

## ***South Dakota Supplement***

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***Greetings from our Grand High Priest  
Most Excellent Companion Jon Gonsor***



### ***Companions:***

Greetings Companions;

This is my first article since being installed in September as Grand High Priest, and life sure has been eventful. In October, Grand Chapter OES was fun, exciting, and fulfilling for me. I acquired a new role in my OES family. Not only am I the most junior PGP but also the escort for the newly elected Associate Grand Conductress, my wife Nancy. May the next four years with our OES friends be as joyful as the last four. I have been visiting several of the blue lodges within our District to help them open. Sioux Falls

held a York Rite Festival in November. They requested help to put it on from the Companions throughout South Dakota. Brothers from Rapid City to Vermillion joined in. Unfortunately, I was at a Fall Scottish Rite Reunion in Yankton that weekend.

The underlining message is that our local lodges have a hard time getting enough members to come, to open a regular meeting. Sioux Falls, South Dakotas largest City and York Rite, cannot get enough members to do their degree work without help from around the state. The good thing is our Brothers are willing to travel to do the work. This issue was addressed at the North Central Department Conference held in Sioux Falls. Most Excellent John Pratt, GHP Wisconsin talked about what they are doing to solve the problem. First, they needed to build up their Blue Lodges, and they did it by recruiting. Yes, recruiting new masonic members! Yet 300 years of Masonic tradition tells us we cannot do that. We need to change with the times if we are to keep the doors of our lodges open. When we recruit for Blue Lodge we can expect 10% to 15% will join York Rite or Scottish Rite. We need to get out of our lodges and make ourselves visible within our communities. Let the public know we are still here and what our message is. Community banquets, parades, booths at local fairs and Farmers Markets are good places to start. Big banners that get people's attention, and handouts, go over well. Let everyone know we are the Greatest Philanthropy in the History of the World! We aid and assist our fellow man, that's what we do!

Let us look at a few of those venues: **Masonic Homes** such as the Eastern Star Home in Redfield, SD for our seniors, or the Eastern Star Children's Home in Fremont, Neb. providing care to their residents. As Masons we provide **Service and Assistance** to our community in many forms ranging from **Educational Scholarships** given to our students, donations such as to the **Almoners Fund** makes it possible to provide assistance to those in need of emergency assistance with the basic necessities of life – food, clothing, and shelter, or provide transportation to a **Shrine Hospital**, along with many others. The **Masonic Medical Research Institute** (MMRI) is an internationally recognized biomedical research institute, founded by the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, in New York State in 1958. The MMRI is an international center for genetic screening of inherited cardiac arrhythmia diseases, especially those responsible for sudden cardiac

death, including sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), and is actively involved in the development of safe and effective drugs for atrial fibrillation, thus addressing one of the greatest unmet medical needs facing our society. The Stem Cell Center is focused on creation of human models of disease, thus enabling the development of innovative therapies and cures. The **Royal Arch Research Assistance (RARA)** funds programs, such as Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD). Central Auditory Processing Disorder affects up to 5% of school-aged children. These students have difficulty processing the information they hear and are usually characterized as “poor listeners”. They have normal hearing ability, but there is a disconnect between what is heard and what is understood. **Cryptic Masons Medical Research Foundation, (CMMR)** supports the Indiana Center for Vascular Biology and Medicine, (ICVBM), located at the Indiana University School of Medicine, and the Richard Roudebush Veteran's Administration Medical Center, located at Indianapolis Indiana. Because blood vessels are important in maintaining the health or repairing almost all tissues, practically all diseases turn out to have a vascular component connected to their origin or remediation. Diabetes, stroke, poor circulation, heart failure, wound healing, and many other diseases share the common denominator of blood vessels. Centering our contributions to an organization that addresses so many different health concerns, both nationally and internationally, allows our supporters to share in the medical advancements, regardless of geography. Through the **Knights Templar Holy Land Pilgrimage** program, the various State Grand Commanderies of Knights Templar sponsor Christian Ministers on an expense paid study pilgrimage in Israel for 11 days. The **Knights Templar Educational Foundation** supports Higher Education through grants and scholarships. **The Knights Templar Eye Foundation**, incorporated in 1956, is a charity sponsored by the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar. Their mission statement "to improve vision through research, education, and supporting access to care." The Foundation now only participates in direct patient care through the Seniors Eye Care Program, in partnership with EyeCare America and the Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. The list could go on and on. This is what we do! Share this information with others and we will maintain and grow our membership with like-minded individuals.

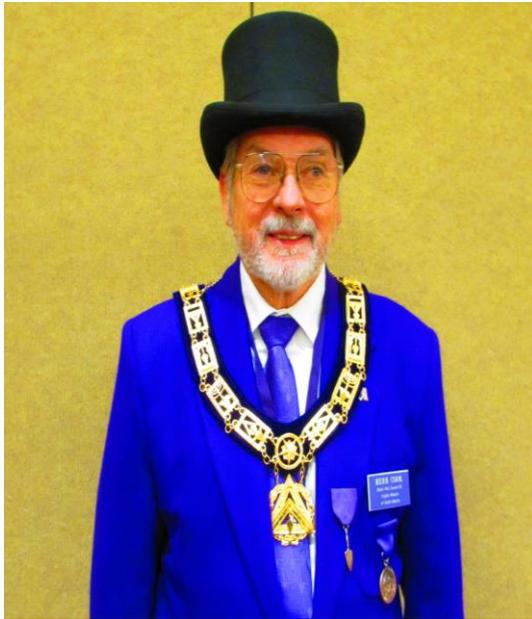
Companions, may you and your families have a blessed  
Holiday Season,  
Fraternally,

*Jon Gonsor*

Most Excellent Grand High Priest

[gonsorj@pie.midco.net](mailto:gonsorj@pie.midco.net) Yours in Faith and Zeal

***Greetings from our Most Illustrious Grand Master Herbert  
Cook***



***Companions***

Fraternally,

My wife Sue and I wish each of you Happy Hanukkah, Merry  
Christmas and Happy New Year!

It was my opportunity to attend the North Central Regional York  
Rite Conference the last weekend of October, in Sioux Falls. What a  
great opportunity to meet new Sir Knights and Companions from our

six-state region and beyond. One of the most interesting sessions I attended had to do with the charity created by the Cryptic Masons. If you are like me, I have been unaware as to the details of the Cryptic Masons Medical Research Foundation (CMMRF) beyond the general purpose which was to fund medical research. That doesn't mean I don't care, it means I just tend to focus more upon other aspects of Cryptic Masonry, making a modest contribution occasionally.

Many of you know that I personally suffer from strabismus which is a condition in which my eyes do not focus together. Some people say I am "cockeyed". Other terms are not necessarily so kind. The problem is congenital. Despite many attempts during childhood to correct the problem, I am still a victim. The most noticeable result for me is a real lack of depth perception. The problem I have lived with for nearly 70 years is one of the areas upon which the CMMRF is confronting AND, the research is proving to move in a positive direction so that in the future, children will not be resigned to the same future I have endured. All of that started me on a course of thought about just what our Masonic charities are doing for people. Imagine the apparently limitless opportunities our charitable foundation is making possible through better understanding or what can be done with stem cell advances. If you, like my wife is diabetic, our Cryptic Mason Charity is focused upon finding solutions and cures. If you are a victim or know of someone who is encountering heart, brain, optic or deep tissue issues or problems Companions of the Council in South Dakota are helping to make a difference. Just imagine: the chance to make life better for our friends and neighbors and their children is what we are doing with every penny we give to the CMMRF.

I can tell you, this year I won't be giving as much toward gifts to my friends and family because I have seen the opportunity to make life better for others through Masonic Charity. Yes, I'll give more generously to CMMRF than I have ever done before. But I also respect the work of the Royal Arch Research Assistance program which is working towards victories in medicine for people. And the Knight Templar Eye Foundation and the South Dakota Child Identification Program and the Save a Child student

intervention program, and the works of Job's Daughters and DeMolay and Eastern Star.

Once in a while, as I am talking with a potential candidate or Petitioner for Blue Lodge or York Rite or Eastern Star or just Masonry in general, I am asked something like, "What do you do?" I have always found it tough to talk in a few words about anything connected with any one or all our charities. No longer! Armed with this information I received because I was present at the North Central York Rite Conference in October, I can tell you, and anyone else I get the opportunity to talk with, that what the Masons do and are doing and will always do is to make life better for everyone through charity.

In one of the lectures that every Entered Apprentice hears is an explanatory lecture about the details of Masonry. It is a long session during which the Brother explains signs, tokens, and so much more. I know that my Brothers will recognize this short portion; "...but charity extends beyond the grave." Brothers, Nobles, Companions, Sir Knights, and Sisters, --- I believe we have started the efforts to make what we do so vital, so beneficial, so revolutionary that the Masonic charities really, honestly do extend beyond our days on this earth as individuals.

So, this Holiday Season, Herby's hand is going to reach a little deeper into his jeans and come out with not a lot more money, but a little more. My heart is going to be just a little more caring and my feelings of generosity, while certainly beyond my financial abilities, are just as certainly tuned toward our Masonic charities. Please read in this magazine and other publications about the vast array of Masonic charity. Remember, with me, the important guideline I use in my well-endowed life: "To whom much is given, much is expected." I have been given the wealth of centuries in this fraternity. I have been given the friendship of men and women and young people. I have learned. I have received respect and friendship and knowledge and, in a word, life. Somehow, I must repay in ways far beyond my means, knowledge or ability. And then I saw that small candle of opportunity for me to make a difference for others. And, of course I can also revel in the happiness of others because of Masonic medical research gains for others.

I also want to remind you, the South Dakota Grand York Rite will convene in Sioux Falls on September 19-21, 2019. I want YOU to

attend this year. I need you to be with me for the Grand York Sessions. But before that, we will be planning for that weekend in mid-January 2019. Send me your suggestions, thoughts, wishes, dreams, hopes ([sd.gyroffice@gmail.com](mailto:sd.gyroffice@gmail.com)). Let's plan together. I look forward to seeing you at the Ninth Arch in YOUR Council in the coming months. Thank you for the honor, privilege and gift of service to you, my Companion!

*Herb Cook*

*Most Illustrious Grand Master*

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***A short note from your Supplement Editor***

If you have a pertinent article or news item that you wish to be considered for publication, please forward it to me as soon as possible. Please note that I have strict deadlines to submit material to the magazine editor. The next deadline will be March 1, followed by June, followed by September 1.

With best fraternal regards,  
Doug McFarland



**South Dakota  
Grand York Rite**