

NORTH CAROLINA THE MASON

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March/April 2020



Sign posted on the road into the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford with notice that the campus is closed to visitors.

LIFE IN THE SLOW LANE

*COVID-19 virus
shuts down lodges,
but not Freemasonry*

*By Beth Grace
Mason Editor*

Nobody wanted to make history this way. But history was made in March when the novel coronavirus made landing in the United States and sent all of us indoors for an indefinite hibernation.

Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw, after a week of Craft-wide alerts asking brethren to be careful, be aware and exercise an abundance of caution, made the hard call on March 16.

“In light of recent events, the spread of COVID-19, and upon the recommendations of our local, state, and federal governments, it is my Order that all Freemasons and lodges in this Grand Jurisdiction conform to the recommendations and civil law of the land, and that all lodge meetings and Masonic gatherings cease at high twelve on Wednesday, March 18, 2020, until further notice,” he wrote.

Lodges statewide complied and even the Grand Lodge in Raleigh locked its doors – while staff continue to work inside, maintaining proper distances. The GL cut staffing to two people at a time on March

20. The other two staff worked from home using remote access.

Both the Masonic Home for Children and WhiteStone: A Masonic and Eastern Star Community had to make the call to restrict visitors. Business continued at the School of Graphic Arts on the MHCO campus, but access to the building was restricted. Davie Academy and Wilkerson College sessions were postponed as were education meetings to help lodges applying for Lion & Pillar honors.

This is the first time a sitting Grand Master in North Carolina has issued a statewide order closing lodges and canceling meetings, says Jonathan Underwood, assistant Grand Secretary. Individual districts called for their lodges to close at times during the 1918 flu pandemic that infected about a third of the world’s population. There’s no evidence in proceedings from that year that the Grand Master issued a blanket closure order.

At presstime in late March, while Masons self-isolated, many still offered a helping hand to their lodge brethren,

SLOW LANE, from page 1

widows and to their communities.

GM Bradshaw reminded brothers in his order that this was the perfect time to reach out.

“I would encourage you to take this opportunity to remain in contact with your brothers and widows. We will be in touch with updates, plans, and notifications as the situation further develops.”

At Grassy Knob #471, brethren took that advice to heart.

They called all 16 of their widows to check to see if anyone needed anything, said Junior Warden Neil Hayes. “They were all good. While on the phone with them, I shared the MESH Outreach program. Most said they do not need anything at this time but two were needing some help. ... I hope MESH can help these ladies.”

At least two entities offered opportunities for virtual education during the virus isolation period.

On March 24, the NC Masonic Research Society offered a virtual presentation from Worshipful Brother Jason Richards, co-host of the Masonic Roundtable podcast.

Mosaic #762 went virtual almost immediately, offering a livestreamed Zoom event on March 17 featuring Worshipful Grand Steward Michael Register for his presentation, “The Power of Freemasonry.” Fifty-two brothers participated.

Grand Master Bradshaw has called for a joint effort between the Grand Lodge ad-hoc IT Committee, the Grand Secretary’s office and the Virtual Lodge Exploration Team to create virtual meeting opportunities that will be private and protected. A plan for a virtual Annual Communication also will be on the drawing board – just in case.

Meanwhile, unprecedented precautions were in place at our two charitable homes.



March 16, 2020

An important message from the Grand Master:

Brethren,
I hope this message finds you happy and healthy.

In light of recent events, the spread of COVID-19, and upon the recommendations of our local, state, and federal governments, it is my Order that all Freemasons and lodges in this Grand Jurisdiction conform to the recommendations and civil law of the land, and that all lodge meetings and Masonic gatherings cease at high twelve on Wednesday, March 18, 2020 until further notice.

I would encourage you to take this opportunity to remain in contact with your brothers and widows. We will be in touch with updates, plans, and notifications as the situation further develops.

Though the business of the Grand Lodge will continue, the Grand Lodge Office has been closed to non-fraternally related visitors and tourists.

Stay safe, keep healthy, remember each other, and keep the light!

Sincerely and fraternally,
Shaun Bradshaw
Grand Master

At MHCO, the campus was to remain closed and events cancelled through the month of April, Administrator Kevin Otis said. The closure order exempted residents, essential employees, mail/delivery people, emergency personnel and counselors and DSS workers as necessary and if not able to see residents via telehealth.

Employees off campus were encouraged to support operations from home as much as possible and movement between buildings was limited to necessary functions. Child care workers on campus were

required to meet with the campus nurse, take their temperature, and self-report any exposure or symptoms.

The School of Graphic Arts, which prints the NC Mason, continued its work with self-distancing and hand-washing protocols in place.

At WhiteStone, the health, safety, and well-being of residents and employees is the top priority, said Executive Director Mark Lewis. WhiteStone early on established a Coronavirus Task Force to address the numerous issues created by this

fast-spreading illness. The task force is comprised of resident and staff leaders, which has provided great dialogue and input on pressing issues.

As a result, WhiteStone has implemented a number of measures to improve infection control and preventative practices. Guidance also is coming from state and federal officials and the task force. It’s a truly collaborative approach, he said.

In addition to social distancing and handwashing, residents at presstime were asked to stay on campus, refrain from having visitors, and avoid large groups and personal contact.

The campus was generally closed to visitors but exceptions included end-of-life and other emergent situations determined by the executive director or health care administrator.

All on-campus activities and outside entertainers were cancelled indefinitely, as were off-site trips. But the community life services team was working on alternate in-home activities for residents.

The main dining room and bistro were closed, although both venues were open for pickup meals or deliveries.

Shopping services were made available for essential groceries and supplies and the resident SARA alert system remained operating with prompt response.

Elsewhere across the Craft, brethren shared news via Facebook, Instagram and email.

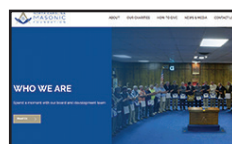
The North Carolina Masonic Foundation released a statement assuring all, including lodges that invest through NCMF and all of those whose gifts fund scholarships and other funds, that their money was in good hands and weathering

■ see COVID-19 next page

Editor’s Note: All of these orders and rules were in effect at presstime; changes are inevitable – and expected – as the world and national situations change. Watch these sites for updates:



www.grandlodge-nc.org



www.mfnc.org



www.liveatwhitestone.org



www.mhc-oxford.org

On Facebook, regularly check the Masonic Home for Children, WhiteStone, Grand Lodge, NCMF and NC Mason pages.

Not sure how to continue being Masonic while stuck in isolation? Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw offers some suggestions for now and in the future

BROTHERLY LOVE

I ask that the officers of each lodge immediately work together to develop a communication and outreach program to check in with the brethren of their lodges. I would suggest dividing the membership roster of the lodge, as well as your widows list, amongst the officers so each officer can contact them on a weekly or bi-weekly basis and provide any assistance during this time of need. I would go further and encourage all of our members to check in with your neighbors, particularly if you are aware of anyone in your community who may be at higher risk if exposed to the virus.

With the Governor's decision to close all K-12 schools, some of our neighbors (and members) with young children may need help as well. As individual Masons, let them know you are here to help by offering to go to the grocery store for them or volunteering to help with local food distribution groups like Backpack Beginnings or other volunteer programs.

RELIEF

Since the Governor issued Executive Order No. 117, which prohibits mass gatherings of 100 persons, many of our planned charitable fundraisers must be cancelled and postponed; however, the important work done by our charities must be sustained. As such, I would ask that each of my brethren consider making a donation to each of the charities equal to or greater than the amount they would spend at a lodge fundraiser or typically give through the fraternal box of assistance. (Eds. Note: You can donate to any of our charities online via www.mfnc.org)

TRUTH

Although we aren't meeting together in our lodges, the need to contemplate Truth and Masonic Philosophy should not be diminished. Consider, at this time, what Freemasonry means to you and take the time you would have spent at lodge to learn a lecture or a new part in your Masonic ritual. Or perhaps read a book on a Masonic topic – one of my favorites is *The Way of the Craftsman* by Bro. Kirk MacNulty.



Photo by Michael Harding

COVID-19 from page 2

the market ups and downs.

“Smart investing, prudent decisions and hands-on monitoring are keeping the endowment that helps fund our two beloved charities, scholarships, special Masonic funds and your lodge investments safe and secure,” wrote board President Brother Mike Faulkenbury. “More-

over, we are working closely with the board and staff of our homes – the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford and WhiteStone: A Masonic and Eastern Star Community – to assist as needed.”

While NCMF funding to both homes will continue as always, brethren are reminded that when

this isolation ends, our homes will need help making up funds lost to fundraisers lodges hold every year. Donations will be welcome.

North Carolina Masons weren't the only brethren canceling fundraisers, closing lodges and heading home. At least 40 jurisdictions issued a similar order.

Brother Chris Hodapp's blog outlines some of those orders, and links to a list that shows many jurisdictions worldwide have canceled Masonic activities for a finite period of a month or two, while others are indefinite.

Check the list out at <https://tinyurl.com/Masonclosures>. 

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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 FATHERHOOD OF GOD WITHIN THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Every storm runs out of rain

So there I was, wandering the aisles of Food Lion in search of soup, crackers, pasta and any snack in a storm. Nearby ... well ... six feet away, other customers cruised the aisles, cheerfully looking to see what was available and shrugging it off if their heart's desire was out of stock.

I was thinking that the level of stock was pretty good, considering that all of America had stormed every grocery store in recent days in search of comfort food ... and, apparently, toilet paper.

I headed down the ice cream aisle – good for my mental state; bad for my diet – when I spied him. My friend, Brother Tommy Mills, was doing some shopping of his own.

We saw each other at the same time and I waved – my hand full of Lysol wipes from my car. We approached each other, then stopped. I offered an air hug from six feet away. We chatted a bit, did some NC Mason business, and parted ways ... Tommy to paper products, me to the coffee aisle.

It really wasn't until then in this surreal isolation we'd all been living in that I understood how much harder this might be on your average Masonic brother than others.

I have never seen a group of friends who love each other more. Masons connect. They flock to meetings, they are all in on fund-

raisers, they show up to help others in droves. They love to hug, give a quick peck on the cheek, shake hands, pat backs.

Masons are people people.

Which is why it's no surprise to me to see so many brothers – even as they wrestle themselves with isolation and wonder about what happens next in this new world we share – stepping out of their comfort zones to help others.

As Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw suggested in his communications about meeting closures and event cancellations, if brethren can't meet as they normally do, take that time to check in on those you haven't seen in a while, the elderly and those in need. Offer to shop for them or help in some other way.

We chronicle some of that in our cover story this issue. God willing, this isolation will have lifted by the time the print edition of the paper gets to your home.

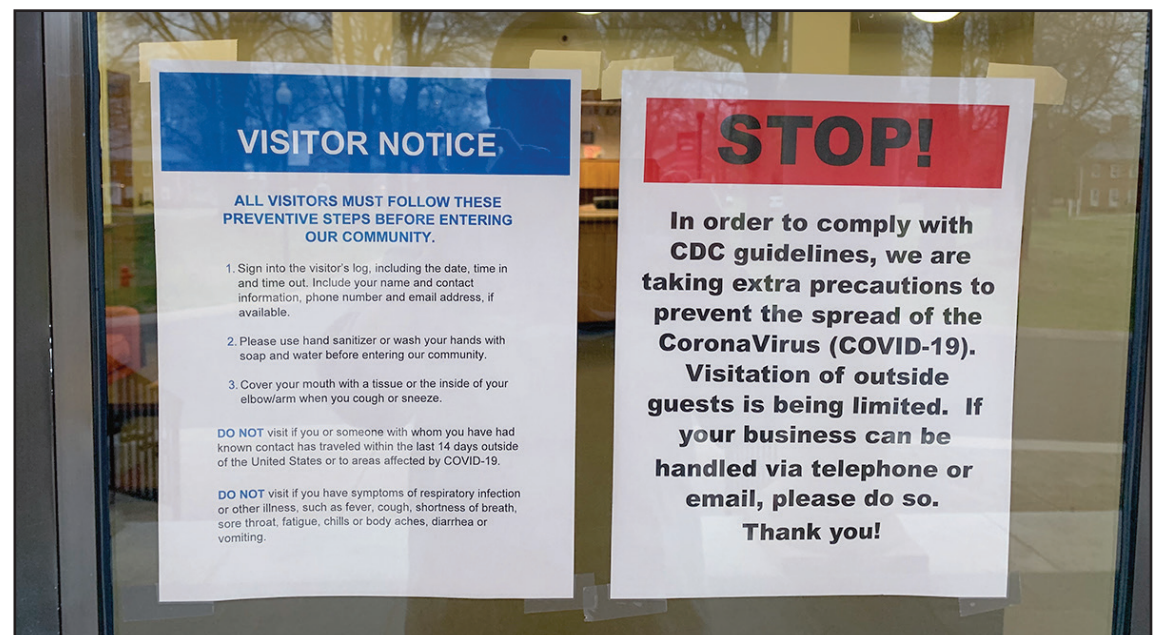
In any case, let us know how the Craft is weathering this human storm. Send your news to ncmason@glnc.us and we'll take it from there.

Until we meet again, be safe. Wash your hands. Get some rest. Pray a little. This shall pass.

To quote poet Maya Angelou, who knew a little about adversity and hardship, remember: Every storm runs out of rain.



By Beth Grace
Editor



Signs posted on the doors at our Masonic Home for Children warn about precautions being taken.

FROM THE GRAND MASTER



When is a rose more than a rose?

By P. Shaun Bradshaw
Grand Master

It has been my honor to travel to our lodges for district meetings – before the coronavirus sent everyone to the safety of their homes – and present a message on the value of Freemasonry.

One area I'm particularly passionate about and believe is exceptionally valuable is the transformative nature of our Craft through the initiatic experience and contemplation of our symbols and rituals. I have found, however, that many of our brethren don't fully understand how our symbols work and tend to only consider the most basic explanation from our ritual.

At one recent district meeting, I asked the brethren to tell me what the Lodge represents. The consensus was that it represents the Tabernacle or King Solomon's Temple, which is true in that that's what our ritual tells us, but it begs the question – what do those structures represent? In other words, our ritual frequently gives us an interpretation, which is intended to make us think further about the symbol.

So, what does King Solomon's Temple represent to you? To me, King Solomon's Temple, which was a building created to hold the divine presence in the Ark of the Covenant, is like our physical bodies. Similar to King Solomon's Temple, our bodies contain the divine spark of

Deity, our soul, our spirit which is connected to Deity. And so, the Lodge is YOU! And all the symbols used within the Lodge represent some aspect of you.

To help this make more sense, let's define and illustrate what a symbol is.

A simple definition of a symbol is *something which makes us think of something else, consciously or unconsciously*. For example, these words you are reading are symbols. Each letter symbolizes a sound and, when arranged in a certain order, forms a word which represents a thing or an idea. So, if I write R-O-S-E, we should all think of a rose. I may also invoke the image of a rose in your mind by showing a picture of one – or by writing RO53.

Given the context of what I've written so far, it isn't a far leap to interpret the 53 as substituted symbols for the letters SE, in which case you again see the word ROSE even though that's not what I wrote.

Oh, and one more thing. A moment ago, when I mentioned I could show you a picture of a rose, I suspect some of you immediately imagined seeing that picture. But here's the thing...what did the picture look like to you? Was it a red rose, a white rose, a bouquet of roses?

If I asked you to think further (contemplate) about a rose, some of you may think of a rose in your garden, or the smell of a rose, or a rose you gave your sweetheart, which may lead you to think about how you feel about that person, which may invoke a feeling of love and joy ... and so even the image of a rose can invoke a subconscious feeling of love.

Our Masonic symbols work the same way. While our ritual helps provide us context with which to think about the symbol, we must understand that the interpretation of the symbol has to become personal in order to

affect a change (a transformation) in how we think, in what we say, and in what we do. Of course, this assumes you occasionally take time to think about the symbols.

Similar to King Solomon's Temple, our bodies contain the divine spark of Deity, our soul, our spirit which is connected to Deity. And so, the Lodge is YOU!

Have you ever watched a degree and suddenly a part of the ritual jumps out at you? Or maybe a statement about one of the symbols gets your thoughts going down a rabbit hole? Or perhaps a particular set of movements or words triggers a personal memory?

These instances are the symbols speaking to you. Listen carefully to them, gauge your emotional state, feel your heartbeat, notice your

■ see BRADSHAW, page 8

Learning how to internalize Masonic symbolism

By Donald Street
Hiram #40, Morning Star #85,
Nine Sisters #773

In a recent conversation with MW Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw, the creation of a series in the *NC Mason* dealing with Masonic esoterica was suggested.

Decades ago, the Grand Lodge of North Carolina sponsored a very worthwhile education service called the NC System of Lodge Education. This well-thought-out publication was read by appropriate section to Entered Apprentices, Fellowcraft, and Master Masons. It was read to



me, and by me to others.

One of the many issues discussed was the matter of understanding our ritual. The concept is the ritual can be learned, performed, and done well, but not understood.

What does our ritual mean? How is it interpreted? How can it be applied?

Starting with the basics, it is very easy to learn our ritual and with practice, it is very easy to perform

our ritual. But understanding and internalizing our principles takes work and introspection. We are a system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols. Though easily said, it is often understood poorly and rarely internalized.

In education parlance – as an educator for 50 years – internalization and integration of learning are the end of the rainbow.

When a subject learns, does he learn by rote or does he internalize? If learning is internalized, we move toward integration or interfacing column A with column B and

getting A+ and not confusion of rote. So much for educational theory.

It is our Grand Master's plan to accomplish internalization of ritual by interpreting its "revelment and reveilment."

To this day, I remember reading in the Lodge System of Masonic Education about internalizing the ritual. In my early days in the Craft, I was fortunate to have two very learned and very patient mentors to walk me by the hand through the

■ see ESOTERICA, page 8

OUR MASONIC CHARITIES AT WORK

Foundation gives thanks to 'Everyday Heros'

By Beth Grace
Mason Editor

Folks long to hear it, people work hard to earn it, and it is so rarely handed out.

So let's just put it out there.

From the North Carolina Masonic Foundation to you: THANK YOU!

The NCMF annual gratitude has just been published. Because of the COVID-19 shutdowns, it is will be distributed when the all-clear is sounded and life returns to normalcy.

The 12-page report focuses on heroes – everyday heroes like the brothers and sisters out there who give what they can to support our Masonic charities, the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford and WhiteStone: A Masonic and Eastern Star Community.

You don't have to leap tall buildings in a single bound to be an NCMF hero ... Just ask Dr. Carla Emerson, an MHCO board member and Masonic widow, one of four heroes featured in the report.

"Giving of my time – and giving money – makes me feel like I'm giving something back," she says.

Past Master Robert Street, now a resident of WhiteStone, agrees.

"Through my life and through what I have learned in this Craft, I have been changed and have seen that giving to others who need help does make me a better man," he said.

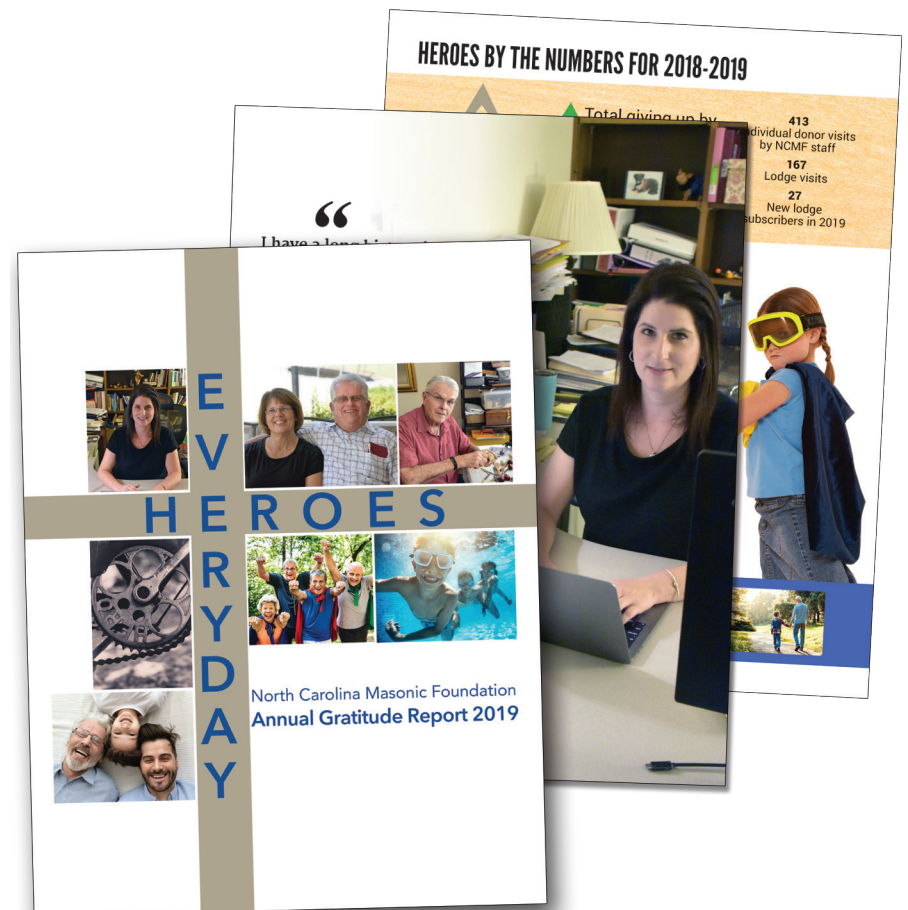
The report details successes and new programs launched by NCMF. Among the most successful new programs: the Bridge Builder Society.

NCMF has inducted its first two members into the society that celebrates donors who contribute \$20,000 or more through NCMF.

The charter members are Brother Robert Broughton "Bobby" Carr of Mingo #206 and Brother William Pete Franklin of Charles B. Newcomb #740.

Other news: NCMF shares its new web site (www.mfnc.org), where you can also access two videos made specially for the Craft: "Keeping the Promise," and "Fathers & Sons."

Read the full report at www.mfnc.org. Look for the story in the News section at the bottom of the home page.



Grand Master bestows Montforts on Coltrane, Mayo



Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw surprised two long-serving brothers with North Carolina Masonry's top honor.

GM Bradshaw in February awarded the Joseph Montfort Medal to Howard Coltrane (left), past master of Liberty #714 and in March, awarded the medal to Past Grand Master Dalton Mayo (right), of Hiram #98.

Each Grand Master may give three Montfort medals during his tenure. Coltrane was the first recipient this year.

Joseph Montfort was the only Provincial Grand Master for America. He died in March 1776 and is buried in the front yard of his home lodge, Royal White Hart #2 in Halifax. Montfort's memory lives on through this award and through more than 200 dedicated Masons throughout history who have earned the honor.



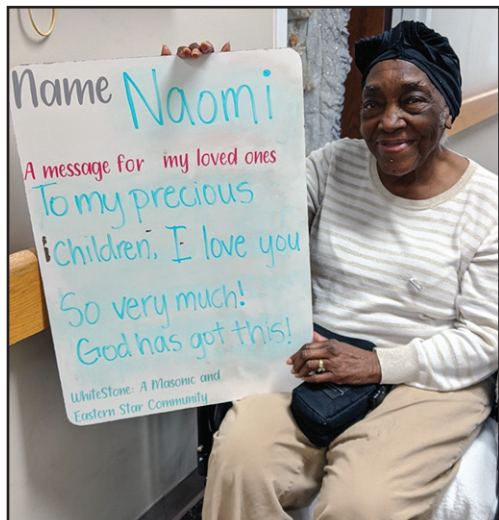
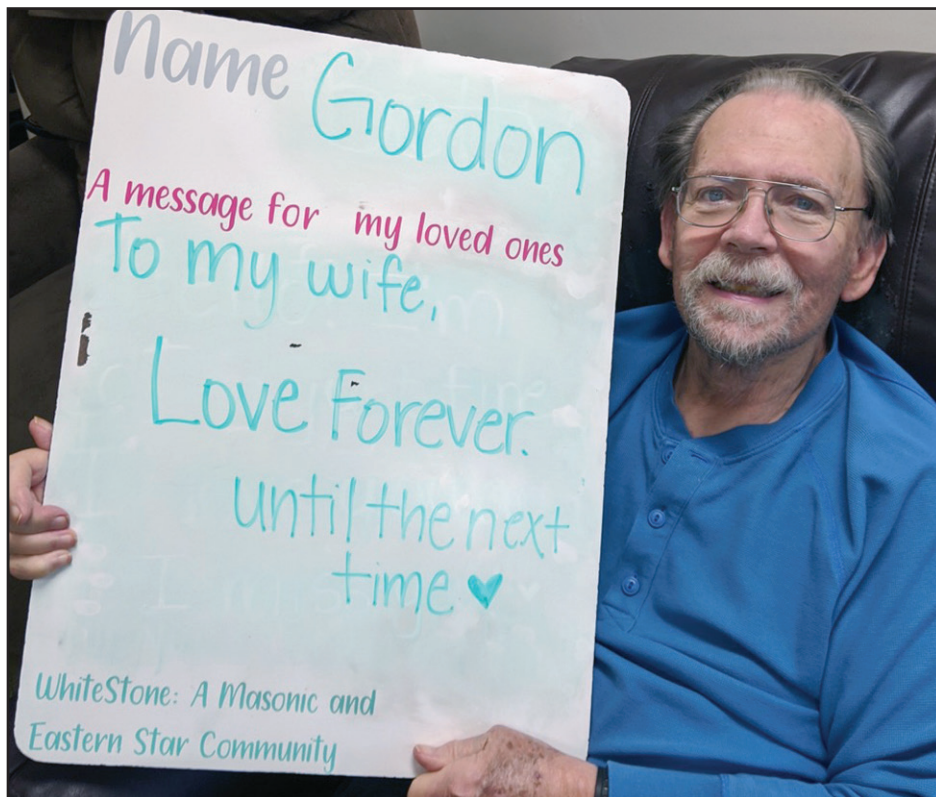
WhiteStone residents share messages via Facebook pictures

It's easy to communicate with family and friends when times are tough if you have an iPhone and a sense of humor.

At WhiteStone: A Masonic and Eastern Star Community, some Care & Wellness Center residents were asked if they would like their picture taken for Facebook with a special message for their family.

In their messages, residents sent love and best wishes to their families, some told jokes and others spoke of how safe they felt and how well the Health Center Staff was taking care of everyone.

The Community Life Services Department was keeping residents busy and happy with room activities and lots of one-on-one time.



BRADSHAW from page 5

breath because engagement with a symbol comes from the deepest core of who you are: Your true self as opposed to the ego self you portray daily to others.

Listen to this part of yourself. What is it telling you? Take time to stop, contemplate, plan, and act on the knowledge (symbolized by light) shed on you by the symbol.

This, brethren, is Masonic labor; this is one of the most powerful and valuable aspects of our fraternity. We are taught that the principal tenets of a Mason's profession are Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. When you care for a brother – speak to him, shake his hand and genuinely care for him – that's Brotherly Love. When you give selflessly of your time or money – visiting your sick brethren, checking in on your brother's widow, or participating in a fundraiser – that's Relief.

But listening to Providence's power through the ritual and symbolism, then contemplating

what it means to you – that's the start of Truth.

However, Truth only comes to fruition when you take the necessary steps of laying the designs on the trestle board (the plan for change) and follow a course of action based on those plans. Thereby building your new

Truth only comes to fruition when you take the necessary steps of laying the designs on the trestle board (the plan for change) and follow a course of action based on those plans.

Masonic edifice (the better you), bringing it closer to completion so you can receive the Master's Word – the connection to Deity.

That's Truth. That's Masonic labor.

Aligning your thoughts, words and deeds with your true self – releasing the ego, the facade of who you are. Through this Masonic labor, slowly chipping away at your rough Ashlar, measuring

with the square, level and plumb, to ensure you stay true, you make yourself worthy of the title of Master Mason and are finally able to place your perfected stone with the others of the great Temple of the Universe, using the trowel to spread the cement which unites your stone with the others.

Masonic labor, the search for Truth, the contemplation of who you are, finding balance and alignment with all parts of yourself and Deity. That is the goal of our Masonic symbols and is what makes them the "soul" of our fraternity.

If you've ever been watching a degree or studying our ritual and you recognized something about a symbol you hadn't considered before, please let me know. Did it cause a transformation in the way you think, speak or act? I'm interested in hearing about it – just email me at sbradshaw@gnc.us, or if you prefer, send me a letter to the Grand Lodge. They'll get it to me.

Brethren, keep the light and tell your story! ✦

ESOTERICA from page 5

minefields of Masonic ritual and allegory.

These two men were Past Masters Charles Page Separk and John Samuel White. Charlie and Jack were old and I was young. Collectively they knew the allegory of the ritual and its esoteric base.

Charlie had served on the Board of Custodians and was part of the group that put together the OSW. He spent much time talking with me, not only about how the OSW came together, but the logic behind each part of the ritual.

Brother Jack had the patience of Job with me. We spent many hours sitting in the East in Hiram #40, with an empty hall, as he walked me through each element of the ritual.

At every point he would stop and explain the "why and something." So much for rote.

Jack believed no lesson should be half-learned. He encouraged me to get into Masonic writings, dictionaries, and monitors to learn our language, always stressing that everything means something, and

something, and then something else.

As this column matures, I trust it will create an exchange of interest to learn the esoteric background of the why and what of our ritual.

With this introduction, I propose in subsequent columns to work through each degree, lecture, open and closing and the catechisms ... if we live long enough.

There is a long road ahead and light will be added to light with each rise in the road. ✦

HIRAM'S WHISPER



Hiram's Whisper is a vocabulary app for the Freemasons of North Carolina.

You must be a member in Good Standing of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina in order to access this app. You will be required to submit your name and membership number to verify your affiliation.

You may then access up to 10 words within a 24-hour period.



For those stuck at home, reading online has become a great way to pass the time. While you're surfing, check out the NC Mason online! But if you want to help us save money (our printing budget is smaller this year and we'd love your help!), just send a note to ncmason@gnc.us with these words in the subject line: OPT OUT, and in the body of the email, include your full name and mailing address. We'll take it from there!



About that word 'brothers'... it's incorrect

By Charles E. Ponton
Wilmington #319

Over the course of years, various masonic and non-Masonic communications have incorrectly used the term "brothers" when they should correctly use the word "brethren."

This misuse should prompt one to examine the word "brothers" as used in Masonic communications. For example: "Good morning, brother" or "Good morning, brethren."

A Masonic brother brings to the symbolic lodge his life experience and his education. His mentor/coach is the first Masonic member to teach proper Masonic decorum and etiquette.

We cannot fault a new member for not knowing proper decorum. We can only blame ourselves for lack of confidence in correcting a brother. Printed articles written by others, then submitted to the editor of *The Mason* and other publications for review and eventual distribution share various Masonic

colloquiums across North Carolina.

Each Masonic writer has a different experience of Freemasonry. But correct usage of commonly used endearing words in Freemasonry and expectations of proper decorum should always prevail.

The traditional Masonic greeting "brethren" and "brother" should always be used in Masonic greetings. The reference to "brother" within the masonic membership is always encouraged, and rightly so, between each member.

The bad habit of using the word "brothers" in the Masonic realm has unfortunately increased over the years. The word "brethren" not "brothers" is the correct plural usage for addressing a group of Masonic members.

Whether in speech or text, the word "brothers" does not describe our intimate Masonic relationship(s). The Masonic fraternity consists of unique individual/group relationships and interaction

that each member has with one another. Through our obligations, our history, our ritual, and our brotherly love, creates an exceptional individual and exceptional fraternal bond.

This Masonic relationship is found when the word "brethren" is used, signifying a closer masonic group relationship that cannot be found in any other fraternal relationships.

Reflect and consider your ongoing Masonic experience and make it be known for the right reasons, the plural form of the word "brother" is "brethren" when speaking to and about a group of Masonic members. Please, gently correct a brother with the correct usages of "brother" and "brethren."

The plural "brethren" is generally used for members of an organization, especially a religious or fraternal body, whereas the plural "brothers" is used in the familial sense as well as for larger groups.

DEFINITION OF BRETHREN:

Brethren is the plural of brother, used chiefly in formal or solemn address or in referring to the members of a profession, society, or religious denomination. Refers (figuratively) to the body of members, especially of a fraternal, religious or military order.

The brethren hold a prayer meeting every Friday.

DEFINITION OF BROTHER:

A male who has the same parents as another or one parent in common with another

A fellow member used as a title for ministers in some evangelical denominations

One who shares with another a common national or racial origin: especially: soul brother.

A member of a men's religious order who is not preparing for or is not ready for holy orders a lay brother.

DEFINITION OF BROTHERS:

Plural form of brother when brother refers to man or boy having the same parents as another person.

Larry and Robert are familial brothers.



PGM Lester Martin Jr. lay down his working tools in February.

Martin came from a distinguished line

Past Grand Master Lester Poindexter Martin Jr., who was carried in his father's arms to his first Masonic picnic at the age of two months, passed away Feb. 20. He was 95.

Brother Martin often told the story of being carried to that picnic, telling brethren he was "rocked in a Masonic cradle."

The 73-year Mason was Grand Master of North Carolina Masons in 1991-92.

He also earned accolades in his work as a lawyer and a judge, but one of his greatest memories came in 2016 when he received NC Masonry's highest honor, the Joseph Montfort Medal.

He called the award "the achievement of a lifetime for a Master Mason."

Then-Grand Master Bryant Webster, who chose Martin as one of the three medal recipients that year, praised his brother for his work and lifetime achieve-

ments at a ceremony attended by what was called the largest gathering of past grand masters to date.

Shortly after MW Martin's passing, PGM Webster shared fond memories of a brother he knew well – and admired.

"He was a true Mason, and one of the best storytellers I ever knew," he said. "Presenting the Montfort to him was a perfect fit. Lester was an Eagle Scout, a lawyer, a judge and a good man."

PGM Martin lived a full and busy life. He represented Davie County in the NC General Assembly in 1961 and 1963; was a State Bar Councilor and was a trustee for Appalachian State University. He served on several committees and was parliamentary of the State Baptist Convention.

He was a chief district court judge, a superior court judge and an emergency judge for

many years. A veteran of the U.S. Army, he served in China, Burma and India in World War II and received the Air Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

He was a lifelong resident of Mocksville and Farmington, son of the late Dr. Lester P. and Helen Bahnson Martin, granddaughter of C.F. Bahnson, longtime Grand Lecturer and author of the North Carolina Masonic Lodge Manual. He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth; two sons, Pete and Bob (Laura); and a granddaughter, Elizabeth.

He was raised by his grandfather, Frank Bahnson, at Mocksville #134 in 1946; his father gave the lecture. He was appointed to the Grand Line by MW I. Boyd Hoskins in 1984.

A memorial service was conducted February in the Lester Martin Courtroom of the Davie County Courthouse.

TRAVELING THE TAR HEEL STATE



▲ **GREENVILLE** – The brethren of Greenville #284 in early March hosted WB Steven Campbell, Past Grand Historian, for a lecture titled “Rebellious and Resolute: Brother Freemasons during the Revolutionary War.” The crowd included a number of lodges from the 6th Masonic District. Attendees learned that North Carolina’s three signers of the Declaration of Independence were all brother Freemasons: Joseph Hewes; John Penn; and William Hooper. He said that many places in North Carolina get their names from brothers who fought during the Revolution, including Buncombe, Caswell, Harnett, Johnston, Lenoir, Martin, Stokes and many more. The Craft provided an important forum for early colonists to come together in brotherly love and fellowship both during the run up to the American Revolution, and while the War was being prosecuted, he said.



NEWS FROM OUR LODGES



▲► **SALISBURY** – The 63rd annual Brunswick Stew sale filled hundreds of bellies and raised thousands for our Masonic charities. The sale is held each year by Andrew Jackson #576, which invests hundreds of hours in prep, cooking and selling the stew that has garnered countless fans over the years. The event annually raises tens of thousands for the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford and WhiteStone: A Masonic and Eastern Star Community. The event was dedicated this year to 100-year-old brother Floyd Burton, who founded the event.



► **GREENVILLE** -- The inaugural meeting of the Crown Point #708 Masonic book club in February was a success! Worshipful Master Chris Uhas and Senior Deacon Jake Rose started the club to instill Masonic ideals and principles and encourage new and younger members to share ideas and converse about such topics with more tenured Masons. The first book chosen was *Laudable Pursuit* by the Knights of the North. The meeting was opened up to the entire Greenville Masonic Temple, which includes four Craft Lodges, and to the Greenville York Rite bodies that meet in the Temple. Attendees ranged from a Mason who had been raised for only a month to a former District Six DDGM and a 48-year Mason. The idea and group was such a hit with the brethren, that they selected another book for a future discussion – *The Traditional Observance Lodge* by Cliff Porter. Each book to be read (one book every other month) will be released at each meeting and also posted on the Crown Point Facebook page. The brethren of the club invite all interested Masons to join.



From tragic accident comes three gifts

Brethren rally to help injured brother

By Don Barrier
Derita #715

As Master of Wilkerson College #760, I was excited at the prospect of attending the North Carolina Masonic Symposium, which we have hosted for as long as I could remember. So, on June 7th, the day before the symposium, I loaded my car with all the necessary equipment and my suit and left my home in Charlotte to visit Worshipful Brother Ben Wallace's "Tractor Shed" to enjoy a great meal he was preparing for us.

I looked forward to meeting our guest speakers, Brother Johnny Royal and Worshipful Brother Chuck Dunning, and enjoying the fellowship of my other brothers.

It was rainy as I headed out of Asheboro toward Troy, second in a line of cars trailing a pickup that was driving 55 mph. I was singing to my radio when I turned my head for a second to look at a familiar logo on a passing. When I turned my eyes forward, I saw a black car between me and the pickup – driving the wrong direction. It hit me head-on at what the NCSHP estimated at 60 mph.

That is when I received my first gift.

As the car began to merge with mine, a shockwave hit my windshield. It exploded and the airbag deployed. Shards of glass floated toward me. The driver's side door window exploded. I watched my cell phone levitate from the console. I felt as if I was in a "Matrix" movie.

Then it got really bad.

The black car tore through my car, shoving my transaxle through my floorboard. My left shin and foot were crushed, my pelvis was shattered and fractured in five places, and my left hip was displaced back four inches, fracturing two

vertebrae. My right leg was shoved against the console, which was torn from its mounting bolts.

As my car decelerated, the transaxle and the other vehicle tore away and spun down the road and my car began to spin. I was slung to the right, breaking two ribs on the seatbelt, the car rotating a full 450-degrees to stop off the shoulder. I looked around, then promptly passed out.

I spent the next three weeks in the Trauma Surgical ICU; the first three days in unimaginable pain awaiting emergency surgery. Days after my third surgery – a 14-hour operation – I remember a lucid moment when I asked my doctor if I had hallucinated the accident and if what I saw was real. Without hesitation, he told me I had been given a gift called "memory packing," which gave me total recall beyond normal sight.

I received other, profound "gifts" as the accident was happening. At one point, after the dash hit my stomach and before the terrible spin, all motion and time seemed to stop, and I

heard a voice say, "You are not alone. You are loved. Have no fear." I can't explain this gift: I saw a "being" – non-corporeal and composed of light – sitting in the back seat. It was a being of light. I felt no fear because it felt kind, loving and nurturing. I lost consciousness about then.

I cannot remember much of my first two weeks in the ICU; it's a blur of trauma, drugs and pain.

Yet, I have memories of faces, including those of some of my Masonic brethren. How they got in the ICU, I don't know, but I am glad they did.

My wife reminds me that one brother thoughtfully showed up on our front porch shortly after my



accident with groceries for her and my daughter, who were making daily trips to the hospital. One brother drove 50 miles each way to retrieve my personal belongings from the wrecked car.

My wife had collected all of the cards and letters from my brothers. I found them the other day – they stack up to more than eight inches tall.

When I was able to receive phone calls, calls of support came in again and again. My brethren called my wife and daughter offering help and support. At the end of week three I was transferred to a rehab facility. My brothers visited me there in even greater numbers.

One brother cooked meals and an OES sister made desserts; one brother gave me a TV antenna and another helped install it; one

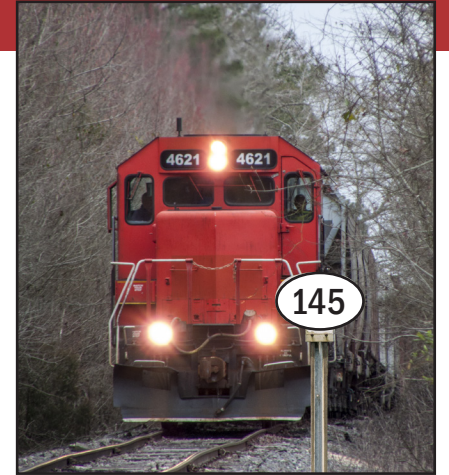
gave me a quad cane and a shower seat. Another bought me a special wheelchair seat designed to ease my injured pelvis and spine. There were many other gifts of kindness including meals, books and magazines. One brought homemade peach ice cream and we attended Castle Island Virtual Lodge while I was still bedridden ... imagine that.

Over time I learned the true extent and severity of my injuries; fractures in the foot and ankle, compound fracture of the tibia in the shin, fractured femur, shattered hip socket and five fractures of the pelvis, two fractured vertebra, and two fractured ribs. In addition, my bowels, urinary tract and testicles had been crushed. I have lymphatic damage and nerve damage in my left leg.

MILEPOSTS



◀ **WENDELL** – It was a family affair when Wendell #565 raised Travis Elliot Glidewell to the sublime degree of Master Mason in February. He was surrounded by family – his father and two grandfathers. From left, grandfathers B.R. Glidewell and Peter Eggimann, Travis Glidewell, and his father, Tony Glidewell. All four are members of Wendell #565.



▲ **ELIZABETH CITY** – More than 100 brothers from the First Masonic District gathered in January to show their appreciation for Gatesville #126 Brother Cecil Taylor and his service in the U.S. Army. Now 99, he was a young man when he saw the attack on Pearl Harbor firsthand. He was a member of the Wolfhounds, a unit assigned to the 25th Infantry Division. They were the first unit to engage the Japanese after the attack on Pearl Harbor, firing from the D-Quad rooftops. At the conclusion of the military program in January, Brother Cecil – a member of Gatesville lodge for 67 years – also was inducted into the 1776 Militia National Sojourners Chapter 560.



◀ **VALDESE** – LoveLady #670 honored retired Air Force Brigadier General Brother Lawrence Earle Huggins with the Diamond Jubilee Certificate for 60 years of Masonic service. Born in 1938 in Galesburg, Illinois, Huggins was commissioned through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program in 1960 after graduation from Bradley University. He retired from the Air Force in 1989. Brig. Gen. Huggins was awarded the Legion of Merit Award for his actions and an Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of a second Legion of Merit award for exceptionally meritorious conduct in his performance of outstanding service. He won the Distinguished Flying Cross for his extraordinary achievements in aerial flight while serving as an F-105 Wild Weasel with the 44th Tactical Fighter Squadron (1968-1969). Pictured, left to right, PM Pat Draugh and Huggins.



▲ **RALEIGH** – Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw presents WB John Held of James B. Green #735 with his 70-year Masonic pin in February. The pin was presented just before GM Bradshaw opened his 15th District meeting at J.J. Crowder #743 in Raleigh. Several brothers, Held's wife Pat and their three daughters were on hand for the ceremony. He was raised on June 2, 1949, at William R. Singleton-Hope-Lebanon #7 in Washington, D.C.

Make an investment, not an impulse buy

Brethren, was your initiation into Freemasonry an impulse buy?

A few Saturdays ago, I was sitting in the crawl space under my house; knees caked in red mud, dodging cobwebs, installing a filter on my home's waterline because, somehow, my plumber talked me into

performing the work myself (a regular Tom Sawyer). As he talked me through the process of crimping a pipe, he recommended I buy a set of crimping tools. While he checked the water, I looked up the tools on Amazon. My muddy fingers swept past several options, and the most compelling set sold for \$100.

I added them to my cart and almost proceeded to check-out, when I paused and thought, "what am I doing? Will I use these again?" Then, it struck me, this was an impulse purchase. I was about to spend \$100 on something I would probably never use again. I didn't need the crimpers, it was just easy to do and satisfied a curiosity.

Brethren, how often do we fall victim to impulse buys? It's usually something we don't need, or something we need in the very short term — like candy for a crying child. And, what does it solve? Usually nothing but curiosity and our immediate gratification.

Translate this premise to Freemasonry. First, consider the price. That crimping set cost \$100 — that's more than most men pay to join our fraternity. That's not a lot of money nowadays. When I joined the lodge in 1974, \$100 equated to nearly \$550. But, today, \$100 gets you a year's subscription to ESPN+, a Smart Speaker, a video game, ear

pods, or a gallon home distillery. Is this the value of Masonry to you?

So, brethren, be honest with yourself. What's the price point of Masonry in your life? Knowing what you know about the fraternity, what are you willing to pay for a lifetime of friendship, esoteric knowledge, and camaraderie? Or, are you even finding those things? Like our Grand Master, I cannot think of an appropriate price. I can never repay this fraternity for what it means to me—for how it has changed and shaped my life. Do you feel the same? Your answer should give you some idea of the value you place on Freemasonry.



By *Walt Clapp*
Grand Secretary

Let's delve a little deeper. Is the value we place on the fraternity

an accurate representation of the initiation fee we require of candidates? The average initiation fee in this jurisdiction is about \$100. Does that sustain our institution? Or, are we facilitating impulse buys? We've discussed why our fees are so low in previous articles—we, as a society and generation have failed to appreciate economic inflation. We can recall figures, but not value. We have also fallen into the trap of believing bigger is better. But, why? Because greater numbers mean we can keep our fees artificially low. That, brethren, is an illustration of selfishness. You don't owe an initiatic investment to the Grand Lodge. You owe it to YOUR lodge. Low fees are easy. Low fees are cheap. Low fees attract impulse, not commitment or investment.

Every year one of four candidates fails to progress through the degrees. On average we lose two men per lodge to exclusion for non-payment of dues. Why? Because they are

bored. Because they are disinterested. Because they are disaffected. We have failed to show them fraternity. And, they know we want them merely to fill chairs and serve their elders without the benefit of Masonic education or emotion or inclusion.

Do you even *know* the next Master of your lodge? We shoved these young men through a discomfulating experience without justification or explanation in order to satisfy our own disinterest. Did you take a candidate to make a new friend or to share your exciting discover of knowledge and virtue? Or, did you take him in because you need new blood in order to once more attempt to patch the hole in your lodge's roof?

Don't facilitate impulse buys. We want men who are thoughtful. We want men who ask questions and who want to get to know the men with whom they are sitting in lodge. Impulse buys are cheap, and we strive for quality, not quantity. Cheapness fails to provide the lodge with either a financial investment or an intellectual interest in Masonry. There is no interest to be drawn on friendship, nor morality, nor brotherly love if the man you initiate has no investment in your lodge.

Besides, how many new candidates can a lodge actually accommodate? Pushing five or 10 new members through the degrees may sound like success but consider *their* experience. Will they be able to actively participate in lodge meetings? Will they be able to integrate into the existing lodge? Will any older members be pushed out merely to accommodate a younger set?

Brethren, we must have balance. We must carefully initiate our candidates, teach them our moral lessons and esoteric values, and build them into productive and successful

Masons — not card carriers who simply flash gold rings and car emblems. Do your new members seek knowledge and light, or are they too busy trying to raise money to fix your roof? Are we simply replacing bodies, or cultivating minds?

Now, you've heard me preach. So, let's address how we might set a standard initiation fee. How do we price our market? Our archives illustrate that initiation fees were once about 2-3 percent of a man's salary.

Several grand jurisdictions have realized that their archives illustrate a similar financial pattern and have instituted measures to codify a sliding scale of fees. A percentage is a very equitable way to visualize a man's regional ability to join and participate in our fraternity.

So, I encourage you to look up your county's average annual salary and divide out 2-3 percent. That should be your lodge's initiation fee. That should be your new candidate's investment in Masonry and in YOUR lodge.

Remember, this is not for Grand Lodge—this is for you and your members. This is what sustains your existence and ability to function as a lodge in your community.

What if for every candidate that was initiated, your lodge invested 50-75 percent of his initiation fee in order to endow your lodge's future. Buy him a membership patent, present him a Bible or Bahnsen manual, an apron — whatever your lodge regularly supplies a new candidate. But, put his investment to good use — something he can see and take pride in — the sustainability of your lodge. His lodge.

Give him an excellent experience and show him the return on *his* investment. That is the value of Masonry.

Beware of impulse buys. Look forward to lifelong investments. ♠

READ THE MASON ANYTIME ONLINE AT WWW.GRANDLODGE-NC.ORG/NEWS-CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS

From the Grand Historian

Masonry: An ancient, honorable society

By Ludwik Wodka
Grand Historian

Nearly all North Carolina Masons know that their Grand Lodge is styled A.F. & A.M., meaning “Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons.”

However, in some older lodges, there are charters that will say “Free and Accepted Masons” or even “Ancient York Masons.”

When and why did this change? We have no documented explanations for why, but we do know when.

From the time our Grand Lodge was organized in 1787, it was rather unclear if North Carolina was A.F. & A.M. or F. & A.M. The proceedings between 1788 and 1793 stated the “Ancient and Honorable Society of Free Masons of North Carolina,” and more simply “the Grand Lodge of North Carolina” after that.

In the proceedings of 1816, we first see North Carolina styled as “Ancient York Masons,” but does not appear again until 1821.

From that point, the name was used (albeit inconsistently) until 1858, when it rather mysteriously changed to “Free and Accepted Masons.” This continued until 1867, when it was changed again to “Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons,” which it remains to this day.

The difficult part is trying to understand why these changes were made. There is nothing explicit in the proceedings or histories that explain these changes.

Circumstances and events taking

place around the time of the change offer us some clues.

During the early 1800s, South Carolina Masonry had two Grand Lodges competing for supremacy.

In 1809, the Grand Lodges of Virginia expressed support for the older of the two, styled the South Carolina Ancient York Masons. The other was called simply “The Grand Lodge of South Carolina.”

In 1809, North Carolina adopted a resolution not to interfere in South Carolina’s dispute.

My theory is that as time wore on, North Carolina came around to support the Ancient York Grand Lodge of South Carolina around 1816. To avoid giving the impression that North Carolina was somehow sympathetic to the other grand lodge, because it was styled the same way, began to refer to itself the Ancient York Masons.

The change to F. & A.M. in 1858 is far more mysterious.

There was much discussion in the proceedings of that year about how the Grand Lodge of Canada had split into two bodies as well, one being the “Ancients.”

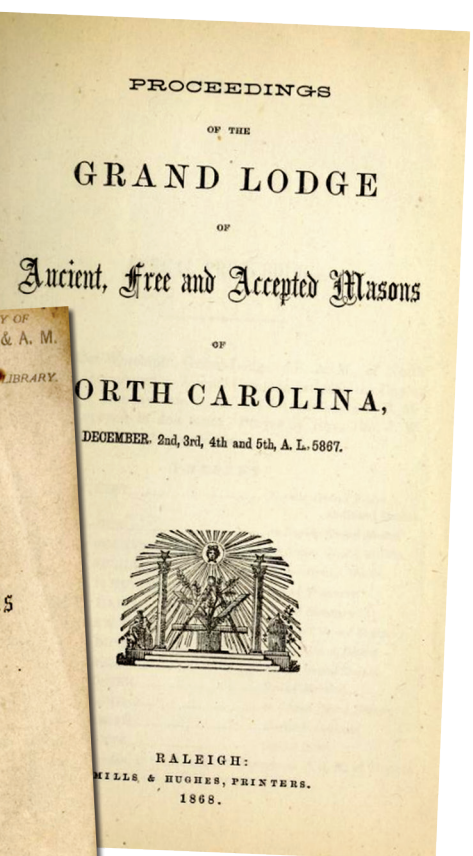
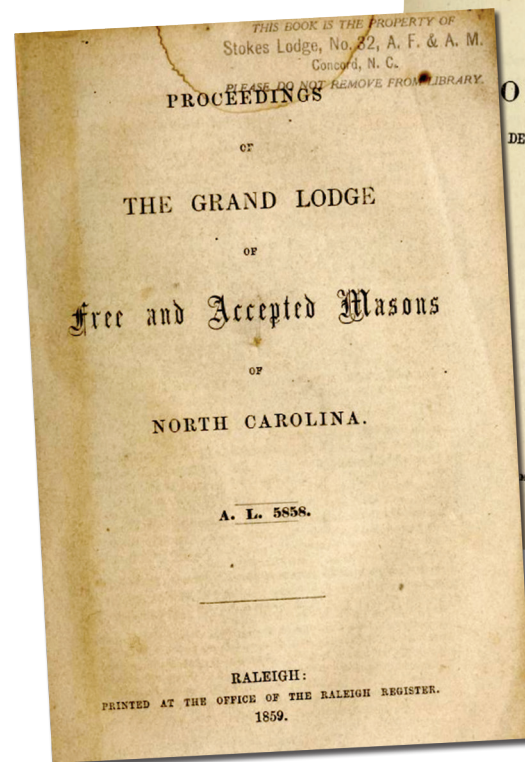
At the same time, almost half of the grand jurisdictions in the United States were A.F. & A.M. (or some variation of it). It remains a rather arbitrary and inexplicable change to our name.

The final change in 1867 most likely took place following the appearance of the first Prince Hall Lodges in North Carolina in 1865 and 1866, which are always styled

F. & A.M. in all jurisdictions where they were formed.

In order to distinguish themselves from these new lodges, “Ancient” was re-adopted, bringing it back in line with their neighbors Virginia and South Carolina.


Again, this is only



In 1858, the official Grand Lodge proceedings went without “Ancient” in the title. The word reappeared in 1867.

speculation, but given the extended commentary on the subject in the proceedings of that year, it seems highly likely.

One thing does seem fairly clear; the changes in name almost certainly had virtually nothing to do with our ritual.

By the time these changes began to occur, most Grand Lodges across the United States began adopting the ritual taught by Thomas Smith Webb, rendering any ritualistic differences between the name F.& A.M. and A.F. & A.M. moot. 

GIFTS from page 11

After four major surgeries, my body was irreparably broken in some ways, many things I loved to do were no more for me. I was self-employed and unable to work, and frankly, I felt very down from time to time.

But my brothers knew when to show up, always making me feel loved and worthwhile. They rekindled the joy in my heart, and that joy remains.

My brothers saved me. When I learned I needed spine surgery that

would extend my rehab stay past the 100 days Medicare allowed, they were there.

I had nowhere to go, and the social worker wouldn’t approve my home until it was wheelchair accessible.

My brethren at Sophia #767 raised the money and a brother donated his time to renovate a bathroom to be wheelchair accessible. My home lodge Derita #715 donated money for me to buy medical equipment and the supplies my wife needed to

care for me, and the Grand Lodge donated money to help me pay my doctor and hospital bills.


Without their generosity, I don’t know what I would have done.

Due to my inability to work and my wife having to quit her job to take care of me, I became financially distressed. Learning of my financial hardship, Derita, Sophia, Knights of Solomon, and Wilkerson College lodges, all without my application forgave my dues.

My brethren have shown me more love and support than I ever would imagine, more than I deserve.

Brotherly Love, Relief and Charity is alive and well in the Craft. I personally testify to that. Those were my third “gift.”

God Bless my beloved brother Masons in North Carolina. I thank God every night in my prayers and ask that someday I may have the opportunity to pay it forward.

Thank you, Brothers. You saved me. 

WELCOME OUR NEW BROTHERS

MEstrada, Omar	8	Phoenix	Heath, Patrick Lee	271	Tabasco	Coble, Christopher Lee	473	Lexington Memorial	Goodman Jr, Earl Lee	626	Cannon Memorial
Head, James Elam	8	Phoenix	Massey, Landon Neal	271	Tabasco	Owens, Garrett Ray	473	Lexington Memorial	Lennon, Chandler Ray	646	Bladen
Farlow, Steven Dale	76	Greensboro	Meehan, Connor Bryn	271	Tabasco	Hodges, Richard Andrew	475	Grimesland	Lennon, Forrest Galloway	646	Bladen
Street, Kyle Lee	76	Greensboro	Davis, Tyson Delane	276	Beaver Dam	Sherrod, Dale Russell	475	Grimesland	Moore, Jonathan Daniel	674	Acacia
Herring, Rodney Mitchell	114	St. Alban's	Hollis, Davis Mark	276	Beaver Dam	Williams, Matthew Carl	475	Grimesland	Winstead, Justin Mayo	675	Washington
Locklear, Roy Woody	114	St. Alban's	Hollis, Timothy Mark	276	Beaver Dam	Johnson, Jackson Gray	493	Pilot	Foland, Austin Matthew	686	Angier
Duggins II, John Taylor	129	Dan River	Lee, Lannie Robert	276	Beaver Dam	Simmons, Yancey Bolton	493	Pilot	Hamilton, Russell Wayne	686	Angier
Mounce, Danny Lee	136	Leaksville	Tilton, Charles L	306	Raeford	Daw, Brandon Michael	500	Raleigh	van Orsow, Alexander Adria	693	Charles M. Setzer
Tilley, Michael Dale	136	Leaksville	Weatherly, Brian Michael	317	Eureka	Hutson, James Lloyd	500	Raleigh	Alexander, David Channing	695	Allen-Graham
Fair, Troy Edward	147	Palmyra	Marshburn, Durwood Lane	319	Wilmington	Wilder, Emmanuel James	500	Raleigh	Gould, Samuel Steven	706	Newport
Rhodes, Cody Lee	147	Palmyra	Martin, Steven Wayne	319	Wilmington	Barcon, Bryan	544	Mount Holly	Brady, Steve Eugene	714	Liberty
Matthews, Donald Cody	147	Palmyra	Gladden, Joseph Dwight	339	Fairview	Padgett, David Landrum	544	Mount Holly	Dunnuck Jr, Richard Howard	714	Liberty
Matthews, Donald Edward	147	Palmyra	Chetti, Keinan Frederick	377	Youngsville	Bugbee, Matthew Austin	562	Waxhaw	Maness, Johnny Douglas	714	Liberty
Hinson, Robert Mitchell	202	Cleveland	Rawls, Richard Chad	378	Seaboard	McDaniel, Nathan Lane	562	Waxhaw	Mounce, Dewayne Albert	714	Liberty
McGinnis, John Robert	202	Cleveland	Thompson, Luke Aaron	390	Copeland	Glidewell, Travis Elliott	565	Wendell	Harrison, William David	723	Winton
Jackson, Jason Dallie	206	Mingo	Ortiz, Manuel L	391	Lebanon	Bolen, William Everette	578	Meadow Branch	Eborn, Rodney Allen	724	Berne
Parsons, Michael Paul	230	Corinthian	Cashwell, Jeremy George	395	Orient	Macom, Thomas Eli	584	Apex	Tharpe, Cody Michael	727	Shalotte
Krutsch, Jordan Richard	259	Waynesville	Jones, Luke Daniel	404	Denton	Wiggins, Richard Calvin	584	Apex	Lewis, Timothy Paul	741	Crissie Wright
Barrier, Joshua Edward	262	Hibriten	Reed, Timothy Lee	405	Ocean	Lackey, Jordan Willis	592	Maiden	Deal, Donald Reid	752	Enterprise
Herman, Jonathan Lee	262	Hibriten	Kempter, Andrew Curtis	407	N. Wilkesboro	Pharr, Robin Mark	593	Stony Point	Draper, David Charles	752	Enterprise
Poteat, Patrick Christopher	262	Hibriten	Kreais, Andrew Michael	429	Seaside	Maurer, Dennis Gene	618	Union	Osborne, Michael Eugene	752	Enterprise
Snyder, Joseph Loyd	262	Hibriten	Dunlap, Charles Robert	459	Dillsboro	Sehen, Brandon Matthew	618	Union	Cavanaugh, Matthew Bruce	753	Federal Point
Crawford, Dace Bartlett	271	Tabasco	Campbell, Timothy Dean	473	Lexington Memorial	Connor, Dennis Randall	626	Cannon Memorial	Query, John Richard	753	Federal Point

Men of Setzer #693 meet a woman Master

By Beth Grace
Mason Editor

There she stood in the middle of Charles M. Setzer #693, apron in perfect place, lodge scarf tied neatly around her neck.

“Good afternoon,” she said. “I am Worshipful Master Elias.”

Lourdes “Lou” P. Elias is the Worshipful Master of America #57 – Freemasonry for Women in Washington, D.C., a lodge created under the authority of the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons (HFAF) in London, England.

America #57 is the first Women’s Regular Masonic Lodge in the United States and WM Elias is its first master.

Elias was invited to speak to the Setzer brethren after Master Kenneth Lambert read about the new lodge and its master. He contacted the lodge secretary who got word to her. She readily agreed – this was her first speaking engagement to a male Masonic lodge, she said.

Not all members of the lodge agreed with the move. Some stayed home, but about 15 attended, along with wives and daughters.

Elias was quick to explain who she was and what Regular Masonry for women is all about. HFAF is considered to be Regular in its practice of Freemasonry by the United

Grand Lodge of England. UGLE says that there are two Grand Lodges in England and Wales solely for women. Excepting that they admit women, they are otherwise regular in their practice of Masonry. They are not recognized by UGLE and are not permitted to inter-visit. Her lodge is for women only, and not a form of co-masonry.

The lodge was consecrated a year ago and now meets regularly in Washington.

Members, who call each other “brother,” is a cultural mosaic.

Elias is joined by American women with ancestry from virtually every continent The granddaughter of Masons and wife of Akram R. Elias, Past Grand Master (2008) of Washington D.C., Elias she was inspired to join by what she saw when her husband joined Freemasonry.

She became a Mason 25 years ago; it wasn’t until last year that she was able to practice Regular Freemasonry in the United States.

“I saw this transformation after he became a Mason many years ago,” she said. “He told me he felt

he found his calling in Freemasonry. I asked how I could do that. So we looked for ideas and I found a group to join.

She emphasizes that the women of her lodge believe in the same things male Freemasons do. They share the ritual and the knowledge brothers pass on to brothers. They respect male Masonry but they are a completely separate group, she said.

“We are not here to storm into male lodges. Men need to do their work together. We need to do ours. We want to practice Masonry in our own lodges,” she

said. “What we have found is that women in America are thirsty for it. They want this learning. They want this life.”

The brothers of America #57 must memorize ritual and “follow all the rigors of Freemasonry,” she said. “We must be our best selves, just as male Masons do.”

The members of her lodge also write in-depth, sometimes scholarly, papers on Masonic symbols as they proceed through the degrees. “These tools are not unique to the men, but we look at them in terms of what

they mean to a woman,” she said.

She said the reaction she gets from male Masons is generally positive, although not always.

Sometimes they will ask why she didn’t join the Order of Eastern Star. UGLE does not recognize the OES, and she wanted her masonic work to go deeper.

“Women have a right to practice Freemasonry,” she said. “We take it every bit as seriously as men. Lives have been transformed in a lodge room.”

After her speech, attendees asked questions and heard stories of women in Masonry. All addressed her as “brother.”

The lodge presented Elias with a special certificate of appreciation for her work in “blazing new trails, fighting for what’s right and making good women better.”

As for Lambert, he was delighted with the presentation and the opportunity to bring a fresh, interesting topic to his lodge’s education program.

“A lot of Grand Lodges do not accept women in Freemasonry,” he said. “That doesn’t mean we have or should have a monopoly on self-improvement. And Freemasonry is the greatest self-improvement program of all mankind.”





page 5

When is a rose more than just a rose?



page 11

Brother finds gifts even in a tragedy



page 15

Charles M. Setzer Lodge welcomed a female Master

On the cover

Even before Masonic functions had to be called off due to the coronavirus pandemic, Masons were finding other means of greeting without handshakes.

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