

NORTH CAROLINA THE MASON

Official Publication of The Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina

Volume 146 Number 5

Oxford, North Carolina

September/October 2021



Photo by Michael Harding

GM R. David Wicker Jr. prepares to present Grand Secretary Jonathan Underwood with a personalized fez from Amran Shrine. In the center is Clyde Alvin Billings Jr., a past potentate of the temple. On Saturday GM-Elect Larry B. Thompson Jr., would name Billings as his choice to join the Grand Line as Junior Grand Steward.

Mask-to-mask, 100s gather for Grand Lodge

By Beth Grace
Mason Editor

A second year of pandemic could not keep North Carolina's Grand Lodge from doing what it does best: the work of Freemasonry.

Some 917 delegates gathered for the 234th Annual Communication Sept. 24-25 in Winston-Salem to consider amendments, elect officers and to see face to face — rather, mask-to-mask — brothers they have not seen in two years.

Among the votes cast: Deputy Grand Master Right Worshipful

Larry B. Thompson Jr. was overwhelmingly elected to become the 169th Grand Master of North Carolina Masons. The 20-year Master Mason will be installed Dec. 4. (See a profile of our incoming Grand Master on page 2)

Brothers shared a laugh after Grand Master R. David Wicker Jr. asked how many of Thompson's votes were actually for his beard. A brother in the crowd shouted, "What about both?"

In other votes, delegates:
► Knocked down an amendment

that would have allowed lodges to conduct some meetings and some brothers to attend some stated communications virtually.

► Passed amendments that would require lodges to fully insure their property, deed property; consolidating lodges to deed property to the consolidated lodge; remove outdated and poorly phrased Masonic offenses from The Code and render obsolete Code language deeming professional and legal gambling and operating a legal gambling business a Masonic

offense.

► Approved an amendment that states all service awards shall be presented by the Grand Master or his representative.

► Rejected an amendment allowing lodges to open on the First Degree and conduct business.

(See the full list of amendments and how they fared on page 3)

In all, five amendments passed, four failed, four were ruled out of order, and two were withdrawn.

■ see ANNUAL, page 2

Thompson seeks a year of Masonic Revival

By Beth Grace
Mason Editor

Larry Thompson is excited about being a Mason, and wants you to feel the same.

The Grand Master-Elect will be installed Dec. 4, kicking off his year in the East. His theme: Masonic revival, and all that goes with it.

“I want us to spend time talking and listening, thinking about what it truly means to be a Mason,” he says. “I want us all to be excited about being Masons and leave apathy outside the lodge door.”

This year, he says, “is not about me. The focus should be on our lodges and creating quality experiences. Let’s make this state a shining example of Freemasonry in this country.”

And that effort starts with good conversation.

GM-Elect Thompson says his district meetings will have a whole new look. The total number of meetings is still in the works, but tentative plans call for 12 total.

Half will be traditional meetings in larger venues, and half will be untitled “table lodges” scheduled around special Masonic dates, such as St. John’s Day, the anniversary of the Halifax Resolves, and others. Special speakers will be invited for those meetings.

He wants to share his thoughts and stories – and he wants to hear yours.

“I would not consider myself a traditional grand master,” he says. “I’m a gearhead and jokingly refer to myself as a knuckle-dragger. I’m not trying to impress anyone – I like to work hard and do things right.



Larry B. Thompson Jr., a 20-year Mason, is elected Grand Master of North Carolina’s Masons. Photo by Michael Harding

When asked to join the line by MW Doug Caudle, I questioned why he chose me. He said it was because I was a worker in the quarry.”

He will not be a traditional GM in at least one other way. Let’s talk about that beard!

He grew it in 2013 during a “No-Shave November,” a campaign to raise awareness about cancer. Participants donate the money they would have spent on shaving to the cause.

“I’ve always had a beard,” he says. “This one just stayed around.” He says it is often a topic of conversation and that’s fine with him. He plans to keep it for as long as he (and wife Angela) like it.

Larry B. Thompson Jr. is no stranger to Masonic duty. He is a member of Blackmer #127, Wilkerson #760, Mosaic #762, Knights

of Solomon #764 and Sophia #767 (charter master and the first observant lodge in the state). He was raised Aug. 21, 2001, at Blackmer.

Four years later, his father Larry Bogan Johnson Sr., would be raised at the same altar. His son, then lodge Master, didn’t know it was coming.

“We were in the process of closing the lodge one night and Stimpson McRae, our lodge secretary, informed me that he had one more item of business. . . . He then proceeded to read my Dad’s petition,” he says.

“It brought tears to my eyes. One of our senior members, who had known Dad all his life and served on the Town Board with him, made this comment on the night he was raised: ‘Your dad has always been a Mason, this just makes it official.’”

The list of GM-elect Thompson’s

committee memberships and other offices fills four pages in MORI. Among his achievements, he has served as District Deputy Grand Master (District 24); was master of three lodges (Blackmer, Wilkerson College, Sophia); served on the board of both WhiteStone and the Masonic Home for Children, and served on all major Grand Lodge committees as a Grand Line officer.

GM-Elect Thompson has also served as Dean of Wilkerson College. He was a graduate of the very first class in 2002

Wilkerson College changed his life, he says.

“It taught me everything I needed to know to be an effective lodge leader and introduced me to new ideas and concepts that blew me away.”

At his side during his year as Grand Master will be his wife Angela and their six children. He will continue working as a biologist and licensed soil scientist, but will cut back a bit on his hours to take on the duties of Grand Master.

Being a motorcycle enthusiast, he plans to host a major motorcycle fundraiser for charities during his year, in addition to the Uwharrie Mountain Rumble (Blackmer’s annual charity ride). Early plans are for a ride across the state (Murphy to Manteo?) that will allow participants to join in for segments if they cannot complete the entire ride.

Not a traditional grand master, but one that is very focused on helping our lodges create unique, quality, experiences that will keep brothers engaged and excited about being Freemasons! ✦

ANNUAL, from page 1

By the numbers: 266 lodges were present, 793 lodge officers voted.

Grand Line elections moved officers up the line as expected. Elected were: Kevan D. Frazier, deputy grand master; Don Kehler, senior grand warden; and Robert W. Rideout, junior grand warden.

Grand Master-Elect Thompson announced his appointment to the Grand Line: WB and Ill. Sir Clyde Alvin Billings Jr., a Master Mason

for 12 years and a member of Bula #409 and several other lodges.

Better known as “Alvin,” he also is past potentate of Amran Shriners and is the annual giving officer for the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford. (*Watch for a full profile of Brother Alvin in the November-December issue.*)

Lewis R. Ledford was re-elected Treasurer. Jonathan A. Underwood was elected Grand Secretary, a

role and title he has held under appointment by the Grand Master since May, after Grand Secretary T. Walton Clapp III retired.

Underwood, in his first election by the entire Grand Lodge reminded the assembled Masons that his office works for them. “I expect to challenge you at times and to be challenged by you.”

Clapp was on hand for Grand Lodge, opening the first day’s work

with a welcome to the brothers, stepping up to the podium and asking, “Remember me?”

































The brothers did, indeed, remember him, with applause and later presenting him a permanent jewel to treasure, before hosting a reception later Friday honoring his 25 years as grand secretary and 42 years of service to the Grand Lodge.

■ more ANNUAL, page 3

Results of Code Amendments voting

Summary of actions taken by the Grand Lodge during the Annual Communication for 2021.

 **APPROVED**
  **FAILED**
  **WITHDRAWN**
  **RULED OUT OF ORDER**

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>  AMENDMENT GROUP 1
Would require lodges to fully insure their property as per NC law.</p> | <p>  AMENDMENT GROUP 10
Would make obsolete sections of The Code deeming professional gambling, legal gambling, or operating a business where legal gambling takes place a Masonic offense. Dropped unnecessary reference to race, color, creed and nation of origin.</p> |
| <p>  AMENDMENT GROUP 2
Would allow a lodge to vote on petitions for the degrees collectively.</p> | <p>  AMENDMENT GROUP 11
States that all service awards shall be presented by the Grand Master or his representative.</p> |
| <p>  AMENDMENT GROUP 3
Would allow a lodge to open on the First Degree and conduct its business.</p> | <p>  AMENDMENT GROUP 11 SUBSTITUTE
Aligns the process of creating, delivering, and presenting service awards to lodges and members into current practice.</p> |
| <p>  AMENDMENT GROUP 4
Proposes to resolve a conflict in The Code concerning motions to close debate in a subordinate lodge.</p> | <p>  AMENDMENT GROUP 12
Creates a Grand Lodge Committee on Philanthropy to review and report all aspects of the Grand Lodge's charitable and philanthropic endeavors to the Grand Lodge.</p> |
| <p>  AMENDMENT GROUP 5
Would require consolidating lodges to deed its property to the consolidated lodge. Also allows the lodge trustees to fulfill their roles as executors of the lodge's property until all property is sold or transferred.</p> | <p>  AMENDMENT GROUP 13
Consolidates subordinate lodge committees on the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford and the Committee on WhiteStone into one committee, and makes the subordinate lodge committee on DeMolay optional.</p> |
| <p>  AMENDMENT GROUP 6
Would allow the estate of a deceased member to purchase an endowed membership for the member. It also increases the Veteran's and Memorial Endowed memberships cost.</p> | <p>  AMENDMENT GROUP 14
Permits any Mason to object to the passing or raising of a candidate in any lodge.</p> |
| <p>  AMENDMENT GROUP 7
Would raise the minimum initiation fee to provide more charity as the current fee structure was set over a century ago.</p> | <p>  AMENDMENT GROUP 15
Deals with virtual meetings and permits some brothers to attend stated communications virtually.</p> |
| <p>  AMENDMENT GROUP 8
Would establish the minimum initiation fee for new members at \$125.</p> | |
| <p>  AMENDMENT GROUP 9
Would remove certain outdated and poorly phrased Masonic offenses from The Code.</p> | |

more ANNUAL from page 2

Grand Master Wicker presented the third and final Montfort Medal of his term to Grand Tyler Calvin A. Rogers Jr. of William T. Bain #231.

He praised Rogers as a true workhorse for Masonry in the Raleigh area.

"If you need someone to help, Calvin will help. If you need a cook, he comes and cooks," The Grand Master said. "He is not interested in recognition or titles. He is just there for his brothers."

In other news:

► The North Carolina Masonic Foundation announced the hiring of a new Chief Development Officer. George C. Marut of Raleigh, a longtime development professional and a Master Mason, begins work in October.

► Watch No. 001, the first of a limited edition of Masonic watches commissioned by Past Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw, was auctioned off for our Masonic charities. The winning bid? \$4,500!

► A fun, energetic presentation by Past Grand Master Bryant Webster on behalf of the Campaign for WhiteStone generated some great memories, good feelings and hearty laughs – and pass-the-bucket donations of almost \$5,800 toward the expansion work at our senior home in Greensboro.

► The Grand Master's run was kicked off and brothers are invited to participate to raise funds for our charities. As of Sept. 25, 105 brothers and others had registered to participate in the run, which ends after Grand-Master Elect Thompson is installed Dec. 4.

Finally, as Annual Communication neared adjournment, winners of the 2021 Lion & Pillar Lodge of Excellence honors were recognized.

Platinum: Lux Libertas #772; Semper Fidelis #680; Fuquay-Varina #258; Eagle #19

Thomas M. Holt #492; Zion #81; Kenly #257; Ashlar #765; William G. Hill #218; Cannon Memorial # 626; Mingo #206; Bula #409; Guilford #656. Standard: Shallotte #727; Cleveland #202; Wilmington #319; Oxford #122; Corinthian #230; Hibriten #262. ⚡

MHCO cancels Homecoming for fall 2021

The Masonic Home for Children at Oxford's Homecoming has been cancelled out of an abundance of caution.

Due to the pandemic and spread of the Delta Variant, the home decided it was in the best interest of the health of the children and visitors to cancel the festivities. We look forward to its return next year in 2022.

NORTH CAROLINA THE MASON

(USPS 598-260) is published bimonthly by The Grand Lodge of AF & AM of North Carolina, 2921 Glenwood Avenue, Raleigh, NC 27608.

Third class postage paid at Oxford, NC 27565.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The North Carolina Mason*, School Of Graphic Arts, Masonic Home for Children, Oxford, NC 27565.

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Each North Carolina Mason is a subscriber to *The North Carolina Mason*. If you know a member who is not receiving the paper, please send us his full name, complete address, and the name and number of his lodge. Masonic widows receive *The Mason* free upon request. Subscriptions are available to others at a rate of \$5 per year. Subscription inquiries and address changes only should be sent to: The School of Graphic Arts, Masonic Home for Children, 600 College Street, Oxford, North Carolina 27565.

Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of *The North Carolina Mason*, the Grand Lodge, or Board of Publications.

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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 MAN.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Have we forgotten heroes of 9/11 20 years ago?

Never forget. We promised we couldn't, we wouldn't. But for an entire generation of young Americans, 9/11 is now little more than just a day they read about in history books. It is not an experience they lived. It is an experience they learn about.

Right after 9/11, a team of scholars asked 3,000 people: Where were you when you learned of the terrorist attacks? A year later, they reinterviewed those people. Almost half had different – in some cases significantly different – memories of that moment.

Never forget.

Have we?

Brother Pat Howard, a seven-year Master Mason and member of Junaluskee #145, has not. Will not. Couldn't possibly.

Twenty years ago, while the former NYPD sergeant was managing the logistics of deploying hundreds of officers from the Bronx to the World Trade Center in Manhattan, his brother George, a 16-year Port Authority officer on his day off, dropped everything to head to Ground Zero with his colleagues from

the elite JFK Airport Emergency Services Unit.

All they wanted to do was help.

George Howard arrived outside the North Tower just as it began to crumble.

As he raced for cover, a piece of the tower's façade fell, pinning his entire body below. He was 44.

He left behind two sons and a loving family, countless grieving friends and colleagues, a personal history of helping those in need ... and an indelible impression on the leader of the free world.

On Sept. 14, President George W. Bush visited with the victims' families. Some 200 people gathered to meet him; among them, Brother Pat and his mother, Arlene.

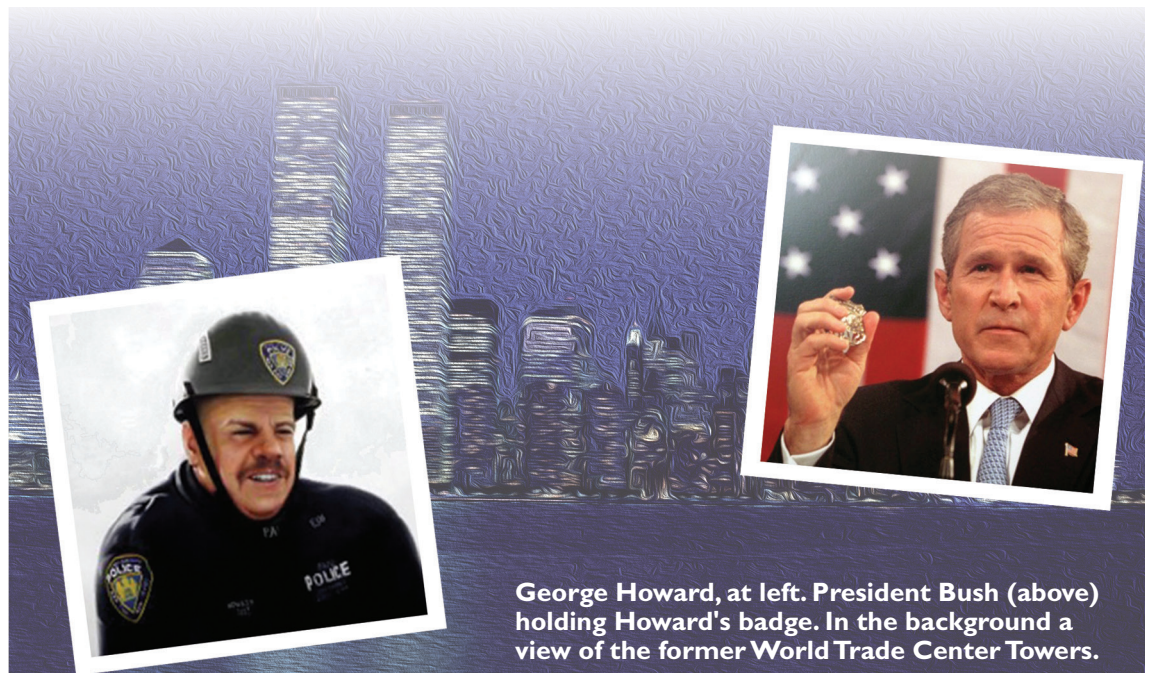
"When President Bush walked in the room, all eyes were upon him," Pat says. "His expression was one of deep sorrow and grief. It was real. He then slowly made his way about the room, speaking with each and every person there. ... My mom was sitting in a chair a few steps away and as he approached her, she, being an old school WWII Navy veteran, began to rise to greet her president.

"He looked at her and shook his head, implying for her to stay seated. As he leaned in to speak with her, she pressed my brother's

■ see 9-11, page 7



By Beth Grace
Editor



George Howard, at left. President Bush (above) holding Howard's badge. In the background a view of the former World Trade Center towers.

FROM THE GRAND MASTER



Time passes; gratitude will last

By R. David Wicker Jr.
Grand Master

It was just a year ago that I sat down at the computer to write my first article for the NC Mason. I had not been installed as Grand Master and my year had not officially begun.

It seemed as though it would be such a long time before my last article would be due. And yet, to my surprise, in the short space of an hour, the time is all exhausted.

During my term as Grand Master, I have stressed that as a fraternity, we need to focus on marketing. Marketing is not the solicitation of new members. Marketing is how we present ourselves.

My brothers, each of you is someone's example of a Freemason. You are someone's role model. As such, everything you do and say markets our fraternity. How you speak to others, how you act in public, how you treat others is a reflection of what our Fraternity stands for, what we teach, and what you have learned.

You can either be a good marketer or a bad marketer. But you are always a marketer.

My focus on marketing addressed three areas: community involvement; lodge stability; and re-establishing fraternalism. When our lodges are engaged in their communities in a positive way, they demonstrate why Freemasonry is important in today's society.

Our Masonic ritual is intended to teach lessons that make us better men. But it is not intended to do so in a vacuum. The lessons learned in Freemasonry are intended to make you a better man so that you can make the community, the state and even the nation a better place for all.

Not everyone should be a Freemason, but Freemasonry, its principles, its philosophies, its values are for everyone.

Community involvement is marketing. There are endless ideas and opportunities to help. Sponsor a child's athletic team, a Boy Scout or Girl Scout troop. Your lodge can adopt a highway, sponsor a blood drive, volunteer at a soup kitchen or Meal on Wheels or Habitat for Humanity. But fulfill a need in your community. Let your community know that you are there to make a difference.

It is through your actions that you will attract

the good men you want to join your lodge. But, if you are known only as the old men in the building with no windows, you are marketing yourself out of business.

We must provide for lodge stability, making certain your lodge is financially secure. Your lodge should have sufficient funds on hand to pay for the replacement of the roof and the HVAC system. If not, plan a fundraiser for the lodge. Financial security will not happen overnight. But you must make plans and move forward to provide that security. Otherwise, you are destined to lose your building.

We must also be good stewards of our homes. Fifty years ago, every important businessman in town was a Freemason. Ask yourself if your lodge looks like a place where an important businessman in my community would go. If you are not doing regular maintenance to maintain the building, the good men you seek to attract will never knock at the door.

Most importantly, we must re-establish fraternalism within Freemasonry. You must keep up with your members. You have to contact them when you are not asking for money. You have to let them know they are important.

Let them know that you would like to have them back in the lodge. Update your contact information. Get a good phone number, address and email address. You cannot contact a member if you don't have their information.

Also update the spouse's information. Let her know she is important as well. Remember, she is the one who will ask for funeral rites. Often, she is the one who pays the bills. Keep in contact with your widows. We took an obligation to aid and assist our widows and orphans. See that she is well. She shared her husband with the lodge for years; do not forget her now that he is gone.

When you contact your members, their spouses or their widows, you are marketing that we are a caring fraternity. But when you fail to do this, you are also marketing. You are sending a message that we care for nothing but the payment of dues. You are saying that we are here only to initiate, pass and raise someone to send us a check. If you fail at fraternalism, you are again marketing yourself out of business.

But remember, we must also guard the West Gate. We do not need members, we need Masons. For too long, just to add anyone to our rolls, we have lowered our standards and allowed ourselves to defend the indefensible, to accept the unacceptable and tolerate the intolerable. Freemasonry is better than this. We must attract those who truly want to be transformed by our Fraternity.

I want to thank Amran, Oasis and Sudan Shriners for their support this year. I want to thank the York and Scottish Rites for the support as well. Remember, this is not a competition. We all do well when we work together and support each other.

I offer a special thanks to the Master, Wardens, Officers and Masons of my home lodge, Oak Grove #750. There are too many names to mention individually. Their efforts were a key factor in making my year as Grand Master a success. Words cannot adequately express what your friendship means to me. Anticipating that my schedule will not be as hectic as this year, I look forward to being in

lodge on a more regular basis.

I would like to thank my Grand Lodge Officers for their continued support of my year.

You each bring a special talent to the officer line. Those combined talents make our officer line one of the strongest in the country. I also want to thank the Past Grand Masters and their families for your support. We stand upon the shoulders of great leaders like you.

It would be impossible for our Grand Lodge to have the respect it does and a reputation for leadership in Freemasonry across the nation without the work of our office staff. I would like to thank Right Worshipful Brother Walt Clapp, Past Grand Secretary; Right Worshipful Brother Jonathan Underwood, Grand Secretary; and the staff: Vicki Lam; Hayley Moll; and Matthew Robbins for the support each has given me this year. Each does so much for our fraternity and I cannot thank them enough.

None of this would be possible if were not for Most Worshipful Brother Dalton W. Mayo. A very special thank you to my Masonic Father for appointing me to this line. I hope that my travel through the Grand Lodge Officer Line

You can either be a good marketer or a bad marketer. But you are always a marketer.

■ see WICKER, page 7

We're 250 years old!!

Provincial Grand Lodge of North Carolina founded in 1771

By Matthew Robbins

Grand Lodge Outreach Coordinator/
Administrative Assistant

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Provincial Grand Lodge of North Carolina by the Premier Grand Lodge of England.

The Provincial Grand Lodge of North Carolina was founded Jan. 14, 1771, and was the precursor to our modern Grand Lodge. Henry Somerset, the 5th Duke of Beaufort and also Grand Master of England (now the United Grand Lodge of England), deputized Joseph Montfort of Halifax as the first and only Provincial Grand Master of and for America.

The history of the fraternity in North Carolina has been partially revealed through Grand Lodge proceedings, historic minutes and fraternal correspondence.

Several lodges were already working in the state before Montfort received his commission. These lodges were Saint John's in Wilmington, Union Lodge in Fayetteville, Crown Point in Pitt County, Buffalo (later Blandford-Bute Lodge) in Bute (now Warren) County, Old Cone in Salisbury, Royal White Hart in Elk Marsh in Halifax County, and Saint John's in New Bern.

Montfort's role as Provincial Grand Master was to consolidate lodges into a working jurisdiction as well as to charter new lodges, although he may not have been aware of all lodges already present in his immediate environs since they were chartered from other Grand Jurisdictions.

Halifax was Montfort's hometown, so naturally his home lodge was the first to be made regular. He



rechartered Royal White Hart and obtained a new English roll number, 413. The lodge became the new Provincial Grand Lodge's de facto number one. Several lodges followed:

- ▶ 1772 - Saint John's No. 2, New Bern
- ▶ 1772 - Saint John's No. 3, Kings Town (now Kinston)
- ▶ 1772 - Royal Edwin No. 4, Windsor
- ▶ c. 1773 - Dornoch (pronounced "door-knock") No. 5, Bute (now Warren) Co.,
- ▶ 1774 - UNKNOWN lodge no. 6
- ▶ 1775 - Cabin Point Royal Arch No. 7, Cabin Point, Surry Co., VA
- ▶ 1775 - Royal William No. 8, Winton



- ▶ 1775 - Unanimity No. 9, Edenton

The lodge in Edenton was the final lodge Montfort chartered before he died on March 25, 1776.

The American Revolution proved a tumultuous time for the lodges in the state, but nevertheless, brotherly love prevailed.

The first attempt to restore the Grand Lodge after Montfort's death failed due to lack of a quorum. The second attempt came in a petition from New Bern, requesting that the remaining extant lodges convene in Tarborough, now Tarboro, to elect a new Grand Master.

This letter was sent to every lodge mentioned above, save Crown Point,

■ see 250th, page 7

■ 250th, from page 6

which had gone dormant during the Revolution, and Cabin Point, which had since chartered the Grand Lodge of Virginia and was under a new jurisdiction.

One very interesting point, however, was the location of the last lodge that New Bern sent the petition to in 1787: a lodge in Rockingham. The town of Rockingham was not officially created until 1784. The secretary of Royal White Hart, James Auld, moved to Anson County in 1773 and probably played a key

role in the formation of this lodge adjacent to Pee Dee River at Anson County's Courthouse, which was called Mount Pleasant until

the county seat was relocated in 1783 to what would become Wadesboro.

This lodge may have survived into the creation of Rockingham in order to be listed on New Bern's petition. Unfortunately, this lodge did not respond to the 1787 petition, and disappeared from existence. At this point, much of its lore is speculation without hard facts to lean on.

To commemorate the 250th anniversary, the Grand Lodge has commissioned a medallion and a lapel in limited quantities. The nine gemstones on the medallion represent the first nine lodges Montfort chartered, scattering Masonry across the state in the early days.

Below the working tools fashioned from Montfort's commission, the words Know Ye that We represent the founding action of the Grand Master of the Premier Grand Lodge of England and a proclamation that Masons in North Carolina derive their identity from.

The medallion and the pin – a small replica of the medallion without the gems – is available by contacting the Grand lodge office.

Have any leads for the mysterious number six lodge? Reach out to info@glnc.us and let us know. ✦



MONTFORT

■ 9-11, from page 4

police shield into his hand and they had a very private conversation that lasted for a few minutes. That conversation remained private through her death two years ago. She said that was her private conversation with the president."

In a Sept. 20 speech to Congress, President Bush displayed that shield, cradled in his right hand.

"Each of us will remember what happened that day, and to whom it happened," he said. "We'll remember the moment the news came, where we were and what we were doing. Some will remember an image of a fire, or a story of rescue. Some will carry memories of a face, or a voice gone forever.

"And I will carry this. It is the police shield of a man named George Howard, who died at the World Trade Center trying to save others.

It was given to me by his mom, Arlene, as a proud memorial to her son. This is my reminder of lives that ended, and a task that does not end."

Bush remained friends with Mrs. Howard even after he left office. When he made his farewell address to the nation in the East Room of the White House on Jan. 15, 2009, Mrs. Howard was among the guests. He kissed her on the forehead after his speech. He would call her shortly before her death at age 95 to tell her that he and First Lady Laura Bush loved her and were praying for her.

Brother Pat remembers every second of every minute of every hour of that day.

He worries that people will forget those like his

brother who gave everything to save people they had never even met.

"My brother was no stranger to getting things done when time was of the essence," he says. "When the Twin Towers were the scene of a truck bombing in 1993, he rappelled down an elevator shaft to rescue school children on a field trip who became stuck in an elevator. He was a master in confined space rescues."

George Howard was not a Mason but, "I am confident that my brother would have made a great Mason. He absolutely fulfilled the embodiment of 'by the exercise of Brotherly Love.'"

To Brother Pat, it feels like society has forgotten the heroes of that day.

"Thousands of innocent people were murdered. Why? Because of their

beliefs?"

"Since then, hundreds more have succumbed to the cancers and various diseases brought on by the toxins in the air. Over 7,000 soldiers have died in the war on terror, yet I struggle to find an American flag lowered to half-staff. I struggle to find the date earmarked on a calendar."

Never forget.

Let's keep our promise.

Never forget.

EDITOR'S NOTE: My thanks to Brother Pat Howard and WB Andrew Norton of Junaluskee #145, who suggested Brother Pat share his story with the Mason. ✦

"I am confident that my brother would have made a great Mason. He absolutely fulfilled the embodiment of 'by the exercise of Brotherly Love.'"

■ WICKER, from page 5

has made you proud. I would also like to thank the rest of my lineage, PGM Gene Jernigan and PGM Charles Ingram. The support, guidance and counsel that I have received from the three of you has been invaluable. Thank you.

Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to wife Susan. You have been patient in my many absences while serving this fraternity. I am glad that we were able to travel together and that you have been able to create your own friendships with many whom we would otherwise have never met. You have been and continue to be my biggest supporter, documenting my journey across the state and the nation. I love you and thank you for all that you have done for me.

I am deeply honored to have been elected to serve as your Grand Master of Masons. I thank each and every Mason in North Carolina for this opportunity and this privilege.

Go in peace, my brothers. And may the God of love and peace delight to dwell with and bless you and Freemasonry. ✦



Wicker wields the big gavel during one of the sessions at the 2021 Annual Communication.

Scenes from 2021 Annual Communication



Members of the Grand Lodge vote by the usual sign during the Friday session.



At right, Past Grand Secretary Walt Clapp gives thanks to the Grand Lodge



GM Wicker pins the Montfort Medal on Grand Tyler Calvin A. Rogers Jr. of William T. Bain #231. It was Wicker's third and final such award of his term.



Clyde Alvin Billings Jr. accepts his appointment as Junior Grand Steward using an apron for an illustration as he talks about our Masonic charities.





Masons are charitable as evidenced by the buckets stuffed with donations. **Below**, the buckets served a dual purpose, collecting election ballots for counting.



Prince Hall Grand Master D.T.Thompson, left, accepts a painted portrait of Prince Hall's likeness, gifted by the N.C. Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. GM Wicker, center and the artist, brother Ryan Flynn, Blackmer #127, look on.



PGM Gene Cobb honored for his Lion & Pillar work.



As in past years, members had an opportunity to shop for Masonic-related items.



At left a variety of face masks adorned the mugs of members in attendance this year, necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Photos by Michael Harding

Preslar, Lyon awarded Montfort honors

Two long-serving Masons have received the Joseph Montfort Medal, our Craft's highest honor.

Past Grand Master Dewey R. Preslar Jr. received the award from Grand Master R. David Wicker Jr. on Aug. 13 at the end of the quarterly board meeting of the Masonic Home for Children.

MW Preslar was raised in 1988 at Andrew Jackson #576 in Salisbury. He served in 1993. He also is a member of Rockingham #495, a charter member of Orphans #761 and Sophia #767 and an honorary member of 16 other NC lodges.

MW Preslar has served on numerous Grand Lodge committees and boards, including Finance, Jurisprudence, Committee on the Masonic Home for Children, Committee on WhiteStone, Board of General Purposes, Board of Directors of WhiteStone and chairs the Board of Directors of the Masonic Home for Children. He recently was conferred Emeritus Board Member status, one of only four Masons to have ever been so honored.

On Aug. 16, at his final district meeting, MW Wicker presented the Montfort medal to WB Herbert C. "Dicky" Lyon. WB Lyon is a member of Eno #210 in Durham, a charter member of Mosaic #762 and an honorary member of Eagle #19, Knap of Reeds #158 and Oak Grove #750.

WB Lyon served as Master of Eno Lodge in 1990 and Master of Mosaic in 2013. WB Lyon has served as secretary of Eno Lodge for 30 years. He also has served as the District Deputy Grand Lecturer for the 19th Masonic District for 10 years as well as District Deputy Grand Master, on the Grand Lodge Board of Custodians and as Grand Lecturer.

For many years, WB Lyon has assisted the various lodges in the 19th Masonic District, as well as the surrounding districts, with their degree work and provided countless schools of instruction and lecture services.

The medal honors the work and memory of Joseph Montfort, the only Provincial Grand Master for America. He died before the American Revolution began and is buried in the front yard of Royal White Hart #2 in Halifax, where he was a member. Montfort's memory lives on through this award and through the hundreds of dedicated Masons who have been honored with the medal. ⚡



Grand Master R. David Wicker Jr., left, presents Past Grand Master Dewey Preslar with the Montfort Medal.



WB Dicky Lyon, left, receives the Montfort Medal from Grand Master R. David Wicker Jr.

Photo by PGM Gene Jernigan



Time to sign up for GM Run!

The Second Annual Grand Master's Run is off and running. Deadline for your walk or run is Dec. 4!

The run – which honors the outgoing and incoming grand masters and raises funds for our charities – was formally kicked off at Annual Communication with registrations far exceeding last year's total. All runners will receive a special lapel pin and a matching medal for completing the event.

We have inventive brethren sponsoring local sports teams and making big strides with their communities. Some are using the run to market the faces of Masonry in their communities.

As an added bonus, any lodge that has two brothers complete the Grand Master's Run this year will earn a credit toward the philanthropy portion of the Lion and Pillar award.

Registration is simple: go to ncgmrn.eventbrite.com to sign up today. Remember, the first 200 registrants will receive a special signed card from the Grand Master, and these are going fast.

"See" you at the finish line!

NC program a hit at Masonic Con 2020(ish)

By Matt Parker
Wendell #565

In the picturesque New England town of Attleboro, Massachusetts, stands Ezekiel Bates Lodge. In 2016, the brothers, desirous of quality Masonic education and spearheaded by WB Bryan Simmons, created the Masonic Con.

Each year the Masonic Con has attracted Masons from around North America to hear some of the top Masonic authors and speakers. It inspired others. Since 2016, other Masonic Cons have sprung up around the country.

Plans were in place for Masonic Con in 2020; T-shirts and custom drinking glasses had been printed, the speakers locked in, travel and boarding arrangements made. Then then the unthinkable happened: a global pandemic.

But the brothers of Ezekiel Bates Lodge were not deterred from their mission.

Determined not to let another year pass without a Masonic Con, WB Simmons and his lodge brothers began planning a hybrid Masonic Con with a limited number of in-person tickets; others would attend virtually.

This proved to be an unexpected blessing as brothers from Canada, Scotland, and other countries were able to attend the event from home. Rather than print new T-shirts, glasses, and promotional material, the event was simply dubbed Masonic Con Twenty-Twenty (ish).

On May 1, a who's who of Masonic authors and speakers



NC Masonry shines bright at Masonic Con with a panel of brothers. From left, RW Robert Johnson, WB Bryan Simmons, WB Ben Wallace, and Brother Chuck Dunning.

descended on Ezekiel Bates Lodge, including Right Worshipful Robert Johnson, host of the Whence Came You podcast and co-host of The Masonic Roundtable; Brother Chuck Dunning, author of *Contemplative Masonry*, and our very own WB Ben Wallace, Past Master of Blackmer #127 and Sophia #767.

Each speaker was phenomenal, but it was Chuck and Ben who stole the show.

Chuck and Ben teamed up for a presentation on contemplative

Masonry. Ben described the Middle Chamber program offered by the Grand Lodge of North Carolina and the vision of continuing the renaissance in Masonry.

Following the presentation, the room was abuzz with questions from intrigued brothers all wishing to take a part of what North Carolina has back to their jurisdictions.

Later, the discussion continued at a panel discussion including Chuck, Ben, Robert Johnson, and Bryan Simmons. Again, the attention was

focused on Chuck and Ben, the Middle Chamber program and all of the things North Carolina is doing to enhance the Craft.

Brothers around the world yearn for Masonic education as well as the fraternalization that our great order offers.

The trend of Masonic Cons across the country shows no sign of slowing, and we are proud that North Carolina Masonry took a the spotlight at Masonic Con Twenty-Twenty (ish). ❖

THE PRAYER CORNER

By the Rev. Mark M. Vickers
Past Grand Chaplain

In the past 12 plus months our world has seen a great rise in civil unrest, violence, and general discontent.

We have seen riots and demonstrations of all sorts, we have seen people slander one another, we have watched as people have been murdered in cold blood.

We have watched our world

slowly fall apart.

What strikes me most about all of this is that “the world” has gained control over our attention – when in fact, we as Masons are called on to be “not of this world” but still be “in this world.” As Biblical as that is, it is also found in our ritual and in our teachings.

I’m reminded of this when I focus on the smooth ashlar having once been a rough ashlar. It has been

transformed into a beautiful and useful stone. I want to encourage us, as Masons who meet on the level that often times we enter our lodges as “rough ashlars,” but being reminded that the work we are called to do requires us to be “smooth ashlars” in a world that seems to be rough a good part of the time.

So, brethren, as you continue on your steps in Masonry, as you work

for the good of humankind, let us work to smooth ourselves into a fraternity that is “in the world, but not of the world.”

PRAYER: In the midst of life on this mortal earth, keep us mindful of the good works we are to do. Keep us mindful of those who need our help and assistance, and may we always move forward toward more light in our lives. SMIB and AMEN. ❖

NEWS OF THE CRAFT



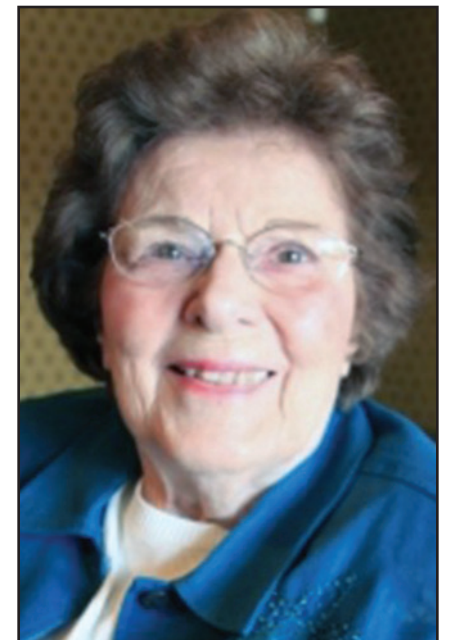
▲**OXFORD** – Thirty-five members and relatives of Semper Fidelis #680 visited the boys of Alumni Cottage at the Masonic Home for Children in August. The lodge adopted the cottage earlier this year. They met up at the picnic shelter to surprise the boys and bring them items the boys had said they would like for themselves and for the cottage. The lodge prepared a hot dog and hamburger lunch for all. Master Jason Caldwell and the lodge's Oxford Chairman WB Joe Reyes presented MHCO a check for \$1,428. Brothers said the visit renewed their sense of obligation to our two homes, and they plan a visit to WhiteStone next year.



◀**MAGGIE VALLEY** – Knights of Solomon #774 was all in at this year's Thunder in the Smokies, selling hamburgers, hot dogs, and other treats to benefit the Rainbow Girls! Paul Aulbach and his band of Brothers were joined by Carleigh Meadows from Lenoir Rainbow Chapter #87. Carleigh has been selected a Grand Representative again this year for the Grand Assembly. She will be liaison to both Michigan and North Dakota this year. The Knights of Solomon Lodges are on a mission over the next couple of years to assist the Rainbow Girls in raising the required monies needed to accommodate expenses of the Supreme Council Assembly hosted by North Carolina in 2024.



▲**CHAPEL HILL** – University #408 Master Dace Bergen, right, in May presented Worshipful Brother Danny Ferguson, left, with a plaque and recognized his more than three decades of service to the lodge. Ferguson also was given the honor of closing the lodge that night. He is a four-time master of the lodge and for almost 20 years, he cooked two fellowship dinners a week for the brothers to enjoy.



▲Josephine "Jo" Poole Pruitt, who at 105 was the oldest graduate of the Masonic Home for Children, passed away in May. The Raleigh native was sent as a young girl to what was then called Oxford Orphanage when her mother fell ill with tuberculosis and her father died. After her graduation, she met and married Tom Pruitt. They had three children, Tommy, John, and Becca. Services were held in May in Hickory.

50 YEARS

Congratulations to these 50-year Masons in NC as reported to The Mason:

Eddie Adams, Andrews #529
Gene Waldroup, Andrews #529
Robert Wood, Andrews #529

Bill Bristol, Andrews #529
Charles Freel, Andrews #529
Charles Van Gorder, Andrews #529

Wilbur King Jr., Richard Caswell #705
Joe Robertson, Widow's Son #7



▲ **ELIZABETH CITY** – “Snoman” wanted to make his exit in style. And he did. When WB Charles E. “Skip” Mahaffey of Eureka #317 was diagnosed with COVID-19 this summer, he made a special request. He told his wife that if something bad happened, he wanted his casket carried to the cemetery in his semi – the one he drove every day as owner of Mahaffey Enterprises Inc., the company he owned and operated. When he passed in August – he was only 50 – his wife and three children honored his request in a big way. Not only did they do what he asked, they invited others to honor him. His truck was followed by some 26 other semis. Masonic rites were conducted at the cemetery.



▲ **GREENVILLE** – The members of Crown Point #708 celebrated St. John’s Day with their first-ever table lodge. Members came out for this special event, which also celebrated the reopening of Masonry since the start of COVID-19 closures. The candlelight supper event was a hit with members and the Education Committee hopes to grow this event and open it to the District with a follow on St. John’s Day meal this December. Education on the night focused on the history of table lodges and St. John’s Day Festivals amongst a series of toasts.



▲ **JACKSONVILLE** – R. David Wicker Jr., the Grand Master of Masons, in August conferred the Master Mason Degree on Brothers John Paul Ledford and Richard Dennis of Semper Fidelis #680 and Brother Michael Pilati as a courtesy to the Grand Lodge of South Carolina. The second section was conferred by WB Jason Caldwell Master. All three brothers were raised by MWGM Wicker.



▲ **KINGS MOUNTAIN** – The Kings Mountain Vietnam Veterans retired an old flag and dedicated a new flag for Fairview #339. Rodney Paulson, Abraham Ruff, Ernie Howell, Carl Marrow and Jim Medlin participated in retiring the old flying flag. Later that evening at the lodge, PM George Melton was honored for his service during World War II. George was presented a certificate of honor and a North Carolina flag, certified as having flown above the State Capital building.

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO BEGIN WORKING ON YOUR LION & PILLAR PROJECTS FOR THE YEAR!



Eureka rides again for MHCO

*By Beth Grace
Mason Editor*

Vrooooooooom!

The only things louder than the motorcycles wheeling onto the Masonic Home for Children campus in September were the squeals of delight from the kids – of ALL ages – waiting to greet them.

Some 45 motorcycles came roaring onto campus at high noon Sept. 11, ending the 22nd annual Masonic Charity Ride to MHCO from Eureka #283 in China Grove to Oxford.

Each rider chips in \$20 per person, which gets them a T-shirt and lunch on campus under the Oaks.

Over its 22 years, the charitable ride has raised about \$356,000, including a check from this year's race for \$32,707.83.

One of the race organizers,

Doug Earnhardt, junior deacon at Eureka #283, told the kids and adults gathered on campus that this year's race is a little more special than normal.

He was accompanied on stage by Eureka Master Brian Craft. The lodge and friends also honored three of the race's original supporters – the men who made it work.

Trees – sprouts from existing oaks at MHCO – will be planted in honor of Brothers Jerry Edwards, Don Lyerly and Bill Comer. Three stone plaques with their names and the words: "Forever in our hearts" and "Riding with the Angels" will mark the base of each tree.

The crowd also took a moment of silence to remember the victims of 9-11 and to recognize all first-responders and military officers in the crowd.



The annual Eureka ride to MHCO raised thousands of dollars — and the heart rates of the kids who got a close-up view of some gorgeous bikes. Photos by Beth Grace



Is there a secret to re-energizing enthusiasm?

I find myself surprised yet again that it is Autumn. Time passes more quickly the older I get.

It's an old adage, but an accurate one. Science tells us that as we age, our mind's ability to process daily tasks becomes rote — used to the processes and actions. We just know what's going to happen.

For some of us, it's the reason we lose interest in childhood cartoons. Yet, in other instances, it's the reason we watch and re-watch our favorite movies — mouthing the words or speaking them aloud in sync. I guarantee one of you just pondered the air speed

velocity of an unladen swallow. Just like the habits of our daily lives, our Masonry is susceptible to fatigue.



By Jonathan Underwood
Grand Secretary

We know it's there, we know the motions, but the excitement wanes, our interest fizzles. This has been especially true since the pandemic began.

Let's be honest, too many of us were half-heartedly interested in our lodges before the pandemic. And, when our communities opened back up, it became too easy for us to let the old schedule slide. Something else occupied our time in a new way that interested us.

We must ask, then, what is the

secret of re-energizing our enthusiasm?

If we return to the analogy of childhood movies, often, re-watching a movie from our youth reveals new details we did not notice before. Plot lines are revealed to be more complex. Details of expressions, scenery, and even dialogue that once seemed simplistic now bear new meaning.

Recalling Past Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw, all these levels and layers of meaning are esoteric. All we have to do is take the time to watch and look for what we thought we knew to change.

Freemasonry is like this. There is always something new to find and discover, whether it be a component of ritual or a new dimension to an old friendship.

What's there that we don't know?

Undoubtedly, if we keep an open mind, there's always something new to learn and pass on.

I hope your enthusiasm is piqued by the possibility of learning something new. I hope you're even more excited by the potential of not only learning something new but revealing that secret to a friend and brother.

Renewal is the hallmark of our fraternity.

The message and mission are always the same. They always have been.

But, the presentation and meaning should surprise us again and again and again, if we only know *how* to look for it. And *remember* to look for it.

We may expect some sort of Spanish Inquisition ... but, it should never cease to be a surprise.

Foundation selects new chief development officer

A veteran development professional and Master Mason has been named Chief Development Officer of the North Carolina Masonic Foundation.

George C. Marut will lead the 92-year-old foundation in its work to support our Masonic charities, the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford and White-Stone: A Masonic and Eastern Star Community in Greensboro. The foundation also financially assists the Charles Edward Cathey Scholarship Fund, the Masonic Historic Preservation Fund, and other philanthropic initiatives of lodges and Masons across the state.

It is a 501c(3) non-profit corporation and all contributions to it are tax deductible as allowed by law. For more information see the foundation's website at mfnc.org.

NCMF's Board of Directors announced the hire at presstime for the NC Mason in late September.

Marut will report to the NCMF board and oversee a staff of two regional development directors — Chris Richardson in Eastern North Carolina and Dee Blake in Western North Carolina — and Beth Grace, the communications director.

He joins NCMF from his last post as Vice President of Development for EasterSeals UCP North Carolina and Virginia. Before that, he was VP of Development and Marketing for the Make-A-Wish Foundation Eastern North Carolina and Senior Director of Development of the Ronald McDonald House of Chapel Hill.

Marut lives in Raleigh with his wife and two children. A Pennsylvania native, he was raised in Mozart #436 in Philadelphia. Marut received his B.A. at Moravian College in Bethlehem, Pa., and earned his Certified Fundraising Executive certification in 2017.

More details on Marut will be in the next issue of the NC Mason.



WELCOME OUR NEW BROTHERS

Bell, Logan James	40	Hiram	Fiser, Aaron Talmadge	544	Mount Holly
Brantley, Carl Richard	45	Liberty	Kullenberg, David Henry	551	Glenville
Daniel, Robert Christopher	58	Concord	Campbell, James Taylor	552	Revolution
Coombs, Robert Darnell	81	Zion	McCutcheon, Trevor Lee	552	Revolution
Starr, Joshua Joseph	83	Lafayette	Hasty, Stephen Michael	562	Waxhaw
Warren, Gregory Calvin	125	Mill Creek	Rowe, Andrew Henderson	562	Waxhaw
Bolick, Hunter Scott	129	Dan River	Summers, Drake Austin	562	Waxhaw
Williams, Jeffrey Chase	129	Dan River	Summers, Jason Brad	562	Waxhaw
Wooten, Vincent Scott	132	Radiance	Biddy, Randy Dveal	579	Casar
Ferguson, Mark Logan	162	Yadkin	Wethington, Thomas Clark	583	Ionic
Williams, Tate Columbus	162	Yadkin	Sessoms III, James Payton	585	Roseboro
Gammons, James Marty	167	Winston	Abel, Jacob Allen	626	Cannon Memorial
Stuart, Andrew Lee	167	Winston	Coble, Darrell Ray	646	Bladen
Horton, Brock Stuart	172	Buffalo	Taylor, Elliott Wesley	646	Bladen
McDade Jr, Rory Dean	198	Cary	Ours, Cory Wayne	657	Keller Memorial
Henderson, John Gregory	231	William T. Bain	Turlington, Edwin Grant	663	Black Mountain
Ray, John Wesley	244	Monroe	Knott, Fred Burton	669	Kernersville
Ham, Casey Lee	263	Gaston	Powell, Joshua-Guy Madison	669	Kernersville
Daniel, Alexander Vann	277	Green Level	Reynolds, John Robert	669	Kernersville
Noble, Michael Albert	304	Pleasant Hill	Coronado, Samuel John	679	Creasy Proctor
Byers, Austin Mitchell	314	New Lebanon	Dennis, Richard Lane	680	Semper Fidelis
Rapp, Elwin Ray	317	Eureka	Ledford, John Paul	680	Semper Fidelis
Chavis, Jessie Lee	339	Fairview	Coleman, James Ronald	693	Charles M. Setzer
Hopper, Richard Christopher	339	Fairview	Morphies, Austin Steel	693	Charles M. Setzer
Barnett, William Chandler	357	Bakersville	Murphy, Gordon Hunter	693	Charles M. Setzer
Long III, Allen Edward	369	Gastonia	Copple, Joseph William	703	Albemarle
Paysuer, Paul Ryan	369	Gastonia	Campbell, Caleb Gregory	713	Stanley
Russell, Devin S	369	Gastonia	Murphy, Robert Allen	713	Stanley
Cogar, Jesse Gage	374	Campbell	Smith, Justin Charles	713	Stanley
Paulson, Brandon Luke	375	State Line	Atwood, Michael Eugene	722	King
Hobbs, Tyler Christopher	379	Coharie	Roscoe, Anthony John	737	Steele Creek
Crotts, Stephen Matthew	388	Friendship	Fletcher, William Bradly	737	Steele Creek
Torres, Julio C	391	Lebanon	McGinn, Benjamin Lee	738	West Gate
Chandler, Casey Todd	397	Bald Creek	Perkins, Michael Harrison	738	West Gate
Keefer, Raymond Charles	397	Bald Creek	Williams, Carter Randolph	742	Mint Hill
Boyette, William Edward	405	Ocean	Atwater, James Martin	743	J. J. Crowder
Ayscue Jr, James Clifford	447	Scotland Neck	Brainard, Robert Jon	752	Enterprise
Wade, Matthew S	461	Matthews	Burge, William Todd	752	Enterprise
Williams, Avery Clearon	471	Grassy Knob	Phillips, Johnson Coe	752	Enterprise
Farry Jr, Michael David	479	Rainbow			
Freeman, Jimmy Lawrence	543	Spencer			



page 2

Grand Master-elect ready for revival



page 6

Guess what is turning 250 years old this year



page 14

Masonic thunder rolls into Oxford with assistance.

On the cover

Even with more spacing between seats, Masons filled up the hall at the Benton Center in Winston-Salem for the 2021 Annual Communication

Photo by Michael Harding

The North Carolina Mason
The Grand Lodge of North Carolina, AF&AM
600 College Street
Oxford, North Carolina 27565

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NORTH CAROLINA
THE MASON

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2021