

NORTH CAROLINA THE MASON

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January/February 2021



Christopher Fundanish, Raleigh #500 (second from left) and four friends ran 3.1 miles in 24:37 on Nov. 4

Virtual fundraiser nets nearly \$2K for Masonic charities

*By Beth Grace
Mason Editor*

Let's face it. Life has been rough lately. The news, the weather, the pandemic have hit us all and wrapped us up in more than our fair share of gloom.

We can't do much about all of that. We can stay home, wear masks of many colors, watch every show on Netflix and Prime, and Zoom until we simply can't bear one more Zoom call.

But we need more.

Fun. That's it. That's what's been missing.

For most Freemasons, fun is critical to

the Craft. Good works and good men need a good laugh every now and then. Which brings us to the Grand Master's Fun Run.

If you missed it, you missed out. Masons and their friends – and families, brothers, sisters, and even their dogs teamed to be part of the first virtual statewide fundraiser ever offered by Masons in North Carolina.

All you had to do was enter, make a run, document it with a fun photo of your feet or watch or even yourself, and share why you ran. For an entry fee of \$20, brethren and their friends got a chance to make a

■ see RUN, page 2





Tracy Armwood
 Mark Bagley
 William Barton
 Dan Beal
 Alvin Billings
 Jimmy Dean Blair
 James Blankenship
 Shaun Bradshaw
 Virginia Brooks
 John Burchfield
 Elvandro de Azevedo Burity
 Jay Callahan
 Warren Campbell
 Ron Coleman
 Earl Creutzburg
 James Dacey Jr.
 Marie Dunn
 Scott Edwards
 Chad Everett
 Charles Fiore
 John Frechette
 Chris Fundanish
 Richard Gelsomino
 Gregory Goolishian
 Speed Hallman
 Steve Hamlin
 Lynn Hill
 Brett Huffman
 Dennis Hutchinson
 Sam Isham
 Louis Jeroslow
 Philip Johnson
 Ralph Jones
 Mark Kolada
 Terry Kuhn

Peter Kurtz
 Steve Lengyel
 Mark Lewis
 Alan Mabry
 Tom McDonough
 Robert McLaughlin
 Bobby Meadows
 Ian Moorees
 Keith Morgan
 John-David Morris
 Richard Needham
 Alejandro Ortiz
 Kevin Otis
 James Pugsley
 Bruce Putnam
 Francesco Ria
 Robert Rideout
 Jim Roche
 Dalton L Rouse
 Dwight Sigmon
 Dave Smith
 Phillip Smith
 James Stem
 Ronald Taylor
 Adam Taylor
 Calvin Travers
 Ryan Walker
 J. Gregory Wallace
 Jeff Walters
 Dave Washington
 Bryant Webster
 Kenneth Wical
 Anonymous

RUN, from page 1

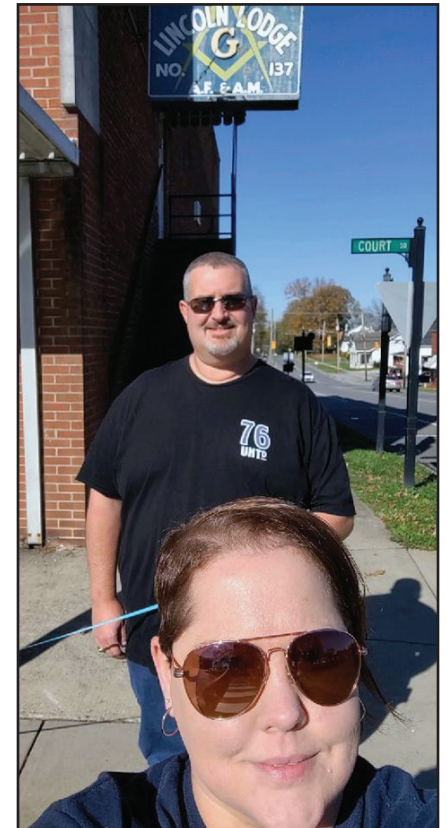
little Masonic history, and to financially support on to our Masonic charities.

The run, the idea of Senior Grand Deacon Bobby Rideout, generated ticket sales (\$20 apiece) of just shy of \$2,000. To honor our outgoing Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw and welcome the new, R. David Wicker Jr., 73 people sent in pictures of their run or walk.

So for a little good news for a change, enjoy a few minutes of generosity, good intentions and fresh air. Check out some photos from the run ... And watch for the second annual fun run later this year! 🏃



Phillip Smith of Forsyth #707 ran 3.26 miles in 32:55 on Nov. 21.



Dan and Emily Beal – he of Cookeville #502 and she of OES Lincoln #114 – and their dog Cooper walked in memory of Dan's grandparents, Andy and Hazel Andrews.



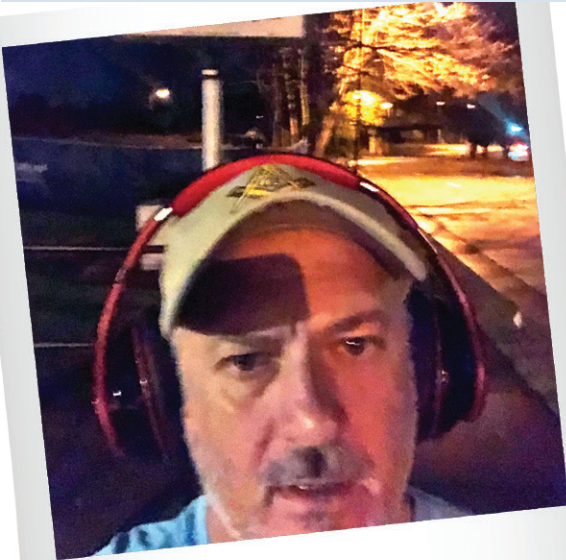
Chad Everett, Hibriten Lodge #262, ran 3.25 miles in 1:01:53 in a December rain.

NORTH CAROLINA THE MASON DEADLINES

Want to get your lodge news out? Here are the deadlines to meet to get your news to ncmason@glnc.us.

March 5 — Issue arrives at your home end of April
 May 5 — Issue arrives at your home end of June
 July 5 — Issue arrives at your home end of August
 Sept. 5 — Issue arrives at your home end of October





Running at MHCO



Having fun at WhiteStone



These shoes were made for running!

A sampling of some participants in the first-ever Grand Master's run in 2020



Mountain trails



NORTH CAROLINA THE MASON

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Grand Historian Daniel F. Finch
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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

My advice: Turn to Twain for strength in New Year

As I write this, it's days and days after Christmas, which means one thing: the tree needs to come down.

That's the rule. Well, it's my rule. Near the 12th Day of Christmas, the day we remember the three wise men making it to Bethlehem, a tree falls in the forest of storage boxes in my living room. My rule is not based on any deep theological meaning; it's based on the fact it took so long to put up, I get tired just thinking about putting it all away.

But, as the new year gets going, I make time in my busy after-work hours – when normally I'd be watching reruns of *Law & Order* and *Life Below Zero* – to start removing the ornaments.

Which brings me to Mark Twain. And thoughts of the year ahead.

I love Mark Twain, a good and true Freemason, because he was funny, wrote like a dream, and spoke truth to authority. I also love him because he's like part of my family. He has been with me always.

For example, my parents grew up in Elmira, NY. Any good Twain fan knows that Elmira is where he married local girl Olivia Langdon, and where they lived for some 20 summers. It's where he wrote much of *Huck Finn* and *Tom Sawyer*. It's where he is buried.

It's also the home of his study, which moved in the 1950s from its original home on a hill overlooking the city to the campus of Elmira College – just a block north of my grandmother's house. My sisters and cousins would, year-round, run up the street to play in the study, which was always unlocked. Inside was his desk and chair, an inkwell and quill, and his wire glasses. Well, folks SAID they were his. We didn't care. We played with everything.

Years later, the study was locked up and security protections were installed. Who knew leaving an historic artifact open all the time would attract vandals and curious kids?

Anyway, I loved that old study and was delighted when my aunt, who still lives near Elmira, sent me a tiny brass replica for my tree. Taking it off the tree sends me down memory



lane, which then sends me to my collection of Twain books, which gives me the fuel I need to head into a new year.

And I don't know about you, but I need some extra fuel this year. I'm exhausted from the wars and wounds of 2020, and praying for a better 2021 for every last one of us.

As the year dawns, COVID still rules. Lodges are closed. Meetings are cancelled. People are fighting everywhere about everything. We can for now do nothing but settle deeper into our worn office and easy chairs at home.

It makes me tired ... until I break out the Twain. He gives me hope. He gives me a laugh. He gives me fuel for the journey.

I share some of my favorite quotes with you. Here's to a great year.

☞ "Do something every day that you don't want to do; this is the golden rule for acquiring the habit of doing your duty without pain."

☞ "It's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog."

☞ "Sanity and happiness are an impossible combination."

☞ "I've had a lot of worries in my life, most of which never happened."

Finally, my favorite. It never fails:

☞ "It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt." ♠



By Beth Grace
Editor

FROM THE GRAND MASTER



Thoughts, words, deeds matter

By R. David Wicker Jr.
Grand Master

As 2020 ended and the new year began, I was putting together my thoughts with regard to my next article in the *NC Mason*. To be honest, drafting these articles is somewhat of a chore.

Yes, lawyers have to be writers. But the briefs and memoranda I have written over the years have come much easier. As a lawyer, the facts and the law are given to me; I don't create them myself. I just have to put pen to paper and present to the court my argument as to how the law should be applied to the facts that are presented in my case.

But having to sit down and create an article from nothing, whether it proves to be interesting or not, is something at which I am much less skilled.

My article was in draft form, needing only to be edited. As I was finishing up, to my shock, horror and disbelief, I had to stop and witness the violence that unfolded in our nation's Capitol.

I had to tell myself repeatedly that this does not happen in the United States of America. Surely, we were witnessing something that was occurring in some third-world country.

It can't be happening here, because we are the bastion for freedom. We are the light that others only dream to live by. We are the gold standard for the world.

I set aside my draft. Although analyzing the current events through the application of our Masonic teachings would result in an entire treatise on the subject, I felt that, that as Grand Master, it was important for me to address these events through my simple thoughts as a Freemason. My discussion focuses only on the events that occurred on Jan. 6. Matters occurring during the term of office of other Grand Masters were addressed by those Grand Masters. I fully supported the actions of my Grand Master as he went through and struggled with the issues that were presented before him.

My discussion herein is not intended to be political. Nor is it my intention to lecture anyone with regard to how they should think or what they should believe, so long as it is not contrary to or inconsistent with the duties and obligations of a Freemason. Other than that,

how one chooses to think, feel or believe is not for me to say.

There is a reason politics and religion are not debated within our lodges. These topics cause passions to run high. Some are certain their position regarding politics and religion is the only morally correct position. No amount of discussion or information to the contrary will sway them.

Others may have an opposite view. History has often shown us that during times of war, the combatants praying to the same God are absolutely certain

that God is on their side. Both combatants believe that theirs is the morally correct position.

It is more likely that God is not on either side as, in my humble opinion, God abhors the wars that kill his children.

It is my humble opinion that what happened in Washington on Jan. 6 was not a matter of patriotism nor love of country. It was not right vs. left, liberal vs. conservative or Republican vs. Democrat. What happened was a matter of right vs. wrong.

I speak out against the wrong. That wrong is anger, hatred, violence.

I do not speak in support of any political ideology over another, but to denounce the use of anger, hatred, and violence, by anyone to attempt to force their ideology upon another. I speak out not to blame one side or the other. Neither side has a monopoly on these vices. I speak out to acknowledge the wrong so that dialogue can begin as to how to address it and how to correct this wrong.

We do not need to place blame on one side or the other for the civil unrest we have for too long experienced. We need to learn to subdue our passions, listen to one another and work together to fix the problem. If we fix the problem, then there is no blame to place.

So, I ask, if Freemasonry is relevant today, what can we communicate to our nation? When I was installed as the Master of my lodge, certain regulations of Free and Accepted Masons were explained to me. These regulations were intended to point out to me the duties, not only of the Master, but of the duties and obligations of every Freemason.

Before being installed, I was required to

publicly agree to support these principles. Since that time, I have installed the officers of various lodges. In doing so, I have required the Master to publicly agree to support those same obligations. Reflecting on these principles and obligations, I believe that the application of our Masonic teachings is needed as much today, if not more so, than it has ever been before.

It is the duty of every Freemason to be a good man and to strictly obey the moral law. We are to be peaceable subjects, and to cheerfully conform to the laws of our country.

The United States Constitution guarantees that the government will not interfere with its citizens' rights of free speech and to peaceably assemble. However, those rights are not unlimited. (Note: The U.S. Consti-

tution and Anderson's Constitutions of Free Masons of 1723 have many similarities that will not be addressed in this article. However, I would recommend that discussion as a topic of Masonic education for your Lodge.)

For example, you have no right to yell fire in a crowded movie theatre. That is an example of speech that endangers the rights and safety of others and is not constitutionally protected. Peaceably assembling to protest any grievance is permitted. But pushing aside barricades, smashing windows and violently occupying both chambers of Congress to prevent them from their work are not examples of being a peaceably subject and cheerfully conforming to the laws of our country.

It is the duty of every Freemason to avoid plots and conspiracies against government, but patiently to submit to the decisions of the supreme legislature. Further, we agree to pay proper respect to the civil magistrate.

Brethren, in part, the duties and prerogatives that the CODE gives the Grand Master are the authority to make determinations and interpretations regarding Masonic questions and issues. My interpretation of this duty is that as Freemasons, we are to live within the laws and decisions of the supreme legislature; that being the laws enacted by our local, state and federal governments.

If we do not like or agree with a certain law, we work within our system of government to

So, I ask, if Freemasonry is relevant today, what can we communicate to our nation?

■ see WICKER, page 7

As world changes, look for the opportunities

As we approach the spring and look back over the past year, I can say with certainty that the past 365 days have been anything but normal.

I remember hearing about COVID-19 on the news at the Grand Secretary's Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, in February 2020. I came in late to the conversation because Jonathan Underwood and I had just introduced our conference's keynote speaker, David Browning, a North Carolina Mason who spoke eloquently about membership loss and his research on Freemasonry's future — what men expect out of our institution — friendship, camaraderie, support, and something greater than themselves to participate in.

How little we knew, or could know, how the world would change within a matter of days.

But, brethren, the world has not changed for the worse. What we have seen presented before us are opportunities.

When we could not meet, our Grand Master urged us to embrace technology and meet virtually. When we thought we had lost touch, we dove into a campaign to contact and speak with every

brother.

When social and civil unrest threatened our cities and attempted to divide us, our Grand Lodges met together in unity to profess to the world why Masonry is relevant and uniting.

All year you called the office and shared your stories of reconnecting with lost brothers. Of teaching older brothers how to use computers and electronic devices. Of adapting to our new surroundings to conduct socially distanced degree work.

We walked together and talked together to better understand our neighbors' plight and points of view. I hope each and every one of you know that Masonry stepped up and entered the 21st Century with a brighter future than ever.

Brethren, 2020 was a very stressful year. And stress does one of two things. It can crush you, or it can form you into a diamond. I want to think most of us took the opportunity to absorb the stress and learn to reflect light to the world.

There are still challenges ahead of us. Political polarization threatens to rip the nation and our fraternity apart. I urge you to think carefully about how you feel, then think just as carefully about what those who

think differently from you feel.

After our cities were rocked by social injustice, murder, racism, marches, protests, and riots did you consider that the other side's concerns were as valid as your own? Did you try to reach out to someone with a different viewpoint and understand their pain?

Now, I am concerned about what happened at the Capitol. I am concerned for the police involved who were attacked. I wonder what would have happened had the Representatives or Senators been captured by the mob. I believe many attended that event, including some members of the fraternity, intending only to express their constitutional right to protest.

But, somewhere, something went wrong. I want to think many of those who found themselves in the middle of the tumult might have recognized the error of their way. I want to think they thought better of the situation and left the area.

I hope those people look inward and seriously contemplate their actions, for those actions were not appropriate to the function of an open, free government.

Those actions are not the actions of Freemasons.

I stand solidly beside our Grand Master and the statement he made after our nation's Capitol was overrun by extremists and terrorists. And I find it difficult to comprehend how someone can claim to be

a Freemason and a Klan member, Proud Boy, QAnon disciple, or Neo-Nazi. Those groups are not fraternal and have no place in our fraternity. They seek to pit people against people. Freemasonry seeks to unite men from all races, creeds, colors, and persuasions. That is our strength.

There was some dissension over the events at the Capitol, but there has been so much more positive and constructive conversation. We can talk and we can listen, and that is how we build fraternity and understanding.

I cannot be more proud to be a brother to the hundreds of Freemasons who have supported this message through positive emails, letters, phone calls, and text messages. The outpouring of solidarity is overwhelming and reaffirms my faith in our Masonic institution and the direction in which it is headed. We can best work and best agree.

We have grown a lot this past year. We have flexed our minds, and it shows. That is what Freemasonry teaches us to do.

Thank you, brethren, for all you do for each other, for our communities, for our nation, and for the world. We have come so far and have a bright future ahead. Keep the faith. Share the light.

And, remember, every human being has a claim on our kind offices. ✦



By Walt Clapp
Grand Secretary

THE PRAYER CORNER

By Rev. Mark M. Vickers
Past Grand Chaplain

The new year has made its entrance, we are two months into what could appear to be another somewhat unusual year. It's interesting that for so many years we have assumed that a new year was in some way supposed to replicate the past year. I believe that we can put that ideology to rest after 2020.

Yet, in a fraternity that tends to place some basic tenets in repetition, I yearn for some of the past, some of the same, some comfort

in knowing that what we do as brothers is repetitive and will never change.

As we move through the stages of life, both in age progression, maturity, and responsibility I believe we long to have the good things fall into place. For things that fall into place give us comfort, and the Grand Architect in our lives surely knows that we need comfort now, this year. So, as we hopefully move back into the work of the lodge, we must keep the basic tenets at hand. Practice good hygiene, stay healthy, keep

your distance if you don't feel well, and if you have a good looking mask, wear it! It is with those basic tenants and caring for one another that we will be able to replicate what has happened in the past to a certain extent.

I want to draw on something from my faith tradition as a United Methodist that I believe sets all of us on the same course of brotherhood and obligation. Our founder John Wesley, in his basic rules, reminds us that one of the great connectors to the Grand Architect is to do no harm! There are many

ways to put that principle into practice and I encourage you, as diverse as we are in Masonry, to make that a prime condition for the way in which we live our lives. For it is practicing that principle we illustrate in so many ways, what Masonry is all about. Do no harm and have a great 2021!!

PRAYER: Grand Architect, we come to you seeking comfort and solace in the midst of turmoil every day. Calm our hearts, minds, and spirits and help us to be rays of light in a dark world. SMIB. AMEN.

■ WICKER, from page 5

peacefully change the law. But, until then, we abide by that law.

The same is true as it relates to our Masonic CODE. If we do not like or agree with a provision of the CODE, we must properly submit an amendment to be considered and voted upon by the Craft. Once the Craft has voted, we abide by the majority of those who voted. But as with our other obligations, we don't pick and choose which portions of the CODE we will abide by and which we will not. We abide by it all.

We agree to respect the decisions of the civil magistrates. This means we must honor and abide by the decisions of the courts, subject to the right of proper appellate review.

My brothers, 50 percent of all lawyers lose 100 percent of all cases. What that means is that in every case, one side or the other loses. In practicing law for more than 35 years, there have been cases I have lost where I do not believe the judge or jury made the correct decision. But in each case, whether I agreed with the decision or not, it was my obligation to respect the decision of the court. It is that respect that we pay to our system of government and to our courts that allows us to live civilly with one another, even if we have disagreements.

It is the duty of every Freemason to promote the general good of society and to propagate the knowledge of our arts. My brothers, we do that in part by application of our Masonic working tools and learning to subdue our passions.

By the square we are taught to regulate our actions by rule and line and to harmonize

our conduct by the principle of morality and virtue.

By the compasses we learn to limit our desires in every station.

By the rule we punctually observe our duties, press forward in the path of virtue and neither inclining to the right nor to the left, in all our actions have eternity in view.

By the line we are taught the criterion of moral rectitude.

And, by the tyler's sword we are constantly reminded to set a guard at the entrance of our thoughts, to place a watch at the door of our lips to post a sentinel at the avenues of our actions, there by excluding every unqualified and

unworthy thought, word and deed.

The anger, hatred, violence we have experienced is destroying us as a country and as a society. Beware of those who promote the anger and hatred of others. They do so only for their personal gain and advantage.

Anger, hatred and violence promoted or exhibited by anyone, on any side, should be called out as wrong. And I do so here and now.

The violent actions of others should never be used to try and justify a violent reprisal. Anger will beget only anger. Hatred will beget only hatred. Violence will beget only violence.

But, friendship will beget friendship, morality will beget morality and brotherly love will beget brotherly love. That, my brothers — friendship, morality and brotherly love — will allow us to have peace.

I encourage you not to memorize words so that you can become a member. Take time to learn the lessons Masonry teaches and become a Freemason. I assure you there is a difference between being a member and being a Mason.


Our Masonic teachings are as valuable today as they have ever been. Through our Masonic teachings we learn to be respectful of others, even when we believe them to be wrong.

Grand Master Sigmon reminded us that in the 31st Degree we are taught to have a willingness to consider the positions and opinions of others, because after a more thorough investigation and study, someday we may adopt their opinions as our own.

Unfortunately, those who descended on Washington had neither ability to subdue their passions nor the inclination to be open-minded as to the opinions of others. The Masonic principles we are to live by were not guiding their actions and as a result, the anger turned to violence and the violence resulted in death. Such conduct cannot be condoned or accepted by a civilized society.

During every local, state or national election, Americans are privileged to have a peaceful transfer of power that is the envy of the World. We should cherish and protect this system which so many only dream of living under.

I have often heard members of the Craft say that Masonry is not for everyone. They could not be more wrong. My brothers, while for various reasons, not everyone should be a Freemason, Masonry, its tenets, its principles and its teachings, is for everyone. That is why it is and has been prohibited and suppressed by every fascist and totalitarian regime throughout history.

I encourage you not to memorize words so that you can become a member. Take time to learn the lessons Masonry teaches and become a Freemason. I assure you there is a difference between being a member and being a Mason. 

Can't get out? Never fear, you can get your NC Mason online

One of these days, we'll all be outside, shaking hands and spending time face to face again. Until then, there's a way to keep up with all the news in the *NC Mason* Masonic news online.

If you want to help us save money (our printing budget will be

smaller in the new year and we'd love your help!), just send a note to ncmason@glnc.us with these words in the subject line:

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Masonic memories find a home at Grand Lodge

Secretaries find all sorts of artifacts landing on their desks

By Thomas Pope
Stedman 730

Member Board of Publications

Drop-in guests are par for the course at the Grand Lodge building on Glenwood Avenue in Raleigh.

And when Assistant Grand Secretary Jonathan Underwood or other staffers greet visitors, they're often met with unexpected gifts. All of sorts of Masonic memorabilia winds up in their hands, be it aprons, full Knights Templar uniforms, pins and badges – the list is long.

The donations aren't always delivered in person. Sometimes, arrivals come via the U.S. Postal Service.

"We accept everything," Underwood said.

"Most things we'll try to save," he added, "especially if there's something unique about it – especially if we can find some information on the member. A lot of what we get, you don't have a story to go with it, and you want to know the story of the man behind the apron."

The same scenario can face a local lodge Secretary. I've learned to not be surprised each time I flip on the light switch in my office at Stedman 730. Half the time, it seems, there's something left there by a brother, and often there's a mystery because there's no note to identify who left the material, why or even a hint of what I'm supposed to do with those things.

So what's a Secretary to do with random discoveries? Unless there's some background to go with the items, what course should a Secretary take?

In a nutshell, it's up to him.

If the lodge has room to store those pieces, they're great for piquing a member's curiosity about Masonry in other parts of the country, or even the world. They can be part of a display in a lodge's library, including ritual books from other jurisdictions, some of which can be deciphered by a ritual-savvy Master Mason.

I recently took a find from my desk – the New York version of our O.S.W. – and was able to "read" about 99 percent of it.

That inspired its use as Masonic Education at our next meeting, showing my fellow lodge members the differences and similarities between the Empire and Tarheel states' methods of opening a lodge meeting. The

lingo was much the same, but the word-for-word, step-by-step process was not a match.

That book was part of a recent find on my desk: two small briefcases that held ritual books, multiple aprons and gloves, pins from Masonic bowling tournaments, a membership card from the lodge at Oak Island, N.C., and – as Underwood describes such things, "the prize in the box of Cracker Jack" – a scroll denoting the same Mason's initiation in a lodge in Johannesburg, South Africa, all the way back in 1953.

That's similar to a story Underwood tells of a woman who stopped by the Grand Lodge to dispose of her father's Masonic memorabilia.

"There was a briefcase full of maybe 10 aprons, four or five sashes, four or five collars, and they were all from Kenya," he said. "This gentleman had been a member there, had been a District Deputy Grand Master, and maybe Grand Tyler. All sorts of things. ... His daughter kind of said 'thanks for looking after it' and moved on."

Not everything received by a lodge Secretary or the Grand Lodge office is suitable for preservation.

"Some things are in horrible, horrible, horrible shape. We've gotten things that've been eaten up, and we can't do anything with it," Underwood said.

If it's worth saving, there's a good chance it will end up in the Grand Lodge library, where Underwood said there's a section on rituals and everything's broken down by state.

"If we can figure out where it's from, we'll try to offer it to the state it's from or track down the lodge. One guy from Maryland, his family had moved down here and he was never a member in North Carolina. We received all his Masonic regalia, a picture as master of the lodge – all sorts of stuff. I tracked down which lodge he was a member of and mailed it to them.

"Virginia's proceedings going back to the 1700s, and in there interspersed will be monitors from Virginia. There's some ritual work, and sometimes you can't tell where it's from, but others might say which Grand Lodge it was manufactured for. The fun ones are where they're written backward and you've got to know how to decipher it to know where it's from." ❖



So what's a Secretary to do with random discoveries? Unless there's some background to go with the items, what course should a Secretary take?

In a nutshell, it's up to him.

REMEMBER TO ROAR IN 2021! PARTICIPATE IN THE LION AND PILLAR PROGRAM



New Grand Steward welcomes the challenge

By Beth Grace
Mason Editor

It's an honor to be appointed to the Grand Line. Ask anyone who has been called upon to take his place on the line of chairs that ends with a purple apron in the East.

It's also a Masonic challenge unlike any other, says the newest appointee.

Philip Ray Johnson of Perquimans #106 didn't hesitate when then-Grand Master-Elect R. David Wicker Jr. asked him to join the line as Grand Steward. The Grand Master had planned a more elaborate scene for the ask – taking the Johnsons out for dinner near their home in Roanoke Rapids and surprising him with the invitation – but COVID intervened.

"So he just called and asked me," Johnson said. "He said, 'Hey, this isn't how I wanted to do this but here we are. Would you take on the role and responsibility for entering the line?' I was certainly humbled."

Brother Johnson, sales manager for McPherson Beverages in Roanoke Rapids, was raised as a Master Mason in 1996. He is a past District Deputy Grand Master, former member of the Masonic Home for Children Board of Directors and the Board of General Purposes. He is married to his wife Kathy and they have two sons, one of whom is a Mason.

"I don't think anybody appointed



to that line feels anything but surprise, humbled and honored," he said. "What an honor. I didn't think it was in the cards for me."

Johnson says he's not sure why he was selected but says his passion for the fraternity and his brothers is strong. Among the many projects Johnson has headed or participated in, one of his favorites came when he was DDGM for the First District.

"We had a brother who had a bad heart problem and no insur-

ance. Some brothers approached me as new DDGM and that started our work. We held a fundraiser – a community effort, with everyone – churches, lodges, businesses – all worked together. We had a huge turnout and raised enough money to pay his monthly expenses for many months," he said.

"That's when I knew that if we come together as brothers like we should be doing, we can truly help somebody in need. Like the closing charge says, 'Every human being has

a claim upon your kind offices."

More projects and fundraisers followed in that district, which won a reputation for its good deeds and hard philanthropic work.

Later, when he was appointed to the MHCO board, he found himself on the marketing committee.

"I'm not a marketing guy at all," he said with a laugh. It didn't take long for him to invite brothers to come visit the home.

"The guys embraced it and loved it. They fell in love with the home," he said.

They jumped at the chance to keep helping as part of what would eventually become the MHCO Ambassadors program. Brothers in all districts volunteer to be ambassadors for the home, speaking on behalf of MHCO and the kids at lodge and district meetings, and offering related education programs.

Johnson is the son of a 70-year Mason and believes strongly that Masons should be the backbone of their communities.

"We need to be out there in our communities," he said. "Let people know who we are. Let's stand up. Let's do some stuff."

"I don't wear a ring, but I can always tell you who the people are at a meeting who are Masons, or who ought to be a Mason. I try to carry my Masonry in what I do and how I do it." ♦

WELCOME OUR NEW BROTHERS

Bucknor, Jerome Omar	8	Phoenix
Bare, Scotty Sawyer	45	Liberty
Bockhorn, Darren Richard	45	Liberty
Alverson, Brendan Arthur	112	Wayne
Wright, Alan Michael	114	St. Alban's
Ashe, Jared Shawn	118	Mt. Hermon
Hamilton, Houston Allen	147	Palmyra
Drum, Joshua Donovan	202	Cleveland
McNeilly, Paul Grayson	202	Cleveland
Manning, Aaron Patrick	230	Corinthian
Odeh, Tarick	230	Corinthian
Cadwell, Joseph Kenneth Lee	237	Mystic Tie
Price, James Randolph	244	Monroe
Shepperd, Samuel Allen	244	Monroe
Evans, Christian Scott	249	Pythagoras
Knuth, John Matthew	249	Pythagoras
Whitfield, Kyle Ellis	249	Pythagoras
Grimes, Derric Andrew	258	Fuquay

Perry, Dylan Forest	258	Fuquay
Moore, Stephen Mark	277	Green Level
Worley, Tyler Devin	301	Clay
Grady, Kenneth Skyler	304	Pleasant Hill
Tipton, Lucas Chase	357	Bakersville
Kilpatrick, Jessie O'Conner	391	Lebanon
Galloway, Leslie Scott	407	N. Wilkesboro
Ferguson, Matthew Rhea	429	Seaside
Sauter, Geoffrey Cecil	429	Seaside
Godwin, Joshua Ethan	431	Relief
Hanks Jr, Alexander Hamilton	446	Biltmore
Pritchard, Justin Kyle	446	Biltmore
Everhart, Ricky Thomas	473	Lexington Memorial
Shepherd, Harrison Hugh	473	Lexington Memorial
Tillman, Curtis	479	Rainbow
Hayes, William Anthony	499	Creedmoor
Reinhart, Seth Richard	499	Creedmoor
Barrett, Charles Christopher	515	Whetstone

Hester, Christopher David	515	Whetstone
Kahlig, Joshua Scott	515	Whetstone
O'Neal, Patrick Sean	542	Corinthian
McNeilly, Noah Andrew	579	Casar
Rhyne, Michael Costner	590	Lowell
Moretz, Daniel Casey	593	Stony Point
Sheppard, Jonathan Stanley	598	Cranberry
Scardo, Patrick	663	Black Mountain
Naylor, Michael Wade	679	Creasy Proctor
Kelley II, Charles Edward	680	Semper Fidelis
Hinson, James Adam	695	Allen-Graham
Thompson, Jimmy Franklin	705	Richard Caswell
Morton, Steve Theodore	725	Grantham
Boya, Thomas Jose	735	James B. Green
Tench, Andrew Madison	738	West Gate
Hall, Michael Tyler	759	James K. Polk
Phares, Michael Christopher	759	James K. Polk

NEWS OF THE CRAFT



Meet Matthew Robbins

RALEIGH – There's a new face at the Grand Lodge. Meet Outreach Coordinator/Administrator Matthew Robbins, a founding member of State College #770.

His work will incorporate some routine tasks and assistance to brothers statewide, but he also will reach out to and coordinate with lodges wrestling with maintenance issues, historical questions and other needs to maintain the buildings that are the public face of Freemasonry in North Carolina.

Matthew, who holds a Master's Degree in architecture, joined the staff after the retirement of Cornelia Doherty. He also manages the Grand Lodge web site, maintains historical lodge information and the new historic map, and provides technical support for the office and assist secretaries over the phone with MORI inquiries.

His experience gives him the ability to assist lodges across the state with their buildings and develop steps to renovate, restore, replace, sell, buy or demolish based on historic research, 3D modeling, and the ultimate desire of the lodge.

"I don't want a sudden roof or HVAC replacement to be the reason a lodge has to close or seek

out a new home," he says. "I'm here to help lodges dream, visualize, plot paths to achieve and sustain success with a long-term goal of helping lodges save and endow for the future and shift planning from reactive towards proactive. I'm here to consult with you about your building! Have an idea for sprucing things up and don't know where to start? Call me! Want to learn about the history of your building? Did a famous person in your town help build it? I can help with that, too!"

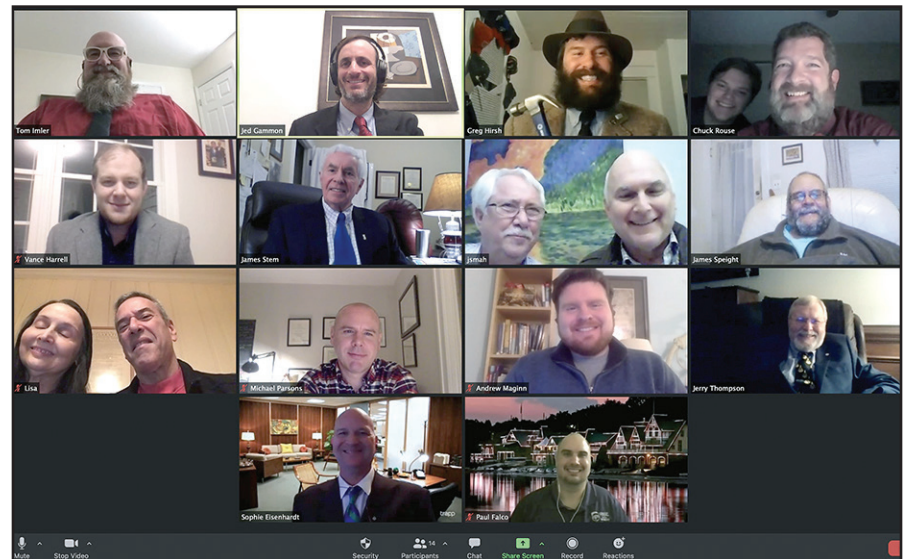
Before joining the Grand Lodge, he worked for Apple in various roles: as a Mac Technician to troubleshoot and repair hardware and software issues with computers, a staff trainer to drive new international initiatives via presentation and facilitation, and with the Real Estate and Development Team in Cupertino, Calif., as a coordinator to elevate visual processes for proposal packages and generation of proposal presentations.

In addition to his GL duties, Matthew also is a member of the Ad Hoc Technology Committee, the Library Committee and the NC Historic Masonic Buildings Foundation LLC.

Contact Matthew at: 919-787-2021 or email him at mrobbins@glnc.us.



▲ BUTNER – Brothers of the 19th District worked hard this past holiday season to make sure area veterans were remembered. DDGM Ron Bowling says brothers in December delivered 40 gifts to residents of the 100-bed Veteran's Life Center. Brother Bowling, center, visits with center director John Turner and his staff. The very next day, the district delivered 40 more gifts to the American Legion Post in Durham and 20 to the post in Roxboro.



▲ RALEIGH – Hiram #40, Wake County's oldest Masonic Lodge, installed its officers virtually for the ensuing year. With a hammer for a gavel in hand, Worshipful Master-elect Gregory Hirsh gave remarks. Chuck Rouse, past 15th District Deputy Grand Master, served as installing officer. "The cement of brotherly love and friendship at Hiram #40 has never been smoother as evidenced by those gathered here this evening. This year, we again will assuredly lose some to age and illness, but we have a strong foundation growing stronger day by day, month by month, and year by year," Hirsh said. New officers are: Greg Hirsh (WM), Vance Harrell (SW), Tom Imler (JW), John Mahoney (Secretary), Chuck Rouse (Treasurer), Gerry Thompson (SD), Michael Parsons (JD), and James Stem (Chaplain).

50 YEARS AS A MASON

Congratulations to:
Ray Fields, Past Master of Henderson #229



▲ **GRAHAM** – Thomas M. Holt #492 received the 2020 Philanthropy Award for Outstanding Philanthropic Organization-Alamance County from the Association of Fundraising Professionals-NC Triad Chapter. This prestigious award is for outstanding community involvement and charitable fundraising contributions. The lodge was nominated by the Alamance Regional Charitable Foundation. For the past five years, the lodge has held an annual Pink Ribbon Breakfast fundraiser each October and donated more than \$8,000 to the local foundation. The lodge also has participated each year in the Little Pink Houses of Hope event for breast cancer survivors, providing valet parking at the annual event and shuttling guests via golf carts. The lodge also holds other fundraisers during the year to support our Masonic charities. Katie Boon, Director/Systemwide Philanthropy, and Jordan Wood, foundation program manager, front row, right, presented the award.



▲ **SUNSET BEACH** – Illustrious Arnold Gene Cobb Jr., 33°, has been appointed Deputy of the Supreme Council (Mother Council of the World) of the Thirty-third and Last Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A., in the Orient of North Carolina. Cobb is also past grand master of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina A.F & A.M. His appointment took effect Jan. 1. “I commend this distinguished brother to the allegiance and obedience of all Scottish Rite Members of the Orient of North Carolina, over which he will preside. I invest him with substantially the powers and prerogatives of a Sovereign Grand Inspector General as provided in our Statutes,” said James D. Cole, 33°, Sovereign Grand Commander.



▲ **OXFORD** – Say hello to Barry Long, the new Print and Design Center manager at the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford. The new head of what the Craft knows generically as “the print shop,” was born and raised in the Halifax County, Va., area. He is the sixth of seven children and graduated from Danville Community College. He has spent his career in the printing industry, working in Virginia and North Carolina. He and his wife Shelby have a daughter, Nora Lynn, and a son, Joseph.



▲ **UNION GROVE** – WB Steve Souther, right, was awarded the Secretary of Distinction certificate at Grassy Knob #471 by Master Chris Whitaker at the December stated communication. He is a Past Master and has been the secretary for 12 years, and will serve in that role this year as well.

▲ **RALEIGH** – MWB R. David Wicker Jr. attended the 2020 Amran Shriner Elections in December, on his first visit as Grand Master. He addressed the Nobles assembled and was presented a “Traveling Man” print commissioned by Amran Shriners. His print is number 750, in reference to his home lodge Oak Grove #750. In his first official presentation as Grand Master, he presented a 50-year service award and pin to Illustrious Sir WB Ray Fields, Past Master of Henderson #229 and Potentate of Amran 2001.

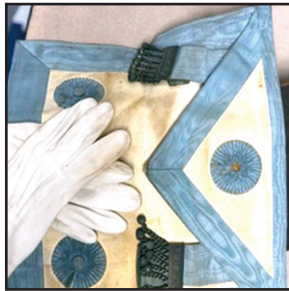
60 YEARS AS A MASON

Congratulations to:
James Wheless, James A. Johnson #413
Vernon Peacock, Lincoln #137



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What Masons say and do matters



page 8

What happens to the stuff people drop off?



page 10

Meet the newest addition to the Grand Lodge staff

On the cover

The first ever - Grand Master's Run found Masons and their friends flying fast for out Masonic Charities

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