "duly and truly," "worthy and well-qualified," etc.?

Several "word-pairs" in Masonic ritual make interesting studies; "duly and truly," "worthy and well-qualified," "free will and accord," "parts and points," "hele and conceal," and "solemnly and sincerely." At first glance, it may seem that these are so arranged only for emphasis. In Middle English writing, especially in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when Freemasonry was in the process of formation, England had two languages. One was Norman-French, and the other Anglo-Saxon. To make sure of understanding, word pairs were much in use, a word of similar meaning being taken from each language.

The apparent redundancy of expression in a number of places in Masonic ritual may be traced back to these Middle Ages. The perpetuation of such usage now, when clarity of thought and understanding might be served as well with one word, is one of many proofs that Freemasonry delights to cling to the ancient and venerated because it is venerated and ancient.

(Reprinted from One Hundred One Questions about Freemasonry, Twenty-third printing, April 1994, The Masonic Services Association.)

Who was Albert "Al" Horman?

A good trivia question for Shriners. Al Hartman was the Shriner carrying the little girl in his left arm and her crutches in his right hand. He was the "poster child" for the famous Shrine symbol - the Shriner in the "Editorial Without Words" photo. This famous photo engendered the Shrine slogan: "Shriners are never too tall too reach down to help a child." The little girl he was helping was named Bobbi Jo Wright.

Albert "Al" Horman passed away on December 6, 2009 at the age of 80. (Reprinted from the March 2010 Southern California Research Lodge.)

A Study of the Winding Staircase

by Homer L. Zumwalt

In the ritual of the modern day Masonic Degrees, the building of King Solomon's Temple plays an important role. It has also fascinated the Biblical scholar and the archaeologist in their attempts to prove the existence of the Temple and the Bible story of King Solomon. All through history this subject has produced an air of mystery which seems to defy a positive solution.

The Masonic scholar, willing to spend the time and effort, can spend hours of research on almost any one of the many features of King Solomon's Temple and still end on a note of mystery admitting that the subject is incomplete and more research is needed. An example to illustrate this point is the reference in the Second Degree which refers to the winding staircase, which we are led to believe existed in King Solomon's Temple. Although there is but one reference to the winding staircase in Masonic ritual, it has been made the central feature of the Second Degree which every Fellowcraft Mason must symbolically ascend in order to make his advancement in the degree. As all Masons will recall, the reference is made "to advance through a porch, by a flight of winding stairs to the middle chamber, there to receive his wages." The details very clearly give a winding staircase leading from the porchway entrance up through the Temple Sanctuary to the upper floors. This reference contains a number of specific and positive statements which we are apparently asked to accept as facts. They are 1) that there was a winding staircase in King Solomon's Temple; 2) that it was approached through an entrance from the porchway; and 3) that the workmen on the building ascended these stairs to receive their wages in the middle chamber.

The serious researcher will find that writers of the Charges and ritual of the craft were apparently more interested in the dramatic effect on the candidate than they were on historical accuracy. Biblical scholars and archaeologists differ widely as to the interpretation placed both on historical and the archaeological evidence dealing with King Solomon's Temple and in particular, with the passages dealing with the staircase, but it's fairly safe to say that neither the Biblical scholar nor the archaeologists would support the specific statements made in the Masonic ritual of the Second Degree.

As of today, the only historical evidence relative to the building of Solomon's Temple is found in three different books of the Old Testament and in the writings of Josephus. Of these writings, it is generally accepted that the version in the First Book of Kings is both the oldest and most reliable description we have of the Temple. Our interest here is the mention of the winding staircase. The passages relevant to the winding staircase are found in Chapter 6 of the Authorized Version, which is probably the one used by the ritualists who composed the Lecture on the Second Degree. First Kings, Chapter 6, Verse 1: "And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord."

Verse 5: "And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about, against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and of the oracle; and he made chambers round about."

Verse 7: "And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither; so that there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building."

Verse 8: "The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house; and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber and out of the middle into the third."

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A Study of the Winding Staircase

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The description above clearly states that there were winding stairs, but an examination of the text finds inconsistencies in the passages themselves and serious discrepancies are noticed between our Masonic ritual and the scriptures above. An example is in Verse 8, which places the entrance door for the middle chamber in the right side of the building. It continues by stating that the stairway went from the door to the middle chamber and on up to the third chamber. No mention is made to an entrance on the ground floor.

The second Bible reference is in Chronicles, Book II, Chapter 3, Verses 1-9. The description, which parallels the Kings version, omits all references to the chambers except for Verse 9 which states: "And he overlaid the upper chambers with gold..." It is widely accepted that the "upper chambers" in Chronicles are the "Side chambers" mentioned in Kings. Notice that there is no mention of a winding staircase.

The third description is found in the Book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel came from a priestly family and some researchers think could have lived at a time which would have enabled him to have seen Solomon's Temple first hand. However, at the time of his writing, the Temple had been destroyed by the Babylonians.

The parallel passages of the above quoted from Kings and Chronicles are to be found in the 41st Chapter of Ezekiel, but differs from the other two.

Ezekiel, Chapter 41, Verse 6: "And the side chambers were three, one over another, and thirty in order; and they entered into the wall which was of the house for the side chambers around about, that they might have hold, but they had not hold in the wall of the house."

Verse 7: 1 "And there was an enlarging, and a winding about still upward to the said chambers; for the winding about of the house went still upward round about the house; therefore, the breadth of the house was still upward, and so increased from the lowest chamber to the highest by the midst."

It would appear that what Ezekiel was trying to say is that the chambers themselves wound about the house in long galleries. By "wound about" does he mean encircle? He makes no reference to a staircase. There are other differences noted in the three versions of the Old Testament.

Our Masonic view was probably taken from the translation of the Authorized Version of the Old Testament, which contained many mistranslations in the relevant passages. The translators themselves were aware of the difficulties, for attached to their manuscripts are numerous marginal notes and questions. Biblical Hebrew text often presents difficulties in translation and some cases impossible to a point of where one can only surmise at the true meaning.

Prof. Robert H. Pfeiffer of Harvard University and Boston University in "An Introduction to the Old Testament" writes: "The third element in Solomon's magnificence consisted of his buildings, primarily on Zion in Jerusalem, but elsewhere. The account in Chapter 6, Verses 1-9 is one of the most difficult sections in the Old Testament. First, owing to scribes who failed to understand architectural terms and the obscure descriptions of the original author, neither an architect nor a clear writer, the text has been greatly corrupted. Secondly, the account has endured successive additions and revisions."

The first difficulty comes from the Hebrew text of Verse 8 in which one word is defective. The word appears as "Lullim" and then translated to English as "Winding Stairs." Scholars point out that if the word is really "Lullim" it appears nowhere else in the Old Testament, but an associated word "Lulin" appears in several passages of the Jewish code known as the "Mishna" and later called the "Talmud."

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A Study of the Winding Staircase

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One reference reads: “there were Lulin in the upper chamber opening into the Holy of Holies, by which the workmen were let down in baskets, so that they should not feed their eyes on the Holy of Holies.” Most translators translate this word to mean “opening” while others translate the word as “Trap-doors.” The Jewish Encyclopaedia, Volume 12, pp. 85,92 says that the word “Lulin” refers to “trapdoors” but gives no supporting evidence to the meaning.

The second difficulty from the Hebrew text comes from the original word “Tichonah” translated as “middle” in our phrase from Kings, Verse 8, “the door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house.” The meaning of the word “Tichonah” is uncertain, but most modern translators refer to it as the “lowest” instead of “middle.” This seems to make more sense.

Dr. James Moffat in his translation of the Bible in 1924 entitled “A New Translation of the Bible” translated Verse 8 in Kings this way: “The entrance into the lower side rooms was on the south side of the Temple; you climbed to the middle row, and from the middle to the top row, through trap doors.”

In 1965, another translation came out in an English Edition of the “Jewish Bible” with Verse 8: “The entrance to the lower story was at the right hand corner of the Temple and access to the middle story above was by trap doors and so from the middle story to the third.” There is no reference to winding stairs.

If the Temple had a winding staircase, as a few scholars still think, it was probably in the side walls and served the side chambers built into the thickness of the walls from the first and second levels. These side chambers were used while the Temple was being built for the purpose of paying the workmen their wages. Later, they were used as store-houses or treasury rooms of the Temple into which the treasures and gifts to the Temple were placed.

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the other source of information about King Solomon's Temple is in the writings of Josephus, a Jewish historian. He mentions Solomon's Temple in several of his works, but the main references are in his history of the Jewish people called “The Antiquities of the Jews.” One relevant passage quoted from Wriston's translation, Book VIII, Chapter 3: “The King also had a fine contrivance for an ascent to the upper room over the Temple, and that was by steps in the thickness of its wall; for it had no large door on the east end, as the lower house had, but the entrances were by the sides, through very small doors.”

Apart from Josephus and the Bible, we have no other literary source to turn to for information. Unfortunately, there is no evidence in Jerusalem to which we might gain a knowledge of this subject, for successive conquerors made a thorough job of the destruction of the Temple and not one part remains standing and nothing has been uncovered by archaeologists. Regardless of whether there was a winding staircase, a trap-door or just an opening to the different compartments of the Temple, the mystery still remains, and will continue to fascinate both the biblical scholar and the archaeologist and be of particular interest to the Freemason.

References: Books of the Old Testament, Standard Work – Grand Lodge of Illinois; The Mystery of the Winding Staircase by A. L. Shane; and A New Translation of the Bible by Dr. James Moffat.

(From the 1989 Transactions of the Illinois Lodge of Research and from the May, 1990 issue of Southern California Research Lodge, and from The Short Talk Bulletin, Vol. 71. January 1993, No. 1, MSA.)