



FEBRUARY 2017

Message from Wor. Daniel E. Froggett



January proved to be a very busy month for the lodge. As I reported at the Stated Communication, the Lodge Trustees met to review the state of the lodge and were pleased with both our financial position and our ability to have a full progressive officer line. I asked the Trustees to advise me on a request that the Lodge received from Henry Knox Field, No. 349, about discussing lodge consolidation. The Trustees encouraged me to have the conversation but make no decisions until after both lodges had been fully brought into that conversation. I now turn to all of you Brethren for counsel and advice. If our lodges were to consolidate, there would be many items to consider and I am sure each of you have valid opinions. Please know I only support consolidation if it means a stronger future and a higher quality Masonic experience.

As you contemplate lodge consolidation, remember we are facing a changing district environment and we want to adequately prepare ourselves for anticipated suggestions about lodges across the Commonwealth. I mentioned the Grand Lodge's plan for district consolidation in last month's Trestleboard. This month, the District Deputy Grand Masters (DDGMs) of Masonic Districts 1A, 1B, and 54 gathered the Masters and Wardens of the lodges that will be included in the new District 1A. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the election of the DDGM going forward; however, it led to many conversations on what the future of many of our lodges might look like. As the Craft continues to shrink, through loss of older members and lack of new members, we have many difficult decisions to make as a corporate body.

Our February Stated Communication will include a full report from the Masters and Wardens meeting and we will outline the agreed upon procedures for DDGM nomination. We will begin the nomination process for DDGM at the February meeting and ratify that nomination at the March meeting. Your attendance is strongly requested for both meetings. These decisions will shape our future district significantly and impact John Blair's role in the Grand Lodge for many years to come. In addition, our current DDGM will be present should you have any questions.

We, as a lodge, must be focused on our future. If we are going to continue to measure up as a lodge capable of sustaining itself, we must all participate and recruit. I implore your attendance and involvement this year.

Sincerely & Fraternaly,

District Deputy Grand Master Nominations & District Consolidation

We have just barely started 2017 and we are being asked to consider what leadership we would like to see in 2019. **The nominating process for District Deputy Grand Master (DDGM) in 2019 will begin at the February Stated Communication, with a final vote at the March Stated Communication.**

Traditionally, Masonic District 1A has used a rotational system where each of the four regular lodges in the district took turns sending a nomination to the Grand Master and the other lodges voter their approval. Masonic District 1A, however, will be significantly different in 2019 when the DDGM will take office. Following the close of the 2018 Grand Annual Communication, 1A will welcome the entirety of Masonic District 54 and Elmer Timberman Lodge from Masonic District 1B. With 11 nominating lodges in total, the District has to reconsider the nominating process.

The Masters and Wardens Association of District 54 generously invited the Masters and Wardens from 1A and Elmer Timberman to join them Tuesday, January 24, to hash out the 2019 nomination. While a very lively and productive exchange occurred at the meeting, it is clear that all of

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- Lodge Breakfast LaCasa Restaurant **February 11, 8:30 a.m.** 4551 Duke Street Alexandria, VA 22304
- Stated Communication **February 20, 7:30 p.m.** Reception of the District Deputy Grand Master Dinner hosted by Wor. Froggett

the impacted lodges are still considering what the district consolidation process means for their lodges and our operations as a district.

Ultimately, the lodges present decided to make individual nominations for 2019. Whether this decision was made (continued on pg. 4)



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

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CHAPLAIN

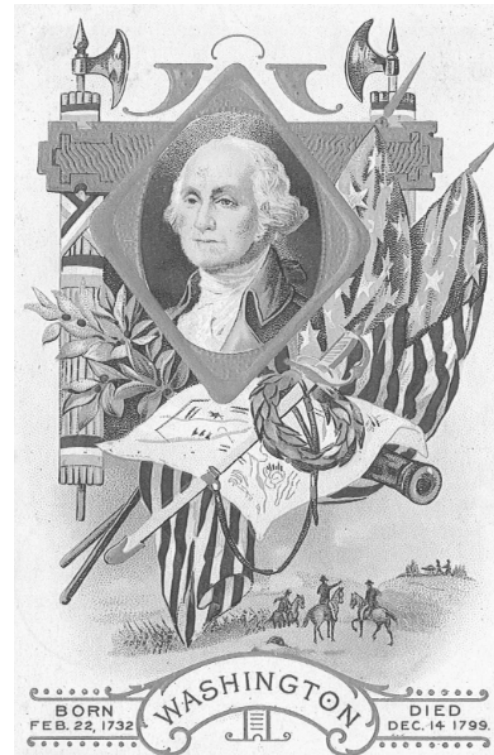
Rt. Wor. James W. Schoonmaker
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(from pg. 1) out of expediency to meet the May 1 nomination submission deadline or to inundate the Grand Lodge with multiple nominations as a quiet protest for the consolidation process is up for debate.

John Blair will consider potential nominees from our lodge and consult with other lodges in the future District 1A. The final candidate for nomination will be voted on at the March Stated Communication. All Brethren are requested to attend both the February and March Stated Communications to be part of the discussion.

Moving forward, the lodges that will be part of the future District 1A have many more items to discuss. Will we formalize a DDGM policy? What expectations does the Grand Lodge have for the "super-districts" they are creating as compared to the more moderately sized districts across the Commonwealth? How will the work of the other district officers be distributed?

All Masons should be most concerned with the future of the Craft. Are we allowing ourselves to get mired in the arbitrary bureaucracies we have created over the years? Have we lost site of why we are really here and what we are meant to do as Masons? Do not be afraid to question and respectfully debate the Grand Lodge and each other as we consider the next five, ten, and fifty years of Masonry in Virginia.



*Celebrating our
Illustrious Brother*
**GEORGE
WASHINGTON**

Born, February 22, 1732.

Entered, Fredericksburg
Lodge, November 4, 1752.

Passed to the Degree of
Fellow Craft, March 3, 1753.

Raised to the Sublime Degree
of Master Mason, Aug. 4, 1753.

Called to the Celestial Grand
Lodge, December 14, 1799
Age 67, and for 47 years a
brother of the Craft.



DUES

Annual dues are now requested from all members. Please remit your check or money order for \$87, made payable to:

John Blair Lodge No. 187

and mail to:

**John Blair Lodge No. 187
1430 W. Braddock Road
Alexandria, Virginia 22302**

If you are a lifetime member, we are most appreciative for the investment you have made in Masonry. The Lodge always welcomes contributions to support our Brethren and events.

2017 MASONIC DISTRICT 1A OFFICER TEAM

DISTRICT DEPUTY GRAND MASTER

Rt. Wor. Mark W. Underwood
Huzzah3579@aol.com

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Rt. Wor. Michael R. Aulicino
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EDUCATION OFFICER

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BLOOD COORDINATOR

Wor. Thomas G. Little
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FEBRUARY 2017 EVENTS

- Thursday 2/9 Alexandria-Washington Stated 7:30 p.m.
- Tuesday 2/14 Henry Know Field Stated 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday 2/11 John Blair Lodge Breakfast 8:30 a.m. LaCasa Restaurant
- Thursday 2/16 Andrew Jackson Stated 7:30 p.m.
- Monday 2/20 John Blair Stated Communication. Dinner 6:30. Stated 7:30.
Reception of R.W. Mark W. Underwood, DDGM
Discussions on Lodge Formation and DDGM Elections
- Monday 2/27 District Ritual School & SLOT (AJ120)

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.

FEBRUARY ENLIGHTENMENT from *Stellar Theology & Masonic Astronomy*

By Robert Hewitt Brown (1882)

Of the volumes that have been written about various aspects of Masonry, Robert Hewitt Brown's 1882 *Stellar Theology & Masonic Astronomy* has been long regarded as a seminal compendium of the allegorical uses of signs and symbols in Freemasonry. Authors have dissected his work to some extent in later tomes but the information presented in *Stellar* does assist the inquisitive Mason on his journey toward greater enlightenment. The following passage is from the chapter on Masonic Astronomy:



Name of the Order

Q. By what name were masons anciently known?

A. Long before the building of King Solomon's temple, masons were known as the "Sons of Light." Masonry was practiced by the ancients under the name of Lux (Light), or its equivalent, in the various languages of antiquity.

Q. What is said to be the origin of the word "masonry"?

A. We are informed by several distinguished writers that it is a corruption of the Greek word mesouraneo, which signifies "I am in the midst of heaven," alluding to the sun, which, being "in the midst of heaven," is the great source of light. Others derive it directly from the ancient Egyptian Phre, the sun, and Mas, a child: PhreMassen — i.e., Children of the Sun, or, Sons of Light.

Astronomy and Geometry

Q. What two sciences have always been held in especial reverence by masons?

A. Astronomy and geometry, the latter because it is the foundation of the former

The Lodge

Q. How ought every lodge to be situated?

A. Due east and west.

Q. Why So?

A. Because, in the language of Dr. Hemming, a distinguished brother and masonic writer, "the sun, the glory of the Lord, rises in the east and sets in the west."

Q. What are the dimensions and covering of a lodge?

A. Its dimensions are without limit, and "its covering no less than the clouded canopy or starry-decked heavens." In the language of Oliver, Boundless is the extent of a mason's lodge – in height to the topmost heaven – in depth to the central abyss – in length from east to west – in breadth from north to south.

Q. How many lights has a lodge?

A. According to Dr. Oliver, in his Dictionary of Symbolical Masonry, a lodge has three lights – one in the east, another in the west, and another in the south.

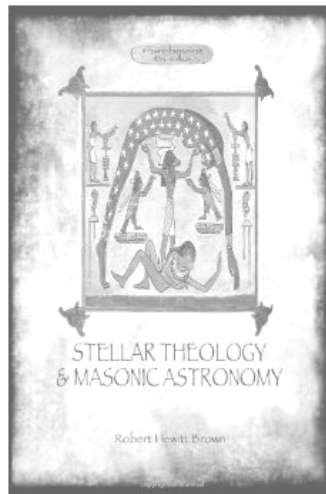
Q. Why are they so situated?

A. Dr. Oliver, in his work just named, says they are so situated "in allusion to the sun, which, rising in the east, gains the meridian in the south, and disappears in the west." These luminaries, says Dr. Oliver,

in the same place, "represent, emblematically, the sun, the moon, and the master of the lodge." The same authority informs us that a lodge "has no light in the north, because the sun darts no rays from thence."

Q. Of what is a lodge therefore emblematic?

A. The whole earth illuminated by the sun, shining from the east, south, and west; covered by day with a "clouded canopy" and at night by "the starry-decked heavens." Says Hutchinson, a standard masonic author, "The lodge, when revealed to an entering mason, discovers to him the representation of the world."



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Stated Communication:
Third Monday 7:30 p.m.