

GRAND CHAPTER OF MAINE ROYAL ARCH MASONS



April 24, 2010
Portland, Maine

Grand High Priest's Message

Companions:

Standing here I am humbled. In all honesty, it has not been my long held desire to sit in the East of this Grand Royal Arch Chapter. I must confess I did consider it. However, to be the head of such an organization was not something I really sought. And, I am not sure I am ready.

The last time I felt this unready for a job, someone special told me "...never to seek any office, if you just do what you do an appropriate office will seek you." I hope he was right.

There are so many to thank for this opportunity. I will surely miss many if I try to recognize everyone, but there are some that I must acknowledge at this time.

First and most important: I thank the Grand Master of the Universe. He has truly blessed my life in many ways. He made it possible for me to be at the right place at the right time with the right experience and whatever else He thought necessary for a great many honors in my life, and this is one of the greatest.

Second, my wife and partner Brenda; without her I can't do much. She encourages me and supports me, sometimes pushes; and sometimes holds back – and most of the time doesn't realize how necessary she really is. I certainly don't say it enough. For the rest of you, she is the one that lets me come out to play from time to time. I am afraid that after this year, she may start the holding back a bit more.

Third, Ed, Dawn and Nancy Carr: they have encouraged me, guided me, and helped me in each step of my travels. Ed once told me if I were ever to become Grand High Priest, he would do the installation. Not only is he here to make good that promise, but he Dawn and Nancy gave up their vacation so he could be here now. I appreciate that more than I can tell.

I have to include Gene Pease and Wayne Nice who were the Dad Advisors that got me started in masonry as a Demolay just a few short years ago.

Bob Chaput, Ray McLellen and Les Buzzell, each with different talents and methods, each as important in my Masonic life. . . .

I could name many, many more to whom I owe my thanks. To whom I am grateful for guidance and acceptance. So let me just say, thank you; all of you.

To my grand officers:

There will be a training session. This is designed to help you find ways to assist when visiting chapters. You Grand Officers represent me in your visits to the chapters. You need to know what I expect from you. This will occur at the summer meeting. I ask that you make an honest effort to be there.

I challenge all grand officers; past as well as present to attend and support your own Masonic organizations throughout this year. More particularly I would like to see a large presence of “red coats” at each and every inspection around the jurisdiction. I can’t be at every meeting everywhere, but there can be a lot of “red coats” there.

Use the website. It is there for communication. If you need something added tell the webmaster. I know him; he is a decent guy and will do whatever he can to accommodate you.

Goals for the coming year:

Goals are always so dangerous. I find that people generally over plan and over state their desires, never to achieve some them at all, and, at the same time doing others an injustice. But, without goals there is nothing to work toward.

1. Personal goals for me:

- a. First, I think it is important to visit Grand Chapters in other jurisdictions. While I understand that I represent you at those events, I am afraid I will not personally be doing as much of this as some would like. I will try, but I believe my duties should center more in this jurisdiction.
- b. Second, I think it is important to visit Chapters in this jurisdiction. The individual chapters are the customers we in the Grand Chapter are here to support. I won’t get to every chapter, but I will get to many, and if anyone has a request for something special I will try to accommodate them.
- c. Third, there will be a training session for each chapter secretary. This will be conducted by the Grand Secretary. It is hard to expect someone to do something a particular way without telling them what that way is.

2. Goals for the Chapters:

- a. Each inspection will include degree work. I ask that, if you can, you do a different degree than that which you did last year. If you need help in one seat or another ask, this grand chapter will help you find someone to assist. There are a great many “old guys” around that love that kind of work. But, I expect the chapters to make an effort to do the work with the officers they have.
- b. Visit with other chapters. Sometimes a visitor or two is all that is needed to open. You may find out something they do that you can do also. Another way to look at this is, if you attend someone else’s meeting, perhaps they will reciprocate and you might have enough present to open your own meeting. Make it a point; either alone or with a companion, to visit at least once to at least two chapters in addition to your own this year.
- c. Get together with other chapters and sponsor a “school of instruction” you pick the topic. Let me or the Grand Secretary know what and when and we will get someone there to discuss the topic with you. We have three “OLD and KNOWLEDGABLE” Past Grand High Priest’s acting as Grand Lecturers this year. We really need to take advantage of the education they can provide while they are still willing.

Dispensations:

I have issued a dispensation to the chapters in this jurisdiction to continue the practice of receiving petitions and conferring degrees at one and the same meeting. I will consider all other requests for dispensation as I receive them.

Closing:

In closing: Too many times I have seen companions complain about membership, ritual work, attendance, and any number of things that effect this organization. Too many times I have been one to do so. And, too many times I have found that I or the other person complaining held the solution. The bottom line, if "WE" don't fix the problem "WE" will continue to have the problem.

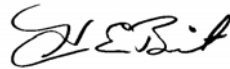
I am not the solution to any problems we may or may not have. We are the solutions. I will work with you to make things happen, but you have to work with me too! And that applies to whatever you see is the problem.

Again, thank you for allowing me to stand here today. I will do my best but the only promise I will make right now is. . .

. . . to "Old Doug" . . .

. . . that I will continue to make Virgie proud.

Fraternally,



Harold E. Birt, Jr.
M.E. Grand High Priest
Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Maine