

Brotherhood

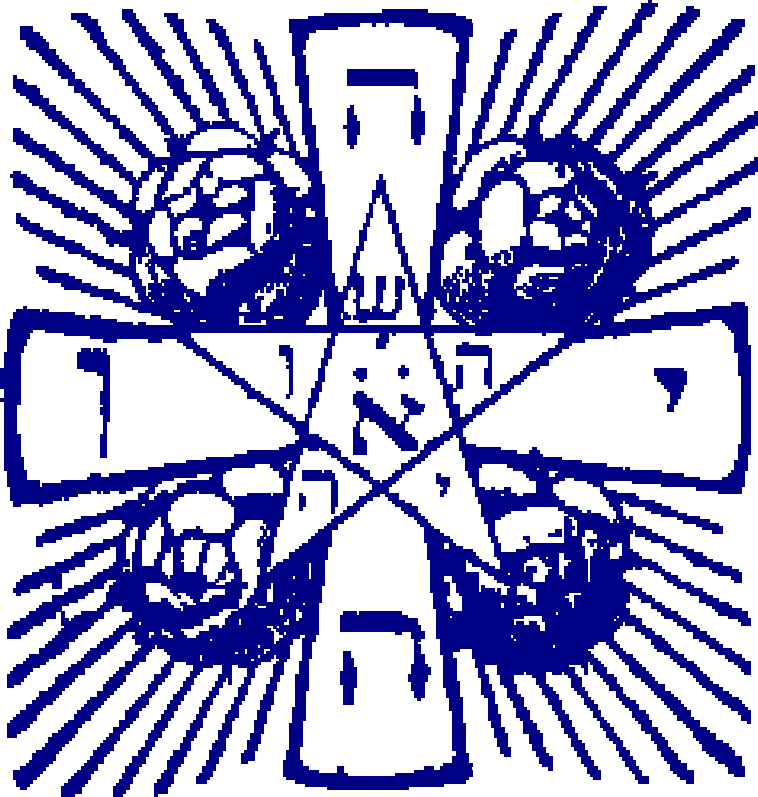
THE OFFICIAL NOTICE OF THE FOUR BODIES OF THE
ANCIENT ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE OF FREEMASONRY
VALLEY OF NEW YORK CITY

MASONIC HALL
71 WEST 23rd STREET, NYC 10010-4102

VOLUME LV

SUMMER 2003

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KABBALISTIC ROSE CROIX

(early Rosicrucian engraving)

Brotherhood

The Official Notice of the Scottish Rite
Bodies in the Valley of New York City

EDITORIAL STAFF

Piers A. Vaughan, 32°
Stevan Nikolic, 32°

ALLEGIANCE

The Bodies of the Scottish Rite, sitting in the Valley of New York City, State of New York, acknowledge and yield allegiance to the Supreme Council 33 °, Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry for the Northern Jurisdiction of the United States of America, whose Grand East is in Lexington, MA and whose Officers are:

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Sovereign Grand Commander

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Grand Lieutenant Commander

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COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S MESSAGE

One year ago when I was elected to the Office of Commander-In-Chief we had thirty-five men in attendance at the installation ceremony. This year we had over eighty men, women and children. I think we did something right, now all we have to do is do it again even 'righterer'! A strong Valley needs a lot of men to run it. I didn't say to "do the work": I said to "run it".

It is true that there are only a limited number of Officers elected and appointed each year, but they are not enough to do everything that needs to be done, and we have a lot of things that need to be done. Followers are great, men who are willing to do whatever you ask them, but as Masons we are taught to be leaders, in our Lodge, in our career, in our community and in our life. And right now the Valley needs leaders. You don't have to be an expert in a particular subject to be a leader, but you do need to be self-motivated. You need to be able to take the initiative to learn and discover; to track down the people who have the knowledge and experience you need to lead this Valley on to bigger and better things. Do you have a talent and skill you feel pretty good about? Is there something you would like to know more about?

We are in need of leaders. The men we have who are leading us are being multi-tasked to exhaustion. One man will direct two Degrees and perform in them too; and one of those will be a Degree that no-one in the Valley has ever done or has seen being done before. None of us are experts on costumes, so we read the little Degree books that tell us what the period is, and then we run to history books to see what they are supposed to look like. We have men who are running our Website, putting together this Newsletter, learning their work for their Office and trying to come up with other ideas to make this Valley better and then implementing them. All at once.

There is plenty of opportunity to serve and learn while serving.
Let's hear from you!

I wish you and your loved ones a peaceful and enjoyable Summer.

Fraternally,

David C. Wright, 32^o, M.S.A.
Commander-in-Chief

MOST WISE MASTER'S MESSAGE

Brothers and Knights of Rose Croix,

One more Masonic year is behind us. We all worked hard and that resulted in growth and progress of our Valley, upward and in the right direction. I hope that our hard work reflected equally positive on each of us and our personal spiritual and Masonic upbringing, since that is real “raison d’être” of everything we do in Masonry. To become Knight of Rose Croix is an honor, as well as a big responsibility. The Rose Croix Degree is a spiritual heart of Scottish Rite Masonry, and to understand the full meaning of that statement, each of us has to embark on its own symbolic journey to complete that **GREAT WORK**, started before the beginning of time.

While thinking about this journey, the words of our Great Teacher from Nazareth come to my mind: **“If you continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free.”** (John 8-31)

At our last meeting in June, new Officers of the Valley were installed by Ill.: Gerry A. Henningsen 33° Active. The new elected and appointed Officers of the Chapter of Rose Croix, Valley of New York City A.A.S.R. for the year 2003/2004 are:

- Most Wise Master.....Stevan Nikolic
- Senior WardenRonald Joseph
- Junior WardenClifford Jacobs
- OratorFranco Calvo
- Master of CeremoniesVictor Marshal
- Captain of the GuardJason Sheridan
- SecretaryMarcel Axelrod
- TreasurerIll.: Swen Mossberg 33*
- HospitalerIll.: Walter Gashnik 33*
- SentinelJames Anderson

I congratulate all Elected and Appointed Officers, and hope since we are a group of seasoned and experienced Masons, that the least we will give in our Ritual and in our Masonic work, is excellence.

Our program for next year is very ambitious. On Tuesday, December 2nd 2003, the Valley’s meeting will be hosted by the Chapter of Rose Croix. The Lecture of the evening will be “Symbolism of the 18th Degree” and will be given by me. On Saturday, March 13th 2004, will be the Chapter Rose Croix Reunion, starting at 10AM in the Empire Room, when we will confer the 17th and 18th Degree on the Class of 2003/2004.

The 18th Degree will be conferred by our Senior Warden – Bro. Ronald Joseph , and we are looking forward to his performance.

On April 1st 2004, we will celebrate our Annual “Feast of the Paschal Lamb”, and we are hoping to do even better work than the last year. The Guest Speaker will be the renowned European Masonic Scholar Bro. Michel Brodsky (Past Master of the Quattour Coronati Lodge of Research in London). Mark your Calendar early for this event. We will have a 5.30 PM pre-meeting sit down dinner, open to all Members of the Valley and their Guests (with Reservations only !)

After the Ceremony, we will have our traditional Coffee and Cake hour, open to all in attendance. This year our Program will be printed as a part of the Journal booklet. By soliciting Journal Ads from Masonic groups , individual and businesses, we will try to subsidize part of the cost of this Event .

On April 13th 2004, The Chapter of Rose Croix will be again the Host of the Valley’s Meeting. The subject of the Lecture for that evening is not yet determined, so any suggestions and volunteers are welcome.

With Brotherly Love,

Stevan Nikolic, 32^o
Most Wise Master

SOVEREIGN PRINCE’S MESSAGE

My Fellow Scottish Rite Brethren:

I bring you fraternal greetings and my best wishes for the ensuing Masonic Season. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude for the utmost trust you put into me and my fellow officers during our most recent elections. I am very proud to have the chance to preside The Council of Princes of Jerusalem of the Valley of New York City, such dynamic and one of the most promising bodies of the entire New York State. I am confident that, with your continued support and hard work, we will make history relived together as once had been portrayed by our predecessors.

My brothers, soon the C.O.P. will start preparations for Masonic work. I would urge each of you to constantly remind yourself that our Masonic Heritage sets aside our benevolent craft from other likewise fraternal organizations. Masonic ritual is the essence of being a Mason,

particularly a Scottish Rite Mason whose ambition should always be to excel towards higher goals and to ultimately achieve the historical and philosophical maturity in Masonic education. Education, my brothers, is the key to success for everything we do in life. Without it, the foundation would miss the “corner stone”, which is critical for any superstructure.

I am pleased to announce that COP is teamed up with wonderful and highly talented brothers in officer’s ranks, whom I had the pleasure to work with in close connection during my previous tenure as the Thrice Potent Master of the Lodge of Perfection. These brothers are:

High Priest	Sub. Pr. Yves Etienne, 32° , PTPM
Senior Warden	Sub. Pr. Piers A. Vaughan, 32° , PMWM
Junior Warden	Sub. Pr. Leon B. Weinstein, 32° , MSA, PSP
Treasurer	Ill. Sven R. Mossberg, 33° , Past Dep Rep. (Ret.)
Secretary	Sub. Pr. Marcel Akselrod, 32°
Master of Ceremonies	Sub. Pr. TBD., 32°
Hospitaler	Ill. I. Walter Gasnick, 33° , MSA, PCIC, PSP
Tiler	Sub. Pr. James Anderson, 32°

I am very much looking forward to seeing each of you in all activities of the C.O.P. during the ensuing Masonic Year.

Fraternally Yours,

Nazmi Mete Talimcioglu, 32°, PTPM
Sovereign Prince



Degree ceremony
(from early print)

THRICE POTENT MASTER'S MESSAGE

...a message from the TPM:

Our degrees, from 4° – 14°, are made to give each brother a sense of idea of what the Ineffable Degrees are. A synonymous replacement for the word *ineffable* is “deep”, as in mentally deep thinking. Each degree is designed to hopefully do just that; make each of us “think” towards perfection. Each degree gives you something to think about through its lessons.

This year I hope to bring you the idea that, as we receives honors and commendations throughout our life, each new honor is meant to be a step towards perfection in the moral code; each one being a development of a particular duty; and that benevolence and charity are necessary virtues of leadership. And as always, in my duty as Thrice Potent Master, I hope to bring forth, as the summit of Ancient Craft Masonry, the crowning reward for the incoming member of the Lodge of Perfection which is to be acknowledged as a Perfect Elu, or Grand Elect Mason!

Happy Summer to All!

Curtis Allan Banks, 32°
Thrice Potent Master

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For information call Editor:

Stevan Nikolic (718) 482-99397 or e-mail at SHESTAR@juno.com

PIERS A. VAUGHAN 32°, MSA-ELECT



Bro. Piers A. Vaughan, 32° with the Washington Inaugural Bible

Meritorious Service Award is the Honor granted by the Council of Deliberation to 32nd or 33rd Degree Masons, nominated for the Award by the Presiding Officers of Bodies of Local Valleys. The Supreme Council Law limits the numbers of such Awards to one member a year from each Valley , although most of the Valleys submit two names for consideration.

This year the Council of Deliberation elected, among others, our own Bro. Piers A. Vaughan 32nd Degree, to receive this prestigious Award. This is a recognition , not only of Bro. Vaughan's commitment and labor of love in the quarries of Scottish Rite Masonry, but also of

positive changes and advancement that we are making in our Valley in the past few years. We should all be proud of this Award.

Bro. Piers Vaughan was initiated in Southwick Lodge No.7058 in England in 1979, and when he moved to the USA he affiliated with St. John's Lodge No.1 in New York City, where he was Master in 1998. AGL of the First Manhattan District , High Priest of the Ancient Chapter No.1 RAM, Illustrious Master of Columbian Council No.1 Cryptic Masons, and Commander of Morton Commandery No. 4 KT, are just some of the Masonic functions that this Worthy Brother was or still is active in. As a Past Most Wise Master and a Ritual Director of the Chapter of Rose Croix, he greatly improved the standard of proficiency in this Body's Ritual work and through his extensive knowledge of the Craft, and especially of the Rose Croix Degrees, has increased the understanding of the Rituals, Symbols and Tenets in the Chapters and in the Valley. As a Co-Editor of "Brotherhood", he has improved the content of this publication by contributing very educational articles and helping to sharpen the focus of the magazine to truly educating readership on Masonry.

Bro. Vaughan's Lectures have become a regular part of the meetings of all Four Bodies in the Valley, and are greatly appreciated by the Brethren. Everyone who attends learns something new and his Lectures give us food for thought and contemplation on our Great Craft.

We are looking forward to many years of continuous invaluable service of Bro. Vaughan to the Valley and our Gentle Craft.
CONGRATULATIONS PIERS !!!!!

Bro. Stevan Nikolic 32*
Most Wise Master

The Masonic Funeral

A new Worshipful Master in a small Georgia town spent the first four days making personal visits to each of the members, inviting them to come to his first Lodge meeting. The following Thursday the Lodge was all but empty. Accordingly, the Worshipful Master placed a notice in the local newspapers, stating that, because the Lodge was dead, it was everyone's duty to give it a decent Masonic burial. The funeral would be held the following Monday afternoon, the notice said.

Morbidly curious, a large crowd turned out for the "funeral." In front of the Altar, they saw a closed coffin, smothered in flowers. After the Chaplain delivered the eulogy, he opened the coffin and invited his Brethren to come forward and pay their final respects to their dead Lodge. Filled with curiosity as to what would represent the corpse of a "dead Lodge," all the Brethren eagerly lined up to look in the coffin. Each "mourner" peeped into the coffin then quickly turned away with a guilty, sheepish look. In the coffin, tilted at the correct angle, was a large mirror.

Remember the Obligation we all took my Brethren – attend and support your Lodge!!!!

Author Unknown
(our thanks to Bro. Curtis A. Banks, 32°, TPM, for finding this story).

FREEMASONRY IN SWEDEN

by Ill.: Sven R. Mossberg, 33^o

The article about Masonry in Sweden, in the Spring 2003 issue of Brotherhood, was based, in part, on old information. Much has changed in the Grand Lodge and its underlying Lodges over the past several years. The notes below are based on a number of Swedish Masonic books and Anniversary Journals in my Library, as well as personal observations and conversations with Masonic Officials during many visits to Sweden over the years .

The first Lodge, as indicated, was established in Stockholm, by a count Axel Wrede Sparre, in 1731. Well there is a paucity of records left to posterity, it continued to work at least until 1747, when Wrede Sparre, a Cavalry Officer was transferred to Western Sweden. It is known that there were few initiations between 1738 and 1745, but an initiation is recorded for that year. There are some questions by what authority Wrede Sparre instituted this Lodge, but in 1737 Count Darwentwater, then Grand Master of France, issued a letter of Authority to Baron Carl Frederick Scheffer to institute a lodge in Stockholm. Scheffer used this to make Wrede Sparre Master of the Lodge.

In 1743, General Keith established a Lodge in Stockholm, called James Keith Lodge. Keith had been designated as Provincial Grand Master for Russia by his Brother, then Grand Master of Scotland, later also of England. He participated in Russia's war against Sweden, and after the peace commended the Russian Occupation forces in Norrkoping, Sweden. He left the country in 1744, at which time his Lodge ceased to function, and many of its members transferred to Lodge Saint Jean Auxiliaire, instituted in 1752 by Count Knut Carlsson Posse, who also had been initiated in France. He received his authorization from the French Grand Master, Count Clermon Tonnerre .

At the same time there were a number of illegitimate Lodges, some of them established by foreigners without known authority. These Lodges were banned in 1750s and were closed with some of their members being accepted into legally established Lodges.

Turning now to the present situation, it should be noted that all advancement or "promotion" from one degree to the next, beginning from the first to the second, depends a great deal on the Brother's own interest in and attendance at Lodge meetings. 1st through 3rd degree Masons belong to the Saint John Lodges, the 4th through 6th to the Saint Andrew Lodges, the 7th through 10th Masons to the Capitular or Provincial Lodges, and the 11th

degree Masons (Knights and Commanders with the Red Cross) to the Grand Lodge.

The Royal Order of Karl XIII is not a Masonic degree, even though some reference books refer to it as the highest degree in Masonry. It is separate and distinct from the 11th degree. It is however awarded only to Masons and then only to the very highest Officials of the Order, as well as to a few foreigners, all of them. Grand Masters. Currently less than half of the 11th degree Masons are Knights of that Order whose Grand Master is the King of Sweden . Who will be the Grand Master when a Crown Princess Victoria takes over the Reign from her Father is probably open to conjecture.

The King however is not a Mason, and thus not a Grand Master, though he is the High Protector of the Order. The last King to be Grand Master was Gustav VI Adolf who died in 1973. His grandson Karl XVI Gustav , who is not a Mason, became King, and Prince Bertil, son of Gustav VI Adolf became Grand Master and served as such until his death in 1997, when the first civilian, Gustaf Piehl became Grand Master.

With the establishment of age limits for all Officers, both of Grand Lodge and individual Lodges, Gustaf Piehl retired in 2001, and was succeeded by Anders Fahlman .

Masters and Deputy Masters of Saint Johns and Saint Andrew Lodges must have the 8th degree (not the 9th), the Wardens the 7th degree, and other officers the 3rd, respective the 6th degree.

Provincial Masters must have the 11th degree, the Deputy Masters the 10th degree. Other Officers must have the 10th, 9th or 8th degree depending on a rank.

All Masters are appointed by the Grand Master based on recommendations from the Lodges, with the approval of the Capitular Master, for 6 years periods with the possibility of one additional 6 years. However there is a maximum age of 75 for service in any Office, with the exception of the Office of the Grand Master if the Grand Master is the member of the Royal House. A new Master installs himself at the Annual Meeting of the Lodge.

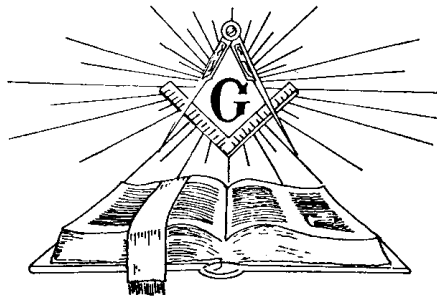
Neither Masters nor Wardens wear heats. There are printed Rituals, but they are not distributed to the members. However, the Master has a Ritual in front of him and is able, if necessary to read his work contrary to the other Officers, who must know theirs by heart.

No business, except for Balloting, is conducted at regular Lodge Meetings, which are solely for the purpose of conferring degrees. The business of the Lodge is handled on an administrative level, with reports given to the members in the Lodge publication, or at one or two “economy” meetings during the year.

American Scottish Rite 32nd degree Masons may attend meetings of not higher than the 8th degree in Sweden. 33rd degree Masons may attend meetings of the 10th degree as well as the Annual Grand Lodge Meetings, which is conducted on the 8th degree, and at which the 11th degree is conferred .

To visit a Saint John’s Lodge the visitor should bring a Masonic Passport obtained from the Grand Lodge. Preferably the Passport should be verified by the Chancery in Stockholm or by the Chancery of the Appropriate Capitular Lodge .

To visit a Lodge working the 4th to 5th degree (a combined degree) or higher , the visitor should also bring the 32nd degree certificate. Here permission is also required, either from the “Keeper of the Seal” or Chancellor (an office with duties similar to that of our Grand Secretary) in Stockholm, or from the Capitular Master. It should be noted, however , that only those of the Christian faith are admitted to Lodges working the 7th degree or higher. I do not know whether special permission can be given in exceptional circumstances.



WINGS - UP OR DOWN ?

by Bro. Stevan Nikolic, 32nd

A couple of months ago , at one of our regular meetings, a question was asked by a new member of the Valley, about a Double Headed Eagle and direction in which the wings are pointing. This question was answered by one of the Senior members and explanation given as follows: the Double Headed Eagle in Northern Masonic Jurisdiction is always presented with the wings pointing down , while in the Southern Jurisdiction , the Double Headed Eagle is represented with the wings pointing up . However , there was some confusion regarding this explanation , and we had to consult the Constitutions of the Supreme Council 33° A.A.S.R. for the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction .

The explanation given earlier , proved to be only partially correct. Article 1219-1, regarding Caps of the 33° Degree-Active and Active Emeritus says: “In the center of the front of the cap shall be superimposed a double headed eagle in gilt cord with wings outspread and pointing upward, on the center of which shall be a triangle of purple velvet with the numerals “33” in gilt cord “.

Thirty-third Honorary Members of the Supreme Council are to have double headed eagle on their caps with the wings pointing downward. As we can see from this, there is one instance in the tradition of Northern Masonic Jurisdiction when the double headed eagle is represented with the wings pointing upward.

Most of us already know that the double headed eagle is the oldest Royal Crest in the world and that it was found in Ancient Sumerian city of Lagash that existed more than 2000 years before the building of King Solomon’s Temple. The city emblem of Lagash was Lion headed eagle.

During the summer months the Metropolitan Museum of Art is presenting an exhibition called “First Cities”, on which Sumerian art work and archeological finds from several Museum collections are put together. At this exhibition you can actually see sculptures presenting an eagle with human body and lion’s paws. There are some pottery and seals representing eagles with lion’s head. It is a great experience to see something that we usually just read about. If you have time and this exhibition is still going on, when you read this article, you should go and see it.



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Rose Croix Masons of a European Mixed Rite

THE SECRET POWER OF MASONS

by Bro. Piers A. Vaughan, 32^o

People become Masons for many reasons. Some seek power, some seek truth, some seek self-development, some seek business contacts. Each receives their reward according to his measure. It may surprise many Masons that there are indeed profound secrets locked within our ceremonies (although those who read this magazine or attend our lecture series will know better, of course!). To those seeking a means to enable them to alter their lives, I will now introduce you to a Masonic secret which will enable you to take greater control of your lives.

No, I am not going to tell you to pray, or to live an exemplary life, or to extend charity to the disadvantaged. You have already promised to do this before our altar. I am going to teach you a **REAL TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE YOUR LIFE**. All you have to do is implement it!

This practice has been around since time immemorial, and all the mystery schools have both taught it and used it extensively. The early

Hermetists* understood the principle in their motto: “As above, So below”. This motto succinctly sums up every system which believes and teaches that, if man is made in God’s image, then he is himself a reflection of the divine; and if the higher is linked to the lower, then the lower is similarly linked to the higher. This important point has been discussed by mystics and scholars for millennia, but the bottom line is this: prayer and thought are far more powerful than people realize. I am not talking about the usual prayer said by a distracted person who is planning lunch while their lips move to a well-known series of words upon which they are hardly concentrating. I mean a prayer or thought which occupies the entire focus and concentration of the person making it. We influence our world in the physical plane – think of penicillin, chainsaws, fertilizers, atomic bombs – and we can also influence our world on the spiritual plane.

Now, this is not the place to get into the mechanics of this process, as I promised you a practical talk! Nevertheless, it helps if you understand a little of the process. I am sure all of you have heard of archetypes. This is the notion that every object in the material world is but an imperfect rendition of a ‘perfect’ object on a higher level. Plato suggested that when we think of a chair in our mind’s eye, we do not necessarily think of an armchair, or a stool, or a kitchen chair. For an instant we have in our mind’s eye an image of the ‘perfect’ chair, of which all these material examples are but inferior copies. Similarly, when God created the material plane his perfect vision descended through several levels, or ‘worlds’, before being realized in the material plane – our earthly level. We can all think and act in the material world. But if we make the effort, and apply the lesson learned in Freemasonry, we can raise our consciousness to the next level, a plane or ‘world’ of archetypes, and cause changes at that level which can influence our very lives.

How can Freemasonry help? Because Freemasonry is a *Mystery School*. Now, I hope that doesn’t have our more genteel readers reaching for the smelling salts! Freemasonry really is more than charitable acts, business meetings, collations, and photographs in the Empire State Mason. It is even more than learning ritual and even more than reading books. It is also a practical school of learning. The most well-read student of Masonry is still only using one side of his spiritual brain if he neglects the practical side of meditation and growing his spiritual skills to match his learning.

The Middle Chamber Lecture is an impassioned realization of one of the oldest techniques of learning and internalization – the Art of Memory – which is in itself a form of the method we are going to use here. Everything can be broken down into mathematical laws, including music, we are told by the scientists. They are right! Everything is in a state of vibration. Even the Universe hums to the Harmony of the Spheres. Higher worlds vibrate at a

higher level (which is why we cannot see them, even though they co-exist with ours). All life vibrates and sings its own chant. What a beautiful picture, with all creation singing the praises of God!

All the things we are taught in Masonry (most of which we work out for ourselves, for true learning lies within, and not in lessons: the teacher can only lead the student to self-discovery by pointing out possibilities) are there for a practical reason. While the outer message teaches us to “be nice to our neighbor”, “be humble”, “be kind to strangers”, the inner message sings its spiritual teaching which can only be heard by those with spiritual ears.

However, beware! We are not given these tools lightly! The maul can set a stone or kill a brother, after all! These techniques can be used for evil purposes as well as good. This is why they are “veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols”.

This powerful technique is often called “Creative Visualization”. It has many names, and can be found in one version or another in almost every mystery school. Have you ever pondered the fact that the person we are called upon to emulate in our rites is called the “Master Builder”, and yet he does not set one single stone upon another? He is, in fact, the Architect! He plans what is to happen, and other forces effect the work. Here is a profound mystery indeed!

The technique is really so simple you will wonder how something this easy can work. Still, if you put it into practice, you will find it is harder than it first appears. On the other hand, I can assure you that it works!

Decide what you want, and then build a mental picture of it. Take the time to build as comprehensive a picture of the end result as you can. Once you are happy with the detail, give it to your subconscious mind to work on. Do this by telling the subconscious mind that this is your desire. Unless you are alone I suggest you don't do this out loud, or you will get some strange looks! Simply present the picture to your subconscious and tell it: “this is what I wish to accomplish. I leave the method in your hands with the confidence that you will bring it about. I ask this unselfishly and hope that the good it brings me will benefit those in my sphere of influence”. Or similar words. Then leave the subconscious to do its work. That's it! Bring the image to mind several times a day and dedicate it to the subconscious mind.

It is such a simple process, and yet it is more complex than originally seen. For example, the axiom ‘be careful what you wish for’ has never been truer! Focus on the end result and allow the archetypal world to

bring about the sequence of events which led to its accomplishment. For example, if you wish to earn money, and mentally specify the occupation, or place where you wish to work, you may end up indeed working there, but may be miserable. Better to ask for an employment which will meet both your material and social needs, and visualize working in an unnamed office, getting on well with your peers and bringing home a good salary to a happy and contented family. Similarly, do not work in the conscious mind: this is like that wish to win the lottery – you build a fleeting picture of rolling in millions of dollars and then forget it when you leave the ticket booth. The conscious mind soothes the immediate need, but achieves nothing.

Finally, you must believe! We hinder ourselves throughout our lives by believing ourselves unable to meet our goals, that we are doomed to failure, that we are unworthy or will never succeed. It is quite difficult to shake off the constant negativity to which we subject ourselves and to which other subject us. With a lifetime of negative thinking, is it surprising that most people see themselves as doomed and unable to succeed in anything?! Their lives are a succession of negative thought-forms confirming their wretchedness. Going to a job interview saying to yourself: “I’ll never get this job” is a guarantee of failure. Of course the person brimming with confidence will get the job: but it is not because he is taller, more handsome or better dressed. It is because he is setting up a vibration which will inevitably result in his success. For Creative Visualization to succeed, you must firmly believe in success.

With these tools in place, you cannot fail!



Now, while there are many books out there on the subject (look at the New Age bookshelves groaning under their weight) and correspondence courses (I can think of at least three) I will recommend only one small book, which was written by a truly great man – Dr. George Winslow Plummer – in 1939, and which has been through over 20 reprints since. It is called “Consciously Creating Circumstances”, published by the Societas Rosicruciana In America at \$10.00, whose website is www.sria.org. I would add that this book only quotes the Nazarene Master in terms of his creative power and does not concern itself with issues of Divinity, so the book will not offend readers of any faith.

**Hermetists – followers of Hermes (Trismegistus); Hermits – from the Latin ‘eremita’. Some use Hermeticists, but I find this ugly: Hermetists does not mean pertaining to Hermits!*

THE MASONIC ALTAR – AN ALCHEMICAL FURNACE

by W.: Carl Najman

I'd like to commence with a quote from the alchemist Jean D'Espagnet, from Paris, 1623:

“The Furnace which is the Keeper of Secrets is called the Athanor – from the Immortal Fire – which it always preserveth; for although it afford unto the Work continual Fire, yet it is sometimes unequally so, which reason requireth to be administered more or less, according to the quantity of matter, and the capacity of the Furnace”.



Does this sound familiar to the Freemason kneeling before the Masonic altar in open lodge? Jean D'Espagnet goes on to intimate that the Work is perfected by Sol and Luna, properly prepared, from whence a union occurs bearing an offspring far more noble than the parents who bring it forth. Again, I would ask the Apprentice, Fellow, or Master if this is not reminiscent of their experiences amid the constant glow of the Sacred Flame upon the Altar before which they've knelt.

More simply put, if the Altar constitutes an Athanor or Furnace, and the Initiate the Alembic, and the Volume of Sacred Lore, Square and Compasses, the presence of Sulfur, Salt, and Mercury, can the erudite mason intuit the relation between the blue lodge degrees and the stages of Nigredo, Albedo, and Rubedo in the alchemical laboratory? How does the mason figure in? As the vessel or its operator? And is their heart the Prima Materia or the Stone?

If there is an universal creed by which the alchemists were guided, that motto would most arguably be the Latin, “Ora et Labora”. Pray and Labor (Work). These words, attributed to Heinrick Khunrath, are mirrored in the proclamation: Ora, lege, lege, lege, relege, labra et invenier – a “Pray, read, read, read, re-read, work and discover”. As true preparation is crucial to fulfillment of the Alchemical Opus, so too must the candidate for the Masonic Mysteries come properly prepared. Kneeling solely before the altar, the Initiate finds the Self alone to confront the transformative source of Light, much as the Alchemist peers alone into the gaping mouth of his furnace. The neophyte is assisted by the lodge master, who, like the alchemists' soror mystica, operates the bellows by which the elemental breath is vivified. And both lodge deacons, wielding wands and creating a portal through which Sol and Luna merge, assist in stabilizing the heat held constant upon the altar.

Consider then, the relationship between the Masonic candidate and the lodge altar, as illustrated by the alchemist and his furnace or Athanor. The light from the sacred flame sits atop the altar, and it “shineth ever in our midst”. In like manner, we know it is possible that the Athanor may stay constantly lit for the entire working life of the alchemist, if the descriptions of the Operators are to be understood.

Let's look at the manner in which a blue lodge altar is generally outfitted and its relation to an Apprentice, Fellow, and Master Mason, in light of an alchemical context. In this way, the ceremonies of Initiation, Passing and Raising can be viewed to correspond with the three basic alchemical stages known as the Nigredo, Albedo, and Rubedo: the Blackening, the Whitening, and the Reddening.

It is in humility before the altar, that the candidate finds themselves subjected to that blackening, where hoodwinked, even the constant presence of the Sacred Flame is seemingly obscured by primordial darkness. The alchemist, much like the prospective initiate, understands that despite the seeming chaos of darkness, there resides within the heart an illuminated twin, a flame drawing both alchemist and initiate toward the Source of Light in residence upon both altar and furnace. Kneeling, the candidate obliges himself to the work whereby his passions will begin the process of mortification, giving way to the submission to Masonic discipline, since the raw prime matter is in a paradoxical state of chaos and potential – what the Operators called “massa confuse”. So begins the roasting or calcination. And so too, begins the transition, by means of fire, from Earth to Water.



Thus commences the experience of the candidate for Fellowcraft. This begins with the operation of the Albedo: purification, baptism and washing. The candidate is on the brink of a slow and consistent effort requiring the acquisition of formidable skills. With this baptismal whitening comes the alchemical admonishment: “Until all be made water, perform no further operation”. And so the Fellowcraft is symbolically familiarized with a certain form of grain found near to a flow of water. And with the acquisition of experience in the Arts and Sciences, there too, flows the liquid intuitive nature of the candidate as they develop their psychic faculties. The lunar receptivity emerges based on the purifying operation of albedic whitening. Let us next consider the solar exaltation to follow.



The raising of a Master ushers in the solar/active operation of the Rubedo, as the candidate is again brought before the masonic altar to attain the Sublime degree. This experience serves as a catalyst to trigger that transformation which stands atop all prior processes sequentially developed. Carl Jung recognized this as the unification of opposites in the process of Individuation. Just prior to ripening to a perfected redness, both the Mason and the Vessel are exposed to a brief “yellowing” which some have known as the stage of Citrinitas. May this correspond to that bright and shining Star in the East that ascends from the

dark night of the soul experienced by the representative of Hiram? And upon that furnace and altar of this Sublime degree, we find definitive proof of the transmuted relationship between Sulfur, Salt, and Mercurius, reflected in the exaltation of Spirit over Matter as exemplified by the perfected placement of those three Great Emblematical Lights.

Our Masonic altar is not placed in the East, yet the Apprentice, Fellow, and Master all approach their transformative furnace with steps that guide them eastward – the place of Light. The alchemists also spoke of a King in the East; hear their words: “There is the Substance of Gold prepared, and there is born an Oriental King, sitting upon a Throne, there to rule over the Princes of this World”.

And so our Altar glows and holds that promise of a Glorious Light that dawns with our journey Eastward. And so the vigilant alchemist prays and works and reads and even sleeps perchance to dream in the constant glow of their athanor. The spark of Gnosis burns pure within that Sacred Fire. And we as Masons become caretakers of the Wisdom, strengthened by our labors, and beautified by our service to the Master Alchemist who is the G.A.O.T.U.

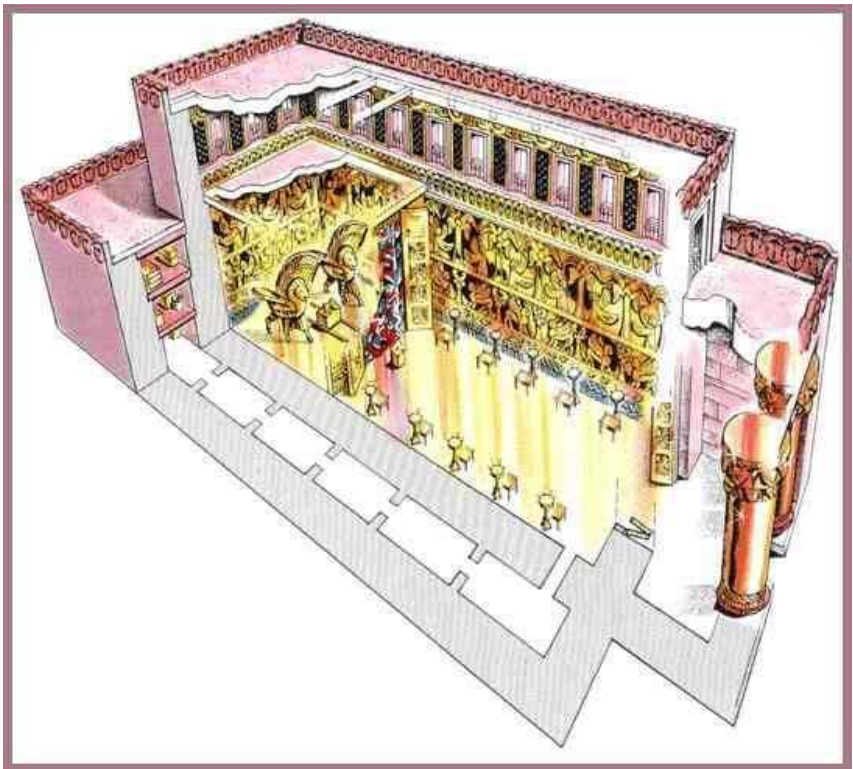


I take my leave by offering the first lines of the Emerald Tablet, as translated most peculiarly from the Chaldean, by Sigismund Backstrom:

“The Secret Word of Chiram, One in essence, but three in aspect:
‘It is true, no lie, certain and to be depended upon, the superior agrees with the inferior, and the inferior agrees with the superior, to effect that one truly wonderful Work’.

If the altar be our furnace, we do well to take heed of this formula.

N.B. This paper was delivered at a Symposium in Los Angeles which I attended this Summer. I asked the author permission to reproduce it here, and he kindly agreed. He is a relatively new Mason, despite serving as Master of his Lodge. This, I hope, will encourage you to donate to our knowledge as well as to draw from it. We will be happy to publish any writings by Brethren which are of a high standard. Piers Vaughan, 32°.



Cross section of the Temple at Jerusalem
(from Missouri Lodge of Research Masonic Screensaver)

HEALTH CORNER: HOW TO SURVIVE A HEART ATTACK WHEN YOU ARE ALONE....

Let's say it's 6:15 p.m. and you're driving home (alone of course) , after an unusually hard day on the job . You're really tired , upset and frustrated . Suddenly you start experiencing severe pain in your chest that starts to radiate out into your arm and up into your jaw. You are only about five miles from the hospital nearest your home ; unfortunately you don't know if you'll be able to make it that far. What can you do ?

You've been trained in CPR but the guy that thought the course neglected to tell you how to perform it on yourself. Since many people are alone when they suffer a heart attack , this article seemed to be in order.

Without help , the person whose heart stops beating properly and who begins to feel faint , has only about 10 seconds left before losing consciousness . However , these victims can help themselves by coughing repeatedly and very vigorously . A deep breath should be taken before each cough. The cough must be deep and prolonged , as when producing sputum from deep inside the chest . And a cough must be repeated about every 2 seconds without let up until help arrives , or until the heart is felt to be beating normally again.

Deep breath get oxygen into the lungs and coughing movements squeeze the heart and keep the blood circulating . The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it regain normal rhythm. In this way , heart attack victim can get to a hospital . Tell as many other people as possible about this , it could save their lives !

*From Health Cares , Rochester General Hospital
reprint from the Mended Hearts , Inc. publication, Heart Response*

Online Resources:

National Heart, Blood & Lung Institute

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/actintime/>

*gives signs to look for, preventative steps, and a heart attack 'Survival Plan'.
Packed with good material in an easy to read format.*

American Heart Association

<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=1200000>

Information on strokes, low fat recipes and other useful resources.

ANCIENT & ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE
VALLEY OF NEW YORK CITY

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2003 - 2004

- September 9 Tuesday, 6:15pm – 7:15pm
FOUR BODY MEETING – VOTE ON BYE-LAWS
- October 7 Tuesday, 6:15pm – 7:15pm
LODGE OF PERFECTION MEETING
- October 24 Tuesday, 6:15pm – 9:15pm
FAMILY LIFE
- November 4 Tuesday, 6:15am – 7:15pm
COUNCIL OF PRINCES MEETING
- December 2 Tuesday, 6:15pm – 7:15pm
CHAPTER OF ROSE CROIX MEETING
- December 13 Saturday, 10:00am
LODGE OF PERFECTION REUNION
- January 6 Tuesday, 6:15pm – 7:15pm
FOUR BODY MEETING
- February 3 Tuesday, 6:15pm – 7:15pm
LODGE OF PERFECTION MEETING
- February 21 Saturday, 10:00am
COUNCIL OF PRINCES REUNION
- March 2 Tuesday, 6:15pm – 7:15pm
COUNCIL OF PRINCES MEETING
- March 13 Saturday, 10:00am
CHAPTER OF ROSE CROIX REUNION
- April 1 Thursday, 6:30pm (Ceremony 8:00pm)
FEAST OF THE PASCHAL LAMB
- April 17 Saturday, 10:00am
CONSISTORY REUNION

(Elections May 4th at 6:30pm; Open Installation June 1st at 6:30pm)

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