

# The Square and Compasses.

A newsletter for the Grand Lodge of South Africa. No. 109 February 2021



Most Worshipful Brother John Smith OSM MSA.

## Education - a Powerful Weapon

Nelson Mandela said that education is the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the World. As the 2020 matric pupils celebrate their achievements, we not only congratulate them but also commend them for facing, embracing and conquering the challenges which the Covid pandemic wreaked on the education system during the past several months.

When the Grand Lodge was forced to suspend all physical Lodge meetings in March 2020, many members despaired that we would lose touch with each other and with Freemasonry. Grand Lodge immediately started experimenting with Zoom technology as an alternative method of communication even though it was new and quite foreign to many of us. We however soon learned how to take advantage thereof and the first Grand Committee meeting was held in April 2020 via Zoom. The success of this meeting was the catalyst to us holding Grand Committee meetings every month thereafter via Zoom. We also held the Grand Conclave in May, which elected the new Grand Master. A directive was thereafter issued to all members regarding the functioning of Lodges during the lockdown.

Two members then wrote an interesting and thought provoking article on the Grand Lodge's rapid response to the pandemic and opined that we had been forced into a 15 year leap forward in technological advancement over a period of approximately 15 days. We maintained the momentum and in June the Eastern Division held its Annual General Meeting via Zoom. This was followed by the Northern Division in July, the

Grand Lodge in August, the Southern Division in September and the Eastern Cape Division in November. In addition to these very successful online meetings, the Southern Division held an equally successful virtual Spring Ball and raised significantly in excess of R100 000,00 for the Masonic Homes.

As the Government relaxed the Covid restrictions to level 1, I was installed as the Grand Master during December 2020 in the presence of less than 50 members who all wore masks and complied with the requirements for social distancing. The installation ceremony was adapted to ensure that non-Freemasons could view it and it was professionally filmed. It was thereafter streamed via YouTube to the Masonic World and has, so far, attracted more than 1,500 views.

During the same period, training sessions for Presiding Masters and Lodge Treasurers were held and most of our Lodges have held their monthly Board of Management and Ceremonial meetings, all via Zoom technology. These Lodges have, through utilising this new found knowledge, successfully kept in touch with their members and aspiring candidates while not contravening the Covid restrictions.

The Grand Secretary further regularly posted updates regarding these restrictions as well as articles of great Masonic educational value on GrandView, in addition to the monthly Square and Compass newsletter and various podcasts. He also regularly included the uploads to the many online lectures and discussions on a wide variety of Masonic topics, which are being hosted by the Grand Lodge of Georgia under the banner *Sapere Aude*. Other interesting educational material has been placed on the Grand Lodge website, which is gaining popularity. All this activity ensured a positive result from the survey done on our member's views relating to the future of the Grand Lodge.

Notwithstanding the present level 3 restrictions, I am confident that the Government will soon relax them as a result of the steady decrease in the rate of infections and deaths and the continued pressure from the public. It is therefore essential that as many members as possible attend the online Covid compliance training sessions which are being held every Saturday and Wednesday so that when the restrictions are relaxed, Grand Lodge can immediately consider re-opening our lodges for physical meetings. The more members who qualify as Covid Compliance Officers, the quicker we can re-open our Lodges.

The VSL teaches us not to forsake wisdom but to continue learning and gaining understanding and so to the few members who have resisted these changes, I encourage you to now accept and embrace them so that we may all be equipped to deal with the future challenges which we will need to face and overcome.

In die lig van wat ons in hierdie kort tydperk vermag het, blyk dit dat opvoeding wel die kragtigste wapen is waarmee ons die Wêreld kan verander. Laat ons dit almal ter harte neem en so die toekoms saam aanpak.

**MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA  
Grand Master**

### **The Resurgence of Freemasonry**

A couple of weeks ago our Lodge was assessing our options for an interesting Zoom Ceremonial meeting when Wor Bro Malcolm Gessler, our Worshipful Master, advised us that he had found a particularly interesting YouTube video which we should all have a look at and talk about. We duly spent a very worthwhile hour exploring it.



The talk is given by RW Bro Mark Koltko-Rivera, who was the Grand Historian of the Grand Lodge of New York. He starts by looking at the challenges faced by Freemasonry over the years and then outlines his suggestions as to what needs to be done to make Masonry the force

in the world that it really ought to be.

Quite frankly, there really aren't any major surprises – it's more that he has a clear plan for how we should set about addressing the issues that we face. He believes that, if we do the right things the right way, we really can look forward to a period of Masonic boom.

Some points that I personally noted include:

- **Repair the Western Gate** – be selective about new members, deal with them properly and don't rush them into making their decision just to satisfy the Lodge's ceremonial needs.
- **Repair the Temple** – research has indicated that people join the Order expecting to experience self-improvement and development. We have to deliver this. We must offer quality education, proper mentoring, high standard ritual work and a strong fraternal brotherhood. Nothing less will do it.
- **Build the Light House** – Freemasonry has become almost invisible. We must take every opportunity to promote ourselves, both individually and as an organisation. We need regular events in which we can interact with members of the profane.
- **Build the Guard Tower** – we must all learn to defend ourselves against unjust attacks. If we don't, it invalidly suggests that we can't.

This video really is extremely interesting and well worth watching. To do so, click on the link below:

[The Resurgence of Freemasonry](#)

Going forward, Brethren, if anybody identifies a video that they feel is worth sharing, please send it to me at [secretary@grandlodge.co.za](mailto:secretary@grandlodge.co.za) together with a brief note on why you are recommending it. Maybe we can make this a regular feature in our monthly Newsletter.

### **Introducing the GLSA Committees**

Committees have been a part of our Grand Lodge for a number of years. Truth is, however, that they have never worked very well. Brethren, being spread all over the country, had difficulty in meeting regularly and the result was that the Chairman, for the most part, tended to work alone and hope for email contributions.

Covid, and Zoom, have changed all that and we now have Committees who meet regularly and work together as a team. The new Grand Master is taking advantage of this and has set up the following "teams" to service our Grand Lodge's needs. The Committees, Chairmen and Teams are listed hereafter:

#### **FINANCE**

**Dave Duncan OSM**, Brandon Topham  
Keith Hutton, Dawie van Rooyen,  
Theoniel Pieterse, Johan van der Merwe

#### **BENEVOLENCE**

**John Smith OSM MSA**, Brandon Topham,  
Dave Duncan OSM, Alf Brönnner, Basil de Kock

#### **CONSTITUTION & PROCEDURES**

**Godfrey Place**, Geoff Edwards OSM,  
Brandon Topham, Tommy Hardiman,  
Henry Selzer, Wikus Steyl, Mahmoud Patel

#### **RITUAL**

**Tommy Hardiman**, Frans Appelgryn,  
Basil de Kock, Keith Hutton, Johan Britz,  
Simon Nash, Peet Roos

#### **EDUCATION**

**Geoff Edwards OSM**, Alan van der Vyver,  
Tommy Hardiman, Godfrey Place, Peet Roos,  
Keith Hutton, Simon Nash, Mahmoud Patel

#### **TECHNOLOGY & SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Avron Jacobson MSA**, Jeremy Rundle,  
Reyaan Uys, Stephane Rogovsky

#### **FOREIGN RELATIONS**

**Dave Duncan OSM**, Geoff Edwards OSM  
Brandon Topham, Avron Jacobson MSA,  
Boet du Plessis, Edgar Baron

#### **PUBLIC RELATIONS & MARKETING**

Alan van der Vyver, Brandon Topham,  
Avron Jacobson MSA, Jeremy Rundle,  
Eric Scholtz, Jacques Maritz, Stephane Rogovsky

#### **INVESTMENT**

Brandon Topham, Alan van der Vyver,  
Frans Appelgryn, Malcolm Lotter,  
Johan van der Merwe, Ric Gillmer

#### **FUND RAISING**

**Alf Brönnner**, Simon Nash, Donovan Le Roux,  
Ian Hetherington, Bushy McKelvey,  
Jan Coetzee, Marco Petronio

#### **HERITAGE**

**Brian Rossouw OSM**, Geoff Edwards OSM  
Victor Mühlenbeck, Riaan Croucamp,  
Martin Kotze, Marius Terblanche

#### **ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Brandon Topham**, Tommy Hardiman,  
Godfrey Place, Keith Hutton, Johan van der Merwe

As Grand Master, MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA, is automatically included in all teams and while not in an active role, certainly shows a very strong interest.

## Introducing the Technology Committee

Freemasonry is built on relationships, and these work best when Brethren can communicate. In the recent past, the Technology Committee has played a leading role in initiating new technologies and methods to help to promote and administer Grand Lodge, keep Brethren in touch and to facilitate learning.



The mandate of the Technology Committee is to apply technology to improve the Masonic experience and help further the aims and objectives of the GLSA. Freemasonry does not need to change to be relevant in today's high tech, fast track world but we do need to adapt and make use of the latest technological advancements in order to improve the overall Masonic experience and to ensure our members keep pace with our fast-changing world. To attract the attention of the younger generation, we must be relevant to them, and for our organisation to survive we must adapt and change with the world. To remain relevant, we must be agile and be able to adapt and cater for the changing needs of our membership in our fast changing times.

The GLSA has made great strides in the past couple of years with the implementation of GrandView, which is much more than a Membership Management system. It is a comprehensive web platform that offers an encrypted portal where Grand Lodge, Provincial Grand Lodges, Lodges, and individual members can communicate and interact online. Over the last few years we have shared in GrandView's evolution into a platform with seemingly endless possibilities. It is now used by some 43 Grand Lodges, 6,500 Lodges and 550,000 members worldwide. We, as the GLSA, now know exactly who our members are and have record of all their Masonic and contact details. We are effectively able to communicate directly with each and every Brother, thus ensuring that no member is excluded.

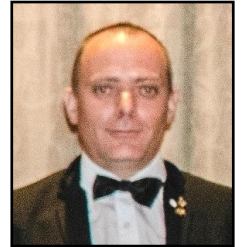


Through GrandView we can offer a range of educational material to our members dependant on their degree level. Provincial and Lodge Secretaries now have access to the details of all their respective members and have a host of resources to help administer their Provinces and Lodges. As a member you are encouraged to regularly log into GrandView via any web browser or the GrandView mobile app and to use the materials offered, thus enhancing your Masonic experience. If you are unsure or unable to log in, please contact your Lodge or Provincial Secretary who will assist you or refer you to someone who can. It is also of utmost importance that you keep your personal details up to date.

We have also recently implemented the Google GSuite, now known as Google Workspace. The primary objective of this move was to provide each Worshipful Master, Secretary and Treasurer with their own Gmail Email Account which can be easily transferred to a new incumbent as Officers change. A further benefit is that

all emails and documents are retained by the system and the history is not lost when an Officer changes. Workspace also provides other useful tools such as a dedicated Google Drive with 30Gb storage per user for document storage, Google Meet for Virtual Meetings of up to 24 hrs long and 100 participants, and Google Calendar. The Technology Committee will be releasing Google Workspace training videos in the near future.

Some 2 years ago, the Technology Committee, assisted by Grand Webmaster, Wor Bro Jeremy Rundle, undertook the mammoth task of redesigning the Grand Lodge's website. The idea was to provide our Brethren, prospective candidates and other interested people with a modern and easy to navigate place on the internet.



To this end, all of the Square and Compass publications are posted on the website under the news section. We also initiated a few new projects to provide a better insight into Freemasonry by including a comprehensive Questions and Answers section on the website which collates all the most common questions and provides answers to these.

The website is continually growing in terms of visits made and some of the busiest days are those where we feature Brethren in our "One Month - One Mason" program, providing insights into why Good Men take that first step to becoming a Freemason. All Brethren are encouraged to submit their own story here.

In an effort to further modernise and increase our public reach and change the negative perceptions towards our Fraternity, we also have a very active and well-established Facebook page (simply search for the Grand Lodge of South Africa). This page has grown from strength to strength since being managed by our Webmaster. It currently has 8,490 likes and followers. There is a continuous attempt to post daily interesting tidbits and historical articles on the Facebook page to further stimulate growth and interest in our fraternity.

If you are a frequent Twitter user, you may also have noticed our presence via @FreemasonsSA which, in a similar vein to the Facebook page, is used to provide timely and accurate current and historical information about our Freemasonry.

If, however, you are more of a visual person and prefer the likes of Instagram, fear not as we have you covered there too! We use this medium to provide historical and otherwise positive messages about our ancient fraternity if you simply follow @grandlodgeSA.

Last, but by no means least, we also have available to both our Brethren and the profane, a rapidly growing YouTube channel where you can attend live streams such as the recent installation of our new Grand Master, MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA. There are also other short and informative video sessions available.

Finally, if you have the necessary skills and would like to assist the Technology Committee, please give us a call. There's just so much to do and so little time!

**RW Bro Avron Jacobson MSA  
Chairman – Technology Committee**



## Almoner's Corner

It is with sadness that we report the passing of Wor Bro Clive Daniels (Perseverance) after a short fight with cancer. Clive was an Assistant Grand Master of Ceremonies and a Brother who truly lived by his Masonic principles. Our thoughts and prayers are with Gloria and the family at this time.



After a long hospital battle, Bro Kobus Breet (Libertas) has been taken to the Eternal East. Our condolences are extended to his loved ones. May they gain comfort from their memories of times they shared.

Our deepest sympathies are also extended to Bro Francois Honibal (Koh-I-Noor) who recently lost his father and to Wor Bro Patrick Wanketa (Flaming Star) who lost his father in law. You are in our prayers.

Bro Papy Okitapoy (Flaming Star) has been in and out of hospital for a medical condition and we trust that he will soon make a full recovery.

Bro Zander Adamson (Simon van der Stel) had a mantle fraction operation and is now home recovering. Get well soon Brother.

Wor Bro Jacques Maritz (Westerford) was feeling very out of sorts. The good news is that it is not Covid – and that his daughter has further cheered him up by achieving 4 Matric distinctions.

Wor Bro Thor Pedersen (de Goede Trouw) is having a great deal of stress with his eye. This is related to cancer treatment he is receiving for a tumour. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers.

Bro Sheldon and Retseh Hall (Golden City) are pleased to announce the arrival of Gabrielle their second child, Enjoy every precious moment!

..please share it with your Divisional Almoner.

|                                 |             |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Southern Wor Bro Cobis Wilson   | 083 2844684 |
| Northern Wor Bro Reuven Coenen  | 071 6120577 |
| Central Wor Bro Johnny Cambanis | 083 9865397 |
| Eastern Wor Bro Johan v d Merwe | 083 3010219 |
| E Cape Wor Bro Ian Hetherington | 082 9545297 |

Sincere congratulations to those families who, despite the challenges posed by Covid, succeeded in producing a positive Matric result. Brethren, your families make us proud! Special mention is made of Bro Jacques van Wyk's (Koh-I-Noor) daughter, Caitlin, who achieved an exceptional 7 distinctions and Bro Anthony Hawthorne's (de Goede Verwachting) daughter, Thalia who achieved 6 distinctions!

Congratulations are also extended to our Deputy Grand Master, RW Bro Brandon Topham, who has not only successfully completed his MBA but has also been appointed as the Associate Professor of Practice of the NWU Business School. Well



done Brandon! You are a credit to the GLSA.

To all of our Brethren, let us remember our older Brethren and widows are often lonelier now than ever. Please contact them with a cheerful word, check whether they need any assistance, try to involve them in your Zoom meetings and do what you can to reassure them that we will always be there for them.

## Recommencement of our Labours

There is no question that we would all like to start meeting again and that we are more than impatient about the ongoing delays. Right at the moment, however, a major obstacle to reopening is not the Covid level 3 restrictions imposed by the Government, it is that many, if not most, Lodges are simply not ready to legally hold meetings.

In terms of current legislation around Covid, a Lodge may not hold a meeting unless an acceptable Risk Assessment on the premises has been conducted by a GLSA approved Covid Compliance Officer (CCO) and any mitigations put in place. This has got to be fully completed prior to any meeting being held. A CCO will have attended the GLSA online training, successfully completed the questionnaire and will be in possession of a GLSA awarded CCO certificate confirming his status.

Lodges looking to open must be in possession of an approved Covid PPE start-up pack which must be purchased through Grand Lodge and the contents have to be used at all meetings held. They must also be in possession of a copy of the "Covid" rituals and must work strictly in accordance with these until advised to the contrary.

The Grand Master has directed that all Lodge Worshipful Masters and Wardens should ensure that they have CCO rating, as well as all Grand Lodge Officers and Grand Committee members.

Brethren, if you are uncertain as to what to do next, please contact your Provincial Secretary or PGM and ensure that you are made fully aware of just what is required of you and your Lodge so that you may be properly prepared to commence labours as soon as you are allowed to do so.

**All we ask of Brothers  
is to be true to the words you  
spoke when you were on your knee**

