



95th ANNUAL ADDRESS
HONORABLE WILLIAM C. RHEUBOTTOM
M.:W.: GRAND MASTER

Greetings:

If I were to ask you, Brethren, the question that is upper most in your minds on this auspicious occasion, I think that I would be met with the almost unanimous response that your presence here indicates your love and zeal for Masonry.

From all over this broad jurisdiction, and other sister jurisdictions, you have come as proud representative of one of the oldest and most highly regarded fraternities known among men; an institution that peasant loves, and the nobleman patronizes, one that knows no distinction, should practices no deception, and has endured because of its worth and the blessings that it has brought to the human family. If in life you have no other claim upon the gratitude of men, if fame passes you by, if fortune does not linger but nods carelessly and is gone, if you who have been the recipients of the arts and mysteries of Masonry and the boon that it confers, and have lived up to its magnificent teachings, have practices its tenets, and tried to inculcate its true Christian sprit and principles, you may boost proudly of the fact that you are a Master Mason.

As Grand Master of Masons for the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Washington and Jurisdiction, I extend to each and every one of you a warm welcome. I am particularly pleased to welcome our distinguished guests, who are visiting from other Grand Lodges and Jurisdictions. We are honored that you have made it your priority to be with us on this auspicious occasion. We appreciate the opportunity to return the hospitality and friendship our representatives have received while visiting your Grand Jurisdictions.

To the Brethren of Prince Hall Lodges in the Jurisdiction of Washington, I am extremely pleased to see you here. My Brethren, we are at the crossroads of a new era. What we do during the next two days will have a serious effect on the direction this Grand Lodge will take, as we move closer to the new millennium. We as a Grand Lodge must position ourselves to effectively respond to changes forth coming in the next century.

My Brethren, on the 95th Annual Communication another page must be added in our history book and new dimensions in the development and expansion of Prince Hall Masonry, whenever disbursed around the globe, are due to the successes that were accomplished this year.

I wish to thank the excellent staff of officers and each of you for your prayers and support. I cannot say enough about the elected officers this past year, they all worked overtime to bring credit to our great Jurisdiction. Not once did I see or experience any unwillingness to meet a new challenge placed before them. Each time I called upon their services, the Deputy Grand Master, Senior and Junior Wardens, Grand Lecturer, Grand Trustees and the various committee chairmen and those serving on those committees were always there and willing to take on another task or project.

And, to the appointed Grand Officers-- thank you for your excellent services and support as well, I truly, truly appreciate each of you. A special thanks to all my District Deputies for their hard work and support. And to all our Past Grand Masters for their heads of wisdom and council.

It is indeed a pleasure for me to stand here today before you, with much humility, and render to you an accounting of my stewardship for Masonic Year 1997-1998. First, I must say thanks to God for allowing me to serve you, my Brethren, as your Chief Executive Officer. The Bible has always been my guide in my everyday life. This protects me from being robbed of my self-dignity, skills, mental, physical and economic resources by wolves in sheep clothing; or those who masquerade as Brothers!

I wish to thank my wife, family and my very close friend who I talk to daily for the support they gave me this past year. When the real test came, the Bible and prayer were there to give spiritual and physical strength to carry me through.

NECROLOGY

1997-1998

When the roll is called at this 95th Annual Communication, there are some Brothers who will fail to answer. Silence will be the response to the calling of their names. They will not answer because they have finished their labors here on earth and have gone on to that celestial lodge above where Job said the "wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest:

There were "many on board" the old ship of Zion when we put out to sea 12 month ago. Faces were bright, and smiles told a story of happiness and expectations. Alas, before the ship could dock in the safety of the Harbor, the dread messenger death summoned some of our Brothers from among the craft and closed the book of life as they stole silently away to receive the great white stone which distinguishes them as "masters" of the craft.

Since the closing of our 94k" Annual Communication 18 of our Brothers have come to the end of life's toilsome journey, dropped forever the working tools of life, answered the final roll call which symbolizes, "the purity of life" and the "rectitude of conduct".

We pray that the merciful Father, who enables us to trace the mysteries of life through its various windings to its most concealed recesses, will receive them into a favored place and give them rest.

We pray, further, that as their trebling souls stand naked and alone before the great white throne, that they will hear the great Grand Master of the universe say to them “well done good and faithful servant, thou hath been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of the Lord”.

Edgar L. Smith

Harmony Lodge #2

November 11, 1996

George E. Gray

Egyptian Lodge #44

February 21, 1998

Frank J. Howard Sr.

Cassia Lodge #5

August 14, 1997

Henry McCoullough

Abiff Lodge #37

February 25, 1998

George W. Pleasant

William H. Upton Lodge #11

August 24, 1997

Cecil L. James

Union Lodge #43

March 3, 1998

Frederick W.C. Washington Jr.

Perfect Ashler Lodge #40

September 10, 1997

Willie James Anderson

Lee Grant Rogers Lodge #61

March 20, 1998

Rodney E. Momon

Cherry Blossom Lodge #42

September 23, 1997

Eugene Ellison

Egyptian Lodge #44

April 22, 1998

Samuel O. Fowlkes

Egyptian Lodge #44

October 19, 1997

Frank Bascomb

Hamma Hamma Lodge #35

May 1998

Leo S. Baptiste

Hercules Lodge #17

February 3, 1998

Eugene J. Baker

Union Lodge #43

May 13, 1998

George A. Williams Jr.

Daniel Chappie James Lodge #72

February 19, 1998

Viven Earl Johnson

Cassia Lodge #5

May 22, 1998

Lewis J. Marshall

Cassia Lodge #5

February 21, 1998

James R. Franklin

Harmony Lodge #2

June 20, 1998

STATE OF THE NATION

In many respects, the nation is at a crossroads of conflicting fortunes. It stands as a beacon of hope and freedom for the world, but at the same time it stands at the confluence of opposites like a mighty river rushing headlong to no where; the rich versus the poor, the housed versus the unhoused, the haves versus the have nots; and the weak versus the strong.

Children in Crisis

Of all the social ills that befall the less fortunate, housing is at the top of the list. Consider a child who is homeless, poorly fed, poorly clothed, and pressured to attend school and complete with others who may have more of the necessities of life. Consider, still further, a child who has lived in four different apartments and shelters for the homeless within a six month period — and attended three different schools in that time. Imagine the strain on such a child. But don't imagine that this case is an exception to the rule. It is not. It happens too often to be an exception!

Children such as these represent the fastest growing segment of the nation's homeless population, which rose from 273,000 school age children seven years ago to more than 740,000 by 1998. As economics, divorce, drugs and other problems have torn families apart, educators have been presented with a particularly vexing problem; how to help such nomadic children hang on to a stable and suturing education, often their only lifeline to a better future.

News for the Jobless

During the last several months, the nation's jobless rate fell to 4.7 percent, the lowest level in 24 years. This resulted from the addition of more than a quarter-million new jobs. The drop in unemployment, coupled with the rise in payroll jobs, suggested that the demand for labor is still rising strongly enough to continue to reduce the pool of Americans who are either looking for work or might take a job if the right one comes along.

How Healthy Are We?

Next to the welfare of our children, health is perhaps the next most important agenda for America. The problem is providing health care spans the scope of American life — from childhood to senior citizens. In a country that is considered by others to provide the best of everything, citizens continue to encounter a barrage of ills, which prevent them from realizing their maximum potential. Amazingly, some 66 per cent of Americans think they are in "excellent" or "good" health.

Unhappily, one in five are “afraid” to go to the doctor. In spite of the fact that we are living longer, we are not necessarily living better or healthier. In a study of 1852 men and women, 18 year olds and older, Parade Magazine found that 57 percent of the respondents admit that they are overweight, 52 percent don’t exercise, and 26 percent still use tobacco in some form. Twenty-five percent of those surveyed cite arthritis as the most common health problem.

When it comes to high blood pressure, 23 percent of the respondents were affected; 14 percent say that they suffered from depression at some point within the last year. Of those, 17 percent were women and 10 percent were men. About 66 percent of the respondents say they would prefer to change their diets, rather than take medication to treat a health problem.

Turning the focus to Alzheimer’s disease, the National Institute of Aging says that up to 50 percent of people over 85 suffer from dementia — confusion, disorientation, and memory loss of recent events. About 60-70 percent of these have Alzheimer’s disease, an incurable condition in which the ability to learn, reason, remember, control behavior or perform basic tasks of daily life gradually deteriorates.

Cancer experts say that Black women, on average, are diagnosed with breast cancer at a later time than women of other races. This put them at greater risk of dying from the disease. Some 26 percent of Black women studied were severely overweight, compared with 7 percent of women of other races, and were three times as likely to be diagnosed with cancer at later, less treatable stages of the disease.

Race Relations in America

Much of America was surprised a few months ago when citizens in Houston, Texas voted to continue Affirmative Action in employment section. In Durham, North Carolina, the President of Duke University proposed an enigma; what is it that many people hardly think about that others think about all the time? The answer; she said, is “race”. The subject has taken on new importance on the university campus in recent months sparked by a racially offensive article in a student publication, and the improper arrest by two Duke police officers of a Black male apparently mistaken for a burglar. What is clear to most of us is that race relations in America is on a roller coaster ride — going hither and thither along an aimless and senseless course to the detriment and derogation of Blacks and other minorities. The recent racial tragedy in Jasper, Texas should serve as a wake up notice to all of us that the work of racial reconciliation is long and difficult. Short-term enthusiasms will not win the day in our struggle for finding unity in diversity. Essential to that struggle is a recognition of and sensitivity to, the various faces of racism. With the state of the nation as it appears today, there is even Greater need for our Masonic Orders to open its doors and become more visible in the problem solving activity of this nation.

THE CONFERENCE OF GRAND MASTERS MISSION

The mission of the Conference of Grand Masters Prince Hall Masons, Inc. is to identify Masonic and Non-Masonic research subject(s), present the product of that research for use by Jurisdictions so disposed, and publicize appropriate positions and issues at a press conference as desired and necessary.

Objective

The objective of this Conference of Grand Masters Prince Hall Masons, Inc., shall be to perpetuate fraternal harmony among Grand Masters of Grand Lodges of the Masonic Jurisdictions; to share constructive ideas, to promote and encourage community involvement with the business sector, to conduct educational workshops and seminars, to support charitable organizations and agencies that assist those persons less fortunate than ourselves; and to extend strong educational support to our youth through annual scholarships.

Meeting

The Conference of Grand Masters usually convenes on the First or Second Thursday in May. The Host Jurisdiction of the Annual meeting is determined by the Time and Place Committee. However, to commemorate our founding Father Prince Hall, the Conference will meet in Boston, Massachusetts every tenth (10th) year.

ON RECOGNITION

The Conference is mindful that all Grand Masonic Jurisdictions are sovereign in their own right, operating without fear or favor as their members so desire, and that the question of recognition by our white/Caucasian brothers is a controversial one. The Conference still believes, that for the sake of Prince Hall Masonic family solidarity, open discussions, pro and con, should take place at the Conference. Further, that as a Grand Masonic Jurisdiction is free to seek or accept recognition from whomever it pleases, the Conference should ask those Jurisdictions with such relationships to share with the Conference such information.

As a Conference, it should be noted that no Grand Masonic Jurisdiction should be subjected to ridicule, castigation, or any other act at a meeting of the Conference, whether that jurisdiction is for or against the act of "recognition." Further, the heritage and future of Prince Hall Masonry are to be protected.

CONFERENCE OF GRAND MASTERS

The Grand Masters of the jurisdictions that make up the Prince Hall Masonic family have formed the Conference of Grand Masters whose purpose is to foster progress and well being for Prince Hall Masons wherever dispersed around the globe.

It is an advisory body, assuming no powers except those agreed upon by the Grand Masters when in attendance at any one meeting.

As a matter of tradition and law by the several Grand Jurisdictions, the following bodies of Freemasonry are recognized as being either concordant, appendant, adoptive, or affiliated:

1. Royal Arch Masons
2. Royal and Select Masters
3. Knights Templar Masons
4. Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite Masons
5. Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order Nobles Mystic Shrine
6. Order of Eastern Star
7. Heroines of Jericho
8. Circle of Perfection
9. Cyrene Crusaders
10. Order of the Golden Circle
11. Daughters of Isis

The above organizations are rooted in symbolic Masonry through the Master Mason or Symbolic Masonry, and by the right of recognition granted by the jurisdictions represented in the Conference of Grand Masters. They shall frame their constitutions and bylaws, and administer and enforce such laws pertaining to the governance of their members as long as those laws, rules and regulations, shall not be in conflict with those of the Grand Masonic Jurisdictions in which they reside.

Each year the Conference will extend an invitation to the National Body Leaders of the Prince Hall Family. Further, the Conference each year would extend an invitation, to the heads of governments or any other political, social, or otherwise designated field of endeavors which the Conference and/or the host Grand Master may choose.

Grand Masters, individually and collectively when appropriate, shall attend all Masonic meetings; in person or by representation.

For entertainment the Kemper Insurance Company and the Buick Motor Company sponsored a reception and musical entertainment. These affairs were most enjoyable.

FRATERNAL RELATIONS

We have established a very good relationship with most of our sister jurisdictions with the other Prince Hall Grand Lodges. Our ties to these bodies and my personal relationship with Grand Masters has been a wonderful experience for me. I have gained personal friends whom I feel I can call on at any given time, to assist this Grand Lodge in any worthwhile endeavor.

I am pleased to report that relations between our grand organizations of the Prince Hall family of Washington are excellent. Grand Worthy Matron Ola Miller of Prince Hall Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star and Most Ancient Grand Matron Carlotta Garraway of Prince Hall Grand High Court, Heroines of Jericho and I have had a cooperative working relationship this past Masonic year.

I must state that an excellent and harmonious relationship existed with Sovereign Grand Inspector General Frank Russell, Deputy of Scottish Rite Masonry, Orient of Washington. I also have similar working relationships with Deputy of the Desert William Spenser and Grand High Priest Larry Williams of the Holy Royal Arch Masons.

The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Washington and Jurisdiction continues to enjoy a harmonious and productive relationship with the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Washington, F. & A. M., contrary to some beliefs and for perceptions, Prince Hall Masonry has maintained its uniqueness, customs, tradition and its proud heritage. There has not been any attempt from either Grand Body to merge, change, or infringe upon each other's sovereignty and I seriously doubt that there ever will be.

We are also enjoying a harmonious working relationship with the following Grand Lodges:

1. Idaho
2. British Columbia
3. Turkey
4. Philippines
5. United Grand Lodge of England
6. New Zealand
7. Australia

Early this year D.D.G.M. Morgan and representatives of District #9 was officially received and given Grand Honors at the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Turkey. Also, attending the session was the Grand Masters of Russia and Grand Masters of a couple of the Balkin countries.

In April of this year I attended the 82nd Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines. I was received and accorded full honors as a Grand Master, also, as the first Prince Hall Mason to attend their Annual Communication. Also in attendance were members of our Mabuhay Lodge #59. Also attending the session were the Grand Masters of Japan, Italy, Spain, Hong Kong, Taipei, Tasmania, Hawaii, Australia, and a representative from the Grand Lodge of Colorado.

On June 3, 1998 D.D.G.M. Morgan and Dr. Hall representing the Grand Lodge attended the Grand Lodge of England's Annual Session, the hospitality and royal treatment they received was indescribable. And they were welcomed with a standing ovation. They were welcomed by the Rt. Honorable Lord Farham the Pro Grand Master.

STATE OF THE CRAFT

I am pleased to report that the overall state of the craft is excellent. It has been said to me during my travels that the Prince Hall Masons of Washington State are one of the strongest, cohesive groups of Masons in the world. I am pleased to report that the true sprit of Prince Hall Freemasonry prevails through the Grand Jurisdiction, and overall state of the craft is excellent. However, there are some areas of concern that will be mentioned later in this report.

We have in the jurisdiction at present, 64 chartered lodges. Our membership has increased slightly since last year. But not as much as our potential shows it should. There is a cluster of Brothers from other jurisdictions at Fort Lewis, who have requested a dispensation from this office to start a U.D. Lodge. This office is still reviewing the request.

STATE OF OUR DISTRICTS

District#1. D.D.G.M. Jackson

Membership in this District is slowly increasing. Community projects in this District have increased, such as donated 17 suitcases for BCD, adopt-a-street program, staff information booth at Central Area Community Festival job fair.

District#2. D.D.G.M. Keys

Emphases was placed on study clubs, workshop, and/or some type of leadership training for the officers and brethren. Also, focusing on developing leadership, confidence, motivation and pride. The District continues to do the things that Masons should do, such as:

- Started a mentor/book program with Mckinley Elementary School with over 700 books have to additional school 300 books
- Donation to women's shelter
- Donation to Sara Baylise for trip to Washington D.C.
- Donation to Knight of Pythagoras
- Donation to Wilberforce University Choir
- Donated food baskets to needy families during the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays
- Donate eggs for Easter egg hunts
- Perform security work at locations during Annual Christmas Play

District #3 and #4. D.D.G.M. Crumb

Lodges in these two Districts have experienced a slight increase in its membership. The lodges in Yakima and Walla Walla are not functioning as well as I would like it to. Hopefully and soon, more military people will be permanently stationed at the Yakima Firing Center.

District #5. D.D.G.M. Jolly

This District with lodges in Everett, Washington and Vancouver B.C. are doing an excellent job pursuing Masonry in its truest sense, both in ritualistic work and community outreach programs.

District #6. D.D.G.M. Richardson

These lodges are located in Japan and are doing very well. They are also pursuing Masonry in its truest sense, both in ritualistic work, community outreach programs, and charitable contributions. Our lodge Revelations #97 and Yokosuka Lodge #20 (of Grand Lodge of Japan) may have to move to another building to hold their lodge meetings. This is due to continuous growth of the installation and the lack of available facilities to house new community enhancement projects.

District #7. D.D.G.M. Hughes

This district is the House of Toni Lodge #46 and Okinawa Military #68. This district after overcoming some administrative and organizational problems and some personal animosity; they are pursuing Masonry in its truest sense, both in ritualistic work, community outreach programs and charitable contributions.

District #8. D.D.G.M. Hall

This district, House of Marianas Travelers Lodge #49 located in Guam, they recently has to vacate the building they were meeting in. They are in the process of locating another meeting place. This district also performances in the highest level of Masonry ideals and principals.

District #9. D.D.G.M. Morgan

In this district this pass year was like the previous two years, have found the majority of its members deployed to one peace-keeping mission after another. Presently there are five lodges deployed to Bosnia. What was supposed to be a mission that only lasted a year has turned out to be an on going project with no end in sight, and it's taking all their resources with them. The remaining lodge is pursing Masonry in its truest sense.

District #10, D.D.G.M. Shepard

With its five lodges in the District, located in South Korea, are performing very well considering the fast turnover of its members, long field training exercises and the diversity of Masonic organizations operating in Korea. District Deputy Shepard has instituted a campaign to simply get "back to basics"; both ritualistically and administratively. They have automated and simplified administrative procedures assuring continuity throughout the District. Training of leaders in those areas is ongoing, because of the rapid turnover of members.

The lodges have donated over \$3000.00 to community programs and have provided more than 5000 hours of community service.

District #11. D.D.G.M. Williams

This district is located in Puyallup, Spanaway, Lacey, Olympia, Vancouver, and all points between. In the past Masonic year, these Brothers have had a very successful working year. This District is very visible by the public and events centered around the family — keep up the good work.

District #12. D.D.G.M. Hall (interim)

This district is located in Angles City, Philippines and is the home of Mabuhay Lodge #59. Members of this lodge consist mainly of retired military personnel. They are proud to have their charter back and are busy performing their Masonic duties. They also joined me in visiting the Grand Lodge of the Philippines.

District #13. D.D.G.M. Crosson

This district consists of Hamma Hamma Lodge #35 and African Genesis #101 — located in Bremerton, Washington and Oak Harbor, Washington respectively. This district is doing excellent work in the community. Hamma Hamma is working with the youth at the Roxy Theatre in Bremerton; Channel 12, Chamber of Commerce and assisting at the Shrine Hospital Screen Clinic.

African Genesis is doing monthly work with the Neutral Zone Youth Group as chaperons, as board members with Partnership with Youth Organization. This lodge has been recognized by the Oak Harbor Police Department and the Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to the aforementioned, these lodges are pursuing Masonry in its truest sense, both in ritualistic work as well as community outreach programs and charitable contributions. Plus Hamma Hamma has a brother by the name of Robert Webb who has celebrated his 100th birthday on April 16, 1998. Congratulations, Brother Webb.

REPORT OF DEPUTY-AT-LARGE

RW Mark E. Heath:

Reclamation:

Working closely with RW Charles Thomas, Headquarters Lodge #75, has successfully helped several Brothers get reinstated the fraternity. Through them and other means of communication, many brothers are now expressing an interest in reinstatement. We have placed this issue at the top of our priorities. We have set a goal for reclaiming at least 50 brothers back into our Order by the end of the 1998.

Given the overwhelming number of inquiries about our Grand Lodge process, and the Headquarters Lodge procedures, we have no doubt that this will be accomplished. And will continue to work with RW Thomas to see this modest task to fruition.

MASONIC EDUCATION & FRATERNAL ACTIVITIES

In order to revitalize interest in the Fraternity, we have established a study club, "The Military District of Washington Prince Hall Masonic Study Group." The primary goal of this group is to provide its members with enlightening Masonic educational topics, and provide the general practices of Masonry practiced by Washington State Prince Hall Masons. Additionally the group provides a source of information on Masonic activities held by the host Fraternal Family in the MD/DC area. The Study Group covers a large area and is broken down into 3 sections. FT Meade/Aberdeen Proving Ground Maryland section, Walter Reed Army Medical Center/DC Section, and Pentagon VA Section. The primary method of communication to the group membership is a Periodical Newsletter, "The Lambskin."

The first gathering of the group membership was for the observance of St. John's Day. The FT Meade/APG section was invited, and participated in a Church visitation with Morning Star Lodge #44 (Maryland Jurisdiction) at the Waters AME church in Baltimore Md. The Pentagon NA section held their observance at the Pentagon on the 19th of June. A truly heartfelt message was delivered by Rev. Brother Charles Glover, of the First AME Church of Manassas, VA. Brother Glover's message was a call to the Brethren to be involved in their communities, as all Masons should. This event was well attended by Brothers of various Jurisdictions including A.F. & A.M. Brothers from the Grand Lodge of Washington. It was especially, as Brother Glover is one of the Masons recently reinstated into Headquarters Lodge #75.

In the future Brother Heath intends to correspond with the overseas Lodges through the District Deputies, to offer assistance in transition to those Brothers who may be coming to the MDW area. To further the efforts of the Study Group, Brother Heath request that if possible, they might be issued copies of the Masonic Monitor, and a set of the Master Mason study packet?

Headquarters Lodge has been functioning quite well this past year. They have truly an asset to this Grand Body in reclaiming brothers that have either been dropped by their lodges or no longer in touch with their lodges. This success is due to the dedication and hard work of RW Thomas and WM Tucker.

1997 — 1998 SIGNIFICANT GRAND LODGE PROGRAMS

Listed below are the Grand Lodge Programs that a considerable amount of human resources were devoted in carrying out the objectives of said program. Each of the program/project chairmen will render a report:

- Headquarters Lodge
- Scholarship & Investment
- Roslyn Cemetery
- Official Training
- Membership Expansion Committee
- Annual Spring Workshop

- Black, White & Red Ball
- Committee of Sons of Haiti
- Community Medical Awareness
- Grand Historian
- Community Out Reach Program
- Knights of Pythagoras
- Youth Out Reach Program
- Building — Capitol Improvement
- Prince Hall Community Development
- Image Awareness

STATE OF THE CRAFT CONCLUSION

For many, membership, pure numbers is important. Numbers and totals are important because it is from this source that we derive revenue by which our various charities, philanthropies, capital improvement projects, and other programs are funded. Few members mean less revenue. To overcome this reduction, additional funds must be sought from those who remain dedicated to our principles and purposes or we adjust our operating budget with current and projected membership. Before the down sizing draw down, or shifting of resources from Europe in 1994-1 995 we had nearly 3000 members on our rolls. Since the events in Europe our strength has dropped to about 2500 members, there by reducing our revenue base. While we were having a decrease in funds generated; and once again while our income decreases, our expenses increased. For an example, as reported to this body July 1997, for the 1996-1997 budget year, our income was \$157,827.24 while our expenses were \$192,221.99, which resulted in a negative difference of \$38,394.85 (you may consider the same negative difference of \$38,394.25 for budget year 1995-1996 and 1997-1998). The deficient is attributed to decrease in membership, unexpected, unplanned capital expenditures, other financial obligations, and unmet financial responsibilities by a few lodges.

In our overseas districts, we have not been able to find a solution to our age-old problem of maintaining a Brother's interest once he returns to the United States. We have suggested to the lodges that they communicate with these brothers by sending newsletters, copies of minutes, certified letters and a host of other things, while there are some results, it does not reward our effort. We must continue to attempt other methods of establishing and maintaining control with our members.

BRIEF FINANCIAL RECAP OF GRAND LODGE TAXES

The Grand Lodge has not had a tax increase since 1981-82 and that increase was from \$2.90 to \$3.80 and it was increased again in 1987-88 from \$3.80 to \$4.70 where it is presently. My Brothers we cannot continue to operate the way we have done in recent years.

The negative difference in each of those years has forced us to tap into our reserves. Therefore I believe this Grand Lodge is due to assess itself a tax increase. The size and scope will be in my recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Earl Metz, who served as Grand Trustee for 15 years and attended each Annual Communication since 1969, be given life membership in this Grand Lodge.
2. That the Comptroller Board prepare and submit for approval during this session a five (5) year budget plan that will include the following:
 - a. Increase Grand Lodge tax for members from \$4.70 per quarter to \$6.00 per quarter -- an increase of \$1.30 per quarter. This increase will raise each member's yearly Grand Lodge tax from \$18.80 to \$24.00 per year.
 - b. Commencing in 1999 or year 2000, the Annual Communication for this Grand Lodge be held in the Puget Sound area for Five Consecutive years.
3. Grand Lodge increases the amount of Grand Lodge Assessment from \$100.00 to \$175.00. This increase will be gradual over a consecutive 3-year period. \$25.00 each year, commencing the First Masonic Quarter of the 1998-1999 and year 2000.
4. Commencing in 1999 or year 2000 for five consecutive years members authorized to receive Grand Lodge Per Diem be reduced from its current rate of \$310.00 (for Eastern Washington) and \$290.00 (Western Washington) to a flat rate of \$150.00 commencing in 1999 or year 2000 for five consecutive years.
5. In order to reduce the Grand Lodge expenses, the Grand Lodge Annual Communications will be limited to two and a half days commencing with the second Monday in July.

IN CONCLUSION

I would like to say "thank you" to a fine staff who have worked diligently throughout the year; to the executive team, the cabinet and the deputies, both special and at large, your loyalty and support throughout the year has been immeasurable. I compliment each of you for giving unwavering of your time, money, and dedication.

And so, my Brothers as I come to a close, I must offer you my personal perception of how I view our organization. Freemasonry, our Freemasonry. The Prince Hall Masons of Washington State emphatically say to its members "Act on the Square". The assumption is that, just as a building is unreliable and unsafe, if not built on the square, so a man's life will only be to the community what it ought to be in so far as it is lived. "On the Square". Living on the square, to all devout and sincere Masons, means the dedication of personal knowledge, acquirements, and possessions to the highest purposes of life.

Some men are known for their knowledge; some for their eloquence and some for their wealth, but

Freemasonry does not measure men by these standards. Unfortunately some members of the Craft do, and find it very difficult to stay with the truth and carry out their promises. Nevertheless, Freemasonry measures men by the presence or absence of love in their souls, love for one another and love for humanity. It's endeavors to develop a fraternity of great feats. A true Mason is never knowingly guilty of rudeness, never selfish, never resentful, never glad when others go wrong, but is always hopeful, always patient and always eager to believe the best. He is generous, mild and modest; his hand is ever ready to lift the fallen, cheer the disheartened, help the

From my personal messages my Brothers; I have represented this great Grand Lodge as your Grand Master not because of my ego. I serve because of my love for this Grand Body. I have walked up right in all of my endeavors in representing each of you in a manner that demonstrated to the world the best side of Masonry and the image of our Brothers. I have always tried to be a gentleman/brother without any feelings of feeding ego. I have always put into practice the words of President Kennedy, what can I do for the Grand Lodge not what this Grand Lodge can do for me.

I have performed my duties consistent with our Constitution while not requesting any funds above my authorized budget, although I have far exceeded that amount.

I refused to be shackled by yesterday's failures. What I don't know I will no longer allow intimidate me. I will instead view it as an opportunity. I will not allow others to define my mood, my method, my image or my mission. I will pursue a mission greater than myself; by treating each person I encounter with dignity and respect. I will not allow self-pity, jealousy, or negativism from my self or others defer from my goal of being an upright Brother/Mason/Person.

And, finally my Brothers, do not judge men by the swiftness of their tongue, judge them by the content of their character and the deeds they have performed in time, all that dwells in darkness will soon come to the light. "Let your light so shine."

My Brothers, the power in which you entrusted and turned over to me at the close of our 94th Annual Session, I now return to you. Thank you for allowing me to serve you.

Fraternally,

/s/WILLIAM C. RHEUBOTTOM
Most Worshipful Grand Master
Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Washington
and Jurisdiction