

Samuel Gompers-Benjamin Franklin
Lodge No. 45 F.A.A.M

bulletin

Takoma Masonic Center
115 Carroll Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20012

Volume XCIX • Number 9
November 2024

Meets Second Tuesday of each month except July and August (no meeting),
and December, (second Sunday)

NOVEMBER STATED COMMUNICATION

Election of our 2025 Officer Line and The Connection between Masonry and Bees



Important Notice for Brethren

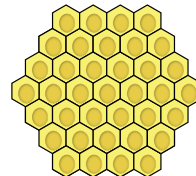
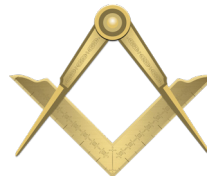
Dear Brethren,

Tuesday, November 12th is a significant date for our Lodge, as we will be electing the line of Officers who will guide our decisions for the upcoming Masonic Year and we will have a presentation on the connection between Masonry and Bees.

This Stated Communication will occur the week after the National Election, emphasizing our civic duty to participate in both elections. Just as we are obligated to vote as citizens on November 5th, it is equally important to fulfill our Masonic duty by voting for our Lodge Officers on November 12th.

Our Brother William Keilsohn will make a presentation on the connection between Masonry and Bees:

Bees!
What are they?
How do I identify one?
What do they mean in Masonry?
Is this anything like real life?



Members attending will enjoy a pre-meeting dinner, have the opportunity to vote, and participate in discussions regarding the future direction of our Lodge as we celebrate our 99th year. You can find a proposed by-law change and an article explaining the rationale for this proposal elsewhere in our bulletin.

Dinner will begin at 6:30 PM for those who RSVP, and the meeting will start at 7:30 PM. Please email secretary@sgbf45.org to confirm your attendance and ensure you can enjoy the dinner.

Any member interested in running for a position in the Officer Line is encouraged to notify the Secretary by November 10th. The dress code for members is coat and tie, while Officers are expected to wear tuxedos.

We look forward to your participation!

Compliments of
SAMUEL GOMPERS-BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
LODGE NO. 45, F.A.A.M.



Your father or uncle
may have been a Mason

Your grandfather probably was a Mason

To learn more about Masonry:
We meet the second Tuesday night
at Takoma Masonic Center

Aaron Kamerer, Worshipful Master, wm@sgbf45.org
Derek Gould, Senior Warden
Jeffrey R. Greenwald, Junior Warden

2B1  ASK1

Light From the East

WM Aaron A. Kameron 2024



Adapting for the Future in the Present while Embracing the Past

Freemasonry has long stood as one of the most revered fraternities in the world, with its rich history, timeless rituals, and unwavering commitment to the betterment of individuals and society. However, as the world changes and membership numbers in many Masonic lodges, including ours, decline, the fraternity faces a crucial moment. In order to thrive in the future while maintaining the integrity of its rituals and traditions, our lodge must adapt our functions and embrace necessary changes.

The Reality of Declining Membership

In recent years, Masonic lodges across the globe have seen a decrease in membership. This decline can be attributed to several factors, including the fast-paced, technology-driven modern world, increased societal obligations, and a lack of awareness about the purpose and benefits of Freemasonry among younger generations. This reduction in numbers presents challenges in maintaining lodge operations, funding, and active participation in both lodge activities and charitable work.

Yet, despite these challenges, Freemasonry's core principles remain as relevant today as they were centuries ago. To preserve the fraternity's strength and enduring impact, lodges must consider innovative solutions to adapt to the new realities while protecting the sacred rituals that define the Masonic experience.

Modernizing Lodge Operations: Streamlining Without Sacrificing Tradition

The first key area for change is the operation of the lodge itself. Smaller memberships require more efficient use of resources—both in terms of time and finances. One possible alternative for our lodge is to streamline meetings and adopt modern technology to simplify operations.

Embracing digital tools such as video conferencing for certain discussions, digital records management, and online dues payments can ease the burden on members. These tools, however, should be carefully integrated in ways that enhance—not replace—the in-person fellowship and solemn rituals that lie at the heart of Freemasonry. In 2024,

a Technology Committee was formed for our lodge and it is my hope that this committee will continue in the future and provide that growing need for administrative efficiency.

Moreover, adopting flexible meeting schedules and exhilarating program development could help ensure that members, especially those with demanding work and family lives, can remain actively engaged and those that might rarely attend lodge be drawn back. The focus must be on quality over quantity, ensuring that when members gather, it is for meaningful, purpose-driven interactions that honor the fraternity's core mission.

Engaging the Next Generation: Attracting and Retaining New Members

For our lodge to sustain itself, attracting new members—especially younger generations—is essential. However, the way we engage with potential members must adapt to modern communication methods. Social media, well-designed websites, and engaging online content can be powerful tools for lodges to raise awareness of Freemasonry and educate the public about its principles. As a fraternity, we do not actively recruit but rather wait to be asked. With this, we as Masons should be promoting the lodge by wearing apparel, jewelry, hats, etc. that might spark up that conversation by a potential petitioner who has the desire to seek out the light but does not know the person next to them is a Mason.

Transparency about the fraternity's values, goals, and charitable efforts will also resonate with younger individuals who seek purpose and community. Outreach efforts should emphasize how Freemasonry provides opportunities for personal growth, lifelong friendships, and the chance to make a meaningful impact on society.

Our lodge has an outstanding training program but we need to find ways to better engage with new members. We should re-institute the "Big Brother" program of the past, where experienced members guide new or prospective Masons through their early stages of initiation. This is currently happening in a general sense but it is something

to consider to help new members. Creating opportunities for personal connection, guidance, and encouragement can help new members feel more supported, engaged, and committed to their Masonic journey.

Balancing Adaptation with the Preservation of Ritual

While Masonic lodges must adapt in many ways, there is one aspect that remains non-negotiable: the preservation of the rituals and traditions that are the bedrock of Freemasonry. The centuries-old ceremonies, symbols, and teachings that have been passed down from generation to generation are what set Freemasonry apart from other organizations. These rituals foster a deep sense of belonging, purpose, and moral development.

As we modernize, it is crucial that these rituals remain untouched and fully intact. We must uphold the sanctity of these ceremonial practices, ensuring that they are performed with the same dignity, reverence, and precision that they have always demanded. The Masonic experience relies on the balance between adaptation and tradition. While operational adjustments may be necessary, the essence of Freemasonry—the work in the lodge room, the rituals, and the journey of self-discovery—must never be compromised.

The Importance of Brotherhood and Charity in Modern Freemasonry

One of the most enduring strengths of Freemasonry is its emphasis on brotherhood and charity. Even in times of reduced membership, we must continue to foster a strong sense of community among our membership. This sense of connection

and mutual support is vital to sustaining engagement and keeping the Masonic spirit alive.

We can focus on deepening relationships within the existing membership by organizing meaningful social and charitable activities that encourage participation. Our lodge has many great charitable events yearly. Continuing to work together on these initiatives not only benefits society but also strengthens the bonds between brothers and demonstrates Freemasonry's continuing relevance in the modern world.

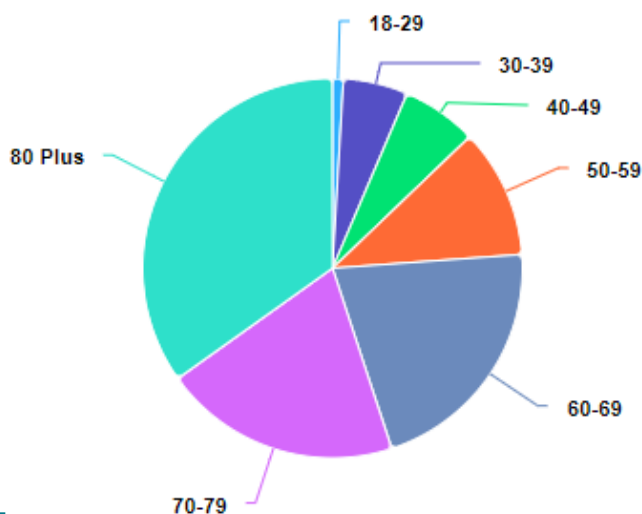
In addition, we should consider collaborating with other lodges or organizations on larger charitable projects. Pooling resources in this way allows our lodge to continue making a significant impact, even with fewer members.

A Fraternity for the Ages

Freemasonry has withstood the test of time for centuries because of its ability to remain relevant while staying true to its core values. As Masonic lodges face declining membership, the path forward requires innovation, flexibility, and an unwavering commitment to the rituals and traditions that make Freemasonry unique.

By embracing change where necessary, focusing on the quality of brotherhood, and preserving the essence of the Masonic experience, we can navigate these challenges and ensure that Freemasonry continues to thrive for generations to come. The legacy of the fraternity, built on principles of virtue, charity, and self-improvement, will endure—adapted to the needs of today's world while standing firm on the foundation of tradition.

Age Dispersion



SAMUEL GOMPERS – BENJAMIN FRANKLIN LODGE #45

Current membership and age distribution. The Grand Lodge has installed a new version of its Grand View software which maintains all of the jurisdictions Lodge records online. The new version includes a graph of the age distribution of our Lodge. We currently have one Entered Apprentice, 109 Master Masons and 5 Honorary Members for a total of 115 members.

By-Law changes *by WB Jerry Keilsohn*

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2:

“To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven.”

Included elsewhere in this *bulletin* is a proposed change to the By-Laws of Samuel Gompers-Benjamin Franklin Lodge #45. Below are some questions and answers as to the; who, what, where, when, and mostly the why for the changes.

Starting with the who. The who are the brethren of Samuel Gompers-Benjamin Franklin Lodge #45, who what to see the Lodge not fold on its 100th anniversary. Several Brethren who do not want to see our Lodge fail, have been discussing the future of the lodge for the last many moons. As an engaged Past Master and potential Future Master of the Lodge, I have taken the lead on trying to come up with a solution that does not include turning in the Lodge Charter.

What: The proposed by-law changes include several that revise when and how often we have our ‘stated’ communications.

The Lodge goes from meeting once a month, 10 times a year, to once a quarter plus an extra one to do the installation of officers in December. Five times a year. Specifically the Lodge will meet during the months of February, May, August, November and December. The day moves from the second Tuesday of each month, to the third Sunday.

Where: No changes on the where. The Stated Communications will still be held at the Takoma Masonic Center, 115 Carroll St NW, Washington, DC 20012.

When: The Lodge open time moves from 7:30 pm to 3:00 pm. The proposed changes would take effect on January 1, 2025 for the 2025 Masonic year. The brethren would be expected to gather between 2:30 pm and 2:45 pm, with the gavel coming down at 3:00 pm to open the Lodge.

On to the first why: The answer is the Lodge is dying. And not slowly. This is a proposed change to how the Lodge functions, and probably a last ditch effort to save it. The alternate is to turn in the Lodge Charter

Why fewer meetings? Because nobody shows up for the ones we currently have. There were ten, yes ten, brethren at the October 2024 Stated. And one of them was a visitor! There was a really good program that evening. Yes over 90% of the Lodge members decided that their Cable Tow was too short to attend. And that some other event was more important than attending their Lodge meeting.

With fewer meetings, and a schedule where the dates are known almost a year in advance, the brethren can and should be able to plan accordingly.

Fewer meetings mean, we can do much nicer meals.

Fewer meetings, mean we can focus on things that the brethren will want to attend.

The dates for 2025 are: February 16th, May 18th, August 17th, November 16th and December 21st. For those interested, the dates for 2026 are: February 15th, May 17th, August 16th, November 15th and December 20th.

Put all these dates on your calendar now.

All are Sundays. None of them conflict with any of the major Jewish holidays, nor a major sporting event such as the Super bowl.

Why a 3:00 pm start time? The Lodge will open at 3:00 pm and conduct whatever business is necessary. Following our Stated Communication, I propose conducting a Festive Board with Dinner. This is an ancient Masonic tradition. A grand meal after the meeting. This makes for an early dinner on a Sunday. Plenty of time to spend with your brethren, yet still get home early enough if you need to do something early Monday morning, like go to work.

For those brethren who travel any distances to get to the Lodge hall, traffic should be better on a Sunday afternoon than the current Tuesday at rush hour.

The Festive Board will be a sit down meal. Not dinner out of a pizza box. It will be catered, so that none of the brethren miss out on the activities, because they are working to serve the other brethren. Dinner will include a speaker or activity for the afternoon/evening. At least one of the dinners will be open to significant others and non-Masonic guests. We will do a traditional Festive board at one of them. That means the seven traditional toasts, songs and the banging of the glasses on the table.

Why the third Sunday? To move it away from many potential conflicts. For example: The Grand Lodge Banquet is the second Saturday of December. The second Sunday is the next day, in every calendar until 2030. It also moves it to the first Sunday after football season ends, when many people are thinking, there is no football today, what am I going to do? The answer is, go to a Lodge meeting and have dinner with your brethren. The first Sunday potentially ends up being the Sunday after Thanksgiving. The third the week before.

Why August? Are we not usually dark in July and August? The Grand Lodge code tells us that a Lodge may not skip more than two months between Stated communications. Most Lodges that are currently doing quarterly meetings, in an attempt to go dark during the summer, and needing to stay within the rules, then end up with a June and September meeting. But EVERYBODY comes back from their summer recess during September. The High Holidays often happen in

September. Or often in October. With their only being five meetings per year, we would be in violation of the Grand Lodge code if we called off one of them for the holidays. Please notice the proposed changes have a clause for slipping the Stated to the following week, when we get that snowstorm in February. The schedule was actually built by working backwards and forwards around the August Stated.

Late August also provides the option to get everybody inside on a hot day, and perhaps do an indoor barbeque. Beer, Burgers and Brats?

Why the “extra” meeting in December? The Lodge has traditionally had the election of officers for the next year at one Stated (November) and an open installation of the new officers at the next (December). The “extra” Stated in December is to continue this tradition. And enhance it. The new officer’s line will get more than an ice cream and cookies social to celebrate stepping into their new roles.

The what abouts? The big one, degrees. The plan would be to schedule a Special Communication, probably on the third Sunday during a month that the Lodge did not meet for the purpose of conferring a degree.

If this bothers you, offends you, or just does not give you a warm fuzzy, then plan on attending the February Stated and voice your concerns which need to come with real solutions.

Sukkah Construction for Makom

After helping JSSA move the baskets for Rosh Hashanah, our brethren answered the call once again to assist Makom assemble the Sukkah’s for their group homes. Makom has several different programs to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to achieve the quality of life to which they aspire. This year we supported the program at the Torchinsky House by constructing their Sukkah. We will of course take it down and store it away for next year, two weeks after we assembled it.

Team Sukkah: WB Jerry Keilsohn, WB Raymond Horn, Bro. Lee Silverman, and Bro. Jeff Greenwald.





THE GRAND LODGE of WASHINGTON, D.C.

Freemasonry in the Nation's Capital

October 25, 2024

Dear Worshipful Masters and Brother Secretaries,

On behalf of the Most Worshipful Grand Master—Most Worshipful Brother Jacob M. Bressman, you are cordially invited to attend the Grand Lodge of Washington, D.C.'s upcoming Education Conference. This event is open to all Master Masons of our Jurisdiction. The Grand Master hopes you will accept this personal invitation to you and your Lodge's Master Masons to attend.

On November 23rd the Grand Lodge will host a special esoteric education conference here in D.C. This is an exciting and important event for the Grand Master and this Grand Jurisdiction, and we would be very glad to have you with us!

The Hidden Influences Conference will be an unparalleled event for our Grand Lodge and the Masonic Education and Service Committee has already lined up more than a half dozen of the world's foremost experts on these Secret Societies...

John Michael Greer – Druidry
Piers Vaughan – French Qabbalists
Ben Williams – Elus Cohen
Darcy Kuntz – Order of the Golden Dawn
Alistair Lees – Illuminati
Jaime Paul Lamb – Rosicrucianism

Please note: You must be a Master Mason to attend.

Dress code is dark suit and tie. A box lunch and a dinner buffet will be served.

In addition to this jam-packed day of Esoterika, we are lining up after parties, cigars, and so much more! The Hidden Influences Conference will be held at the DC Scottish Rite and tickets are \$50 each, but seats will be limited. Register using the link or the QR code below. We hope to see you and your members there!

<https://events.humanitix.com/conference-on-the-hidden-influences-of-craft-masonry>

Sincerely & Fraternally,

Adam J. Goldman, PM
Grand Secretary

5428 MacArthur Boulevard, NW
Washington, DC 20016-2524
(202) 686-1811
grandsecretary@dcgrandlodge.org



September Meet-Up at Mi Rancho Restaurant

By Hal Henig



On the evening of September 23, Samuel Gompers-Benjamin Franklin Lodge Number 45 held its monthly meet-up at Mi Rancho Tex Mex in Maryland. Despite the rainy weather, the gathering took place comfortably indoors at the restaurant.

Three lodge members and four guests attended the dinner social. The members present included Tiler Hal Henig, who also served as Meet-Up Chairman, Past Master Jerry Keilsohn, and his son, Brother William Keilsohn. The guests included Lisa Henig and the Zitomer family: Sharon, Renie, and Stuart.

Attendees at the Mi Rancho Meet-Up

SUCCESSFUL DISTRIBUTION OF ROSH HASHANAH BASKETS FOR JSSA

On Sunday, September 29th our Lodge filled an important request, to once again assist JSSA by handling the movement of 500 baskets from their storage inside both the Rockville JSSA office and at Congregation Ohr Kodesh to the drivers who come from many corners of our area to bring the baskets to their recipients.



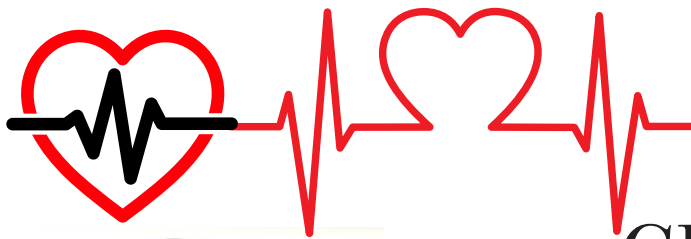
Just some of the baskets that our brothers moved and organized for the distribution drivers.



Team Ohr Kodesh: WB Jerry Keilson, WM Aaron Kamerer and his wife Shelly.



Team Rockville: Bro. Lee Silverman, Bro. Hal Henig, Bro. Jeff Greenwald



OCTOBER
STATED COMMUNICATION
(10/8/2024)

CPR AND AED TRAINING



Brother Jean A. Marcelin, Jr., MD, Grand Lodge Physician accepted our invitation to come to our Lodge to present his CPR and AED program to all attending. With the assistance of Brothers Karpas and Silverman, Brother Marcelin presented life-saving information for someone experiencing a cardiac incident and encouraged all to participate with hands-on skills utilizing CPR manikins and AED trainers. Brother Marcelin answered many questions about Cardiac emergencies as well as the why's and how's of such emergencies.

Additional Photos available on our website.



SAMUEL GOMPERS-BENJAMIN FRANKLIN LODGE NO. 45, F.A.A.M. LIVING PAST MASTERS

1974	Aaron S. Teitel	1995	Burt Levy, HPSGD	2015	Randy A. Schoch
1974	Donald M. Stein	1997	Adam Forman	2016	Leonard Rubin
1979	Michael J. Rinis	2001	Sheldon I. Rapoport, MA, DSM, GL-E	2017	Michael K. Greenwald, SGD
1979	Burton Penn	2002-2003	Jeffrey Sherman	2018	Raymond E. Horn
1981	Jules S. Teppar, PGM	2009	Jonathan M. Binstock	2019	Robert Greenwald
1981	Joel Shulman	2010	David B. Torchinsky	2020	Jerry P. Keilsohn
1983	Julien P. Hofberg	2011	Joshua L. Rubin	2021	Burt S. Levy, HPSGD
1989	Sheldon I. Rapoport, MA, DSM, GL-E	2012-2013	Erik F. Milman	2022	Jerry P. Keilsohn
1990	Robert H. Starr, PGM	2014	Adam Forman	2023	Allen R. Levy



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lives through platelet donations,
Visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org) or call
1-800-RED CROSS
(1-800-733-2767)**

THE WILLIAM D. BOKER
THANKSGIVING BASKET PROGRAM –
NOVEMBER 24TH

Upcoming Signature Event: Supporting Needy Families

It's time to prepare for our Lodge's Signature Event!

Reflecting on our 75th Anniversary in 1981, when MWB Jules S. Tepper served as Master, the Lodge distributed 50 baskets to those in need. Now, 43 years later, Samuel Gompers-Benjamin Franklin Lodge No. 45 continues its mission to support families in the Washington Metropolitan area.

As in previous years, volunteers from JSSA and The Eagle Academy will pick up the baskets in the morning. This year, we also plan to deliver pre-made meals ourselves, with assistance from the Sisterhood of Bnai Tzedek later in the day on the 24th.

This event presents a valuable opportunity to witness firsthand the impact of our efforts. We need your help to make this happen! Please contact Brother Jeffery Greenwald to let him know if you can assist with either preparing the baskets or delivering the meals.

If you are unable to participate but would like to contribute, please consider making a financial donation to the Lodge to help cover costs.

The location for assembling the baskets will depend on the weather; we will either gather in the Safeway parking lot or at the Kensington Lodge. Assuming clear weather, here is the plan:

- **Basket Making:**
When: November 24th, 7:30 am
Where: Kensington Safeway, downstairs parking area (next to the loading dock)
Address: 10541 Connecticut Ave, Kensington, MD 20895
- **Basket Distribution:**
When: November 24th, 9:00 am
Where: Kensington Masonic Lodge.
Address: 4315 Howard Ave KensingtonMd.

Chairman: Jeffery Greenwald, Cell 240-401-1261, Email: Jrg57@comcast.net** Breakfast foods will be provided to volunteers

Happy Birthday

The following Brethren observe their birthdays on the **NOVEMBER** dates shown. Be sure to wish them well on that day.

Paul C. Cohen	03	Joseph P. Gibson, Sr.	14	John F. Buchanan	22
Jay A. Torchinsky	04	Jerome Barry	16	Aaron S. Teitel, PM.....	23
Allen R. Levy	06	Jeffrey R. Greenwald.....	16	Howard L. Blum.....	30
Erik F. Milman, PM	08	Zalmon J. Chelec.....	20		
Jerry M. Robbin	11	Chester N. Katz.....	20		

Samuel Gompers-Benjamin Franklin Lodge No. 45 F.A.A.M.
Secretary
6109 Lone Oak Drive
Bethesda, MD 20817



Calendar for Masonic Year 2023—Samuel Gompers-Benjamin Franklin Lodge #45

For the most up-to-date information, please check the Trestleboard or www.sgbf45.org. If anyone is interested in any of these events and wishes to obtain more information, please contact WM Aaron Kamerer about all events (see page 2)

Date		Event	Open to
November	12	November Stated Communication, Election, 7:30 PM	Masons only
	24	William D. Boker Thanksgiving Baskets, 7:30 AM	Family and Friends
	25	Meet-up 6:30 PM	Family and Friends

Date		Event	Open to
December	8	December Stated Communication, 1:30 PM	Masons, Family and Friends