

Address of the
M.:E.:Alan C. Lewis
At the 2009 Annual Convocation of
The Grand Chapter, State of New York, Royal Arch Masons

Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master, Grand High Priests who have served before me, Members of the Grand Line, Distinguished Guests, and Companions. It is with a humble heart that I express to you my deep gratitude for given me this opportunity to serve as Grand High Priest of this Grand Chapter. I pledge to you that I will carry out my responsibilities with dispatch, dignity and compassion. I will at all times do my best to represent the Companions of this Grand Chapter in a manner that will bring respect and honor for Royal Arch Masons in general and this Grand Chapter in particular.

To the Installing Officers I express my sincere appreciation for a job well done. To the 2009 Grand Chapter Officers and High Priests it will be my pleasure to work with each of you as we join together in serving our Grand Chapter and New York Capitular Masonry. Working together as a Team we can accomplish great things for Royal Arch Masonry in New York State.

We are looking forward to a busy year. We expect to rededicate two chapters who will celebrate their 200th anniversary this year, several chapters have consolidated and a number of chapters have moved to new locations, so we anticipate that we will be receiving a number of requests to perform consolidation and dedication ceremonies. In addition the Special Events Committee is planning two events -- the dedication of the Regional Medical Center in Greenwich and an event honoring George Clinton , the first Governor of New York and Vice President of the United States under Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, to be held in Kingston. Information regarding each such ceremony will be sent to the Grand Officers and will be posted on our web site.

Membership is our most important activity and we must never forget that our Lodge comes first. Information regarding the "Re-Member the Blue Lodge" program can be found on our web site. I submit that the best way to attract Brothers to become Royal Arch companions is by being an active and supporting Brother in our Lodge. We also encourage each chapter to use our "Fervency and Zeal" program and to hold a "Companion Bring a Brother" night.

I have also asked each DDGHP to obtain the number of candidates and for which degrees from each Chapter and to determine when degrees will be held by each Chapter. This information will be sent to me and the Regional Officer and we will monitor the progress of these candidates. Over the course of my fifty plus years as a member of the fraternity, I have noticed that too often we drag out the degrees and as a result have lost some candidates. This is not fair to the candidates

and is certainly not helpful for Royal Arch. I have therefore announced my goal, which I refer to as "No Candidate Left Behind", that any candidates that have been approved by a chapter before July 1st should be exalted as a Royal Arch Mason by January 1st or at least by our 2010 Grand Convocation in March.

The assigned ritual work this year for the Grand Lecturer's Convention is the "completion & dedication" of the Temple in the MEM degree (pages 189 to 205 in the ritual) -- however with the Grand Lecturer's **advanced approval**, for the Convention an alternate part of the ritual may be substituted. I have asked the AGL's to officially visit each chapter and observe the opening & closing plus the MEM degree work re completion & dedication of the temple, or whatever degree work has been approved by the Grand Lecturer for the Convention. We hope that many more chapters will qualify for the R.:E.:Hobert C. Cook award this year for the attendance of their top six officers at the their District's Grand Lecturer's Convention.

I am also asking each Chapter to support our Masonic youth groups (DeMolay, Constellation, Rainbow and Triangle) -- if there is no "Masonic" youth group available in your area then support another youth group, e.g. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, church youth group, etc. (Note: this is also a great source for programs). Support may be by attending their functions and inviting them to be part of your public activities (for example your Summer picnic).

Last year our Grand Chapter Education Committee, under the leadership of R.:E.: Jeffrey Williamson revised "The Royal Arch Masons Organizational Handbook" with the focus to make it more readable and relevant to our current issues. They also presented The Royal Arch Capstone Course. This includes lesson plans to help make it more appropriate for discussion groups and training sessions. We encourage each DDGHP to present this Capstone Course at least once during the year to his district focusing on the issues relevant to their District.

Under the leadership of R.:E.: Ray Roche, our Committee on Public Information began a new venture last year called the "Royal Arch Penny". This newsletter will continue this year, but to be successful we need information articles from the chapters. Please send me or Ray Roche your news articles for publication.

Companions, we must never forget those companions who have paved the way for us -- whose labor has assured for us the continuance of Royal Arch. I therefore request that each chapter hold a Memorial Service (or Church service) in memory of their departed Companions. Many Lodges do this either in the Lodge Room or at a church service. I encourage our Royal Arch chapters to do likewise.

Our web site was completely revised this past year and includes many new features. I hope that each companion will check it out and let us know what additions or other features they would like to see included. We are indebted to Mike Dunn, Bill Hyatt and Florence Hyatt for their work in making this all possible.

My companions in concluding I ask all of you to be positive in all your thoughts and deeds and actions -- look at the glass as half full, not half empty. I believe you are as proud as I am to be a Royal Arch Mason -- thus, each of us should show that pride at all times, especially when in public. Be enthusiastic about masonry and show the world by our actions that we are a brotherhood that is based on friendship, morality and brotherly love. This is why I have chosen "LIGHT A FIRE WITHIN" as my theme for the year. I look forward to meeting and greeting many of you as I travel this great State during the year.