

# **The Master's Letters**

**Jorge Luis Romeu, M.M.**

**Liverpool Syracuse Lodge No. 501**

**Onondaga Masonic District of the GL NY**

**A Compilation of my 10 monthly Master's Letters appearing in The Word,  
The Masonic Monthly Newspaper of the Four Districts in Central New York.**

*To other Lodge Masters and to my Brother Freemasons*

*With the hope that these letters help them in their Lodge work.*

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## **About the Author**

Jorge Luis Romeu is a Master Mason, Initiated in January, in Estrada Palma Lodge, and Raised in his Island Lodge No. 56, Havana, Cuba, in April of 1969. These were difficult times to be a Mason, in Communist Cuba, especially for a young man.

In 1980 Romeu moved to the US. The social and economic conditions of an immigrant, plus the differences between Masonic Rituals and language, made it difficult for him to join an American Lodge. However, he kept his links with individual Brethren and Masonic listserves.

After a long hiatus, where he remained unaffiliated, Bro. Romeu joined the Jose Celso Barbosa Lodge No. 106, in Bayamon, San Juan, Puerto Rico, the land of his paternal family, where he regularly visited his brother and other family members. Romeu later joined Liverpool Syracuse Lodge No. 501, in the state of New York, where he resides and teaches. He was the Worshipful Master of Liverpool Syracuse Lodge 2018-2019.

Bro. Romeu is a 32nd Degree Scottish Rite Mason, with the Syracuse Valley, AASR, NMJ, and the Onondaga Masonic District Mentoring Chair, where he leads the North Star Mentoring Program. He wrote these Masters Letters in The Word, the monthly newspaper of four CNY Masonic Districts, when he was elected to this Office.

Bro. Romeu researches the history of Freemasonry in the Spanish Antilles: Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. For his research work, Bro. Romeu has been accepted into the American Lodge of Research, NYC, Western NY Lodge of Research, Buffalo, NY, both of the Grand Lodge of New York (GLNY); Jose G. Bloise No. 113, San Juan, Gran Logia Soberana de Puerto Rico (GLSPR); The Correspondence Circle of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, Grand Lodge of England (UGLE); and the Centro de Estudios Historicos de la Masoneria Espanola (CEHME), Spain.

In these Research Lodges and Academic Organizations, Bro. Romeu has presented and published a number of papers on Freemasonry. The reader can find more information in his Masonic Web Page:

<http://web.cortland.edu/romeu/MasoneriaPage.htm>

Thank-you.

Worshipful Master's Letter: Liverpool Syracuse Lodge. September 2018.

Hello, Brethren: I am greatly honored by having been elected Worshipful Master of our Lodge. I plan to give my best effort and ability to this endeavor. And I want to start by sharing with you Three Main Concepts that I would like to develop in our Lodge, during this year:

First: the lodge is an Oasis of Peace and Fellowship. We are all Brothers, and should meet, act and part as such. Attending the Lodge is something to look forward to –not a punishment! An environment of respect and collegiality is necessary, if we want to achieve it. Bickering should be left at the door. Hopefully, such measure will help increasing Lodge attendance.

Secondly: many brothers, including myself, have problems with the Lodge ending past 10 pm. Some have to wake up early to go to work, or our significant others do. So, arriving home close to mid night is not conducive to create a supporting home atmosphere. Without home support, Lodge attendance falters, and perhaps the member ends up by leaving the Lodge.

This is especially crucial during Degree Work. As Master, I will seek ways to have Degrees end by 10:30 at the most. We already have changed our By-Laws to start earlier on degree nights.

Finally, we come to Lodge to do Masonry. Every session will have some form of instruction: a Program, or at least a short presentation or reading. To enable the participation of newly initiated Brothers, the Lodge will be lowered to the First, then Second Degrees, as these Brothers progress in Masonry. This year we will have only one round of Degrees, two months apart, so our new Brothers have time to assimilate and learn the concepts conveyed by the Degrees received. And we will have meals either before or after Lodge sessions. Officers will take turns preparing them. This Master will cook for our first Lodge meeting, the Official Visit, on September 17<sup>th</sup>.

I want to end by thanking WM Doug Russell, under whom I learned many useful things about what to do as a Master. For that, I am most grateful. And I want to invite all Lodge Brothers to contact me with their ideas, suggestions, criticisms etc. And to come to Lodge, join a Committee and participate actively in our work.

Fraternally/

Worshipful Master's Letter: Liverpool Syracuse Lodge. October 2018.

Hello, Brethren:

We had a very fruitful summer fund raising, organized by Bro. Drew D'Angelo: the Funnel Cakes, sold on the Mondays Liverpool public concerts, in the park across Lodge. We want to thank the many Brothers that attended and helped out: Lee Wiggins , Norm Gauthier, Doug Campbell, James Colditz, Ralph Hanney, Rainer Grimme, Bob Bowels, Bill Schueltz, Doug Russel, Carl Barber, Geoff Linehan, and Charlie Blood. Such activity not only helps raise needed funds, but also helps strengthen the fellowship bonds of participants. Thanks to all!

We had only one meeting in September (the first one is always cancelled, as it coincides with Labor Day). The meeting entertained the Official Visit by our DDGM, RW Jack Dombrowski. The meal consisted of pulled pork sandwiches, cooked by your WM's wife (you do not want to eat the food I cook), salad, and dessert. Officers will take turns, cooking dinners.

We had two Masonic Funerals, for two Brothers that put down their working tools: Bro. Arthur Schoeck, and RW. Bro. Carl Barber. Always remember that, if it is within our cable-toe, our Masonic duty is to attend the Funeral Services for our departed brothers.

*On October 1<sup>st</sup>, and to honor our Veterans and Sojourners, we will have an open meeting with a catered dinner. Our Keynote Speaker will be R.W. John Fuller. Make your reservations by calling our JW Bro. James Colditz, at 315-297-6550. We need a head-count.*

I want to end by inviting all our Lodge Brothers to contact us with their ideas, suggestions, criticisms etc. And to come to Lodge, join a Committee and participate actively in our work.

Fraternally/

Worshipful Master's Letter: Liverpool Syracuse Lodge. For November 2018.

Hello, Brethren:

We had our Veterans and Sojourners Open Meeting with a delicious catered dinner, which was well attended. RW John Fuller gave a very nice account of the monument that GL Pennsylvania erected to the Masons, at the site of the Battle of Gettysburg.

Our second, tiled meeting hosted RW Gary Heinmiller, Grand Historian of the GLNY, and our Lodge Secretary, in a talk titled "A Perspective of Craft Symbols of the Lodge". Bro. Heinmiller founded, and serves as the Archivist for, the Onondaga and Oswego Masonic Districts Historical Societies [OMDHS] and was the Charter Area 11 Historian for the Grand Lodge, for 24 years. Read more on RW Heinmiller in <http://www.omdhs.syracuseasons.com/content/about-founder> There was a dinner served, to enjoy Fellowship.

We had the District Convention on Friday October 26, in Memorial Center. As usual, it offered a great opportunity to learn more about the ritual changes introduced recently in the GLNY, and to meet new Brothers, from other District Lodges.

In November we will have the Concordant Bodies night. We have invited three distinguished Brothers of our Lodge that belong to the Scottish Rite, the York bodies, and the Shriners, to talk about them. There will be a dinner served. Our second meeting will develop a "Walk About the Lodge", to refresh this important topic.

At our first meeting in December we will have a First Degree, conferred by Junior Warden. Bro. James Colditz. He has started contacting Lodge members, to practice for this important event.

There is an excellent series in NETFLIX titled "Inside the Freemasons", with many interviews of Brethren from England, and pictures of the Grand Lodge and other masonic temples, there.

I invite again all our Lodge Brothers to contact us with their ideas, suggestions, criticisms etc. And to come to Lodge, join a Committee, and participate actively in our Masonic work.

Fraternally/

Worshipful Master's Letter: Liverpool Syracuse Lodge. For December 2018.

Hello, Brethren:

November had two Masonic Education events. First, the Concordant Bodies night, where Brothers Tyrrell, Hanney, and Russell, talked about the Scottish Rite, the York bodies, and the Shriners. Secondly, a "Walk About the Lodge", By RW Hanney, to refresh our Station and Places duties and requirements. Both were well-attended, and we had our usual fellowship informal dinner, in the first meeting.

In our first December meeting we will have a First Degree, conferred by Junior Warden Bro. James Colditz. There will be a formal dinner on December 17<sup>th</sup>, our second meeting, during our Christmas Party. On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, Sunday, our Lodge will host a chocolate and cookies event for our Liverpool Christmas Tree community lighting.

There is an excellent article about Freemasons, initially published in the Washington Post, with a nice summary of the Morgan Affair and the Anti Masonic movement of the 1800s. You can read it in: <http://www.watertowndailytimes.com/national/skull-identified-as-anti-freemason-candidates-20181022>

I wish our Brethren and their families, a Happy Holiday Season and a Happy New Year 2019!

I encourage our Lodge Brothers to contact us with their ideas, suggestions, criticisms etc. Come to Lodge, join a Committee, and participate actively in our Masonic work!

Fraternally/

Worshipful Master's Letter: Liverpool Syracuse Lodge. For January 2019.

Hello, Brethren:

I hope you had a wonderful Holiday with your families. We now begin a new year and I wish you all, and your families, health, happiness and many good things.

In our first December meeting we had five Candidates for the First Degree, conferred by RW Bro. Ralph Haney. On December 17<sup>th</sup>, we had a formal dinner for our Christmas Party, with some caroling from the A-Capella choir. On Sunday December 2<sup>nd</sup>, our Lodge collaborated with the American Legion in the lighting ceremony of our Liverpool Christmas Tree.

On January 7<sup>th</sup> we will have the Junior Warden's Program night, with our usual collation and fellowship. We look forward to an instructive presentation. On January 21<sup>st</sup> we have our Past Master's Night. We will honor them for their good work in our Lodge. In addition, we would like each attending Past Master to take a few minutes, to recall a memorable event that took place during their Mastership, as well as to remind us of some of those who were raised that year.

We remind our Past Masters that they are our best Committee, and that we look forward to their advice, suggestions and to their continuing contributions to our Lodge.

I have started emailing the Agenda, prior to our Lodge meetings. The objective is twofold: for Brethren to know what will take place, as well as for them to provide suggestion and feedback with their ideas, criticisms etc. There is always room for improvement.

Come to Lodge, and participate actively in our Masonic work!

Fraternally/

Worshipful Master's Letter: Liverpool Syracuse Lodge. For February 2019.

Hello, Brethren:

In our January 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, we presented a Program where our Masonic Compact was read and discussed. We worked in First Degree, so that our newly initiated Brothers could attend. On January 21<sup>st</sup> we had our Past Mater's Night, to honor them for their good work in our Lodge. I was out of town, and our SW, W. Tim Hansen, chaired the Lodge.

On February 4<sup>th</sup> we will have our Second Degree, conferred by SW Tim Hansen to five EAs. After that, we will work in Second Degree, so that said new Brothers can continue to attend. On February 18, we will have the Senior Warden's Program. W. Tim Hansen will discuss about architecture in Masonic Rituals.

Before every meeting we have either a light meal, or coffee and pie, to encourage fellowship.

Come to Lodge, pass on your suggestions, and participate actively in our Masonic work!

Fraternally/



Worshipful Master's Letter: Liverpool Syracuse Lodge. For March 2019.

Hello, Brethren, near and far:

Due to weather conditions, the February 4<sup>th</sup> Second Degree, to be conferred by SW Tim Hansen to five EAs, was exchanged with the Senior Warden's Program of February 18<sup>th</sup>. In it, W. Tim Hansen discussed about architecture in Masonic Rituals. Before each meeting, we had either a light meal, or coffee and pie, to encourage fellowship.

In March, we will have two Education evenings. And since our five Candidates will be Fellow Crafts, we will open and close in Second Degree. The meeting of March 4<sup>th</sup> will be dedicated to discuss the article "What every Master Mason Should Know", recently appeared in The Word. The Meeting of March 18<sup>th</sup> will be dedicated to reviewing Masonic history. We will talk about the new discussions of whether the first Grand Lodge was created in London, in 1717, as it has been traditionally believed, or in 1721, as some new historians are postulating. The Mentor has dedicated a column, in this issue of The Word, to this interesting topic.

We will move our Third Degree from April 1<sup>st</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup>, to keep in line with the changes in the dates for the Second Degree. We are also looking forward to Bro. Peter Rompf, who will present one of his Historic Masonic Characters for us, before the end of this year.

The Lodge will hold a Garage Sale event in May, coordinated by SD Bro. Rainer Grimme. Look for items you want to get rid of. Anything sold provides funds for our Lodge. Liverpool Library has contacted us, and is interested in doing joint events, especially participating in our Egg Hunt. It is positive to see how our Lodge is being again recognized as an active member of our local community.

Come to Lodge, pass on your suggestions, and participate actively in our Masonic work!

Fraternally/

Worshipful Master's Letter: Liverpool Syracuse Lodge. For April 2019.

Hello, Brethren, near and far:

Some of our *far* (e.g. winter bird Brethren) have, or shortly will, come back. We look forward to seeing them in Lodge, again. Welcome back!

March was our Lodge's *Education Month*. We had one Education meeting dedicated to discuss two articles appeared in *The Word* : "What every Master Mason Should Know", and "Part XII: a review of the First Steps". On March 18<sup>th</sup>, W. Bro. Bowles presented the talk *Lodge Leadership: where do we go from here*. The talk about the first Grand Lodge and how it was created in London (either in 1717 or in 1721) was discussed in a *Mentor* column on March's issue of *The Word*. So, it was postponed. Instead, we shared the url addresses of several Masonic Web Sites, included in this month's *Mentor* column, and had four *Telecons* to talk about Officers duties,

In April, we will discuss Grand Lodge proposals; and RW Gary Heinmiller, our Lodge Secretary and Grand Historian, will talk about the history of Grand Lodge in NYS. We will have our Third Degree on April 15<sup>th</sup>; there will be two practice meetings TBA. We will also have our Egg Hunt on the Saturday before Easter Sunday, coordinated by Bro. Jim Santy.

In May, our Lodge will hold a Garage Sale, coordinated by SD Bro. Rainer Grimme. Donations of used items are welcome. Move-Up Night will take place during my absence to attend Grand Lodge. Annual Lodge elections will take place on May 20<sup>th</sup>. Selection of the Lodge Leadership is a Key issue. The new Lodge Line will develop an efficient, fraternal, and interesting year.

Fraternally/

Worshipful Master's Letter: Liverpool Syracuse Lodge. For May 2019.

Hello, Brethren, near and far:

In April, we discussed Grand Lodge proposals and raised four Brothers in our Third Degree of April 15<sup>th</sup>. We also had our now traditional Egg Hunt, on the Saturday before Easter Sunday, coordinated by Bro. Jim Santy, with the collaboration of Liverpool Library.

On the weekend of Friday May 10, from 10am to 7pm, and Saturday May 11, from 9am to 5pm (Mother's Day weekend) our Lodge will hold a Garage Sale, coordinated by SD Bro. Rainer Grimme. Donations of used items are welcome.

This year three key Liverpool Syracuse Lodge Officers will attend Grand Lodge, May 5 through 7. They are myself, our Senior Warden Tim Hansen, who is also WM of Seneca River Lodge, and our Secretary RW Gary Heinmiller, who is also Grand Historian.

In our absence, the Lodge will hold an Open Communication on Monday May 6th (ladies and guests are welcome!). Ms. Dorianne Elitharp-Gutierrez, the Liverpool Village Historian, will delight us with an overview of the village's history. Freemasonry has been in the Village of Liverpool since 1834. There be refreshments following the presentation. RW Ralph Hanney Jr. will be presiding the Lodge, in said Open Communication.

Annual Lodge elections will take place on May 20<sup>th</sup>. Selection of our Lodge Leadership is a very important issue. The new Lodge Line will need to continue developing instructive, fraternal, and interesting programs, next year.

Make your best effort to attend our election night, and to inform yourself about the Brothers running for Line positions. Advancement should not be automatic: officers should have made suitable proficiency in their preceding Station or Place.

Fraternally/

Worshipful Master's Letter: Liverpool Syracuse Lodge. For June 2019.

Hello, Brethren, near and far:

Two items for this letter: Lodge Trestle-board and my farewell.

May 5 through 7 Senior Warden Tim Hansen, who is also WM of Seneca River Lodge, Secretary RW Gary Heinmiller, who is also Grand Historian, and this Master attended Grand Lodge. In our absence, the Lodge held an Open Communication on Monday May 6th (ladies and guests were welcome). RW Ralph Hanney Jr. presided the Lodge in said Open Communication.

On the weekend of Friday May 10 (Mother's Day weekend) SD Bro. Rainer Grimme planned a Garage Sale, to sell used items donated by Brethren, to raise funds for the Lodge. Due to the poor response, the event was cancelled.

Annual Lodge elections took place on May 20<sup>th</sup>. We congratulate the new Lodge Line elected!

This is my last Letter, as Master. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve our Lodge in this capacity, as well as an opportunity for me to learn many new things. Our Lodge is in good hands under the newly elected Line. And I would like to say a couple of things, before I leave.

Firstly, I would like to thank those Line Officers who have supported me fully, without whom little could have been accomplished. Our main success this year has been strengthening Harmony and Fellowship among Brethren, and providing several useful Masonic Instruction meetings. All merit stems from our Line and Lodge Members team work; errors or shortcomings are mine.

Then, I would like to make two recommendations. The Station of WM is complex, and learning it takes several months. When a WM finally becomes "proficient", it is time to go. I suggest that, as several other District Lodges do, Lodge re-elects a good WM for a second, successive term.

Secondly, we need to improve in three areas: ritual, fellowship and attendance. This can be done through more practice: rehearse Opening/Closing during the summer, and Degree work before a Confer; apply more Brotherly Love; and come to Lodge as often as you can. Any Lodge missing these three key components becomes a Candidate for merger or disbanding.

Finally, there are more than one styles of Leadership. I always see myself as Master of a Lodge of Freemasons –not master of a group of slaves or serfs. Thence, to maintain Harmony I always try persuasion behind the scenes, first. Only when this fails would I

use the Gable. This method takes longer –but its results also last longer. Some may see such approach as a sign of weakness of character. I stand by my Leadership style.

Again, thank-you all for the honor and the privilege of having served as your Worshipful Master.

Fraternally/

A special Letter to the Liverpool Lodge: December 22/2018.

Hello, Brethren, near and afar:

First or all, a heartfelt wish for Health, Peace, and Happiness in the union of your families, during these Holidays, as well as for the forthcoming 2019.

We had an excellent Xmas Party, with a catered dinner and a choir group that sang afterward. DDGM Jack Dombrowski and his wife honored us with their attendance. I thank W Tim Hansen for organizing the event, and Bro Drew D'Angelo, for contacting the singers, among others.

In January we have two important meetings. The first, on January 7, will be of special importance for our new Brothers. We will open/close in First Degree, so they can attend a complete session, where they will be exposed to rich Ritual material. Then, we will review the Masonic Compact, a defining document that states what we are and stand for. It is very important to know and understand them well. I am attaching a copy of the Masonic Compact, taken from the NorthStar manual, and a session Agenda. I encourage our five new Brothers to contact RW Dan Campis or our AGLs, to register for the MDC course.

The second meeting, on January 21, will be chaired by our Senior Warden, W. Tim Hansen, as I will be out of the country. It will be dedicated to honoring our Past Masters. We request that those PM who are going to attend, let RW Bro. Gary Heinmiller, our Secretary, know. SW, W Hansen will decide whether to open in First Degree, or to open in Third, and then lower the Lodge. Either way, our new Brothers will be able to participate in the session.

We would like each attending Past Master to use the floor for a few minutes to underline one important event that took place during their tenure. Of particular interest are the names of those Brothers who were raised during their tenure, and who are still members of our Lodge and Institution.

On February 4th, we will have a Second Degree, conferred by Senior Warden, W. Tim Hansen.

Finally, it is important for Lodge Officers to be well-trained in their Stations and Places, as well as in the ones immediately following. For, moving up the Officers Line is not automatic. A strong Lodge has well prepared Officers. I will launch in February, monthly Teleconference meetings to review Key material from the *24 Inch Gauge*. Telecons facilitate participation, as we don't need to physically go anywhere. We can call in, from wherever we happen to be at the time (home, work, etc.) and participate.

Officers, as well as any Brother interested in joining the Lodge Line, are welcome to participate in these Telecons. A free of charge phone number, where we can all call in, and talk as if we were together in the same room, will be provided to those interested in attending. We also encourage our Line Officers from Deacons up, who have not yet taken the *Road to the East* Course, to contact RW Dan or one of our AGLs, to register for it. In addition, there are two Livingston Library courses, The Masters and The Wardens courses, that can be of valuable use.

Fraternally/.