

Gray Line



NEWSLETTER OF GRAY MASONIC LODGE No. 329, A.F. & A.M.

JANUARY 2022

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CHARTERED JUNE 24, 1870

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Greetings from the East



Happy New Year Brethren!

I hope each of you enjoyed time with your family and friends and were able to re-charge with some much-deserved time off.

I stated in my first address after being installed as Master of Gray Lodge that my first-born had given me a new purpose. As she just turned one year old, she has really developed her own personality and I was able

to see how much she enjoyed driving around looking at Christmas lights, opening gifts, and having all of her family around at once. Being around her during this time only strengthened my desire to be the best man and father I can possibly be for her. We all should have our own inspiration for bettering ourselves – to be a better man for our friends and family, a better boss or employee, a better civil servant, or just for our own personal growth. As we head into a new year, this is the time when people make resolutions. I want to take a moment and share my reflections on how this relates to Freemasonry.

The tagline we often hear about the fraternity is that we “take good men and make them better”, but I think you know it isn’t that simple. The work cannot be done by anyone else but yourself. Just as a person’s life isn’t improved simply by making a list of resolutions for the New Year, self-improvement through Freemasonry requires reflection, action, and time. Occasionally attending a stated meeting does not produce a better man, father, husband, or friend. Spend-

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Greetings From the East

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ing time being an active part of your Lodge, reading about the history and lessons of Freemasonry, and getting to know your fellow Brethren will help you identify some things you might like to improve in your life and spark the journey of improvement. Once you've identified these things (like making your list of resolutions), you have to spend time reflecting on these issues, taking action to break the habit, make the change, or include something new in your life, and awaiting the time with patience – because don't be fooled, it will take the rest of your life. There is no objective finish line to self-improvement through Freemasonry.

For me, the important thing to remember when striving to live up to the tenets and lessons of Freemasonry is that the only standard to measure myself by is myself. The ultimate goal is to be better than I was yesterday, last week, or last month. I know that sometimes I will falter, but I'm thankful to be part of a supportive society of friends and brothers who share similar goals. e.

Fraternally and Sincerely,
Erickson Ybarra, Worshipful Master

Greetings from the West

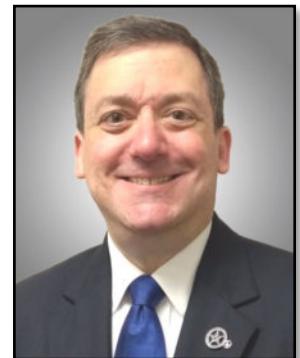
Brethren,

Has it really already been a year since we last rang in a New Year? (I have heard enough jokes from my wife about “the ball dropping” to last me until next December 31.) And did everything in 2021 go for you the way you anticipated? I can only say, for myself, that such was not the case — not even close.

They say “with age comes wisdom”, but I prefer to think of “wisdom” simply as experience. Experience, in turn, is the process of learning what works and what doesn't in a given situation, what can be done and what can't. We have each gained another year of *experience*. Whether it translates into “wisdom” is up to each of us.

I have found that, as a Mason, New Year's resolutions are kind of pointless — because, to the extent we want to improve ourselves, Masonry teaches us that smoothing off the rough and superfluous parts of our ashlar is a continuous process, not one that begins on January 1. Still, particularly given the challenges of the year that lie ahead, I have resolved to apply the experience of the past year to be a better listener, a better friend, a better husband, and a better Mason. If I can do these, my belief is that the “better man” part will naturally follow.

If your cable tow will permit you to join us on Wednesday, January 5th for Gray Lodge's first Stated Meeting of 2022, we would love to see you. If you haven't been by your Lodge for a while, you will be very pleasantly surprised by the changes taking place inside and outside our Lodge building — and we are far from finished! Dinner at 6 pm, meeting at 7 ... you know the drill. I hope I will get to see you this coming Wednesday!



- Gary Wiener, Senior Warden

Don't Be "THAT Guy".

We've all heard the conversation — "Whatever happened to So-and-So? He never comes around the Lodge anymore." "Oh, didn't you hear? He got suspended for non-payment of dues." (Okay, maybe we *haven't* all heard that conversation, and few of us want to — and we'll bet *none* of us want to be "So-and-So".)

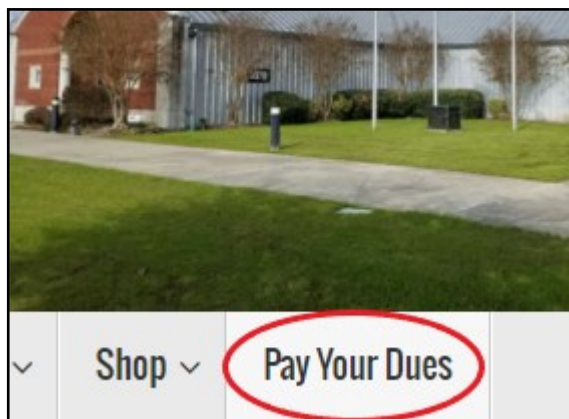
Dues notices were mailed and emailed to all Brethren in December, and if you haven't paid for 2022 yet, technically you are now in arrears.

Your dues payments provide the funds that allow Gray Lodge to pay our bills, so when asked, please provide your financial support to the Lodge promptly.

You can now pay your annual Lodge dues, join the Master's Club, or increase your Endowment online through the Gray Lodge #329 website! Go to <http://www.gray329.org> and in the navigation banner, just under the picture of our Lodge building, click "Pay Your Dues".

This link will take you to a page where you can make your dues payment via PayPal, either using your credit card or PayPal Account. (PayPal will add a small convenience fee.)

Our Secretary and Treasurer will be notified of your payment, and your dues card will be mailed to you as soon as we receive it from Grand Lodge.



"Flattering as it may be to the human mind, and truly honorable as it is to receive from our fellow citizens testimonies of approbation for exertions to promote the public welfare, it is not less pleasing to know that the milder virtues of the heart are highly respected by a Society whose liberal principles must be founded in the immutable laws of truth and justice. To enlarge the sphere of social happiness is worthy of the benevolent design of a Masonic institution; and it is most fervently to be wished that the conduct of every member of the Fraternity, as well as those publications that discover the principles which actuate them, may tend to convince mankind that the great object of Masonry is to promote the happiness of the human race."

~ George Washington

A Busy November

In the space of just over two weeks in early November, the Brethren of Gray Lodge #329 were working at full speed on bringing more Light to the Masons of Houston!

The month began with our Stated Meeting on November 3, when our guest speaker, Grand Orator R.:W.:Rhith Moore, offered his acclaimed presentation "The Letter" to the Brethren.



From left: SW Gary Wiener, R.:W.:Rhith Moore, WM Erickson Ybarra, R.:W.:Darrin Pitts, JW Steven Cobb.

The next evening, November 4, the Lodge brought two worth Candidates from darkness to Light by initiating them as Entered Apprentices.

On November 11, the Past Masters of Gray Lodge assembled to confer a very special Master Mason's degree upon Brother Arilson Nunez de Souza, who had been awaiting his time with patience since May of 2019! It



was good to see so much of our Lodge's heritage present among the Lodge's past leaders.

That Saturday, November 13, brought the return of our A.S. Richardson Dinner and Lecture (see facing page).

Then, on November 16, the Brethren raised another very patient Brother, Marshall Collins, into the Third Degree in Masonry.



13th Annual A. S. Richardson Dinner and Lecture

After a year's absence (due to You-Know-What), Gray Lodge #329 resumed its traditional A. S. Richardson Lecture series, by welcoming R.:W.:Oscar Alleyne, Junior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of New York. R.:W.:Alleyne shared a fascinating presentation entitled, "The Frontispiece of the 1611 Authorized King James Bible", in which he argued that the engraved artwork at the front of this original Scripture was filled with Masonic imagery, despite predating the formation of the Grand Lodge of England by over 100 years. Following the presentation, Past Master R.:W.:Roberto Sanchez gifted Bro. Alleyne with the Gray Honor—the first time we have been able to present the award to an A.S. Richardson lecturer in over two years. We thank all the Brethren who were able to attend.



The Brethren of Gray Lodge and some of our Visitors



A motley Masonic crew indeed!



R.:W.:Oscar Alleyne



R.:W.:Alleyne and WM Ybarra (photobomb courtesy JW Cobb)



R.:W.:Sanchez presents R.:W.:Alleyne the Gray Honor



Alexander Joseph Di Caro, MD.

Jim Hoffpauir, Staff Writer

Reprinted from *Texas Freemason Magazine*, Winter 2021

Grand Lodge of Texas

[Editor's note: Because not all Brethren read The Texas Freemason, which the Grand Lodge of Texas sends out to all Texas Masons each quarter, we want to reprint for you (with permission) a profile of one of Gray Lodge #329's own — Brother Alexander Di Caro. What a pleasure to see that Bro. Hoffpauir has begun a two-part biography of our esteemed Worthy Brother!]

Alexander Joseph Di Caro, Jr. can only be described as an unusual man and Freemason. In his 81 years of life, he has walked through the pages of history first in the medical field, in the 1960s when he participated in the growth of the world-famous Houston medical complex. Then, as a Freemason where his adventures in the Scottish Rite and Shrine, have been remarkable.

Brother Di Caro was born of Hispanic heritage, grew up in Houston, and is married to Sandra Whitman, also in the field as a Medical Assistant. From a previous marriage Di Caro was blessed with two sons: Gregory and Bryan, and sixteen grandchildren ranging in ages from twenty-five to eight-month-old Zachery. Di Caro's father, Alexander Joseph, Sr., was a 60-year Freemason. Di Caro is a fifth-generation Mason himself.

Dr. Di Caro's Masonic history is quite extensive. He was raised to the degree of Master Mason at Gray Lodge No. 329 in September of 1970. He endowed as a 32° member of the Houston Valley of the Scottish Rite, and the Houston Arabia Shrine in 1971. He has been Medical Director of the Arabia Shrine for 38 years, served on its Board of Directors nine years, currently serves as Director of the Band, and is also acting Health and Safety Coordinator. He is 2nd Vice President of the Orchestra, and a member of the Dance Band. He has served as Medical Director for Imperial Sessions 141 and 148 – just held in Houston 2021 – for Shriners International based out of Tampa, FL. Di Caro joined the Shrine at the behest of Dr. Gordon Kibler over a beer after work one afternoon. Kibler, now deceased, was a Blue-Lodge member of Concordia Lodge No. 345 in Cleveland, OH, and also served the Arabia Shrine as Medical Director at the time.

Di Caro went into the service as a combat medic after high school. He was stationed with the 8th Medical Battalion in Germany as an X-ray Radiologist. An explosion on the base left him with hearing loss and a head wound. He was sent to Walter Reed Hospital in Maryland, and due to 90% hearing loss he received a medical discharge after three years of service. He attended Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD, and received a medical degree before serving his residency in an Army hospital in San Antonio. He also attended the Common Wealth College of Science and Pathology in Maryland. He then wrote a paper 'Toxicity of Metal Particles Invitro' for Cambridge University in Cambridge, England in conjunction with the Bone and Joint Journal – to Orthopedic Surgeons International.

Upon completing his medical training, Di Caro went home to Houston and joined Hermann Hospital to teach radiology. Later, he joined the surgical team of Doctors Denton Cooley and Grady Hallman at St. Luke's Children's Hospital. There he assisted as a standby surgeon, radiologist, and monitored the circulation of blood using heart-lung machine pump equipment.

He also contributed to the development of oxygenator heart lung monitors for the team. After surgery he observed monitoring equipment in the recovery room.

Due to a fire on the launch platform in January 1967, which resulted in the loss of Freemasons Virgil Grissom and Edward White, as well as fellow astronaut Roger Chaffee, space suits became a real focus, and NASA began to investigate metallurgy, heat transfer, and gases in space, etc. NASA had no biomedical group on site. However, through the efforts of PE licensed engineer Ed Petrash, Di Caro, due to his work with the Cooley – Hallman group, got involved with the Johnson Space team. “We studied electrocardiograms (EKGs) for God knows how long,” remembers Di Caro. EKGs record electrical signals from the heart when attached to the human chest. “A group of us were selected to explore development and implementation of the devices within the space suit. This project jump started the field of Biomedical Engineering. A joint venture between Houston cardiac medicine and NASA.”

Dr. Di Caro’s venture into forensic medicine pretty much followed the same path as most of his other adventures. During the days of the NASA project Di Caro and fellow physician Ken Johnson investigated an issue with heart monitors manufactured by a firm in Georgia. The issue: four of the alarms were sounding, and patients were dying; within a week and a half they lost several patients. The monitors were taken out of service and it was discovered that the wiring was going to ground and reversing currents. Instead of monitoring, the units threw electricity back to the heart in alternating – not direct – currents. “Instead of defibrillating the organ, the equipment was fibrillating it,” declared Di Caro. “Who is the insurance company. We have a subrogation case on our hands.” After tireless work and investigation, the issue was eventually solved.

Off goes Di Caro to visit Royal Globe Insurance who, at the time, had St. Luke’s liability coverage. After a fruitful conversation about the monitor case the office agent handling the case asked Di Caro if he had enough time to look into a few other issues on his desk. Di Caro looked at his watch and mentioned that he wanted to get back to the hospital that afternoon. “It will only take a short time” turned into dinner, drinks, and a very long evening as they drifted through ten or twelve pending cases. Offhandedly, the agent asked Di Caro for his home address. A week or so later a check came from the firm for \$7,500.

Wondering minds tending to wander as is often the case, Dr. Di Caro was struck with the notion “If they are having these issues and paying this kind of money, there is a good chance others are too.” It wasn’t long before he had made himself known to other insurance and law firms seeking help in his field of expertise.

He soon left St. Luke’s and opened his own business – Di Caro & Associates – in Houston. By 1978 he had moved the company to San Antonio and renamed it Analytical Group and took on twelve to fifteen partners. Analytical now has branch offices in Houston, Brownsville, McAllen, and Monterrey, Mexico. The firm offers expertise in forensic medicine, independent medical exams of alleged certain injury types, vehicular, plant, and structural failure analysis. The total staff at one time exceeded sixty individuals specializing as scientists, chemical, structural, and bioengineers, and medical specialists.

To be continued in the Spring 2022 issue of the Texas Freemason.

UPCOMING LOCAL MASONIC EVENTS (Gray Lodge activities are [hyperlinked](#))

Please note that all plans are subject to change and should be confirmed before attending. The most up-to-date calendar info is always available at <http://www.GRAY329.org/calendar>.

Online calendar feed for your personal device:

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/ical/graylodgecalendar@gmail.com/public/basic.ics>

JANUARY 2022

5	Wed.	Gray Lodge Stated Meeting	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
6	Thurs.	Lodge Masonic Education	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
10	Mon.	Washington Chapt #2 Meeting	Holland Lodge #1	Meeting 7:00 pm
11	Tues.	Bluebell Chapter OES Meeting	Gray Lodge #329	7:30 pm
13	Thurs.	Lodge Education & Esoteric Work	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
14	Fri.	Ruthven Cmdry #2 Stated Meeting	Holland Lodge #1	Meeting 7:00 pm
17	Mon.	Arabia Shrine Stated Meeting	Arabia Shrine Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
20-22	Thu-Sat	Grand Annual Communication	Grand Lodge, Waco	
26	Wed.	District 30 MWSA Meeting	Reagan Lodge #1057	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
27	Thurs.	GL Comm on Work Exam	Reagan Lodge #1057	Exam 6:00 pm
27	Thurs.	Lodge Catechism Instruction	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
27	Thurs.	Scottish Rite Stated Meeting	Scottish Rite Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm

FEBRUARY 2022

2	Wed.	Gray Lodge Stated Meeting	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
3	Thurs.	Lodge Masonic Education	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
8	Tues.	Bluebell Chapter OES Meeting	Gray Lodge #329	7:30 pm
10	Thurs.	Lodge Education & Esoteric Work	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
11	Fri.	Ruthven Cmdry #2 Stated Meeting	Holland Lodge #1	Meeting 7:00 pm
14	Mon.	Houston Council #1 Meeting	Holland Lodge #1	Meeting 7:00 pm
17	Thurs.	Lodge Ritual / Degree Practice	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
21	Mon.	Arabia Shrine Stated Meeting	Arabia Shrine Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
23	Wed.	District 30 MWSA Meeting	Holland Lodge #1	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
24	Thurs.	Lodge Catechism Instruction	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
24	Thurs.	Scottish Rite Stated Meeting	Scottish Rite Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm

MARCH 2022

2	Wed.	Gray Lodge Stated Meeting	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
3	Thurs.	Lodge Masonic Education	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
8	Tues.	Bluebell Chapter OES Meeting	Gray Lodge #329	7:30 pm
10	Thurs.	Lodge Education & Esoteric Work	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
11	Fri.	Ruthven Cmdry #2 Stated Meeting	Holland Lodge #1	Meeting 7:00 pm
14	Mon.	Washington Chapt #2 Meeting	Holland Lodge #1	Meeting 7:00 pm
17	Thurs.	Lodge Ritual / Degree Practice	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
21	Mon.	Arabia Shrine Stated Meeting	Arabia Shrine Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
23	Wed.	District 30 MWSA Meeting	Reagan Lodge #1057	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
24	Thurs.	Lodge Catechism Instruction	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
24	Thurs.	Scottish Rite Stated Meeting	Scottish Rite Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
31	Thurs.	Lodge Education & Esoteric Work	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm

January Stated Meeting

Please plan now to join us for our next Stated Meeting on Wednesday, January 5. Dinner will be served at 6 p.m., with an Entered Apprentice lodge to open at 7 p.m.

WM Ybarra is planning meetings that will be more entertaining and educational than the typical monthly business of the Lodge, so we hope you will be there on Wednesday, January 5!

Keep Us Posted

If you have moved, or updated your email address or phone number, please update your record at grandlodgeoftexas.org (in the Member Portal), call us at 713-730-9329, or email Bro. Darrin Pitts at secretary@gray329.org with your new information so we can stay in touch.

Also, please let the Secretary know if you have any personal announcements you would like us to pass along to the Brethren.

MASTER MASON ANNIVERSARIES

JANUARY 2022

3	Thomas Hill	27	Yassen Kantchev
5	Myron Welsh	27	Jamal Diallo
6	William Nicholson	28	Kenneth Smart
10	Brian Blowers	28	Chad Mitchell
11	James Littlejohn	29	Jerry Argovitz
12	Robert Reeder	29	Charles McKinley
12	Chester Presley, III	31	Todd Ivey
12	Anthony Copeland, Jr.	31	Ignacio Fantaguzzi
21	Thomas Bashforth		

FEBRUARY 2022

4	Al Florido*	16	Crawford Weir
4	Lonnie Posey	18	Roy Cook
5	J. Weldon Clampitt*	18	Frank Bissell
5	David Vukovic	24	Valdemar Perez, Jr.
8	Alan Johnston	25	Buddy Taylor
12	Todd Rovner	27	Earnest Canterbury
15	Donald Beckner		<i>* Past Master of Gray Lodge</i>

MARCH 2022

37	Richard Cobb, Sr.	21	Luiz Soriano
10	Hamlin Elrod, Jr.	25	Richard Cobb, Jr.
10	Frederick Schwartz	27	Kenneth Wallis
10	William Britt	28	Curtis Buchan
10	Gregory Stephens	28	Noil Frisby
13	Ricardo Abuabara	29	Lloyd Sherbert
13	Kevin Roberts*	30	David Black
14	Willard Cox, Jr.	30	Lawrence Rathbun
18	Zach Willner	31	David Jurgens
19	James Shafer	31	Cary Maurstad
20	Darrin Pitts*		<i>* Past Master of Gray Lodge</i>
20	Daniel Boyd		

"We are committed to excellence in our lives and we are not willing to compromise ourselves for the sake of popularity. One time, the great German mathematician, Karl Gustav Jacobi, was asked why he decided to spend his life at work in such an obscure field. He replied, 'For the honor of the human spirit.' That is the reason why we, as Masons, give our lives affirming our beliefs in moral conduct, brotherhood and compassion. We do it for the honor of the human spirit."

~ Stanley F. Maxwell