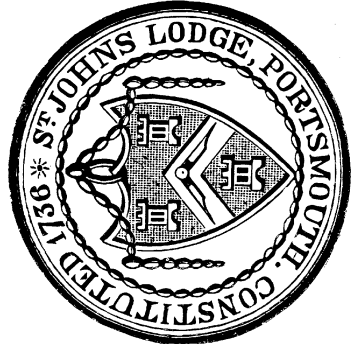
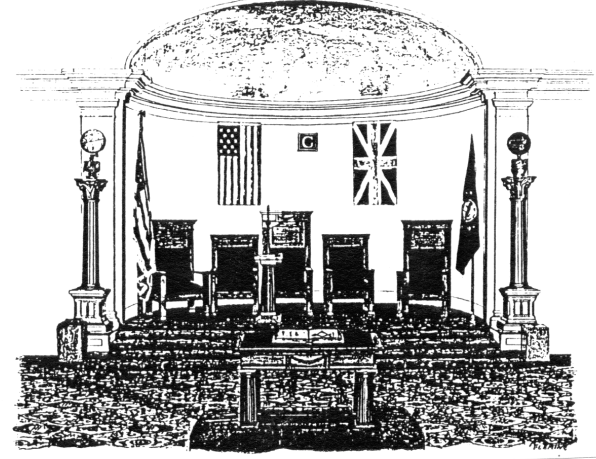


St. John's Lodge, No. 1, F&AM  
351 Middle St  
Portsmouth, NH 03801



Stamp

August 2024



# August 2024 Trestle Board

St. John's Lodge No. 1  
Portsmouth, NH

# The Master's Message

My wife and I live in a Victorian home in an old neighborhood of Dover, and we are fortunate enough to have a working fireplace in the living room. During the warm months of the year the fireplace sits idle and we don't think much about it, but the other evening as we were sitting in the living room we were startled by a chorus of chirping sounds coming down the chimney.

After some alarmed Googling we concluded that we had a family of chimney swifts nesting up there. It turns out that the birds prefer a clean flue in which to build their nests, and we had had the chimney swept last fall. Happily — again, according to Google — chimney swift nests pose no fire danger or other issues. In fact, because they live on flying insects, they are beneficial and should be left alone before they leave, conveniently, for the winter. Now the sudden, insistent chirping of the chicks broadcasting from the fireplace when a parent arrives with food is just part of our evening as we unwind in the living room.

Chimney swifts used to be much more common — they rely on chimneys for habitat, and as that architectural feature has become less common, so too have chimney swifts. But at some point in our past — when everyone had a fireplace — it must have been a normal, everyday occurrence to hear chimney swifts chirping in the flue. Hearing them now, then, feels something like opening a time capsule or listening to an Edison Victrola — an experience adding a small data point to how I think about the past.

We are fortunate in this area to have history so much a part of our present. This is especially true when it comes to Masonic history, both in terms of physical structures such as the William Pitt Tavern and the ancient practices of our ritual. One of my strongest memories as an Entered Apprentice candidate is what I was thinking as I first knocked on the door of lodge: George Washington did this. I felt quite viscerally that this was a rare experience, one that would deepen my insight into how the founding fathers viewed the universe and our country. And, having experienced the degrees, I wasn't disappointed.

As we enter a season of increasing political noise, my hope is that we will still hear the voices of our shared past, however rare they seem at times. So mote it be.

Fraternally,

***Worshipful Alan D. Ammann***  
***Worshipful Master***

# Masonic Travels



While in San Antonio, Brother Daniel Silverman, visited the Alamo and the Scottish Rite Cathedral. Legend has it that Davey Crockett never died at The Alamo. Santa Anna was also a Freemason and saved his masonic brother.



Every year, Masons meet at this plaque (pictured left) to commemorate the Freemasons that died at the Alamo

Brother Jason Dubrow visited Mount Washington and came across this plaque in the Sherman Adams building.



# Veteran's Program



At the Veteran's Program in July, Worshipful Brother Thomas W. Haslam (Secretary) received his 20 year pin and Brothers Michael A. Hudson (SW) and Worshipful Thomas W. Beaudoin each received their 10 year pins. Pictured above is all of our brothers receiving their pins from Worshipful Alan D. Ammann and MW Daniel R. Hotchkiss.



Worshipful Craig Brown received the Major General John Sullivan medal in bronze from St. Andrew's Lodge in recognition of his years of service as the Lodge Secretary. Left, Craig is pictured with the Grand Master, Most Worshipful Brother Daniel R. Hotchkiss.

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In his retirement years, J.B. led a quiet life of compassion, humility and generosity for others. He was the embodiment of Honor, Courage and Commitment and chose to embrace life rather than succumb to the effects of his severe POW experiences. He enjoyed woodworking and refinishing antique furniture; in fact, the furniture outside the door of the Lodge Room in Portsmouth, including the Tyler's chair, used to be dark brown. J.B. refinished all of that furniture to their beautiful natural wood appearance.

Helen Begala passed away on August 23, 1998 at the age of 78 years and J.B. passed on June 14, 2010 in Northampton, MA at the age of 97 years. They are buried together at the New Hampshire State Veterans Cemetery in Boscawen.

In every respect, Brother J.B. was a good man. He was Raised a Master Mason in Port Royal Lodge, No. 242, Ancient Free Masons of Port Royal, SC on January 3, 1956 and was active in Dalcho Consistory of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry in the Valley of Charleston, SC. On June 28, 1989, near the end of the St. John's Lodge's annual Masonic Veterans Night program, the Master, Worshipful Martin W. Curtis and the Grand Master of NH, Most Worshipful Philip L. Hall asked that Brother J.B. Begala be presented to the East. Once there, the Grand Master announced that Brother J.B. had been elected an Honorary Member of St. John's Lodge, No. 1; he congratulated him and presented him his dues card; and the brethren arose to give our brother a long and well-deserved standing ovation. It was a great night!

**Alan M. Robinson, PM  
Historian**



On July 15, Brother Joshua Nixon, Senior Deacon, was officially commissioned as a Direct Commission Officer (DCO) in the U.S. Navy Reserve. Josh will serve as an Intelligence Officer and assist in the analysis of activities that pose a threat to national security, such as drug smuggling, illegal immigration, arms transfers, and other intelligence operations.

Josh took his oath of office on the USS Constitution, better known as "Old Ironsides".

## August 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**Stated Communication  
Scholarship Night  
Open Semi-Public  
Wednesday, August 7, 2024  
(Dinner 6:00, Meeting 7:00)  
Dinner—TBD  
Officer dress—white tie and tails  
Collation to follow**

**Special Communication  
DDGM Visitation  
Wednesday, August 21, 2024  
(Dinner 6:00, Meeting 7:00)  
Dinner—TBD  
Officer dress—white tie and tails**

**Contact  
Information:**

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Worshipful Master  
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**Thomas W. Haslam, PM  
Secretary  
stjohnstom@comcast.net  
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## St. John's Lodge

## Historical Sketch

### J. B. Begala

For many years, Brother J.B. Begala was a regular attendee at Masonic meetings in Portsmouth. He was a small, cheerful man who happily sat on the sidelines with friends. He could always be counted on to be present and supportive of the activities of the Lodge, and was generous with his time and hand craftiness. He was a gentle and humble man, and he was fun to talk with. While he didn't like to talk about the War, I was always fascinated by his heroic service to our Nation.

June Bela Begala was born and raised in Struthers, Ohio, on October 4, 1912, a son of Stephen and Katherine (Zebura) Begala who had immigrated to America from Czechoslovakia, or as their immigration papers showed, the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He was the youngest of twelve children (four boys and eight girls, including brothers: John, Joe and Steve, and sisters: Mary, Consuela, Catherine, Helen, Anne, Yolanda, Josephine and Blanche). He and his siblings grew up on a rural Ohio farm, and he graduated from Struthers High School at the start of the Great Depression. For J.B., attending college was not possible and on May 10, 1935, at the age of 22 years, he joined the United States Marine Corps.

J.B. trained at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, SC; he was stationed for a few years with the 5th Marines, Fleet Marine Force, Quantico, VA; and served at Marine Barracks, Philadelphia, PA where he attended military school. Just prior to his deployment in 1939, he married for the first time to Edna Jones Patterson in Washington, DC. That marriage ended in divorce. He was deployed to the Asiatic-Pacific Theatre and Shanghai, China, where he served for a couple years. From there, he was dispatched to the City of Olongapo in the Central Luzon region of the Philippines in 1941. He served as a Platoon Sargent at Corregidor, an island located at the entrance to Manila Bay.

Corregidor was a Philippine stronghold during World War II, and while serving there in 1941-42, J.B. was as a scout and platoon leader for Company F, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment. In April 1942, the battalion of the 4th Marines was sent to reinforce the island's beach defenses. The Battle of Corregidor was the culmination of the Japanese campaign for the conquest of the Philippines. American and Filipino soldiers on Corregidor and the neighboring islets held out against the Japanese to deny the use of Manila Bay, but the Imperial Japanese Army brought heavy artillery to the southern end of Bataan, and proceeded north to blockade Corregidor. The Japanese air force bombarded the area day and night for weeks and then the Japanese Army continued the fierce fighting, some of which was hand-to-hand combat with bayonets, until the Japanese troops forced the surrender of the remaining American and Filipino forces on May 6, 1942. That day, J.B. became a prisoner of war along with the rest of the brave Marines and Allied soldiers. He was forced to join at the end of the Bataan Death March and was then held prisoner at Camp #1, Cabanatuan, Philippines. The Japanese army forced over 70,000 American and Filipino prisoners of war to make this arduous march. In the hot sun, they were

made to walk one hundred kilometers to reach a train that then took them to a prisoner of war camp. The journey took one week and the prisoners received too little food and water and were severely beaten by the guards. Thousands of prisoners died on the way.

From there, J.B. spent the next three plus years in harsh conditions as a Japanese prisoner of war at Camp Shinjuku in Tokyo Bay. The Japanese were cruel in their treatment of the prisoners of war who were required to do forced labor under terrible conditions. During his captivity, J.B. was forced to work in the deep copper mines near Tokyo. More than ten percent of the allied citizens in Japanese captivity, mainly British, American, and Dutch citizens, died.

Over the next three years, the Allies continued their relentless and effective campaign against the Japanese. By the end of July 1945, the Imperial Japanese Navy was incapable of conducting major operations and an Allied invasion of Japan was imminent. President Harry S. Truman and the Allies called for the unconditional surrender of Japan on July 26, 1945, the alternative being the empire's "prompt and utter destruction." President Truman's call went unheeded and on August 6, 1945, the United States detonated an atomic bomb over the Japanese city of Hiroshima. J.B. felt the tremors from his location deep underground in the copper mine. Sixteen hours later, President Truman called again for Japan's surrender, warning them to "expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth." On August 9, the United States dropped a second atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Nagasaki. This time, Emperor Hirohito ordered the Supreme Council for the Direction of the War to accept the terms that the Allies had set down, and on August 15, Emperor Hirohito announced the surrender of Japan to the Allies. The surrender ceremony was held on September 2, 1945, aboard the battleship USS Missouri. Liberation of prisoners of war commenced and on September 8, 1945, J.B. and the other POWs in Tokyo were liberated.

J.B. returned stateside and continued to serve in the Marines as a leader and as an advanced technical and tactical expert until he honorably retired with the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 3 on June 30, 1957. He was awarded many military honors for distinguished service including the Bronze Star Medal which is given to those who distinguish themselves through heroism, outstanding achievement, or meritorious service in a combat theater. His citation included these words: "For his daring initiative and personal valor, and as an inspiring example to his men; he contributed materially to the defense of the vital Philippine Stronghold at Corregidor during World War II."

Following the War, 38 year old J.B. met and fell in love with a dashing registered nurse, LTjg Helen Daroska, USN. Helen was born in Pittsfield, NH and was seven years younger than J.B. They married on June 8, 1951 in Portsmouth, VA shortly before her honorable discharge from the Navy. They eventually moved to Portsmouth, NH where they raised their two children, Jane and Thomas, at their 669 Greenland Road home and J.B. worked as a civilian warehouse manager at Pease Air Force Base.

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