



NORTH CAROLINA THE MASON

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Living into our OBLIGATIONS

Aiding the women left behind

*By Beth Grace
Mason Editor*

Carla Emerson never doubted that her husband was Mason material. After all, her father, grandfather and uncles all had made their own journey through the Craft. She knew a good man when she saw one.

So, she was overjoyed when he decided to ask the question.

"I encouraged him to join," she says. "I mentioned it to him off and on during the years of our marriage. ... One day, he came home and said, 'Guess what I did?' He had gone to Bula Lodge (#409) in Burlington on a day when they had a meeting. He just walked up and talked to them."

Brian liked what he heard. He was raised in 2009, and served in his lodge as junior deacon, senior deacon, steward and chaplain. He also was a member of the Scottish Rite Valley of Greensboro.

**OBLIGATION
TO WIDOWS**

He loved his brothers and they loved him.

His brothers were there for him when he was diagnosed with advanced-stage colon cancer and never left his side during the fight that followed. He was just 38 when he lost his battle with cancer on July 4, 2015.

Now, his brothers stand with Carla and their daughter, Ava, checking in on them regularly, calling to catch up, even though the two have since moved away from Burlington.

These caring men, it turns out, are her brothers, too.

"I honestly feel like I could call a half dozen of those men at any time and say I need help ... and they would be there for me," she says.

"When Brian was sick these men were always available for us. For example, they came and mowed our lawn. And kept mowing it for a long time. They did so much for us. It really solidified for me the message these men really did take their obligations seriously."

■ see WIDOWS page 5

◀ Mary Speidel



FROM THE GRAND MASTER



By Dwight M.
"Mack" Sigmon
Grand Master

Are you a Mason or a member?

My Brethren, the district meetings have finished and summer activities are just around

the corner. I am deeply grateful for the warm welcome I received as I traveled across our grand jurisdiction bringing my message of kindness and encouraging the wholesome respect of our fellowman.

I emphasized the critical importance of living the lessons of our ritual in conjunction with the lessons of our various Books of Faith.

Living these lessons is what separates us from all other organizations. If we live our lives the same after beginning our Masonic journey, have we really paid attention to the meaning of these teachings?

If not, then we have failed ourselves in taking advantage of the true purpose of Freemasonry, one of the world's greatest self-improvement programs.

I often ask myself, why me? What did the Great Architect of the Universe have in mind, in putting me in this position of serving as the 166th Grand Master of Masons in North Carolina? I am just a plain simple country boy from a small town in western North Carolina.

Maybe it is my love of the lessons our various rituals teach and that it is time we have a friendly reminder of how these lessons can help bring a positive change to the world we live in.

Our world is extremely divided and has been for some time. I truly believe as Freemasons, we have the tools to make a real difference in guiding this world on a more positive journey. Anyone who knows me well knows my love of the ritual and the lessons it teaches us. These, coupled with my Book of Faith, guide my life in everything I do and say.

In two of our degrees, we are taught that Masonry is Work! It is not always easy being a Mason but that doesn't mean we can't be successful if we try. Making good men better as our motto states, making ourselves better, is hard work but as Freemasons, it is truly worth the effort.

Making good men better is not just a slogan, it should be a way of life.

Each of us must be committed if we are to bring a positive change both to our own lives as well as the lives of others. We do this by the example of the type of life we choose to lead. Actions always speak louder than words.

Each of us has a choice, we can choose to be a Mason or just a member.

To me, a Mason is one who lives his life in accordance with the lessons taught to him. A member may choose to be impressed by the lessons when first heard but afterward quickly returns to his previous lifestyle as if he never even began this journey.

Remember, there is a huge difference in being impressed by a ritual lesson versus being changed by that lesson.

Our third-degree charge cautions us: Be particularly attentive not to recommend him unless you are convinced he will conform to our rules (this means our ritual lessons as well, not just the Code). We need to guard our west gate!

My Grand Master pin this year is intended to be a friendly reminder of what guides our lives as men and as Masons. In the middle of the Square and Compass is the all-seeing eye. Under it is an open book. This book represents both our own Books of Faith and our various ritual books from where we have taken multiple obligations.

At the bottom, it stresses that **Masonry is Work.**

Many view Masonic emblems, pins, rings etc. ... as our chance to show others that we are members of this fraternity. There are, however, several rituals that teach us that these illustrations are intended for ourselves, not others, to serve as a constant reminder should we ever be tempted to prefer anything to honor or duty or for a moment forget that we are a Mason and the solemn obligations that name imposes on us.

Our dues cards say that we are a member of this fraternity. It does not state that we are Masons. To me it is when the lessons of our rituals, obligations and vows, coupled with those lessons from our own Book of Faith, enter our hearts that we are truly made Masons.

After completing our third degree, we are told that we are now a *member*. You have to earn the title of *Mason* and you do that by the respect you earn through your words and actions. Remember the all-seeing eye is always watching everything we do and say.

As Masons, we should hold ourselves to a higher standard. The majority of us joined this fraternity because of someone we looked up to – a father, grandfather, a member of our church or maybe a community leader. As Freemasons, it is now our turn to be the person others would want to emulate.

The choice of how you choose to represent our fraternity is one that you must make every day. More importantly, always remember that your own actions, appearance and words provide an opportunity for us to attract the best of the best this world has to offer in becoming a part of our historical fraternity, or they can just as easily discourage someone from exploring further an opportunity to be a part of the world's greatest and oldest fraternity.

How often do you truly renew your obligations?

Consider holding an annual homecoming event at a stated communication of your lodge. Promote and encourage inactive members to attend as well. Make renewing your obligations part of that celebration.

Many problems in our lodges could be solved if we would be Mason enough to sit down and do what our lessons teach, both in prevention and forgiveness.

A simple rule to follow is: if you have wronged a brother – apologize; if a brother has wronged you – forgive. I believe every wrong deserves forgiveness but that does not mean it goes unpunished, if applicable.

In the Maundy Thursday ritual of the Scottish Rite we are reminded in the relighting ceremony that "Each man is still responsible for his own actions and must account to our Father" and at the close of the ceremony, "What there is, to be our fate and fortune, depends upon ourselves." Being a Mason is hard, you see Masonry is Work!

As mentioned before, we live in divided times. Social media has contributed to the problem. I respect everyone's right to freedom of speech; however, I am extremely disappointed in some of the social media postings I read from my Masonic brothers and my friends outside of Freemasonry.

It is human nature to have differences in opinions, but it does not and should not give us the right to be disrespectful. If you choose

**OBLIGATION
TO A HIGHER
STANDARD**

How often do you truly renew your obligations?

■ see SIGMON page 3

SIGMON
from page 2

to continue a disrespectful path, I encourage you reevaluate your mission as a Mason. If not moved to improvement, please remove any Masonic references from your social media pages as your comments will not represent what Freemasonry teaches. Instead, I hope you will choose to live our lessons as taught.

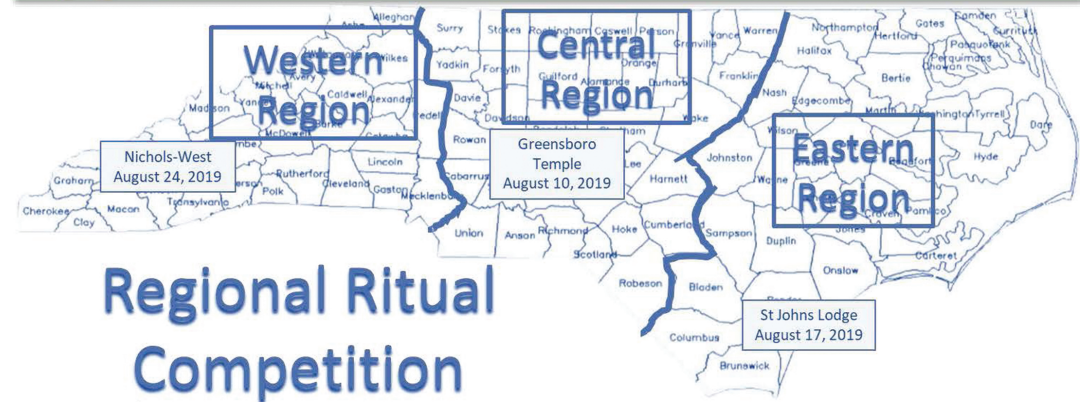
One of our degrees teaches: “Ever remember that, being human, you must of necessity often err; that those who hold different opinions entertain them as honestly as you do your own; and that you have no right to deny or doubt their sincerity. Especially, never harshly denounce an opinion that more experience and a more thorough investigation may someday compel you to adopt. Therefore, always treat your opponents as if their opinions were at some time to become your own.”

I like people and enjoy being around people. Something unique about me is that I can honestly say that I dislike no one. I have zero hate in my heart. So, what are my main Ritual/Book of Faith lesson guidelines on how to interact with others?

- I choose being disappointed in other's actions over hate.
- I choose being difficult to offend and easy to forgive.
- I choose to treat others as I want to be treated (the Golden Rule).
- I choose to pause and reflect before I speak or act. Before speaking or acting ask yourself this question, “is this the proper time or place?” Remember we are taught that “the mouth speaks from that which fills his heart”. If you are speaking ill of others, don't repair your speech, repair your heart.
- I choose to follow the words in the charge when installing the Tyler: To set a guard at the entrance of our thoughts, place a watch at the door of our lips, post a sentinel at the avenue of our actions thereby excluding every unqualified and unworthy thought, word, and deed, and preserving consciences void of offense toward God and man.
- I choose to follow the words in the closing charge when installing lodge officers: May kindness and



Ritual Competition



Regional Ritual Competition

Two categories

Closed Competition—Lodges only are eligible to compete in this category. The degree team must be composed of the installed officers of the lodge—Master, Senior and Junior Wardens, Senior and Junior Deacons (stand-ins for any other positions will be supplied at the competition). Up to two alternates, members of your lodge, may be substituted for these officers (the alternates may not be certified lecturers). The lodge teams will all exemplify the Second Degree, including portion of lecture necessary, omit charge. The winners from each region will compete on Friday, September 27, 2019 in Winston-Salem at Annual Communication for the State Championship. A trophy will be awarded to the winning lodge team. In addition, the winning lodge name and number will be attached to a trophy which will be displayed at the Grand Lodge office building in Raleigh.

Open Competition - Any degree team may compete. Teams should prepare for First Degree, Second Degree, or first section of the Third Degree (including obligation, not including lecture or charge). All teams will exemplify the same degree, announced the day of the competition. The winners from each region will compete on Friday, September 27, 2019 in Winston-Salem at Annual Communication for the State Championship. A plaque will be awarded to the winning team.

Ritual competition sponsored by Wilkerson College Lodge No. 760

Name and Number of Lodge or Degree Team _____

Contact person _____

Contact person telephone _____ email _____

Region _____

Closed competition-restricted to the elected and appointed officers of the lodge (Master, Junior and Senior Wardens, Junior and Senior Deacons).

Open competition—no restriction as to degree personnel (district team, team of certified lecturers, Highway Patrol team, etc).

Enclose \$25 donation to NC Masonic Foundation. Mail to: WBro. James Pugsley, WCL 760, 7920 Gaelic Dr, Fayetteville, NC 28306

brotherly affection distinguish your conduct as men and Masons.

■ And finally, I choose to follow the words from the last and highest recognized degree in Freemasonry: Hate none and Despise none.

As I close my remarks, I want to offer you this challenge. It is a

challenge that I try to give to myself every day.

When you stand before the mirror in the morning to wash your face, to brush your teeth or comb your hair, ask yourself this question: Today, am I going to be a Mason or just a member?

I hope you will do as I try to do each and every day and live your life as the best Mason you can possibly be. Practice Freemasonry in everything you do and say. Be the example! Be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

I am glad our paths crossed. ☩

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THE MISSION OF FREEMASONRY IN NORTH CAROLINA IS TO RAISE THE MORAL, SOCIAL, INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL CONSCIENCE OF SOCIETY BY TEACHING THE ANCIENT AND ENDURING PHILOSOPHICAL TENETS OF BROTHERLY LOVE, RELIEF, AND TRUTH, WHICH ARE EXPRESSED OUTWARDLY THROUGH SERVICE TO GOD, FAMILY, COUNTRY, AND SELF UNDER THE PATRIBROOD OF GOD WITHIN THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Doing the right thing is a Mason's obligation

Rules were made to be broken. I don't know about you, but I've heard that phrase countless times in my life – uttered mostly by folks who didn't know or like the rules.

I have developed a renewed respect for rules in almost three years working with this Craft.

Masons, it's true, have a rule for almost every eventuality. And, it turns out, they were not only created for a reason – there's good reason to follow them.

Rules, obligations, promises. All of them are important. They make this fraternity what it is: a haven for fellowship, community and charity.

This issue of the NC Mason takes a look at some of those obligations, promises made and broken, good intentions either faded away with time or simply forgotten.

Take, for instance, Masonic widows. The women behind the men of Freemasonry.

They spent a lot of time – some, decades of their time – supporting their husband's love of the Craft. They attended ladies nights. They proudly watched as their husband moved through the chairs to become Master of his lodge.

They formed friendships and groups of their own among fellow Masonic wives and girlfriends. Some joined the Order of the Eastern Star to share through sisterhood that "indissoluble chain of sincere affection" that exists between their husbands and his brothers.

These good women were all in on their husbands' behalf. Brothers agreed at their

raising to be all in on behalf of widows and orphans in need. In our front page story this month, meet some of those women who still treasure their connection to Masonry.

If you take anything away from the story, take this message: Call your lodge widows and say hello. They will love hearing from you, and the rewards of their friendship and participation are endless.



By Beth Grace
Editor

The Grand Master's column takes the message of obligation a bit further. His message: Masonry is not only work, it's a good idea. "Making good men better is not just a slogan, it should be a way of life," he writes.

Deeper within this issue is a column from Grand Secretary Walt Clapp that focuses on the financial

obligations of brothers to support their lodges financially. "The higher the value we place on our fraternity," he writes, "Men will be inspired to participate in something they have had to save and work for."

And then there are this month's new items in the standing Traveling the Tar Heel State and Mileposts sections. Nowhere can you see the fulfillment of fraternal obligations more clearly than in the stories about fundraisers, raisings and special awards for those who have been good brothers for more than 70 years.

I invite you to take some time during the long summer to read these stories and reflect on what Masonry means to you.

Save a Tree – Opt Out of the Print Version

On behalf of all the trees . . . Thank you!

Dozens and dozens of brothers have opted out of receiving the print version of the NC Mason (and reading it online now). Your kind gesture saves the trees, for sure – and it saves the NC Mason some money by cutting the number of issues we have printed!

We're happy you're reading the Mason in any form and thank you for subscribing, but if you want to join the ranks of your brothers who have opted out, here's how you do it:

Email your name, lodge number, and mailing address to ncmason@gln.us. Write OPT OUT in the subject line.

That's all it takes. (Note – if you have sent your notice in via other addresses, Facebook or Messenger and the paper is still coming, try again

WIDOWS, from page 1

The brothers of Bula are among North Carolina lodges that remember and keep their promise to contribute to relief for Master Masons, their widows and orphans. North Carolina isn't alone – several states have programs designed to assist widows. In general, those programs are usually endorsed – but not managed – by the Grand Lodge.

In Pennsylvania, for instance, the Widows' Guild is run by the Masonic Villages, the senior-living charity. The guild meets at group events throughout the state and around the country. Widows who attend these events receive a Masonic Blue Slipper Pin and personalized membership card to the Widows' Guild. On the back side of the membership card is the toll-free telephone number for the Pennsylvania Masonic Outreach program, with a list of the many services available to any widow of a Pennsylvania Mason.

The Blue Slipper pin, in use around the country, comes from the Old Testament book of Ruth. During the time of Boaz, next of kin were to look after the widow and offspring. In Ruth's case, the next of kin refused to honor this requirement for Ruth, so Boaz agreed to take up the task. When Boaz met with the next of kin to seal the deal, the next of kin drew off his shoe and handed it to Boaz as a token for the bargain to take care of Ruth. Boaz held the shoe up for all to see as witnesses of the deal.

In North Carolina, lodges also sometimes "adopt" a widow as part of a program run through WhiteStone: A Masonic and Eastern Star Community.

WhiteStone Care and Wellness Center resident Ann Long is one of them. Her husband, Peter, a member of Charles M. Setzer #693, died many years ago at age 42. She also is the daughter of Past Grand Master Charles Harris, who served in 1957 and went on to serve as Grand Secretary from 1960 to 1975. She is a retired language arts and social studies teacher.

Mrs. Long says the lodge sends her a small check every month and keeps tabs on her health and well-being. The brothers have been good friends through the rough times – her son passed away at 42 – the same age as his father – some years ago.

"The Lord helps you through the hard times," she says. "And these brothers have been there for me."

She rooms with another Masonic widow, Minnie Rae West. Her husband, Johnny Robert West, died in 2003. He was a 55-year Mason and a member of Doric #568. They moved into WhiteStone together after he retired, and both made lots of friends at WhiteStone.

The lodge has kept in touch with her for years.

"I know that if I were to call and ask them for help, they would be there for me," she says.

Down the road from the Care and Wellness

Center, Mary Speidel points lovingly across the living room of her WhiteStone cottage to a portrait of her late husband, Frederick. A past Grand Commander of the Knights Templar, he also was a member of Raleigh #500. He passed away in 1998.

She says being the widow of an active Mason means she has many fond memories of her husband's journey



Carla and Brian Emerson. Brian was a Mason for only a short time, but left a wonderful legacy.

through an organization that he loved.

But she and all of the women interviewed for this story said the connection is stronger than that. All of the women have wonderful memories of friendships they made among other wives during those years.

Some of those relationships remain strong; others are now just wonderful memories.

But all of the women say those friendships sustained them through a time of great loss. And all worry about those widows who never hear from their lodges.

Recent Grand Masters have in their district meetings implored lodges to keep in touch with brothers who no longer attend and with widows who supported their husbands in their Freemasonry.

Some lodges took that to heart and stepped up their programs aimed at bringing lost members and widows back into the fold.

The brothers of Cannon Memorial #626 in Kannapolis started by updating their list of brothers and widows. It wasn't easy work. They checked public records, obituaries, and interviewed friends, family and sisters of the Eastern

Star. From that work, they identified 13 widows.

They wasted no time in getting to work. They invited the women for their regular family events and invented a new one – a family and widows' picnic. Some of the widows were not receptive to the invitations, says lodge secretary Thomas A. VanEtten Sr.

"Moving into 2019, we saw the need to create a special committee," he says. "The Widow's

Outreach Committee is comprised of three brothers. It has been tasked with reaching out to our 13 widows on a quarterly basis, and then exchanging lists. Basically, if I have four names in Q1, I will hand my list to another committee member in Q2 and take his list. This approach provides the ladies multiple points of contact within the lodge. The committee uses this personalized method to create bonds, make the ladies aware of our upcoming events and remind the ladies that we (as a Lodge) are here to help."

He says that because of this new level of engagement, two widows have reached out for assistance with home-maintenance tasks, and one contacted them just to say thank you for checking in on her.

"The Brothers gladly showed up to help, even setting follow-up dates," he says.

Keeping in touch with our Masonic widows falls directly in line with the promise brothers make when they are raised.

"We can never, ever forget that we obligate ourselves to take care of our widows," says Grand Master Dwight "Mack" Sigmon. "They not only supported their husbands as they spent countless hours working within the Craft, they also support the fraternity in their wills and with generous gifts in honor of their husbands. That keeps Masonry – and the memory of their beloved husbands – strong."

The Grand Master says his lodge, Catawba #248 in Newton, makes a point of remembering widows and visits with 18-20 every year. They make special visits on the holidays and invite them to a ladies night. He fondly recalls a visit to one widow from his lodge who had little but wrote a \$25 check for the Masonic Home for Children every year in gratitude.

Taking care of the women who have taken care of the brothers of the Craft shows real love in real time, GM Sigmon says. "Do what you can for these wonderful women," he says. "Start small. Start simply. But do something. Just ... start." ♠

OUR MASONIC CHARITIES AT WORK

WhiteStone celebrates day of fun, big plans

Residents look forward to it every year: Family Day at WhiteStone.

Relatives and friends of those who live and work at our home for Masons and Eastern Star sisters in Greensboro do too.

There is great food, face painting, icy treats, games and music. Even with the threat of rain, nobody missed out on the fun, including Executive Director Mark Lewis and his family – all displaying the finest of hula-hooping talent.

There was a little something else this year. Members of the WhiteStone board of directors, led by Chairman PGM Gene Jernigan, as well as Grand Master Dwight “Mack” Sigmon took some time to meet with residents for a ceremonial ground-breaking to share news of a major planned expansion that will make our top-rated home for seniors an even more popular home for our aging brothers and sisters.

Watch the NC Mason for details of that expansion and capital campaign!



Photos by Beth Grace

The WhiteStone Board of Directors, Masons and Eastern Star sisters and friends from the North Carolina Masonic Foundation took a fun moment at Family Day to brief residents and others about plans for the upcoming WhiteStone expansion.



▲Fun was the order of Family Day this year. Residents and others enjoyed some tasty ices courtesy of the NC Masonic Foundation.

◀Executive Director Mark Lewis shows his hula-hoop expertise.

On display were renderings of plans for the expanded facility ▶



Come on in, the water is fine at MHCO!

Take one hot day, add some stylin' shades and a beach ball, peel off the argyle socks and jump on in!

Young and not-so-young dipped their toes in the brand new pool in mid-May at the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford to celebrate the near-completion of the project that replaced an aged pool that was beyond repair.

The full MHCO board was on hand to cut the ribbon and welcome young home residents to the new version of the place where generations of kids have spent their summers. They also thanked the many donors who stepped forward to help pay for the project.

While much of the construction work is done, the home still welcomes donations to complete the punch list and pay off the debt. Every dollar you share will bring a smile to one of our kids at the home! (And the adults who care for them, as well!)

Contributions may be sent to the home itself, at 600 College St., Oxford, NC 27565, or donate online at www.mhc-oxford.org. You can also donate online via the North Carolina Masonic Foundation web page at www.mfnc.org. Look for the "donate now" button on the home page! You can designate your gift exactly as you please.



Photos by Beth Girace

It was time for celebration in May as board members and others took the first official "toe dip" and dedicated the new MHCO pool.



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What value do you place on Masonry?

OUR OBLIGATION TO THE CRAFT

Just after World War I, my grandfather, Theophilus Walton Clapp, left his home in Abingdon, Va., to follow a call to the ministry. He moved his family 80 miles south to the rural community of Plumtree, NC, in Avery County.

His new charges included five Presbyterian congregations, of which only one could pay him. He supplemented his meager income by farming, and though he was a trained surveyor and engineer, he never charged his neighbors for his services.

The prominent men of the community took an interest in my grandfather, and he sought their counsel on matters of spirituality, affairs of the church, and the well-being of the village. Through that association, he discovered they were Freemasons, and members of Plumtree Lodge No. 648.

Impressed with their philanthropy and leadership, he petitioned the lodge in 1924. Being of limited means, it took him almost an entire year to save enough to pay the \$40 initiation fee, an amount that would now equate to \$600.

Then, and today, in the rural hills of western North Carolina where there is no industry, little commerce and much scarcity, \$600 is a lot of money and a testament to the value our forefathers put on their Masonry.

The old-timers told me that entry into Freemasonry cost a man a week's wages. In 1924 in Plumtree, NC, that was about \$40. Today, the average weekly wage of a working man in North Carolina is \$800.

Brethren, what is value of your Freemasonry?

Doubtless, there's a spiritual and personal side to the value of our fraternity. There must be for a man to truly understand its precepts.

But there is a very real financial obligation to our organization and ourselves that we have failed to uphold.

Lodges are in disrepair. Men are failing to knock upon our doors. And, those who do enter the fraternity are leaving almost as soon as they step foot in the door. Why?

Because we have failed to hold our Freemasonry to a high standard and cheapened its rate of exclusivity. Exclusivity is not a dirty word. Since its founding, the ranks of our fraternity have been populated by men whose dedication, portent and value to the Craft have been precious and priceless to society.

This does not mean they have been elitists, though they may be among the elite. This does not mean they are wealthy or affluent, but they do value their time and place a dollar figure on their time and resources.

For instance, I'm a woodworker. I want a new wood lathe for my shop. But the lathe I want is \$3,200. I cannot hand over my credit card or cash without seriously considering the value I place on that lathe. If I want it, how am I going to save the money to buy it? What in my life have I chosen to go without, in order to obtain what I desire?

I will take much better care of that wood lathe because of the value I place on it — and paid for it. Did you make these considerations when you entered the lodge and paid your initiation fee?

Brethren, do you treasure your lodge? Do you treasure your friendships? Do you take care of what you claim to be precious and rare?

We look around ourselves and fear for our future — physically, mentally, and financially. We have failed to understand the financial value of Freemasonry. What kind of person wants to join an organization that values itself so cheaply?

Men can pay the initiation fee of a lodge off the hip—whether it's \$50

or \$300. We have so undervalued the financial investment we should be obligated to pay that many men join out of curiosity, not out of sincerity.

The things I want and value most in life are the things I have to work for.

Doubtless, many of you reading this believe raising the initiation fee will chase away potential members, or that it's elitist.

First, our statistics show that the ratio of fees and lodge raisings prove higher fees attract more members. This is because a value has been placed on their participation in the Masonic experience.

Secondly, we may not want to be elitists, but are we not THE elite?

We want men who are able and willing to put a high value on their membership—either through the amount they have to put on the table, or the amount they have to save to put on the table.

I receive inquiries time and time again: "Is that all it costs? I thought Freemasonry would cost more."

The initiation fee is the first vetting process—to weed out those unsuited to our standards. We do not take poor material and make it work. We take the best materials and build them into something greater.

Like any good business, test your pricing. You'll notice an increase in value improves your clientele and his dedication to our principles.

At a recent meeting, the question of the initiation fee came up. One brother said that if the initiation fees were as high as I proposed, then he would have never joined.

I did not have the heart to tell him, as his fellow brothers shifted in their seats, that he had just answered the question as to whether he was appropriate material for this fraternity.

He then said he became a Mason so he could join the Shrine. At the time, that also meant he had to join either the York or Scottish Rites. He wound up paying nearly \$400 to join three different Masonic bodies. He eventually left two of the three because, in his words, "It wasn't worth it."

Brethren, if you're uncomfortable with my statements let me ask you this: If someone offered you \$200, or \$300, or \$1,000 not to join at the time of your petitioning,

would you have taken it? Would you leave our fraternity for that amount today?

Contrary to popular belief, the Grand Lodge does not benefit from your petitioner's initiation fee. The Code states that Grand Lodge shall receive \$21 of that fee, but the Code also stipulates that of that \$21, \$10 goes to Masonic charity, \$5 goes to the Grand Lodge's building fund, \$5 goes to the George

Washington National Masonic Memorial, and \$1 goes to the Grand Lodge's general fund.

Your lodge should allocate similarly, planning for your lodge's future. If the initiation fee was at least \$500, what could your lodge do with that money for charity or for lodge maintenance?

The higher the value we place on our fraternity, the lower the rate of NPDs.

The higher the value we place on our fraternity, fewer men will fail to



By Walt Clapp
Grand Secretary



Theophilus Walton Clapp

WINNERS AT THE 2019 PIG JIG

A North Carolina lodge swept the top awards at this year's Carolina Pig Jig, the 14th annual homage to barbecue held in conjunction with the Got to Be NC Festival.

Some 25 teams compete each year to smoke the tastiest pork barbecue and chicken. The event is open to the public to sample all-you-can-eat BBQ, sides, and more for \$15 a head. Everyone gets a vote on who did it best. All participants volunteer their time to the event and all proceeds go to charity.

Grand Champion: Joseph Warren #92, NC Grand Lodge, Stantonsburg, NC
 Team Spirit Award: Mentor #55, Prince Hall, Raleigh, NC
 People's Choice: Rhamkatte #827, Prince Hall, Raleigh, NC

Sauce Category:

1st Place: Joseph Warren #92, NC Grand Lodge, Stantonsburg, NC
 2nd: Golden Star #150, Prince Hall, Fuquay-Varina, NC
 3rd: Spurmont #98, Strasburg, Va.

Chicken Category:

1st: Joseph Warren #92, NC Grand Lodge, Stantonsburg, NC
 2nd: Oak Grove #750, NC Grand Lodge, Durham, NC
 3rd: Saint Annah #350, Prince Hall, Raleigh, NC

Pork Category:

1st: Joseph Warren #92, NC Grand Lodge, Stantonsburg, NC
 2nd: William G. Hill #218, NC Grand Lodge, Raleigh, NC
 3rd: Doric #30, Millville, Del.

2019 CATHEY SCHOLARSHIPS

Fifteen students have been awarded the Charles Edward Cathey Scholarship for 2019.

In 2000, Grand Master Charles Cathey initiated a drive to raise money for scholarships that could be awarded to deserving North Carolina students. NC Masons generously supported his call to help send graduating high school seniors to college.

Because of his tireless efforts on behalf of education, the scholarship was named in his honor.

Each student receives a scholarship of \$1,000.

Winners are:

- Julia Fuller, Ocracoke, Ocracoke School
- Megan Gardner, Clinton, Sampson EC HS
- Austin Heath, Leland, North Brunswick HS
- Zachary Knight, Stokesdale, Dalton McMichael HS
- Aaron Meadows, Havelock, Havelock HS
- Aiyana Polk, Belmont, Stuart W. Cramer HS
- Lauren Robinson, West Jefferson, Ashe County HS
- Jillian Scharf, Willow Spring, Fuquay-Varina HS
- Nathaniel Sheets, Mount Airy, East Surry HS
- Addie Smyth, Statesville, Statesville HS
- Sabrina Williams, Stella, Swansboro HS
- Tanner Barnhill, Clarendon, South Columbus HS
- David Caldwell, Charlotte, Myers Park HS
- Samuel Cornwell, Shelby, Burns HS
- Taylor Dunn, Winterville, D. H. Conley HS

VALUE, from page 8

finish their work.

The higher the value we place on our fraternity, men will be inspired to participate in something they have had to save and work for.

If you need to justify the price, include your lodge's dues in the initiation fee and hand that man a dues card when he is raised. It never feels right to raise a man, then hand him a bill before he leaves the room.

We have so undervalued this fraternity that the public sees no value in our existence. Men do not flock to our doors to join because there's no effort required of them to do so. The creation of value creates stability, and ultimately, success.

Brethren, what is the value of your Masonry? I believe we have proven that being cheap is not the answer.

So mote it be. ✨



Wilkerson College graduates new class of Masonic leaders

OUR OBLIGATION TO BUILD LEADERS

It's an impressive alma mater: Wilkerson College.

But it's not for every Mason. In fact, it was designed with one mission: to provide Freemasonry with the best-trained leaders.

Jointly sponsored by the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite Orient of North Carolina and the NC Grand Lodge, each class is limited in size and preference goes to lodge deacons under the premise that our best investment is in the future of officers who have several years to work and plan for his year as Master.

The curriculum covers most of the Masonic universe, including the origins and traditions of Freemasonry. But most of the training focuses on hands-on leadership: budgeting, lodge operations, membership services, and effective charity and communications strategies.

Trainers are charged with helping to provide each student with a well-rounded exposure to the tools they need to confidently and effectively lead his lodge, his fraternity, and his community.

Sessions are held at WhiteStone, the Masonic Home for Children and in Raleigh at the



Grand Lodge and a nearby conference center. (Students get to tour all three Masonic locations.) This year, Wilkerson offered two concurrent sessions; trainers taught at each session to two sets of students.

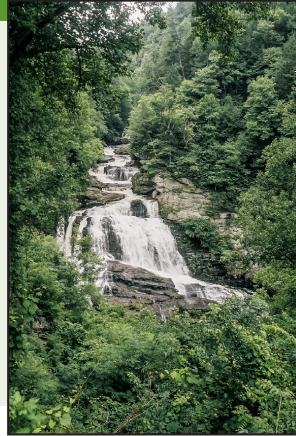
Each instructor is a recognized Masonic leader. Graduates are honored at the end of the sessions each year at a graduation ceremony, where each is given a "diploma" certifying him as an official Wilkerson College graduate.

Consider applying for the 2020 session. Details will be posted here in October: <http://www.wilkersoncollege.com/admissions.html>

TRAVELING THE TAR HEEL STATE



▲**SWANSBORO** – Seaside #429 in April raised about \$3,700 for the Masonic Home for Children at its annual fish fry – and sold out every plate in the process. The lodge was prepared to sell some 400 plates, but brothers sold so many tickets, they ran out about an hour before they planned to close. WB Alex Garner donated all the supplies and some 24 brothers worked the fish fry. Celebrating a job well done are, from left, Rusty Forbis, Master Mike Hodges and SW Ken Jackson.



NEWS FROM OUR LODGES



▲**HIGH POINT** – Cornelius Harnett Camp 97 of the National Sojourners presents a printed copy of Toast to the Flag by John Jay Daly to Acacia #674 at Acacia's May Stated Communication in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the National Sojourners formation. On hand are, from left, James Pugsley, Master Jake Summey, John Chandler and Troy Chandler.



▲**ELIZABETH CITY** – Masons of the First and Fifth districts spent a recent Saturday visiting Museum of the Albemarle to attend the official opening and ribbon cutting of the Blue Lodges of the Albemarle exhibit, followed by a presentation about the master's chair from Unanimity #7. Brother Paul Vincent (pictured), who is a member of Revolution #552 and Widow's Son #75, and Collections Assistant at MOA, worked with the lodges in both districts to assemble a collection of artifacts representing the history, charitable contributions and values of Freemasonry. OES #44 provided light refreshments for the event, and many on hand toured the museum awaiting the official opening. Every Lodge in the First District loaned an item to the museum for the display. The exhibit is open through December 2019.

►**GOLDSBORO** – There's always time for fun! Brotherly love and friendship are on the menu every Wednesday morning at Wayne #112. Brothers and sisters from Wayne and other lodges meet that day every week at 7:30 a.m. to enjoy a hearty breakfast and fun. These brothers dressed up a bit for the St. Patrick's Day breakfast.



TRAVELING THE TAR HEEL STATE



▲DURHAM – One of the oldest Masonic charity golf tournaments in North Carolina celebrated a big milestone this year. On May 8, Fellowship #687 raised thousands of dollars for our Masonic charities. In its 30-year history, the tournament has raised more than \$300,000. Funds raised have benefitted more than 3,500 kids and 2,000 brothers and sisters at the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford and at WhiteStone: A Masonic and Eastern Star Community in Greensboro. Four players and two sponsors, Bud Ross, owner of Refuse Equipment Corp., have participated in all 30 charitable tournaments. Brother Mark Stephens, chair for the very first tournament in 1989, said, “We’ve been blessed for 30 years, with the support of the lodge and its members and families, sponsors and players, all for our charities. Back in 1989 with that first tournament, even with 10 teams and in raising \$2,300, we thought we’d did well. With gifts now over \$12,000 each year, we are thankful for all who continue to believe and help all for our Homes through this tournament.”



▲BRYSON CITY – Oconee #427 held a Civil War degree in March to raise Shawn M. Smith to the sublime degree. Oconee has had a busy year, initiating two candidates, raising one brother and affiliating one brother. The lodge also has donated biweekly to local elementary schools, and helped a community member who lost everything when her house burned down.



▲KERNERSVILLE – Education is a priority for the brothers of Kernersville #669. The lodge recently awarded scholarships to two local students, Nicholas Murphy and Lindsey Bourbanais.



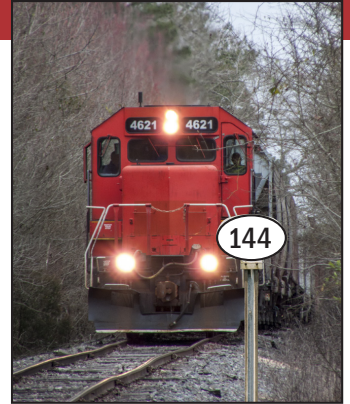
◀Masons around the state are helping their communities keep things neat and tidy. In late March, the brothers of Mooresville #496 joined the Mooresville “Adopt-a-Street” program. The lodge selected a one-mile stretch of a heavily traveled road. In one day, 14 brothers collected enough trash to fill 10 bags. Meanwhile, in Kannapolis, Allen-Graham #695 conducted roadside cleanup projects on a mile-long stretch of South Main Street in Kannapolis.

See more Traveling, page 15

MILEPOSTS



▲**LENOIR** – Hibriten #262 presented brother Paul Broyhill with his 70-year award. On hand for the celebration are, from left, Worshipful Master Doug Bolick, Grand Master Dwight “Mack” Sigmon, brother Broyhill, Lenoir Mayor and brother Joe Gibbons, and Worshipful Brother Russell Bridges. Brother Broyhill presented the brothers, who are also Shriners with Foothills Shrine Club, a very generous check for the Shriners Children’s Hospital on behalf of the Broyhill Family Foundation and Foothills Shrine.



60 YEARS Congratulations to our 60-year members*:

Wayne Hollifield, Lincoln #137

* As reported to The Mason



◀**KING** – Just four years ago, Jordan Roddy was raised and began his journey as a Master Mason at King #722. A year later, things got really interesting – and he got to raise his father, Kenneth “Trent” Roddy. Since then, they have been heavily involved in the lodge and Masonry, most recently, attending Wilkerson College together. They both graduated May 4 and were recognized as the first father/son duo to attend the college together. Jordan says raising his dad was an honor. “He has raised me for 28 years. It was a great experience to be able to return the favor.” Trent responds, “It was an indescribably proud moment for the both of us. Proud and joyful.”

50 YEARS Congratulations to our 50-year members*:

Hugh Therman Hardee Jr., Grimesland #475

* As reported to The Mason



▲**WALLACE** – The brothers of Wallace #279 gathered recently to honor a brother for years of service. Brother Francis Townsend, seated, is presented with his 70-year certificate by Brother Raymond Turner.

MILEPOSTS



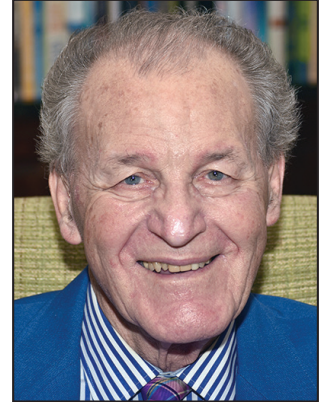
▲ **CORNELIUS** – Williams #176 celebrated brother Richard Inman Slaton's 70 years of service during a recent ceremony at the lodge. Brother Slaton currently resides in Huntersville and is a member of Trinity Union #372 in Baton Rouge, LA.



▲ **ASHEBORO** – May 9 was a special night for Asheboro #699. Brothers raised Ryan C. Hodgin, the fourth generation of Hodgins to join the lodge. His father, Jeffrey Hodgin, master in 1997, conferred both sections of the degree. At left, Ryan holds a picture of his grandfather, Hal W. Hodgin (Master In 1990). On the right, Ryan's father Jeffrey holds a picture of his grandfather, Keith G. Hodgin (Master 1954). WB Keith was Asheboro #699's first master.

Jones named chaplain emeritus

GREENSBORO – The White-Stone Board has unanimously adopted a resolution naming Tommy L. Jones to the status of chaplain emeritus at the Masonic and Eastern Star community. The retired chaplain is an exemplary product of the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford, entering at age 3 and graduating in 1952. After graduating college, he began serving the residents of WhiteStone as their chaplain and in other administrative roles starting in 1980. Jones and his wife now live at WhiteStone and still offer their support to the new chaplain, Dr. Patricia B. Spicer, and residents. The White-Stone Chapel Committee, led by chair Brother Gene Lewellyn, wanted to honor Jones in recognition of his love of and service to WhiteStone.



▲ **FRANKLIN** – Most Worshipful Grand Master Dwight "Mack" Sigmon recently presented a 70-year service award to JC Jacobs of Junaluskee #145. Brothers from Western North Carolina and North Georgia attended a dinner in Brother JC's honor, followed by remarks from Past Grand Master Berry Rigdon. Pictured: Brother JC Jacobs, seated; Standing, left to right: 41st District Deputy Grand Master Ron Hensley; PGM Berry Rigdon, and Grand Master Sigmon.



▲ **RALEIGH** – Brothers gathered recently to honor 97-year-old brother Nicholas Gus Russos and present his 70-year award. Brother Russos has been a member of Hiram since he was raised.

Masons in History

NC ritual work has a Cushman Connection

By Ludwik Wodka
Grand Historian

Where did the ritual work that North Carolina practices today come from?

Most American Masonic jurisdictions trace their work to a ritualist named Thomas Smith Webb, who began teaching his version of the ritual in the northeast in the late 1790s.

Around 1816, Webb taught the work to Jeremy Ladd Cross, a hat-maker from New Hampshire, who a few years later taught it to a Connecticut Mason by the name of James Cushman. It was Cushman who first brought the work to North Carolina.

Cushman was born on Dec. 23, 1776, in Brooklyn, Connecticut. He was descendant of the Rev. Thomas Cushman, one of the original settlers at the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts in 1620.

James was the grandson of Lt. Josiah Cushman, a Revolutionary War veteran. Little is known about his early life or education, but his Masonic career began around

1815 in Norwich, where he also joined the Royal Arch Chapter and Knights Templar.

In 1818, Cushman encountered Jeremy Ladd Cross, who was appointed Grand Lecturer of Connecticut that year. Cross taught Cushman the Webb Work (or his version of it), and shortly thereafter, he headed south.

At this time, most of the traveling lecturers who were teaching the Webb Work headed west, particularly into the Midwest and Great Lakes region.

Cushman arrived in Virginia in 1819 and sufficiently impressed the Grand Lodge, which adopted a resolution establishing the position of Grand Lecturer, to which Cushman was appointed.

In 1821, he traveled south to North Carolina. The Grand Lodge here also created the position of Grand Lecturer and made Cushman the first to hold the title.

While in North Carolina and Virginia, Cushman supplemented his income by collecting payment to establish several of the first Councils

of Royal and Select Masters, as well as several Royal Arch Chapters.

Cushman remained in Virginia for only three years. Around 1824, he headed back north and settled in New Jersey, where he was again appointed Grand Lecturer. He remained there only a few years before passing away in November 1829. He is buried in Mount Holly, NJ.

Even though Cushman first introduced North Carolina to the Webb Work, his most lasting contribution to the state was teaching the ritual to one of his pupils, Levi L. Stevenson.

It was Stevenson who returned in 1836 and again exemplified the Work to the Grand Lodge and became a Grand Lecturer.

Through Stevenson's sustained effort as Grand Lecturer (from 1836-1873), the legacy of Cushman's version of the Webb work has been adopted and preserved by the Grand Lodges of North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia.

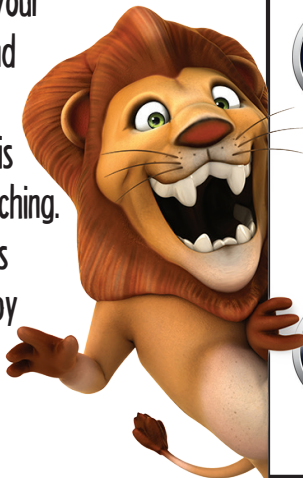


Photo from findagrave.com

Tombstone of Bro. James Cushman, who spread the version of our ritual work throughout several states as Grand Lecturer. He is buried in Mount Holly, NJ.

REMINDER:

Deadline for submitting your 2019 Lion and Pillar application is fast approaching. All materials must be in by June 30.



Proposed Code Amendments for 2019

Here are the proposed amendments to be considered at Annual Communication, Sept. 27-28:



Amendment Group 1

To raise the per capita rate owed to the Grand Lodge to \$25 from its current rate of \$20.

SUBSTITUTE AMENDMENT: This amendment would increase the grand lodge per capita \$5 effective Dec. 31, 2019; \$5 effective Dec. 31, 2022; \$5 effective Dec. 31, 2025

Submitted by Grand Lodge Finance Committee



Amendment Group 2

To require the Grand Lodge to collect \$1 a year on all its per capita tax members on roll as of Dec. 31, for the George Washington National Masonic Memorial.

Submitted by Sophia #767



Amendment Group 3

To require brothers to immediately notify the Secretary of their lodge of changes in contact information.

Submitted by Mount Holly #544



Amendment Group 4

To require a majority vote to approve an Honorary Member.

Submitted by Stedman #730



Amendment Group 5

To administratively suspend the membership of a member who has been charged with a felony.

Submitted by Oak Grove #750

WELCOME OUR NEW BROTHERS

Smith, Leslie Dean	1	St John's	Judge, William Charles	277	Green Level	Woodie, Joseph Nelson	407	N. Wilkesboro	Lashley II, Richard Alfred	685	Piedmont-Pioneer
VanOrder, Kenneth Alan	1	St John's	Fore, Colton Joe	292	French Broad	Smith, Shawn Michael	427	Oconee	Pate, Travis Jordan	685	Piedmont-Pioneer
Zhorne, Zachariah Mikael Marino	1	St John's	Burnette, Houston Garrett	293	Vance	Phillips, Zachary Hunter	428	Stokesdale	Long, Robert Emerson	686	Angier
Carter, Andrew Sterling	11	Caswell Brotherhood	Pearce, Stephen Wayne	294	Atlantic	Carpenter, Charles Tyler	431	Relief	Spence, Tony Wayne	686	Angier
Walker, Timothy Wade	19	Eagle	Godwin, Timothy Ethan	302	Lillington	Bozard, John Henderson	447	Enfield	Mallory, Roderick Sidney	687	Fellowship
Clark, John Michael	27	Statesville	Champion, Chandler William	339	Fairview	Roby, Joseph Andrew	461	Matthews	Bullen, Marcus William	691	Renfro
Ross, Adam Grayland	81	Zion	Yarbro, Joshua Scott	339	Fairview	Svensson, Jens	461	Matthews	Mahaffey, Richard Arlen	691	Renfro
Johnson, Randy David	83	Lafayette	Fulbright, Hunter Glenn	339	Fairview	Doub, Corey Dean	473	Lexington Memorial	Williams Jr, Robert O'Neil	699	Asheboro
Marek, Matthew Scott	84	Fellowship	Ross, Tanner Dale	339	Fairview	Kennedy, Todd Vincent	473	Lexington Memorial	Williams, Jacob Jefferson	699	Asheboro
Parris, Charles Dillon	91	Western Star	Wilson Jr, Kenneth Leo	339	Fairview	Blanton, Rodney Eugene	486	Lawndale	Williams, Joshua O'Neil	699	Asheboro
Bradshaw, Frank Lewis	98	Hiram	Wooten, Daniel Preston	339	Fairview	Mindwicz, Thomas David	486	Lawndale	Hodgin, Ryan Christopher	699	Asheboro
Miller, Jimmy Ray	114	St. Alban's	Wright, Timothy Ray	339	Fairview	Keeter Jr, Ronald Luke	497	Royal Hart	Tolson, Eric Matthew	717	Burnsville
Boyles, George Earl	115	Holly Springs	Bailey, Christopher Belmon	340	Harmony	Whitelock, Cody Ryan	500	Raleigh	Drake, Corey David	730	Stedman
Feimster, Randall Vincent	123	Franklinton	Carswell, Lance Dexter	343	Hickory	Horn, Donald Verner	515	Whetstone	Perkins, Kenneth Ian	730	Stedman
Fuller, Jared Avery	123	Franklinton	Papa, Piro	343	Hickory	Midgett Jr, Samuel Elliott	521	Manteo	White, Bradley Michael	730	Stedman
Benson, Jimmy Dean	125	Mill Creek	Wiseman, Brian Eugene	343	Hickory	Windley, John Linton	521	Manteo	Gallimore, Victor Allen	732	Bush Hill
Wyatt, Christopher Allen	145	Junaluskee	Beeson, Jacob Keith	363	Snow	Evans, Randy James	527	Lucama	Ross, Herbert Alexander John	732	Bush Hill
Jones, William Alfred	147	Palmyra	Walsh, Carson James	363	Snow	Kyle, Joseph Kerry	527	Lucama	Letterman, Philip Ferguson	735	James B. Green
Stefanski, Ted Andrew	205	Long Creek	Johnson, Brent Andrew	369	Gastonia	Marshburn, Jonathan David	564	Richlands	Spencer, Gary Chandler	735	James B. Green
Hill, Brian Keith	208	Mr. Olive	Killian, James Eric	369	Gastonia	Cayton, Brandon Allen	573	Mt. Pleasant	Evaris, Scott Robert	742	Mint Hill
Teague, Mark Madison	248	Catwaba	Rogers, Robert Joseph	374	Campbell	Hendricks, Brandon Lee	589	Bethel	Brackett, Justin Kyle	744	Shelby
Novak, Jeffrey J	258	Fuquay	Hyder, Eric Ray	387	Kedron	Bordeaux, Jacob Bryan	596	Waccamaw	Jones II, Robert Allen	759	James K. Polk
Norman, John Christopher	259	Waynesville	Mellon, Gary Brian	388	Friendship	Porter, Preston Bush	596	Waccamaw	Sheena, Brent Michael	759	James K. Polk
Sanford, Joseph Jackson	259	Waynesville	Bessey Jr, Robert Allen	391	Lebanon	Law, Larry James	616	Round Peak	Muntis, Franklin Robert	762	Mosaic
Shepherd, Chad Clark	259	Waynesville	Cole, Daniel Santos	391	Lebanon	Boyd, James Bailey	650	Nichols-W. Asheville	Gonzalez, Kyle Thomas	770	State College
Welborn, Jonathan Hunter	259	Waynesville	Kost, James Allen	391	Lebanon	Causby, Robert Dwayne	670	Lovelady	Townley, Andrew Bryant	770	State College
Caviness, William Hunter	272	Bingham	Martin, Patrick Joseph	391	Lebanon	Pruitt, Michael Edison	670	Lovelady	Kearns, Brian William	770	State College

TRAVELING THE TAR HEEL STATE



▲SOUTHERN PINES – The brothers of Southern Pines #484 held an emergent communication and did it up in style – colonial style. Brothers attired in colonial dress initiated three candidates – one from #484, one from Carthage #181 and a third from Hancock #311 in Leavenworth, Kansas.

RALEIGH – James B. Green #735 co-hosted a third degree with State College #770, raising two brothers each. James B. Green raised Gary Spencer and Philip Letterman, and State College raised Andrew Townley and Kyle Gonzalez. ▶



▲LINCOLNTON – Lincoln #137 and Lincoln OES #114 get cooking for Special Olympics at Lincolnton High School. Brothers and sisters put in a lot of hard work, preparing about 800 hot dogs for the event. The lodge and chapter team up every year to “put on the dog.”





WhiteStone Family Day comes with twists
page 6



Wilkinson College graduates new class
page 9



Read about proposed Code amendments
page 14

On the cover

Grand Master Mack Sigmon kicks off summer at MHCO by "helping" MHCO Administrator Kevin Otis take the first dive into the new pool.

Photo by Beth Grace

The North Carolina Mason
The Grand Lodge of North Carolina, AF&AM
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