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Grand Lodge Zooms through Communication

Wicker elected next Grand Master as brethren gather by Districts

*By Beth Grace
Mason Editor*

It was a “most historic event.”

As Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw presided via Zoom from the Masonic Center of Winston-Salem, masked brethren braved rainstorms from border to border and gathered in socially distanced groups to conduct the business of the Craft at the 233rd Annual Communication.

The coronavirus and regulations preventing close contact forced organizers, who traditionally spend months every year preparing and executing the largest meeting of A.F. & A.M. Masons in North Carolina, to change everything – almost literally – to pull off the first-ever virtual Grand Lodge.

Normally, the two-day gathering of more than 1,000 men, their wives, significant others, friends and others consumes much of the Twin City Quarter hotels in downtown Winston. Friends who never see each other gather in lobbies, restaurants and on the streets to exchange hugs and catch up before getting down to the business of Masonry. There was very little hugging this year – but lots of elbow bumps.

Annual Communication happened in six hours over a secure Zoom connection in designated

rooms with strong WiFi in districts around the state. Designated brothers bearing proxies – each lodge gets three votes – cast his own vote and that of the other two brothers via the Election Buddy app under the guidance of their DDGMs.

With the exception of an hour-long local internet outage, which happened providentially at lunchtime, the day went without a hitch.

Brethren elected a new Grand Master, R. David Wicker Jr. of Oxford, who will be installed on Dec. 5.

“I am humbled by the actions of the members of this fraternity,” he said after the vote. He thanked his family, brethren and made special mention of his Masonic “father,” Past Grand Master Dalton Mayo.

“I’m not sure what he saw in me when he appointed me,” he said.

“I will do my utmost to fulfill the duties and make not only PGM Mayo proud, but all of the brethren.”

Because of the virus and meeting restrictions, things are up in the air as he plans his year.

“We must begin at some point to reopen. We must give members



The scene from behind the camera as GM Shaun Bradshaw speaks.



Meanwhile, Masons from across the state gathered, socially distanced, at sites in the various districts to participate in the Annual Communication via Zoom.

■ see ANNUAL, page 2

ANNUAL, from page 1

a reason to come back to lodge,” he said. “We must rethink how this fraternity does business ... so that we can become stronger than in the past.”

Also elected were: **Deputy Grand Master Larry B. Thompson Jr.** of Salisbury; **Senior Grand Warden Kevan D. Frazier** of Asheville; **Junior Grand Warden Donald E. Kehler** of Burlington. Re-elected were: **Grand Treasurer Lewis R. Ledford** of Raleigh and **Grand Secretary T. Walton Clapp III** of Raleigh. RW Clapp told the crowd this is his 25th year as Grand Secretary.

Other Grand Line positions were approved by the Board of General Purposes the day before Annual Communication. Appointed were: **Senior Grand Deacon Robert W. Rideout** of Zebulon; **Junior Grand Deacon Steve M. Norris** of Shallotte; **Grand Marshal Gilbert D. Bailey** of Charlotte; and **Grand Steward Michael A. Register** of Asheboro.

Brethren also welcomed to the Grand Line **Philip R. Johnson** of Perquimans #106 as Grand Steward. Brother Johnson, who was raised in 1996, is a past District Deputy Grand Master, member of the Masonic Home for Children board of directors and the Board of General Purposes. He has been married for 37 years to his wife Mary and they have four sons.

Past Grand Master Mack Sigmon addressed the communication in his final report, urging his brethren to “practice Freemasonry in everything you do and say.”

He took a moment to recognize how difficult 2020 has been for brethren and GM Bradshaw alike.

“Grand Master, you have served us well in these times,” he told Bradshaw. “When looking at all you’ve had to deal with this year, I realize how blessed I was.”

In his address, GM Bradshaw touched on the highlights – and lowlights -- of his year, spent in hard work but also in isolation from his brethren. He completed only 11 of his 23 planned district meetings

before the pandemic closed lodge doors.

“It’s not necessarily what I hoped for, but it is what I got,” he said. But he said he was heartened by the reports he keeps getting from lodges who heeded his request to keep tabs on each other and our widows.

He reflected on a difficult point in his term: Issuing a joint statement with the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina condemning rioting and violence of any sort in the wake of the George Floyd murder.

The reaction from some quarters was harsh.

“Systemic racism continues to exist in our grand lodge,” he said. “We all know of a lodge where we won’t take a petition from a man of color because you know it will be rejected. ... Don’t give yourselves to prejudice ... we are better than that. Only the unloved hate, and brethren. I love you. You have the power to create joy.”

Traditional honors, such as handing certificates to past

District Deputy Grand Masters, could not be held in this year’s venue, but GM Bradshaw promised he would hit the road and make in-person presentations as his year winds down. Names of the Lion and Pillar honorees were announced live.

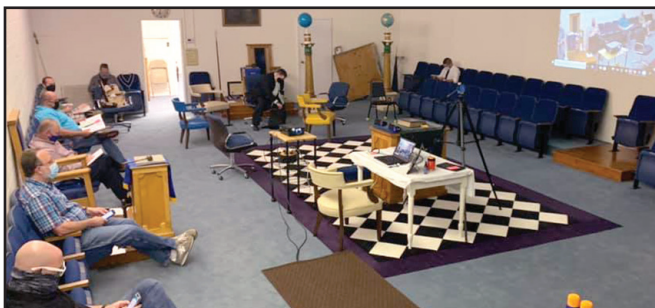
Brethren also voted to approve five of 11 proposed Code Amendments, including amendments that allow brothers who live out of state to serve on NC Masonic boards, commissions and committees; increases the size of the Committee on Subordinate Lodge Special Activities to five from three and creates a Chaplain of Distinction Award. (See full list of amendments and votes in sidebar.)

Two late additions to the agenda were approved: Enfield Lodge gets approval to change its name to Scotland Neck; and Rolesville #683 becomes W.G. Arnold #683.

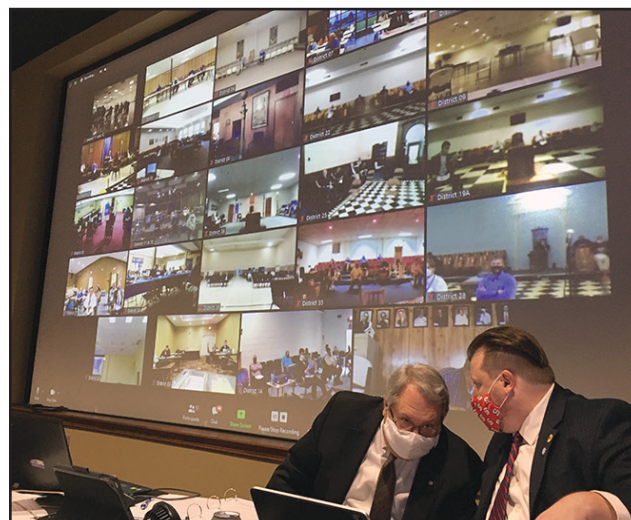
The body also approved the budget for 2021, which closely mirrors the 2020 plan with few increases. ❖



Newly appointed Steward, Philip R. Johnson



Above, brothers gathered in their districts to participate in Annual Communication (pictured here, Wake Forest #322). Each district made sure brothers were safely distanced. Meanwhile, Worshipful Brother Joey Transou and Grand Lodge Outreach Coordinator/Admin Matt Robbins work their technological magic at the Masonic Center in Winston-Salem, making the first virtual Annual Communication possible.



APPROVED AMENDMENTS

GROUP 1

Allows election of Finance Committee Chairman to occur prior to installation of Grand Lodge Officers.



GROUP 3

Allows members who reside outside the state to serve on Boards, Commissions, and Committees.

GROUP 4

Establishes additional qualifications for Grand Lodge Officers.



GROUP 6

Increases the size of the Committee on Special Activities to five members.

GROUP 11

Creates recognition Chaplain of Distinction.



TABLED TO 2021



GROUP 2

Requires lodges to fully insure their property per NC law.

GROUP 5

Allows lodges to vote on petitions collectively.



GROUP 7

Allows a lodge, if it wanted to, to open and conduct business on First Degree.

GROUP 8

Resolves conflict in the Code concerning motions to close debate in a subordinate lodge.



GROUP 9

Requires consolidating lodges to transfer real property before consolidation is complete.

GROUP 10

Refines and restructures endowed memberships.



GM-Elect Wicker: Make Masonry known

By Beth Grace
Mason Editor

What came you here to do?

It's possibly one of the most important questions of Freemasonry. When first confronted with this question, a newly made Entered Apprentice may not appreciate its importance. In fact, many Master Masons may not appreciate the significance of what is being asked. But, it's a question brethren will hear often in the coming year, as posed by Grand Master-Elect R. David Wicker Jr.

Because of ongoing COVID restrictions, the question will come in a variety of ways – whether in a Zoom meeting, a lodge gathering, in the Grand Master's regular column in *The NC Mason* or via the best-case scenario: a face-to-face District Meeting.

The coronavirus is still a factor as we head into late Fall and Winter, as Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master Wicker, elected GM Sept. 25 at the first-ever virtual Annual Communication, prepares for his installation on Dec. 5.

In early September, hopes began to rise for a return to some sense of normalcy when Gov. Cooper moved the state into a new phase that allows more people at gatherings. GM Bradshaw quickly ordered lodges to follow those guidelines, and most wasted no time in calling a stated communication.

But Masonic life here and around the world is still not what it was when the year dawned and few folks had heard of COVID-19. GM-Elect Wicker says he anticipates that



Grand Master-Elect R. David Wicker Jr. speaking at the 2019 Annual Communication.

stated meetings and other gatherings will still be restricted until March or April. Nonetheless, his district meetings are being planned, and he is hoping all can be held as usual.

It's hard to make a plan when you don't know if folks can actually get together to hear you. But there are other ways to get a message out and he is ready.

"One thing I will do, no matter what ... is talk about marketing," he said in a recent interview.

"We are terrible marketers. In my opinion, 'To be one, ask one' is a terrible marketing tool. It means we're not going to do anything unless you ask us. I don't subscribe to that. I'm not going to endorse going out to solicit membership but I will talk about how we won't get members by just sitting around."

There are many ways to get the message out, he said. Why not wear shirts with the lodge name? Lodges can sponsor local youth teams. Get

involved in community events, blood drives, animal shelter work, or maybe Habitat for Humanity or a similar organization. Even just placing a Masonic sticker on your car constitutes marketing.

Some brothers are hesitant to speak publicly of their Masonry. He says there's very little you cannot talk about as a Freemason. "No, you can't talk about degrees or ceremonies. But you can talk about who you are, what the Masonic lessons are, what those lessons teach us and how we are transformed by those lessons."

He also will ask brothers what they – individually – are doing for our charitable homes? Have they visited? "I know some lodges are a long way away, but it's one day, one time. Please make a visit. See the work that's being done," he said. He also supports efforts in lodges to provide current information and education about our charities to all petitioners.

A second theme will focus on a

bigger question.

"It's the first lesson in Freemasonry. What came you here to do? What is your purpose for being here? What is the purpose of a Masonic lodge in 2021," he said.

He has asked himself the question, more than once.

"You generally first come to Masonry because of someone you know, like or admire. That's why I joined," he said. "Going back to our poor marketing, when I joined, I didn't even know that my grandfather was a Mason and so were my three uncles. My grandmother was Eastern Star.

"Over time, the transformation came. I began to really understand the messages in each lecture, and I learned that we are all human – you make a mistake but learn from it and keep moving forward."

With encouragement from his friend and brother Archie Smith, he got in the line at his lodge. Along the way, he found more brothers who engaged and encouraged him. He became a certified lecturer.

"DDGL was my path," he said. "If you have a speaking part, you find that you are always engaged."

Raised at Oak Grove #750 in 1999, he is a member and past master of Oak Grove Lodge #750. He also is a charter member of Orphans #761 and Mosaic #762 and honorary member of Eno #210.

He truly has engaged. He has served on virtually every Grand Lodge committee and on the board of the Masonic Home for Children and WhiteStone: A Masonic and Eastern Star Community. ♠

Honor Our Grand Masters by being a part of virtual fun run

Have some real fun and join in the inaugural Grand Masters Fun Run, a virtual contest to honor Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw and GM-Elect David Wicker.

Complete your chosen run or walk by the Grand Lodge officer installation on Dec. 5. Proceeds from the run, which opened for registration on Sept. 25 – the date of the virtual Annual Communication – will raise money for our two Masonic homes. The run is the brainchild of Grand Lodge officers Bobby Rideout and Gilbert Bailey.

This event allows you to choose to participate in a 1K

walk/run (0.62 miles); a 5k run (3.1 miles) or a 10K run (6.2 miles). After you complete your event, send creative proof to event@glnc.us.

The submission can take any form. Some ideas: running data from a smart watch; a selfie of you standing in front of a cool tree/monument/building on your route; maybe even a photo of your route on a map.

You can walk or run for yourself, someone else, your lodge, or in memory of another. Registration costs \$20. Register here: <https://gmrn.eventbrite.com>

Names of participants who complete the event will be published in the *NC Mason* along with the distance they ran/walked.

The editor of the *NC Mason* will select the top three photo submissions and publish them and the names of all the participants.

Questions? Contact is Matthew Robbins, administrative assistant and outreach coordinator at the Grand Lodge, at (919) 787-2021 or mrobbins@glnc.us.

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Grand Master
P. Shaun Bradshaw

Board Of Publication
Kenneth Wayne Lambert, Chairman
Adam Cloninger
Dwight Decoskey
Stan Dodd
Thomas VanEtten

Editor
Beth Grace

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Grand Master P. Shaun Bradshaw.....sbradshaw@glnc.us
Deputy Grand Master R. David Wickerdwicker@glnc.us
Senior Grand Warden Larry B. Thompson Jr.....lthompson@glnc.us
Junior Grand Warden Kevan D. Frazier.....kfrazier@glnc.us
Grand Treasurer Lewis R. Ledford (PGM).....lledford@glnc.us
Grand Secretary T. Walton Clapp III.....wclapp@glnc.us
Senior Grand Deacon Donald E. Kehlerdkehler@glnc.us
Junior Grand Deacon Robert W. Rideout.....trideout@glnc.us
Grand Marshal Steve M. Norris.....snorris@glnc.us
Grand Steward Gilbert D. Baileygbailey@glnc.us
Junior Grand Steward Michael A. Registermregister@glnc.us
Acting Judge Advocate Jimmie B. Hicks
Grand Tyler Gary D. Handy
Assistant Grand Tyler Graham S. Bradshaw
Grand Chaplain Mark M. N. Vickers
Grand Historian Ludwik J. Wodka
Grand Lecturer Christopher L. Wright
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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 PATRERHOOD OF GOD WITHIN THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Tree falling on campus makes sound + an impact

Late one night this summer, along the old farm road on the Masonic Home for Children campus, a tree died.

The oak had been dying for years, for longer than anyone can remember. Nobody knows how old it was. Could have been 50; could have been 150.

Now, a tree might just be a tree. But this one was different. This one was an old friend, a reliable campus landmark and touchstone for generations of MHCO kids. So there was mourning after the tree in the wee hours of that unremarkable night simply let go, dropping its ancient branches in exhaustion and giving way to time, gravity and nature.

When a tree falls in the forest, does it make a sound?

Yes. And it makes an impact.

This tree, one of hundreds of oaks that have guarded the MHCO campus and residents for decades, was truly a *family* tree.

Ask any of the kids who grew up “under the oaks,” as alumni like to say.

One of those kids – a man of years and experience now – talks about the trees as if they were his childhood friends.

“Under any of the trees there, we would marvel at their age and size,” says Amos

Speight, who now serves on the MHCO board of directors. “Every tree meant something to us. It was a place to sit under, to eat an apple under. The trees really had a comforting feeling for us ... and it was something that meant permanence, something that meant stability.”

The death of just any old tree normally would have gone unnoticed, but this death was reported during an MHCO committee meeting. Administrator Kevin Otis broke the news, and you could hear the sad reaction on the conference call.

“What was so special about this tree?” I asked.

Amos didn’t hesitate to talk about it, then Kevin chimed in.

“These trees mean so much to the kids and the staff here,” he said. They have been on campus so long, their personalities have come through and won friends.

He explained that for many MHCO kids, permanence and stability are not the norm in their lives.

They have found that stability in the family cottages protected by the strong branches of the oaks. Their presence – even the leaves they shed by the truckload in the fall – are part of life at the children’s home, part of the scenery.



By Beth Grace
Editor

■ see TREE, page 6

FROM THE GRAND MASTER



Esse Quam Videri, brothers

By P. Shaun Bradshaw
Grand Master

As I sit here writing my final article for the *NC Mason*, I am reflecting on this past year and what I want my closing message to be. It certainly has not been the year I planned and I am confident few, if any of us, anticipated what 2020 had in store.

Yet, despite the many challenges we have faced, I am hopeful that our fraternity can come out stronger if we focus on being what we say we are.

I firmly believe that lodges can once again be a moral and spiritual center for the next generation of men in our communities – we simply need to return to our heritage and take seriously the idea that we are the custodians of symbols rich in moral, ethical, and spiritual teachings.

And here's the thing, I know it can be done.

I have seen lodges with the enthusiasm, desire, and passion (both before and after our pandemic-driven shutdown) to return to our social, charitable, and ritualistic labors. They have shown that the fraternity can thrive again, although maybe not in terms of number of members, but in our impact to ourselves, our charities, and our communities.

Yet I know many of our lodges struggle. The question is, "Why do they struggle?" As I mentioned in my last article, throughout the degree work we ask, "Who comes here?" And while each of us will need to answer that question for ourselves, I think it is equally important for lodges to consider that question as well.

How would your lodge answer the question, "Who comes here?"

► Does your lodge practice meaningful ritual or do you struggle to make the candidate the center of attention?

► Are your meetings focused on education centered on moral, ethical, or philosophical discussions or do you rush to get through the business so you can close and go home?

► Is your lodge building one of the finest edifices in the community or has it fallen into disrepair?

► Is your lodge a frequent promoter in the community or does your community even know you exist?

Think about this. When you petitioned your lodge did you expect the extraordinary or the

ordinary? What did you get? What type of experience does your lodge give candidates today?

As I think about my experience with the Craft over the past year, I am reminded of our state's motto, "Esse Quam Videri" – *to be rather than to seem*, which is taken from a longer quote in Cicero's essay, *On Friendship*: "Virtute enim ipsa non tam multi praediti esse quam videri volunt" or "*Few are those who wish to be endowed with virtue rather than to seem so.*"

Brethren, what are our lodges if they are not a place where men can come together to learn to be endowed with truth and virtue? And yet, too often, these topics are only mentioned during the ritual work and even then, many of the members present have little understanding of the words spoken.

I have seen too many posts on social media, had too many conversations, read too many emails and letters that show many of my brethren leave our teachings in the lodge when they go home.

I recently spoke to a past DDGM who was upset because two young men who had shown interest in the fraternity are now unwilling to petition because of derisive comments and posts they saw from members of the lodge on social media. Their comment to the brother was, "Is this what you teach in Freemasonry?"

Brethren, we need to be what we say we are **because the young men of today want and need what we say we are.** Study after study confirms that these men are aching for a place to learn, to share, to discuss the values, philosophies and mysteries, which our symbols and rituals confer.

However, in order to attract these young men to our lodges we are going to have to shift how we do things today, how we interact with them, and how we interact with each other. I hate to call it out, but we are going to have to change the culture of lingering racism, ageism, and religious intolerance in some of our lodges. These ideas go against the ideals of Brotherly Love which we are taught in the First Degree and will not attract these young men.

Our Masonic forefathers gave us so much to be proud of. Our rituals and symbols, our reputation, our history, and our buildings. Freemasons were once known as protectors of the ideals of the Enlightenment – of science & philosophy, of moral & social understanding, but today many of our members want to commoditize the fraternity – cheapen it – and hold on to a past plagued with intolerance.

Rather we should denounce complacency and intolerance and actively restore our lodge experience to one aligned with our original Enlightenment values.

In short, to attract younger men to our fraternity we must be what we say we are – both inside and outside the lodge!

Before I go, I do want to publicly acknowledge a few important people. First, is my Masonic Father, Most Worshipful Dewey Preslar. I first met Brother Dewey when Brother Larry Thompson and I crashed Most Worshipful Billy Dill's installation banquet. While we were helping ourselves to the buffet, I was asked to come speak with Brother Dewey, who had just been appointed to oversee an Orient-wide fundraiser for the Scottish Rite.

Brother Stan Dodd thought I might be able to assist Brother Dewey by serving on the committee with him and wanted to introduce us. Through our years of working together on the Scottish Rite fundraisers and attending the GAP International training, we came to be close friends. I can only assume that Brother Dewey saw in me some traits he believed would be useful to our fraternity and I am grateful to him for giving me the opportunity to serve our Grand Lodge as Grand Master. Thank you, Dewey.

I also want to thank my family: Sharon, Graham, and Brantleigh. My desire to be a better husband and father is what inspired me to become a Freemason and I hope you trust I made the right decision when I joined. I realize I could not have made this journey without you and it has been even more special having your encouragement and support over the years. I love you all so much and I am deeply grateful to have you in my life.

Freemasonry has been invaluable in shaping me as a husband, father, business man, and citizen. Without this fraternity – this organization dedicated to Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth – so many aspects of my life would be different. I cannot fathom where or who I would be without its influence on me, without YOUR influence on me. So, to all my brethren, thank you for giving me this great and humbling opportunity to serve you. As I said before, it has not been the year I planned, but no matter the circumstance, I am grateful to have been able to serve as the 167th Grand Master of Masons in North Carolina.

Finally, brethren, keep the light and tell your story! ✨

OUR MASONIC CHARITIES AT WORK

MHCO kids learning how to learn online

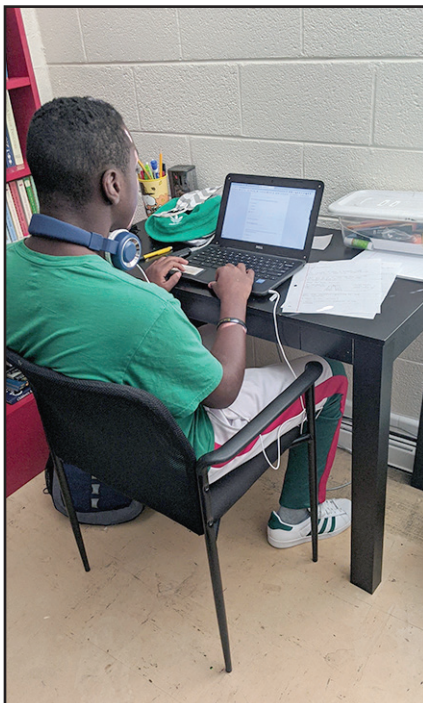
School's in at the Masonic Home for Children. Literally – at the home, and not at school.

Virtual classes began Aug. 17. The work seems to be going well – despite the learning curve of learning to learn online.

Math is the greatest challenge, teachers say, because it's not as easy to learn such complex lessons outside of an in-person class. MHCO has several tutors working to provide skill development and help the children tackle whatever classes are hardest for them.

The work is paying off, it seems. And some kids have really taken to the virtual learning world. In early September, one young resident of MHCO was awarded student of the week for JF Webb High School. One 13-year-old student is earning straight A's for the first time in his life.

Education Coordinator Linda Frederickson has provided great educational opportunities for the summer and has worked with program staff to establish a supportive plan for this school year. She was the key person in managing the program when schools shut down due to the coronavirus. She even personally delivered schoolwork to kids at cottages and their homes.



Tutor Janet Taylor, above right, spends the day helping MHCO kids complete their studies in mini-classes on campus. Tutors say it's harder to learn online than in person with teachers and kids together in a classroom, but it's fun to be together.

Photos courtesy of MHCO

TREE, from page 4

Kids who grew up at MHCO will tell you about their first kiss under one of those trees, the time they read a book that changed their life on a lazy summer afternoon in the shade, the perfect hidey hole they provided during countless games of hide-and-seek.

Once, long ago, they were even a source of income for the kids who grabbed up falling acorns and sold them to neighbors for pennies. Most of the tree have grown where they were planted, but some have even been moved over the years to allow for MHCO expansion – without

losing any of the beloved oaks.

The trees are the longest-lived witnesses of the work done at MHCO, the kids who have arrived in a time of trouble, made it through the dark and emerged strong and ready to tackle life.

To lose even one tree is to lose

part of the home's history. It is no small loss, no small matter.

To remember one is to honor the good work Masons have done here, the help children have found and what seeds we can plant now for the future. ♠

NEWS OF THE CRAFT



‘Pandemic degrees’ let brothers re-engage

Trey Andrews was initiated at Cannon Memorial #626 on Feb. 25. (See above photo) By the end of March, he was ready to stand his advance to the degree of Fellowcraft. But like many others, he ran into the coronavirus pandemic.

Waiting for life to get back to normal, he and his coach Worshipful Brother Richard Secoolish met to refresh his proficiency.

In August, the Grand Master offered to review and approve dispensations to hold outdoor degrees. Master George Maxwell offered his property. Following review and approval by the DDGM, Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw issued a dispensation for 25 attendees, with conditions that the lodge must take health and distancing precautions.

The location was kept secret; attendees had to RSVP to the lodge secretary.

In the meantime, brothers Maxwell, Secoolish, WB Jason Resendes, WB Thomas VanEtten, and B Srujan Katanguri, along with 15-year-old Eagle Scout Andrew VanEtten transported the lodge furniture to the outdoor site.

They painted x's on the ground to represent six feet of distance; the chairs and altar were

specially located to ensure proper distance was maintained. They offered gloves, masks and hand sanitizer at the entrance.

To ensure safety, the lodge invited a doctor (also a brother) to take temperatures and assess any potential medical issues.

With 22 people in attendance, brothers of all ages re-engaged with Masonry. After almost six months of coaching, the candidate was pleased to stand his proficiency and see what the Fellowcraft Degree – this time informally dubbed the “Pandemic Degree” – had to offer.

Earlier in August, with dispensation from Grand Master Bradshaw, Semper Fidelis #680 conferred the first outdoor Master Mason's Degree in Onslow County. (See photo below) Four Fellow Crafts were raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.

DDGM Wes Sales and DDGL Steven Springle were present.

The fellowship enjoyed by those present will not soon be forgotten. Master Jason Caldwell and his officers prepared for and conferred the degree, raising Richard Barbee, Austyn Harrell, and Geoffrey Horning of Semper Fidelis and William Faulkner of Richlands #564. All the necessary safety precautions were met.



HOPE MILLS – Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw makes a stop at Hope Mills to present Worshipful Brother Kenneth Porter with his 70-year certificate and pin at Lebanon #391. Worshipful Brother DDGM James Pugsley, Master Mark Saults, PM Woodrow Inman III Chaplin, PM Bruce Pross, PM Bob Houston, PM Conrad Swick and PM Melvin Dove came for the ceremony. Brother Porter was born in Hope Mills, NC, in 1928 and became a Mason in 1950. He served as Master in 1958. After the ceremony, the Grand Master gave officers some guidance, Masonic education and talked about current events as it pertains to the Craft.



PINEHURST – The brothers of Southern Pines #484 raised more than \$6,000 for Masonic scholarships at its annual golf outing on Aug. 8. The outing at Pinewild attracted 32 golfers and 10 volunteers to help out. Contests were held for some great prizes: a hole-in-one contest to win a Mustang, a silent auction for foursomes at Pinehurst No. 8 and Pinewild and a chance to win a golfcart.

'Let him enter and be received'; but how?

By Donald Street

Hiram #40, Morning Star #85,
Nine Sisters #773

A Masonic solicitant is, theoretically, in darkness. Without light the full beauty of illumination is impossible. The journey towards the light and full illumination begins at this point.

How will he enter? Blind, poor, and barefoot. Societies in all ages have held this point of address for a solicitant to be the most critical. It is the last chance to retire.

From this point forward it becomes the will of the fraternity for the solicitant to continue. "Darkness has, in all systems of initiation, been deemed a symbol of ignorance, and opposed to light, which is the symbol of knowledge. Hence the rule, the eye should not see until the heart has conceived the true nature of those beauties which constitute the mysteries of the Order." (Mackey, 196).

Blind. Arrive in darkness. If found unworthy, leave in darkness.

Poverty reminds him of his destitute condition in regard to the transition of worldly wealth. If found unworthy, leave in poverty. Barefoot, or decalceated, confirms frank bargaining and avoids bringing unclean feet into a holy place, as referenced to God's instruction to Moses at the Burning Bush. (Short Talk Bulletin, Vol. 11, No. 4, April 1933).



These are commonly accepted methods of entry for competing ancient religions.

Into the darkness of reflection passes the solicitant. A rough ashlar seeks to become perfect. As in many historical incidences, reception, as reflected in the ancient roots of Freemasonic entrance, is extremely ritualized for effect.

Dionysus received solicitants blind, poor and nude. The Cult of the Great Mother received solicitants while seated in a taurobolium covered with the blood of a freshly killed bull.

Masonic reception is an activity of reflection. First internally, then externally. Based on the allusion of "torture to the flesh," the degrees can be related to the three degrees of physical torture designed to extract truth from a subject. This three-degree method of interrogation was promulgated by Empress Maria Theresa (1717-1780) in her Habsburg Estates. She was considered an "enlightened monarch" who outlawed flagellation and marriage between members of different religions.

The three degrees of torture, strictly defined, permitted increasingly severe punishments depending upon the recalcitrance of the subject. The last element, "the third degree"

or "grill," requires no further explanation.

The "instrument of torture to the flesh" leads the reflective person to view this recollection as insightful to one's "real person." The "recollection" to one's conscience begs the question, "What kind of person is one?"

Upon such recollection, will one achieve a full and honest self-assessment? Is one the quality of human to whom recollection, but not the actual application, of torture possesses any validity?

In 1955, two psychologists, Joseph Luft and Harrington Inghram, developed a technique for self-examination. The Johari Window, a combination of the creators' first names, is designed for heuristic (enabling a person to learn for himself) exercises. The objective of the activity is to improve one's perceptual process. It centers on four quadrants:

- ✦ Open space: things about self, known to self, and things about self that are known to others.
- ✦ Blind Spot: things unknown to self, but known to others.
- ✦ Hidden Area: things known to oneself, and unknown to others.
- ✦ Unknown Area: things unknown to oneself, and unknown to others.

The mystery unfolds as "recollection to my conscience." Are these parroted words or a life changing experience. If Freemasonry is to

make good men better, then a realistic assessment of oneself is a basic tenet of "recollection to my conscience."

Does one really know oneself? The easiest person to mislead is oneself. One of J.P. Morgan's most popular quotations concerning the real life man is "man has two reasons for what he does: a good reason and the real reason."

Is the solicitant becoming a Freemason for good reason, i.e., to study, learn, improve oneself, make society a better place, or the real reason, i.e., to make connections, to assist oneself financially, politically, or socially, or the reverse? In the cool darkness it is time for recollection. What is one really?

The often quoted "to thy own self be true," attributed to Shakespeare, Socrates, Plato, and others, is at this point of one's reception the moment of perfect reflection. Has one considered our cardinal virtues, our points of entrance, the tenets of our profession? NO! These are unknown at this time, but soon to be revealed, explained, and hopefully, understood and internalized as guideposts for a long and credible Masonic career.

Our travels begin into the inner sanctum of the tiled recesses. Soon the solicitant will be confronted and, with great hope and joy, hear the welcome words "give me your right hand." ✦

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Well, here we are, eight months into a new way of living!

Who would have ever thought that such an event could reshape our world? It has messed with our lodge meetings, our fellowship, our fundraisers, and now (it will already happened by the time you read this), Grand Lodge.



Life is different and I believe it will never return to the way it used to be, at least in our lifetime.

But you know, that is what makes history. Changing times to meet the extended and necessary needs of a society today. Then we look back on what was and that constitutes our history.

If we look at scripture, in all the Holy Books, history has changed. Sure, we attempt, in faith communities to align ourselves with what "had been" in order to understand how to act and react in today's world, but we will never be able to recreate the past. For me, that is what makes it so exciting! When we take a look at what was in our

past, what formed us, shaped us, and moved us forward and then to see how that shapes us today.

I see a lot of similarity in the way in which Masonry will take shape over the next decade as well. Some things will remain the same; the foundation of our fraternity, the promises we made, the ritual(s) to a degree, those things and others will remain constant I am sure.

Yet, how we address these in the wake of a changing culture will take time. I'm not referring to just a pandemic, but the changing times of history.

I was reading in an appendant body periodical last night and I was amazed at the number of times certain rituals and degrees and practices had changed in that appendant body in the course of a 10-year period in the late 1800's. Changes were impacted by world history events, forward thinkers and pioneers in the fraternity, and the way life was lived among other things and the change worked out for the better.

As I reflect upon the changes

Exhausted? Don't forget to ask for help

By the time this edition of the Mason arrives, the 233rd Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge will be over. This year's annual meeting was a first — it was virtual. I cannot deny that the planning that went into this year's event was exhausting.

But even as I look forward to the post-Annual Communication season, I anticipate the meeting was successful, and at the least a fantastic learning opportunity and insight into the future. I am excited for what we did and will be able to do in the future. And, so, I take a step back, take a deep breath, and press on.

Still, at the moment, I am exhausted. The pandemic, social discord, and this virulent political season overwhelms me, and I know, many of you, too. Brethren, I'm concerned that many of you are burned out and ready to give up.

Since the middle of the summer, several Masters and Secretaries have called the office and said in no uncertain terms that their lodge is dead and ready to turn in the charter. Brethren lament that no one is willing to participate, that they can't — or won't — pay their dues because, "Why should I pay, we're not meeting?" Sadly, some Masters have called in and just said, "I'm tired. I'm done. So, how do I get my charter to you?"

Brethren, a lodge is more than a meeting. A lodge is more than dues.

A lodge is more than a building. And if you don't realize that, you need to find another organization. Don't destroy a lodge because of your own apathy. A lodge's life cycle is not based on one man's bias. The heartbeat of a lodge is a group of friends who know how to interact outside of a ritual space.

There is a gift in knowing when to throw in the towel. A graceful tactical retreat is always better than a nosedive. But, brethren, have you considered every possibility? Have you tried engaging the next generation? Have you tried to pass the torch?

Have you called the Grand Lodge office for help?

I think I'm most upset because the lodges that have called me over the last few months have given the Grand Lodge no notice that they were in trouble. You cannot expect change if you don't ask for help. I've written several articles offering such help. So I'll just say again: the Grand Lodge office is the champion of the lodges. We want you to succeed. We want you to thrive. We have a quiver full of resources we can put at your disposal to help rebuild or reinvent your lodge.

There are very few lodges that couldn't use just a few petitions to reinvigorate them. Remember, bigger is not better. Large lodges are not the answer. Small lodges of friends are. If you merge two sorry lodges, all you're going to get is one

bigger sorry lodge. If your lodge is small, celebrate it and get to know each other better. It's easier to know 25 men than 250.

Redefining your perception of success may be the answer. Maybe you need new officers? Lodge renewal is not instantaneous. We're builders, and solid construction takes time and effort.

Lodges also require money. Some lodges are going dark because they can't pay the bills. Brethren, before I was a Mason, I was a Jaycee, and treasurer of our club in Marion. Our club was constantly broke. No one wanted to pay, they just wanted to play. I have never been more embarrassed than hoping a check would float until I could make a deposit. I swore then I would never be a member of an organization that did not have money to operate.

What does your lodge mean to you? How do you value your lodge? And, do you value your brethren?

There's another piece that troubles me. Some of these lodges going dark have express instructions on how their funds, building, and furniture are to be handled — which is perfectly fine. If a lodge can, it may merge with another lodge. Essentially, a new lodge will be born with the assets of both lodges. If a lodge goes dark without merging, its assets go to the North Carolina Masonic Foundation to benefit our charities. The Grand Lodge does not receive any piece of a defunct lodge, except its records, and the discretion to help the Foundation find homes for furniture (columns, chairs, jewels, etc.) or determine the value of that furniture for sale to benefit of the

charities.


What bothers me is that some lodges say they don't want to merge with a nearby lodge because they don't want "those" brethren to have access to their assets. Or, they don't want "that" charity to benefit from their property. And, the most prevalent, "we don't want the Grand Lodge to get anything." Well, brethren, the Grand Lodge does not get a thing.

Let me be clear. If your lodge is on its deathbed and more concerned with the disposition of its property, then your charter belongs on a shelf in the Grand Lodge basement.

Brethren, we need to fight for the integrity of our fraternalism. I know we're all tired—physically, mentally, and spiritually. But we can't give up. We can't let go of what Freemasonry is.

Now, more than ever, the world needs men of honor. We need men outside sectarian political squabbles and divisive social ailments to fill our lodge rooms and be our friends. We need unselfish men who can see an issue from both sides, calm our weary minds, and lead us into a common bond that builds spiritual temples, not divisive walls.

We are not Democrats. We are not Republicans. We are not Liberals. We are not Conservatives. We are Brothers.

Check on your brethren. Relieve your brethren. Care for your brethren. And, expect that care in return. The joy of our successes and camaraderie defines us as Masons. Are we really our Brother's keeper? 



By *Walt Clapp*
Grand Secretary

More of Annual Communication

At left, GM Shaun Bradshaw presents Mack Sigmon with his Past Grand Master pin. At right, District 7 checks in during an online roll call to determine the number of delegates in attendance.



From the Grand Historian

Cerneau's Last Stand: Winston-Salem 1914

By Ludwik Wodka
Grand Historian

In 1907, The Commonwealth of Virginia held a celebration to mark the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Jamestown Settlement in Virginia. Among the numerous visitors that year was a Mason named Daniel Barton from Winston-Salem.

During his visit, he encountered J.H. Messenger, who piqued his interest in the Scottish Rite degrees. Unbeknownst to him, was that the Scottish Rite Messenger spoke of was "the Supreme Council, A.A.S.R., for the United States of America, their Territories and Dependencies, Orient of New York," a body that traced its origin to Joseph Cerneau, a Masonic impostor. It was regarded as clandestine by the Grand Lodge of North Carolina.

Brother Barton returned to his home in Winston-Salem where approximately 25 brethren also expressed interest in organizing a Scottish Rite body. A deputy was sent to Winston-Salem to communicate all the degrees, 4°-32°, for a sum of \$25 per member, all in a

single day.

PGM Walter S. Liddell heard about this activity and sent a message to the brethren at Salem Lodge warning them that joining this clandestine body would jeopardize their membership in the Grand Lodge.

The brethren of Salem Lodge reached out to brothers Liddell, Grand Master Samuel M. Gattis, and Mr. M.W. Bayliss of the Cerneau Council, inviting them to Winston-Salem in hopes of clearing up any misunderstanding. Brother Liddell showed up but only spoke with the brethren of Salem #289, and refused to meet with Bayliss.

Bayliss, indignant at being slighted by Brother Liddell, then chose to travel to the Grand Master's home in Hillsboro for a private audience. The conversation was very brief, with the Grand Master stating that

he "will be governed by what Liddell recommends." Bayliss returned to Washington, and awaited a formal response.

The Grand Master appointed a committee to investigate the matter. They stated at the Grand Lodge convocation of 1909 that a resolution adopted in 1892 declaring the Cerneau Council clandestine was still in force. Because of language in the committee report describing the Cerneau bodies as "spurious," "bogus," and "clandestine," the Cerneau Supreme Council filed a lawsuit in civil court in Winston-Salem, claiming malicious libel.

A trial was held on Nov. 9-11, 1914. PGM Gattis and SGW Andrews, representing the Grand Lodge, were both prominent attorneys.

The defense pointed out that

nearly every other Grand Lodge in the United States by that point had taken some kind of action against the Cerneau bodies. The Grand Lodge of North Carolina was recognized as the supreme authority in all Masonic matters in the state, thus upholding its 1892 interdict. Although the plaintiff's attorney objected that the interdict was "incompetent and immaterial."

The court dismissed the suit on the grounds that the matter lacked sufficient grounds for legal action.

Though Bayliss appealed the outcome, nothing further became of the suit.

Being blocked from nearly every Grand Jurisdiction in the United States, and now legal precedent against his Supreme Council, the fortunes of the Cerneau bodies had now reduced them to a fringe element in the Masonic world, terminally branded as clandestine and bogus.

Five years after the trial, in 1919, Bayliss passed away, and with him, the Cerneau bodies' bid for mainstream legitimacy. ✦



The infamous Joseph Cerneau

Masonic education lives on even in pandemic

By Matt Parker
Wendell #565

As Jeff Goldblum said in the 1993 movie Jurassic Park: "Life finds a way."

In the era of COVID-19, Masonry likewise finds a way. In early March 2020, just before the start of the stay-at-home orders and self-quarantines, brothers and lodges from around the country leapt into action and began hosting virtual Masonic education presentations with some of the top Masonic scholars and speakers in North America, as well as local brothers who had invaluable knowledge and wisdom to share.

Many lodges and Masonic organizations began to utilize the various virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom, WebEx, and others.

The demand for Masonic education and brotherly fraternalization continues despite lodges going dark. A great side effect of all of the virtual presentations and discussions is brothers who

may have remained at a perpetual distance have formed what promises to be lifelong friendships.



Matt Parker

In North Carolina, several lodges and Masonic bodies use virtual platforms as well, including State College #770, Raleigh #500, University #408, the Raleigh Valley of the Scottish Rite, the North Carolina Masonic Research Society, and many others.

While, as of this writing, we cannot perform our ritual or meet together as brothers in the same sacred space, we can still share in the knowledge and fraternalization offered by the Craft.

As a result of the sudden explosion of virtual education and presentations, a group of brothers

from many states came together for the Refracted Light Facebook group and YouTube channel to serve as a central hub for accessing these incredible presentations, most of which are recorded and can be viewed at a later time.

The biggest takeaway from the virtual presentations is that brothers around the world are hungry for Masonic education and enlightenment, and North Carolina is on the forefront of an incredible movement sweeping our fraternity.

While we look forward to the day when things return to normal, the virtual education experience may truly be a new normal for our Craft for years to come.

Here's how to find Refracted Light on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/refract-edlight/>

You can access and subscribe to YouTube versions of the classes by searching for Refracted Light Masonry on YouTube.com. ✦

Teacher, traveler, leader: PGM Charles Lewis passes

Charles Albert Lewis Jr., who loved teaching, traveling and his Masonic brethren, died Aug. 5 at the age of 83.

He served as Grand Master in 2003, capping a Masonic career that began in the 1960s and never waned. He was an active member of St. John's #1, Stokesdale #428 and Wilkerson College #760.

He served as Master of Homer #52 in New York state, where he had been raised. After moving to North Carolina, he continued his active membership. As Grand Master, his themes were "The Best Is Yet to Come" and "Good Is the Enemy of Great."

His year was briefly interrupted when he had to undergo surgery to replace an aortal valve. He managed to conduct 26 of 41 scheduled District Meetings; fellow Grand Line officers conducted the rest.

He remained busy even after his tenure as Grand Master ended, serving on the Committees on Masonic Education and Fraternal Correspondence and on the North Carolina Eagle Scout Task force.

He was also an ardent supporter of the North Carolina Masonic Foundation and our Masonic charities. His family asked for donations in his name to be made to the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford.

He grew up with his sister and two brothers in Port Washington, NY. He is survived by his wife, Helga Maria Gunkel Lewis; daughters, Dr. Kirstin Helga Lewis Hansford and husband Mark; Heidi Marie Lewis Vincent and husband Jason; his sister, Ann Caroline



Lewis Walter (George) and brother, Burchard Hults Lewis (Antoinette). He was predeceased by his brother, Edward Thomas Lewis.

Charles received a B.S. from SUNY Maritime College; master's degree in education from Hofstra University, an M.A. from C.W. Post College, and a Ph.D. from New York University.

Charles sailed intermittently from 1959-1969 as a licensed deck officer in the U.S. Merchant Marine. He retired as a lieutenant in the U.S. Naval Reserve.

He retired as Professor Emeritus from the University of North Carolina-Wilmington. While there, he served as department chairman and received the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Distinguished Teaching Professorship. He also taught at Hunter College (NYC), the University of New Hampshire, SUNY Cortland, Georgia College and State University, and Cape Fear Community

College. Other pursuits included more than 50 years with the Boy Scouts of America, where he received the Silver Beaver and Vigil Honor.

In addition to his work as a Grand Officer, he served as the Grand High Priest of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of North Carolina. Charles was honored to serve as Master of Internet Lodge #9659 under the United Grand Lodge of England in 2007. He received the honor of Past Provincial Senior Grand Warden in the Province of East Lancashire. He was an Honorary Member of many Masonic lodges around the world, including Paumanok-Port Washington #855 New York, and the Lodge of The Holy Land #50 in Israel. He was the recipient of many Masonic honors, including the 33rd degree of the Scottish Rite. He was especially proud to serve as President of National Sojourners Chapters in Warner Robins, Ga., and Jacksonville, N.C. The Grand Oriente of Brasil presented several recognitions to Charles. He also was a member of the Shrine in Mecca and Sudan Temples.

Cremation was followed by a memorial service at Carolina Beach Presbyterian Church, with Masonic Rites, U.S. Navy Flag Ritual, and Maritime College tolling of Eight Bells. Final internment will be in the family plot in Port Washington.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the Celebration of Life ceremony was postponed until a later date to be announced. ❖

WELCOME OUR NEW BROTHERS

Leslie, David Adams	91	Western Star
Flynn, Michael Dane	292	French Broad
Childress Jr, David Howard	322	Granite
Strickland, Robert Dale	428	Stokesdale
Robertson, John Ross	431	Relief
Watkins, Marshall Edward	482	Polk County Unity
Dillard, Steve Michael	552	Revolution
Hinkle, Ryan Keith	552	Revolution
Faulkner, William Lee	564	Richlands
Barbee, Richard Stanley	680	Semper Fidelis
Harrell, Austyn Avery	680	Semper Fidelis
Horning, Geoffrey David	680	Semper Fidelis

CHAPLAIN from page 8

we have seen over the past eight months, I have to consciously remind myself not to be disheartened because changes have happened before and they will happen again. Just as in scripture and the life of faith communities; change will continue. Just as in the lodge, if we fail to advance the way we were taught, change will not take place and we will certainly die as a fraternity.

My Brothers, take heart, embrace the change, be proactive, be instrumental in making sure that when change does come, we are ready to advance as we were taught in order that history will speak well of us in the future.

PRAYER: Grand Architect of the Universe, help us this day and in the days to come to embrace the change in our lives, to make the best of our God-given talents, and share with those what we have learned as we advance forward into a new and different world. SMIB-AMEN.

Sincerely and Fraternally,

Rev. Mark M. Vickers

Grand Chaplain

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Incoming GM to start term in uncertain times



page 4

Fallen tree at MHCO makes impact



page 7

'Pandemic degrees' keep Masons engaged

On the cover

A wide-shot view of the meeting room for the 2020 Annual Communication in Winston-Salem. Photo by Jonathon Underwood.

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