

APRIL 2017

In this Issue

Message from the Master, p. 2

Officer Contact Information, p.3

April

Enlightenment, p.4

Masonic Bowling, p. 6

Dates to Remember

Upcoming Events, p. 7

Lodge Breakfast

LaCasa Restaurant

April 8, 8:30 a.m.

4551 Duke Street

Alexandria, VA 22304

Stated Communication

April 17, 7:30 p.m.

Presentation by

District Education

Officer

Wor. Richard Laaken

On Lodge Consolidation

The Joint Committee on Lodge Consolidation has begun its work in earnest. The committeemen are conducting research with the Grand Lodge, querying other lodges that have consolidated, and seeking feedback from the members of our lodges. John Blair had a listening session as part of the March Stated Communication and Henry Knox Field will host a listening session for its members in early April.

The Committee is taking the feedback it receives and creating a draft resolution. No important undertaking in Masonry is accomplished without deliberate thought, inclusiveness, and time for reflection. Understanding the goals of lodge consolidation and the process to make it happen are essential for peace and harmony.

Members of both lodges on the committee agree that no traditional or symbolic programs will be deleted from the usual program of work of either lodge. Traditions from each will be honored and celebrated as part of our rich history. We seek to create a stronger, joined lodge, not a compromised lodge.

The process begins with the presentation of a formal resolution for consolidation in each lodge at a Stated Communication. Once presented, it will lay over a lunar month. After laying over, each lodge will vote. If the resolution is approved by 50% of members present (in each lodge), the resolution will lay over another lunar month. After laying over again, each lodge will vote again. A 75% majority is required from each lodge to approve the resolution. If approved, the consolidation then becomes a matter of paperwork for approval by the Grand Lodge.

Message from Wor. Daniel E. Froggett



Spring is a time for renewal and growth. In many ways, John Blair is going through a period of renewal and growth. Over the past few years we have doubled-down on our efforts to reach out to every member and ensure that our communications

were being received. We will continue to strengthen those efforts through this document, a continually evolving and improving website, email messages, invitations, and meaningful stated communications. We must renew and grow our relationships with one another to grow in Masonry.

Since January, you have heard me speak at length on the topic of lodge consolidation and I was pleased with the robust conversation that the members had at the March Stated. I implore you to keep the conversation going. The Joint Committee on Lodge Consolidation seeks your input as the process of drafting a resolution for presentation to both John Blair and Henry Knox Field begins. Every opinion matters and will inform the document. Consolidation will result in the birth of a new lodge that has much more potential to grow in the Craft.

I hope that you are also considering your own renewal and growth as the weather gets warmer and the trees get greener. When is the last time that you visited a lodge other than John Blair? Visiting other lodges provides us with greater perspectives and new interpretations to Masonic practices. We can grow our personal networks and find support in the constant renewal of our obligations to the Craft and one another.

Sincerely & Fraternally,



JOHN BLAIR LODGE NO. 187, A.F. & A.M., 2017 OFFICERS

WORSHIPFUL MASTER

Daniel E. Froggett
danielefroggett@gmail.com

SENIOR WARDEN

John J. Murawski II
jjmski2@gmail.com

JUNIOR WARDEN

Erik N. Schultz
erik.schultz77@gmail.com

TREASURER

James F. Cordes
Jim_Cordes@yahoo.com

SECRETARY

Wor. Kenneth R. Reynolds
contraq@aol.com

SENIOR DEACON

Antoine P. Issa
issatoni@hotmail.com

JUNIOR DEACON

Timothy J. Fisher
tfisher2000@gmail.com

MARSHAL & MUSICIAN

F. Paul Norris
fpnorris@gmail.com

TILER & WEBMASTER

Wor. Jaime H. Flores
southofharlem@gmail.com

CHAPLAIN

Rt. Wor. James W. Schoonmaker
james.schoonmaker@gmail.com

APRIL ENLIGHTENMENT

On April 10 we will initiate a man into the Mysteries of Freemasonry. Many aspects of initiation are similar across the globe, but one practice that is not universal, and even a little controversial, is the candidate's placement in a "Chamber of Reflection." The piece presented here is taken from proceedings of the Southern California Lodge of Research.

To learn more about Lodges of Research, attend the April 22 meeting of the A. Douglas Smith Lodge of Research, No. 1949.



The Chamber of Reflection *by Jordan Yelinek, P.M.*

Freemasonry is an initiatic society, and her rituals are transformative. The cultivation of the prospect for our Craft should be the utmost care of our Lodges, and when that prospect is made into a candidate for the mysteries of Freemasonry, it is our duty to ensure that he is indeed duly and truly prepared. The Brethren, on the candidate's entrance into the Lodge, can readily examine the physical preparation of the candidate, yet the mental preparation of the candidate too must be addressed. All too often, a candidate is rushed from his daily, dull cares of life, into the preparation room, where he is physically prepared, but carries with him, into the Lodge, the worries of his day. An interstitial space between the profane and the initiated, the Chamber of Reflection provides an opportunity for our candidates to separate from the profane world, and ready their hearts and minds for the great work in which they are about to engage themselves.

The form of the Chamber of Reflection varies greatly between different jurisdictions. The most familiar are adorned with alchemical and arcane symbols, together with those of mortality. Still others are adorned with pieces of modern art, and some are quite plain. In all, the candidate for the Entered Apprentice degree spends some 30 minutes to an hour in the Chamber previous to his Initiation. The end result, in all three cases, if executed with attention and care, is the due and true mental preparation of the candidate.

The origins of the Chamber of Reflection draw themselves from the Pythagorean mystery schools, and even from the Cult of Mithras (perhaps another progenitor of our Craft). Here, novitiate's were secreted away in a cave previous to the initiatory observances of these orders. To us, the Chamber is also reflective of this cave, as seen most closely in the arcane Chamber, which is painted black and small in size, to mirror this experience.

The arcane chamber also commonly possesses the skull,



crossbones, scythe, or other emblems of mortality. A small plate of bread and glass of water, intended for the candidate to eat and drink, are present and are simple food for the work ahead. Alchemical elements, most commonly sulfur, salt and mercury, are drawn upon the walls. To the alchemist sulfur is a masculine element, and represents strength, salt is considered neutral, and represents wisdom; and Mercury, a feminine element, represents beauty. An hourglass is also present, to mark the time. Phrases are sometimes written up on the wall, such as Perseverance and Vigilance. A mirror is occasionally present for the physical reflection of the candidate, together with the spiritual. In all types of chambers, arcane, modern, or plain, a philosophical testament is written, or the candidate answers questions prepared for him in advance. Examples of such questions, used by Prometheus Lodge No. 851 in San Francisco, CA, are:

- In the modern world, in which we live, what drew you to seek membership in the fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons?
- It has often been stated that, simply, the goal of Freemasonry is to make good men better. What is it, in yourself that you are seeking to better, through your experience of the fraternity?
- One of the principal tenets of Freemasonry is Brotherly Love. How, through the exercise of brotherly love, will you support and enable those around you in seeking to better themselves through the Fraternity?

These questions are then sealed in an envelope, with the candidate's signature across the seal, and presented by the Brother who retrieves him from the Chamber. Some Lodges hold these questions, and return them to the candidate, unopened, on his raising to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason, while others read them in open Lodge before the initiation, to better know their candidate, and best match his experience to his needs and desires.

Ultimately, the Chamber of Reflection provides an opportunity for the candidate to separate from the profane world as he begins his journey in Masonry. It provides reflection on who he is as a man, what he wishes to accomplish in his life, and how the Craft fits into that path. Through the use of the Chamber of Reflection, or not, it is our duty as Brethren, to ensure the due and true preparation of our candidates, both physically and mentally, for the good of our Craft.

[Jordan T. Yelinek, P.M., "The Chamber of Reflection," *The Voice of Freemasonry in the Nation's Capital*, An Official Publication of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Washington, DC, Volume 30, Number 1, 2013, 26-27.]



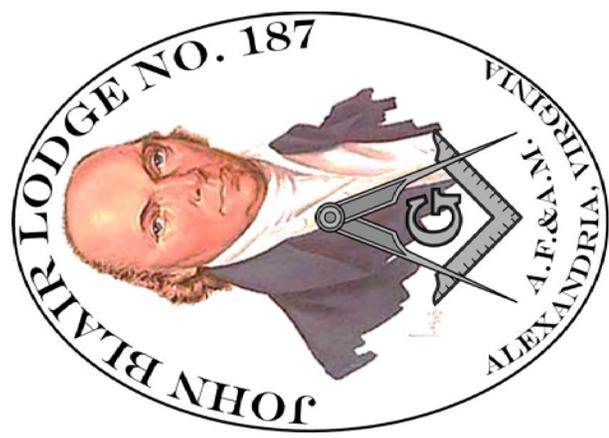
Masonic Bowling on March 25 was a great evening of fellowship. Twenty-five members and guests, including Brothers from four lodges and some potential recruits were in attendance. Thanks for all who participated and let us know what our next event should be!





APRIL 2017 EVENTS

- 4/1 Division Leadership Conference (ASRT) [all officers should attend]
Breakfast to precede the event at 7:00 a.m., event begins at 8:00 a.m.
- 4/8 Lodge Breakfast (LaCasa Restaurant, Duke Street, Alexandria)
- 4/17 Stated Communication (Wor. Richard Laaken presenting as DEO)
- 4/22 A. Douglas Smith, Jr., Lodge of Research, No. 1949
Open to all Master Masons. Light breakfast will begin at 9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m. Meeting Rt. Wor. Rhey Solomon will present research on the history of Masonic District Realignment in the Grand Lodge of Virginia from the early 1900s to present. Lunch to follow.
- 4/24 District Ritual School (Alexandria-Washington, No. 22, hosting)
All brethren are encouraged to regularly attend ritual schools. Lodge Instructor of Work, Wor. Ken Reynolds, will provide more information on ritual schools throughout the area on a regular basis.



JOHN BLAIR LODGE, NO. 187, AF&AM
 DANIEL E. FROGGETT, WORSHIPFUL MASTER
 1430 WEST BRADDOCK ROAD
 ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22302
www.JBL187.ORG
*Stated Communication:
 Third Monday 7:30 p.m.*