



The Official Newsletter of The Grand Chapter State of New York - Royal Arch Masons

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*In This Issue: Grand High Priest's Message – Most Excellent Jeffrey M. Williamson
Biography
Itinerary - March to May*

Most Worshipful Grand Master, Right Worshipful
Deputy Grand Master, Distinguished Visitors,
Distinguished East, Permanent Members, Grand
Chapter Officers, Delegates, Companions All...

I stand before you this morning as your newly installed
Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter State of New
York, Royal Arch Masons. This exact moment in time-
is the fulfillment of a dream and a goal that was set in
motion many years ago, and I thank the Grand
Architect of the Universe and my family for giving me
the opportunity to be right here - right now!



I wish to publicly express my appreciation to Most Excellent Edmund D. Harrison, who was the Companion who lifted up that dream, and to Most Excellent James W. Hemstrought Jr., who appointed me the Grand Royal Arch Captain and ultimately into the Progressive Six, and to Most Excellent Edward R. Trosin, who shared his immeasurable experience and knowledge and was instrumental in facilitating this year's ambitious programs.

This journey began in the lowly valley- looking ever upwards towards the summit and with steadfast determination working our way forward, we now stand at the pinnacle, overlooking the magnificent panorama now set before us. We not only look back on the upward path that was traveled- but now look **forward** to the path that wends us on to the next summit!

Every man who succeeds to this exalted station has to decide for himself how he wants to shape his destiny. What kind of legacy does the new Grand High Priest want to transmit to posterity? Decisions can be difficult, or even unpopular. Is the office of Grand High Priest, which is the epitome of Capitular Masonry, a destination? Or is it an opportunity to serve?

Many of you already know my answer, this is not the end...this is only the beginning! The wheels of forward progress are already spinning! It's now time to drop the clutch in gear and set things in motion... "So let's get it started!"

Companions, the theme for this new term of Royal Arch Masonry is "**Learning from the Past, Building for the Future**". This motto, will actually be our guiding compass to navigate and transition our way into a new, strengthened, and improved organizational model.

Learning from the Past

What can we learn from the past? Some would say... who cares about the past? The past IS past!

Well, the past is our history. It contains our knowledge, philosophies, and rituals. It demonstrates our organizational structure, relationships, and beliefs. It holds the lives of our remarkable Companions, problems, challenges and everything that is both good and bad about our beloved institution.

It is vitally important that we carefully review, learn and then-**take** the best-from our wonderful and incredible past. Let us fondly remember the unsurpassed accomplishments during the "High Water Mark" of Royal Arch Masonry. But let us also scrutinize the actions or LACK of actions that finds us in our current state of affairs

It has been said that *"The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results."* It has also been said that *"Those who do not learn from the past are destined to repeat it"*. While this holds true in so many aspects of life, it is especially accurate in Royal Arch Masonry.

Companions: We need to get past our past!

It is vital to our future that we stop looking at Royal Arch Masonry through the rear view mirror and start looking through the front windshield of life!

Royal Arch Masonry is in a rut. The only difference between a rut and a grave ... is the depth.

A rut is very easy to stay in - but very hard to turn the wheels and get out of that rut.

There may be even a little challenge in holding onto the steering wheel while trying to jump out of that rut!

The time to make serious decisions in the world of Royal Arch Masonry is now! Worldwide Organizations- who are much larger than us- (such as General Motors etc.) have made major, remarkable and significant changes in less than a year!

We are not bound by the same critical time constraints as General Motors, but we can do no less. We can accomplish the same amazing outcome if we apply ourselves with fervency and zeal to the task at hand.

Building for the Future

Masons are Builders ...and Royal Arch Masons are **Re-builders!**

The Great Book of the Law brings to mind the destruction of the Jewish nation by Nebuchadnezzar, and the Jewish captivity.

Zerubbabel and his followers journeyed back to Jerusalem and started to **re-build**. They looked at the ancient ruins, they studied, and they planned ...and they **re-built**. A new nation and Temple began to take shape!

Companions, it is now our turn, as contemporary Royal Arch Masons, to re-build our Chapters and Grand Chapter. We must **together** put up a modern and professional Masonic model for our future success!

This begins this morning, this instant, right now!

Our team, the Assistant Grand Lecturers, the District Deputy Grand High Priests, the Grand Line Officers and I are focusing all of our thoughts and efforts on accomplishing every one of the 11 goals and objectives which we have set forth on our Grand Chapter Trestle board for the ensuing year. These programs will enable Royal Arch Chapters to grow and prosper for the following year and beyond!

Chapter High Priests and Chapter Leaders - We charge you with one watchword: **Preparation!** Show your leadership! Take charge and form genuine partnerships in the Chapter and District. Take ownership. **We are all accountable for our future!**

We need to start and finish with the fundamentals. Have a Chapter trestle board. Prepare early and seek perfection. It's the little things that matter. By fundamentals we mean open the Chapter on time. Carry out and render the ritual work from memory, take no shortcuts, insist on perfection, efficiently run the Chapter. Have good programs, communicate, and follow up. Ask yourself-"what can we have done better?" Implement continuous improvement strategies. Restore relationships, employ stewardship, give more than you take and lastly believe in yourself! Have a great work ethic- Work ethic becomes contagious. If you are enthusiastic others will follow.

We think too small! We need each of you to think outside of the box, to be creative, take risks, and to put it on the line, use your God given energy and ambition!

"What gets measured gets done".

Companions, we need good- not only good- BUT GREAT- leadership flowing from all aspects of Royal Arch Masonry! **What gets measured gets done! ...No more lip service...no more..."Oh well...I just ran out of time...maybe next year ...type of thinking.** " Lack of leadership is killing our fraternity!

If this is your second or third year of service to the Chapter or Grand Chapter, I say to you now...that this is a new day! You may need to change your way of thinking! We need you ...excited, enthused, and determined to get this important work done!

From the Grand Line Regional Officers, to the District Deputy Grand High Priests, to the High Priests of the Chapter, we will **inch** our way, and we will **motivate** our way back on the track to greater achievement! We must all labor with a sense of urgency in order to successfully build for the future!

Goals and Objectives 2010-11 and beyond

Companions, the jurisdictional goals and objectives of 2010-11 are actually a long range program that transcends the term of the incoming GHP. It is completely adopted and accepted by the Progressive Six. This means that these new programs are NOT a flash in the pan... or something that you have to put up with for a whole year until the new leader's term has passed... then we can go back to the ways things used to be! The subsequent leadership team is committed to these agenda items and will monitor results and make continuous improvements to the programs along the way.

Companions...We need you to have a full understanding of what we are trying to accomplish this year. To that end, every District Deputy Grand High Priests received an extensive full day of training on December 5, 2009. If you- as a Chapter leader do not understand the goals and objectives of the Grand Chapter State of New York, then we have failed in our training of the District Leaders.

The Goals and Objectives for 2010-11 are as follows:

1. Creation of the new Chapter Renewal Team - CRT
2. Requirement that every Chapter must be certified in the Opening and Closing Ritual.
3. New Royal Arch Seals Program
4. Implementation of an exciting New Royal Arch Charity Program
5. Creation of the Zerubbabel Society
6. Requirement that each district to hold at least one Table Chapter
7. Re-activation of the State Newsletter
8. A new focus for the RAM Magazine
9. Asking each district to recommend one companion for the Meritorious Companion Award
10. Recognize senior Companions by bestowing 50 year service awards
11. Redistricting the jurisdiction - for next year.

If you have previously subscribed to the NYRAM Newsletter, a copy of this inauguration address will be on your computer when you get home. We hope that you will download it, study it, and make additional copies for those Companions who do not use computers.

Companions, we will not take the time this morning to give an in depth presentation of these new goals and objectives outlined in this address, but we would like to lift up few major points that need to be addressed at this time:

Chapter Renewal Team

This year, the Grand Chapter has launched a new and exciting program entitled the **Chapter Renewal Team** or **CRT** for short. It is sort of a sick-bay for Chapters.

The purpose of the CRT is to assist a distressed Chapter in developing strategies and implementing programs and procedures fostering advancement, growth and prosperity. The team assists in evaluating and identifying a Chapters strengths and weaknesses. They will work with the Chapter to create a customized renewal program for the organization.

The team also assists in the implementation of process, procedures, goals, timetables and benchmarks that will ultimately result in a successful and vibrant Royal Arch Chapter, thereby transforming the organization into a vital part of the fabric of York Rite Masonry.

This committee is comprised of some of the most knowledgeable and dedicated Royal Arch Masons in the State of New York, and they look forward to getting started!

Chapter Ritual Requirement - Certified Open and Close

Companions, do you know that nationwide (and worldwide)...Royal Arch Masonry is experiencing a new and renewed interest with an upswing in membership? In order to be a part of that upswing and to grow new members in New York State it is essential that every Chapter learn both to ACT and BE successful!

In order to retain existing members it is essential that **every** Chapter demonstrate great PRIDE and enthusiasm in the organization! In order for any Chapter to develop and retain members ... It must display its value to its members and function in a professional and competent manner. A Master Mason expects that Royal Arch Degrees will be impressive and rendered in no less a quality than that portrayed in the Symbolic Lodge. Therefore the Grand High Priest (along with the full approbation of the Progressive Six) is issuing the following Chapter Ritual Requirement:

That all Chapters must Open and Close without books. Each Chapter shall competently exhibit the opening & closing ceremonies from memory in accordance with the current ritual book. All sword work and floor work shall be executed in accordance with current ritual work. Certification of Ritual shall be performed by members of the same Chapter (no district fill-ins allowed!)

Certification of the Chapter must take place within a two year period- effective today through February 2012. A Certificate of Compliance will be issued by the Grand Chapter summarizing the time and date of such qualification.

The demonstration must take place with any two of the following four Grand Chapter officers in attendance:

1. DDGHP
2. AGL
3. GRAND LECTURER
4. REGIONAL OFFICER

Everywhere we go in New York State, we see that no two Chapters are doing the ritual work alike! Therefore, the Grand Chapter has determined that it is imperative we must portray the **SAME** ritual across the jurisdiction. Ritual is the glue that holds us together as Royal Arch Masons and it is vitally important that we succeed in uniformly displaying our ritual across the Empire State.

Royal Arch Seal Program

Did you know that every dollar donated to Royal Arch Seals goes for immediate distribution of scholarships? Every DDGHP was given a package of 250 of the new and exciting Royal Arch Seals! We are asking that every Chapter in this jurisdiction, to purchase at least one sheet for every Companion in his Chapter. Please place an order for sheets TODAY!! We publicly express our appreciation to R.:E.: Mark Brandariz, State Chair, for spearheading this program. Our goal is to raise \$9000.00 towards this charity.

Royal Arch Charities

We are pleased to announce that Grand Chapter has launched a new and exciting Royal Arch Charity Campaign for 2010-11. We publicly express our appreciation to M.:E.:Walter J. Hilsenbeck, General Chair, R.:E.:Michael Dunn, and R.:E.:George Prentice State Co-Chairs, for spearheading this thrilling program. Our goal is to raise \$55,000.00 for our charities.

In anticipation of your loyal support to our charities, Grand Chapter has implemented a NEW extraordinary rewards system for your thoughtfulness .When you donate \$100.00, \$250.00, \$500.00 or \$1000.00 we will send you a special gift to show our appreciation for your participation- just select what gift you desire on the return envelope and Grand Chapter will mail the gift directly to your home!

The second new program we want to share with you is the creation of the **Zerubbabel Society**. Any Companion who joins will receive a distinctive jewel that he can proudly wear in his Chapter along with his apron and regalia. This jewel will be bestowed to you in your Chapter or at Grand Chapter as you wish. This jewel will be immediately given to any Companion who pledges a minimum of \$100.00 per year for 10 years. (*\$1000.00 total*). You may choose to donate the full \$1000.00 earlier if desired.

When this program was unveiled to the Permanent Members at the January meeting, several Companions immediately stepped up to join the Zerubbabel Society. It is now my privilege to present these loyal Companions with the new jewel and to officially welcome them into the Zerubbabel Society.

Reshaping the Capitular Districts

One of our last major challenges facing this administration will be the reshaping of the Capitular Districts of New York. There are many good reasons why this move is necessary, among such as a lack of Chapters in the district, and lack of Companions willing to serve as DDGHP and AGL. Our goal is to properly evaluation the situation, and proactively re-set the districts as they should be- rather than watching the shrinking process! We shall unveil the new district plan at the three Meet the Grand Chapter seminars for your review and comment.

Closing

Companions, we ask for your steadfast dedication to these goals and objectives that we have lain out before you this day. We need each of you to be a self-motivated, passionate promoter for Royal Arch Masonry!

Speaking for myself and the rest of the Grand Chapter Officers, It is our sincere wish that the Supreme Architect of the Universe give each of you the fervency and zeal necessary to join us on this new amazing journey. We ask you to choose to make a difference, to make your Chapters better! We are also urging you to show up for work, ready to go! We are confident that with personal perseverance and courage your Chapters will indeed succeed and flourish!

“And May God’s Richest Blessings Be Yours”

Biography

M.: E.: Jeffrey M. Williamson is celebrating his 32nd year as a Mason and has an active and enjoyable life. He is married for 37 years to Carla Williamson and they have twin 34 year old sons. (One is married)

Jeff is an Ordained Elder and an active member of the Crittenden Presbyterian Church and a former Clerk of Session. He is involved in the Western New York community and also serves as chairman of the Ferguson Electric's United Way of Buffalo and Erie County Annual Campaign for more than a dozen years.

Professionally, he is a Project Manager-Engineer for Ferguson Electric of Buffalo, NY and holds all of the Licensed Master Electrician Licenses for all municipalities located in Western New York. He is responsible for engineering of design-build, estimating and project management throughout Western New York.

Jeff is a member of Western Star Lodge No. 1185 in Lackawanna NY and has been a Mason since 1978. He served as Master of Buffalo Lodge in 1984 and 1985 and District Deputy Grand Master of the Second Erie District in 1998-2000. He also served or chaired several District and Grand Lodge Committees. He enjoys several Honorary Memberships in several sister lodges as well.

Jeff was exalted in 1984 in Buffalo Keystone Chapter No.71, and is currently a member of Holy Ark Chapter No. 304 in Lackawanna, NY. He was appointed Grand Master of The Third Veil in 2004 and is currently serving as the Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter State of New York, Royal Arch Masons.

Always active in the entire York Rite, he has presided in all of the major bodies and in 2005 was made a member of the Knights of the York Cross of Honor. (KYCH). He is an enthusiastic member or officer of innumerable invitational bodies and organizations.

In what little spare time he has, Jeff enjoys spending time in the great outdoors which includes fly fishing and traveling. His theme for the year is “**Learning from the Past, Building for the Future**” and looks forward with great eagerness to the future of Royal Arch Masonry as we navigate and transition our way into a new, strengthened, and improved organizational model.

Grand High Priest's Itinerary

MARCH

12 – 14	Grand Chapter of Delaware	
19	Dinner with Companions	New York City
20	Meet the Grand Chapter	City island, NY
26 – 27	Grand Chapter of Rhode Island	

APRIL

3	Easter Weekend	
8 - 10	Grand Chapter of Ontario	
10	Millennium Lodge 10 th Anniversary	
15	Western Star Chapter No.35 Apron Presentation for R.:E.: Rev. Lee and R.:E.:Turton	
17	Grand High Priest Reception Grand Line Meeting at 2 PM	Hamburg, NY
24	Grand Chapter of Maine	
30	Syria - Lebanon Festival MMM - PM - MEM	

MAY

1	Syria - Lebanon Festival HRA - OHP	
3 - 5	Grand Lodge	New York City
8	Grand Chapter of New Hampshire	
15	Meet the Grand Chapter Charity Dinner	Liverpool, NY Syracuse, NY
22	Washington Chapter Bicentennial and Consolidation	
29	Memorial Weekend	