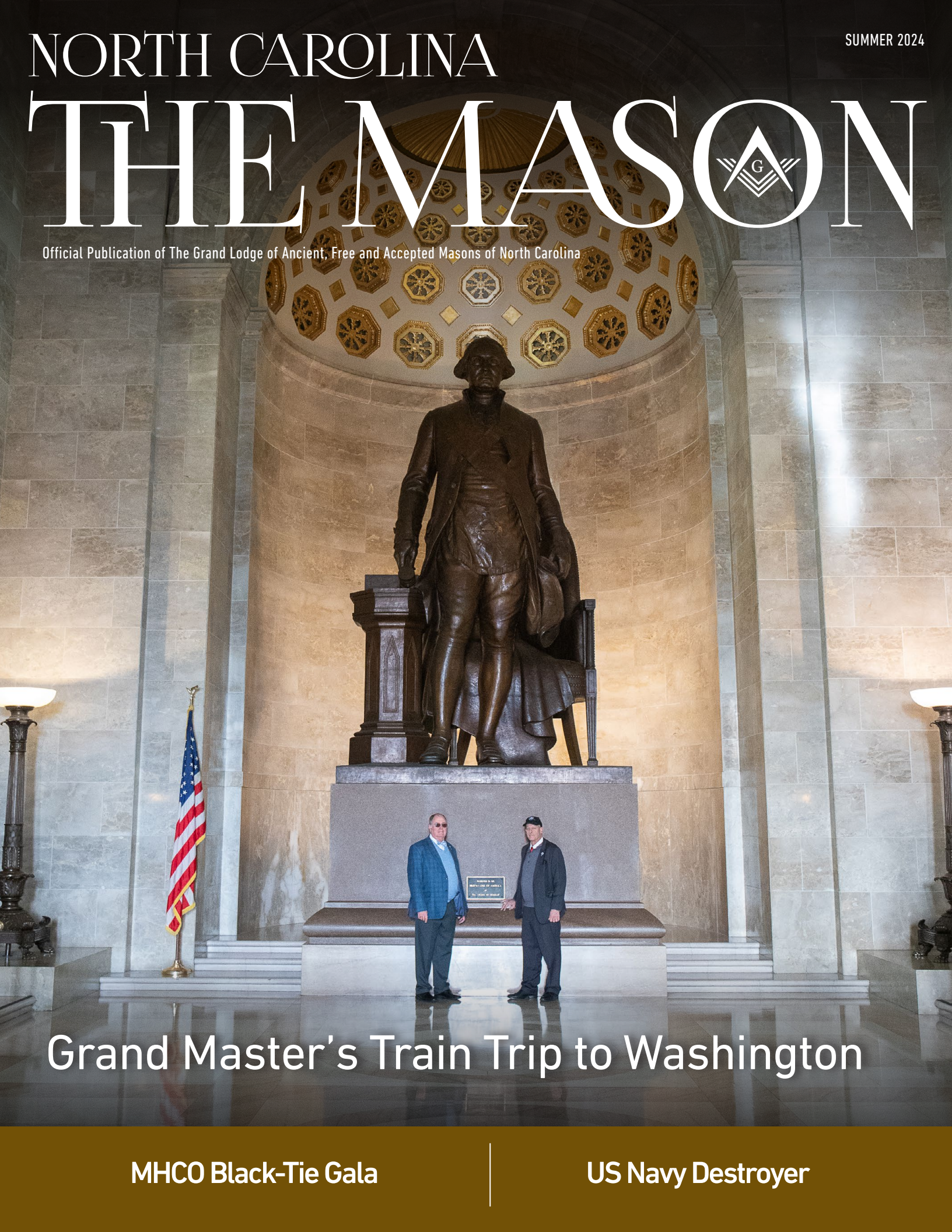


NORTH CAROLINA

THE MASON

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



Grand Master's Train Trip to Washington

MHCO Black-Tie Gala

US Navy Destroyer



Enhance YOUR INDEPENDENCE WITH WHITESTONE

At WhiteStone, a retirement community in Greensboro, our lifestyle is designed with active, carefree living in mind. Instead of worrying about home maintenance, repairs, housekeeping and yardwork, you'll open the door to better things to do - **RIGHT ON YOUR DOORSTEP.**

Stay As Involved as You Choose

Whether you want to pursue new hobbies and interests, make new friends, focus on your wellness, explore the Greensboro and Winston-Salem area, or relax in your residence, the possibilities are endless and waiting for you. Simply take a look at our in-depth calendar of activities to reveal which regularly scheduled program you'd like to enjoy; what seasonal event, festival or party is taking place; or who you'd like to invite to one of our many family-friendly offerings - after all - the more the merrier.

Enjoy Privacy When Preferred

Are you someone who loves to entertain and host? Would you rather relax with just the right amount of space? Need an extra room for your many hobbies, your grandchildren, or

your furry friend? With various home options, you'll find the one that's perfect for you.

APARTMENT HOMES

Our one- and two-bedroom apartment homes offer convenient, under-one-roof access to our amenities. Each comes with a full kitchen, great room, walk-in closets, an extra powder room, laundry closet, den and/or sunroom.

COTTAGES

Our duplex-style cottages feature one- or two-bedroom floor plans with a full kitchen, great room, patio, breakfast nook, guest bath, and laundry closet.

VILLAS

Villas feature two bedrooms and two bathrooms with a garage, a screened-in porch or Carolina room, full kitchen, breakfast nook, formal dining room, laundry closet, roomy storage spaces, and walk-in closets.

Live With True Peace of Mind

As a Life Plan Community, WhiteStone welcomes you to make a secure plan for your future now. Retire with confidence, knowing if your health care needs ever change, everything you need is right here - including independent living, assisted living, memory care, short-term and long-term skilled nursing care, rehabilitation, and in-home care.

THE FRATERNAL FRIENDSHIP PROGRAM

A Friend in Need Is a Fraternal Friend Indeed

As Masons and Eastern Stars, we pay our blessings forward. Since 2016, the Fraternal Friendship Program has provided support and assistance to qualified Masons and Eastern Star Members in WhiteStone or in their current homes.

Made possible by donations, the program helps qualified and fraternally affiliated families cover the costs of WhiteStone's entrance fees, room and board, meals, and more - helping them make a smooth transition to the community.

This is only possible through the support of generous brothers and sisters like you.

Please consider making a donation today at: liveatwhitestone.org/donate.

Experience WhiteStone for Yourself



Call or scan the QR code with your smartphone to schedule a tour of WhiteStone.

336-308-4688

WhiteStone

A MASONIC & EASTERN STAR COMMUNITY  EST. 1912

Founded on fellowship. Inspired by you.

Editorial Board of Publications

Larry Thompson, Chairman
Thomas Pope
Tony Rathbone
Alvin Billings
Russell Scull

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This issue marks the first time we are using the new hybrid distribution system. In the past, 30,000 magazines had to be printed, labeled, sorted by zip code, and shipped to each member. To align our expenses with the NC Mason's budget, we now provide the magazine in a more customized way.

Online: Most members have email and internet access. For those members, the magazine is available online. The online version is a simple PDF that is easy to scroll through, download for offline viewing, and share. This saves 100% of printing and delivery expenses.

Lodge Pickup: For members who want a hard copy and either attend regular meetings or know someone nearby who does, we now ship bundles of magazines to each lodge. Any extra magazines can and should be used for engagement and outreach. This saves about 75% on shipping and handling expenses.

Direct Mail: If you do not have email or internet access and cannot get a copy from the lodge or have an attending member bring you a copy, you can contact the editor by phone at (919) 795-8505 or by email at ncmason@glnc.us and will be happy to put you on the direct mailing list and have a copy mailed to your home.

In this way, each individual Mason decides how they want to receive their copy of the NC Mason magazine. I truly hope you will assist us in saving the Freemasons of North Carolina unnecessary printing, handling, and shipping costs.

Don Butto, Editor

ncmason@glnc.us

ON THE COVER:

Don Kehler, Grand Master 2024
A. Gene Cobb, PGM, SGIG of North Carolina

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 04 From the Grand Master: Sublime Ascension**
Donald E. Kehler, Grand Master
- 06 A Salute: To the Unsung Heroes of the Lodge**
Jonathan Underwood, Grand Secretary
- 07 MHCO Black-Tie Gala**
Kevin Otis, Administrator MHCO
- 08 Grand Master's Train Trip to Washington**
Gilbert Bailey, Junior Grand Warden
- 10 Academic Lodges: A Series**
Matthew Robbins, Assistant Grand Secreta
- 12 Carolina Pig Jig Cook-Off**
- 13 Successful Car Show**
Michael Matty
- 14 Small Lodge, Big Community Impact**
Thomas Pope
- 16 The Journey to Eagle Scout**
Steve Pendergrass
- 18 Proudly Serving the Cause of Patriotism**
James Pugsley, Carolinas Area Rep, National Sojourners Inc.
- 19 A Legacy of Giving**
George Marut, Chief Development, NCMF
- 20 From Master Mason to Trustee**
Tim Ludwig, Trustee Shriners Hospital for Children
- 21 Do You Hear What We Hear?**
A. Gene Cobb, SGIG / Alex Edmisten
- 22 US Navy Names Destroyer**
Ric Carter, Editor Emeritus
- 24 WHY MASONRY?**
Dr. Russell Philbrick



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

Sublime Ascension: The Grand Master's Brew

Donald E. Kehler, Grand Master



Grand Master of Masons rewards donations with beer across the state, in huge effort to support NC Masonic Foundation, and encourage Masonic fellowship.

MWB Don Kehler, Grand Master of Masons in North Carolina, has executed a state-wide campaign inspiring donations to support the NC Masonic Foundation. For each \$50 donation, the contributor receives a case of beer, fondly referred to as The Grand Master's Brew. While this continued effort has been widely well received, there are still concerns being voiced among the brothers, as to whether alcohol is appropriate as an incentive in a Masonic atmosphere.

Kehler addressed these concerns, saying, "This project is not intended to promote alcohol use in the Lodge room. As we well know, Masons, are to *indulge neither in intemperance nor excess*. Alcohol is still not permitted in the Lodge Room. However, as brothers gather away from the Lodge, sharing a beer often encourages lighthearted fellowship among the Craft.

"This fundraiser is boosting the available funds of our Foundation. The NC Masonic Foundation, as you know, provides support to our charities. The Masonic Home for Children at Oxford, and The Fraternal Friendship Program, otherwise known as MESH, LLC, which provides assistance to our fraternally related residents, both rely heavily on generous donations to continue providing first class care to folks we have taken an oath to assist."

Pausing to light his cherry tobacco filled pipe...

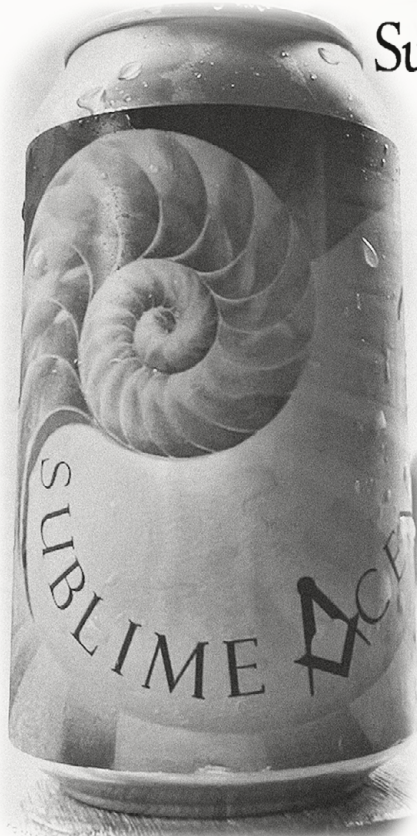
Kehler continued, "Choosing beer as an incentive for donations also serves another purpose. Conversation should be encouraged among the Craft regarding what the Code currently states, pertaining to the use of alcohol on Lodge property, as well as inside Lodge rooms and Lodge buildings. Passages of the Code pertaining to alcohol and its usage were updated on January 1, 2015, and are still very much in effect today.

"For the brothers that disagree with using beer as an incentive, I hear you. Please be assured that all federal, state, local, and Masonic regulations are being strictly adhered to in this fundraiser. Know that you are welcome at any time to make a donation to the NC Masonic Foundation, and simply decline the case of beer, or give it to a friend.

To the folks who have already donated, Kehler extended his personal gratitude, saying, "I thank you for the laughs and the fellowship we've shared during this important undertaking. Your participation is greatly appreciated."

"I thank you for the laughs and the fellowship we've shared during this important undertaking. Your participation is greatly appreciated."

For the brothers who would like to participate in this campaign, send an email to me at grandmastersbrew@gmail.com. Let me know how many cases you need, and where you are located. I will arrange to deliver them to you, as my travel schedule permits."



Sublime Ascension: The Grand Master's Brew

...raising money for the
NC Masonic Foundation in 2024...



Sublime Ascension is a blend of mild English hops, sweet Irish malts and roasted barley. This is a ruby session ale with a gentle hop bitterness, mild malt notes and a bewitching hint of 'roast'.

To get yours, send an email with your location and number of cases you'd like, to grandmastersbrew@gmail.com. One \$50 donation is rewarded with one case of Sublime Ascension. Cash or check made payable to NC Masonic Foundation are accepted.

A Salute: To the Unsung Heroes of the Lodge

By Jonathan A. Underwood, Grand Secretary



The role of a Lodge Secretary is often overlooked yet indispensable for their unwavering dedication and attention to detail. They are entrusted with a myriad of responsibilities

vital to the seamless operation of Freemasonry.

On the surface, secretaries may seem like mere note-takers. The term "secretary" itself sometimes carries connotations of simplicity. I recall a dinner where, upon learning my occupation, someone remarked, "Isn't that a woman's job?"

First and foremost, this stereotype is wrong. Due to chauvinism, women were and are largely forced into administrative positions, often called secretaries, to manage what is perceived to be the menial work of an office. Yet, most of us are fully aware that secretaries hold society and the world at large together by organizing our leadership and guiding that leadership toward success.

While many may perceive the role of the Lodge Secretary as primarily involving minutes and dues collection, it goes much deeper. They serve as the gatekeepers of communication within our fraternity, ensuring that every correspondence is handled with care and professionalism. Neither the Master nor the Wardens can be in all places at all times. It's the Secretary who gives voice to the leadership's orders.

The Lodge Secretary usually shoulders the responsibility of orchestrating the execution of our lodge meetings. From preparing meeting agendas to ensuring the timely dissemination of information to members, their efforts lay the foundation for meaningful and productive gatherings. Moreover, their presence at every meeting, diligently recording

the proceedings, ensures transparency and accountability within our fraternity.

The Secretary plays a pivotal role in managing our membership. They carefully maintain records of our members, ensuring that each individual remains in good standing. They often talk to members more than any other person in the lodge, becoming the face, or at least the voice, of the fraternity.

In addition to these roles, the Secretary serves as the custodian of our heritage, recording the proceedings of our meetings—those things proper to be recorded. A good secretary is a good historian, recalling events, habits, and the culture of a lodge.

To undertake the role of a Lodge Secretary is to embody a multitude of qualities that are indispensable to our fraternity. A deep understanding of Masonic principles and law, impeccable organizational skills, effective communication, and adept time management are necessary. Time constraints, managing expectations, and conflict resolution are but a few of the hurdles they encounter. Yet, it is their resilience in the face of adversity and their dedication to our cause that sets them apart as true pillars of our fraternity.

The profound impact of Lodge Secretaries on our Masonic fraternity cannot be overstated. Their unwavering commitment to service, dedication to preserving our rich heritage, and tireless efforts in upholding the principles of Freemasonry are worthy of our deepest gratitude and admiration. To every Lodge Secretary, past, present, and future, we extend our heartfelt thanks for your invaluable contributions to our beloved Craft. May your dedication continue to inspire us all as we journey together in the pursuit of truth, enlightenment, and brotherly love.



MHCO Black-Tie Gala

By Kevin Otis, Administrator MHCO

Rejoicing for all the Right Reasons

On June 22nd over two hundred friends of the Home wore their finery to celebrate another wonderful year at your Children’s Home. The Gala featured speaker Brother Clifton Truman Daniel, oldest grandson of President Truman, regaling all with wonderful stories of being a President’s grandson. The auction was led by Noble Brother Bill McMillan and Lady Sabrina Cashion’s handmade MHCO logo quilt stole the show with the largest bid. Mike and Jude Harding with Genesis Photography captured the evening with great pictures of our wonderful attendees.

Orphan Friends were recognized beginning the “class” of 2024. Lady Deborah Rice was the first to be recognized this year leading an exceptional group of friends of the Home including Alumni, Masons and their Ladies, and Neighbors.

The day began with an Ice Cream Social, Amran Family Fun Day, and featured the KOS Charity Ride. Over seventy riders braved the hot weather conditions to bring attention and donations to your Beloved Children’s Home. Brother Kyle Dortch

led the Eastern Guilford Drum Line which paved the way to an afternoon of rides, food, fun, and fellowship.

MHCO would like to thank our Gala Sponsors, Ice Cream Social Sponsors, and all who came out to Rejoice everything your Masonic Home for Children at Oxford has done, is doing, and is planning to accomplish. What we do for the children today extends for generations. Thank you all!



Event Photos: Michael Harding, Genesis Photography

Grand Master's Train Trip to Washington

By Gilbert Bailey, Junior Grand Warden

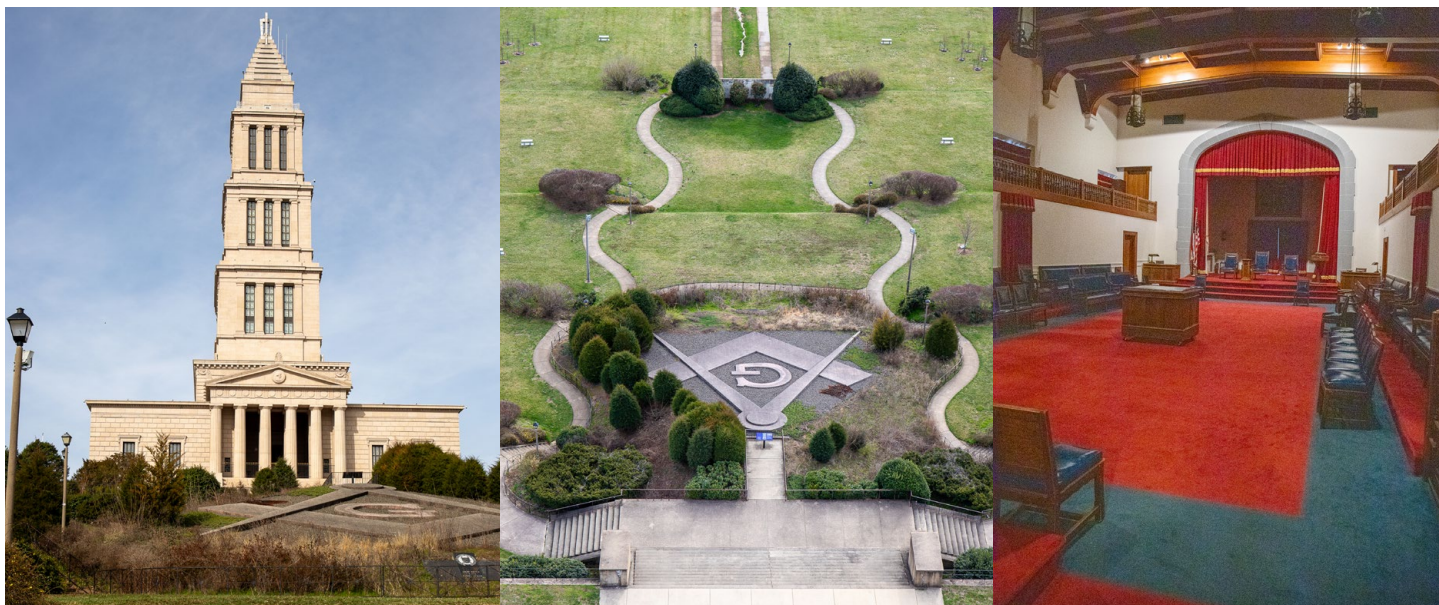
Every month in my professional life, leading a software business, we conduct an all-hands meeting to discuss challenges, wins and celebrate our team members. One of the highlights of this meeting is where we celebrate those who have reached their one-year anniversary. My human resources leader reminds us that many employees quit during their first year and these team members have made us their home because we were welcoming and engaged them in fulfilling work. Every time he makes this proclamation I think about how this same logic applies to our lodges. If newly made masons are not welcomed or engaged in meaningful work in the quarry, they will shortly be added to our NPD lists.

It's in this context that I'm excited to share a story about one of the new tools in our member engagement toolbelt for North Carolina Freemasonry: The Grandmaster's Train Trip to the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. Earlier this year I was fortunate, as your representative to the GW Masonic Memorial, to assist in organizing our inaugural Grand

Master's train trip. This first event, which we hope will become an annual tradition and be seen as innovative by other Grand Jurisdictions and our members, was open to all and well attended. One notable contributor to the attendance was the North Carolina Scottish Rite, which sponsored one newly made Master Mason and one newly made 32nd-degree Scottish Rite Mason from each Valley in the state to make the trip.

My journey began at the train station in Charlotte along with many masons of the 32nd masonic district, including two of the sponsored masons. As we traveled north, masons boarded the train at every station. By the time we rolled into the station near Raleigh to greet Grand Master Kehler there were two full train cars of Freemasons! Talk about welcoming and engaging newly made members in a masonic experience, words can't describe the excitement and fellowship as we traveled north to Alexandria, Virginia with the Grand Master walking about the cars and stopping every few rows to sit and speak with our brothers!

Over the course of the next day we visited the





George Washington Masonic Memorial with a private tour, spent the afternoon, hosted by the Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite, touring the House of the Temple and rounded out the evening with a dinner hosted by the Valley of Washington DC while observing their Maundy Thursday service. To quote Brother Isaac Burton, a newly made mason in Charles M. Setzer Lodge No. 693 “This trip served as an educational experience for me as well as a reminder of why I joined such an honorable fraternity.”

After an educational and engaging few days in our nation's capital we boarded the train in Alexandria, Virginia, with the sight of the Square and Compass just below the towering memorial setting our backdrop at the station. We headed south telling stories and to quote Brother Augustine Weah of the Valley of Charlotte “As we made our way back to Charlotte on the 13th of March, the train ride was filled with laughter, stories, and reflections on the experiences we had shared. It was clear that this trip had forged bonds that would last a lifetime, and that the memories we created would be cherished forever.”

I was struck as we stopped at every train station in North Carolina that brothers stood up, helped each other off the train, and stop-by-stop the two cars of freemasons slowly emptied. As we arrived in Charlotte late in the evening at the end of the line, those of us in the 32nd district were the last ones to leave. I couldn't stop thinking about my

human resources leader and how this trip was an example of what he means by “welcoming and engaging” and why someone wants to participate in the organization they selected year after year. I'm hopeful that this trip continues to grow and look forward to the opportunity for more appendant bodies and youth auxiliaries to sponsor participants.



The 2025 trip to the Washington, DC, with the Grand Master and SGIG, to visit the George Washington Museum and the Scottish Rite House of the Temple is scheduled for March 10-12. If you would like to participate, contact PGM Gene Cobb at ag-cobb@nccumc.org for details.

Mars Hill College Lodge No. 370

Academic Lodges: A Series

By Matthew Robbins, Assistant Grand Secretary

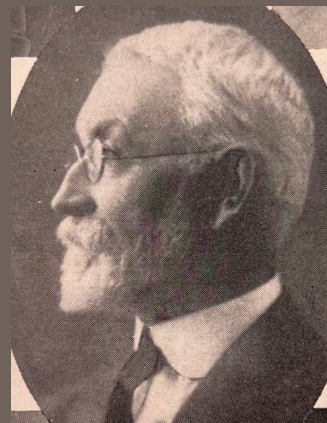
Since the founding of the University of North Carolina by Grand Master Davie, Masonry has co-existed with education in several forms throughout the centuries. Partnerships have included colleges, military schools, academies, and even grade schools.

Many Masonic lodges still meet in buildings that were also schools where the lodge was on the upper floor and the school on the lower. This series will explore the architectural history of the linkages between North Carolina Masonry and education within the framework of existing and extinct lodges.

During the Civil War, Mars Hill College was closed. After failed attempts to revitalize the campus, the Trustees unanimously agreed to deed the college over to the Grand Lodge of North Carolina to be repurposed as an armature of the Masonic Home of Children in Oxford. During its tenure, it served forty-two children in need. But, just as quickly as the new orphanage was opened, it was closed by Grand Master Blount and John Mills two years later in 1876. Those men involved with the orphanage at Mars Hill remained at the college and formed a lodge four years later after the college got back on its feet.

Mars Hill College Lodge No. 370 existed from

1880 to 1932. Its first master was John Robert Sams,

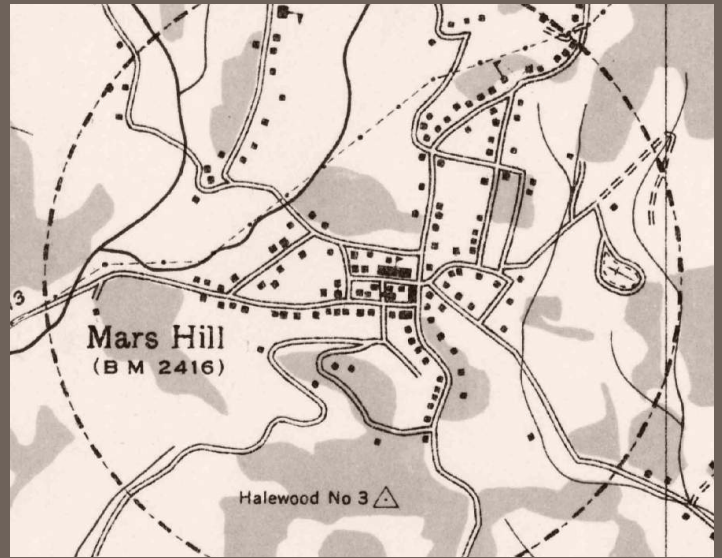


the first steward of the beleaguered orphanage that had recently closed. The college rented the upper floor room in one of the college's first brick academy buildings for a dollar per month or repairs to the structure.

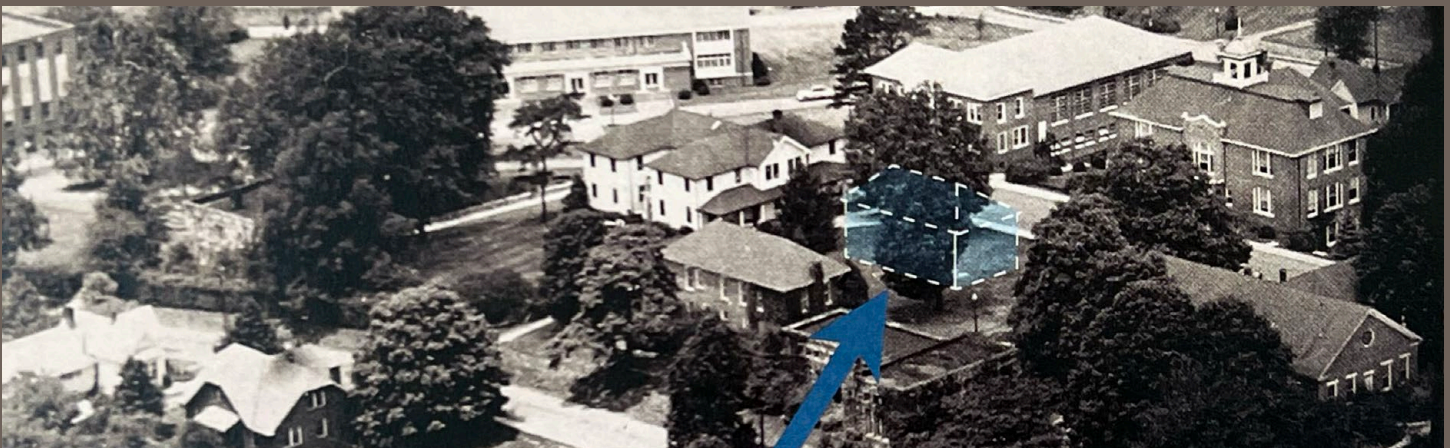
This agreement was for ten years. In 1882, the college trustees entered into a contract with the lodge where repairs would be made "from basement to garret, including blinds to all the windows," and "reroof and repair every part of the building." The trustees would in turn give title of 50% interest in the land in a sixty-foot circle around the building and 100% of the second-story wing of the building where they met. The town was

incorporated in 1893 by the NC General Assembly. The sixty-foot circle around the lodge in the first building was expanded to 3,600 feet and became the circular boundary of the town limits of Mars Hill that are still intact to this day. At the center of this circle is the northwest cornerstone of the building, the rest of it having been demolished in 1910.

In 1897, the lodge relocated to the Riddle Building right outside the gates of the college. The Riddle Building was purchased by the college in the mid-1910s along with its adjacent hotel and eventually repurposed. The location of the lodge after that is a mystery as it was erased from the rolls of the Grand Lodge in 1932.



1936 USDA map of the town of Mars Hill's circular boundary, with the center being the foundation stone.



The first building was located opposite Founder's Hall and stood in the middle of campus as shown here in blue.



Undated postcard shows the college's first building, built 1857, where the lodge started in the upper floor.



Cornerstone of the first campus building, denoting the center of the town of Mars Hill.

2024 CAROLINA PIG JIG COOK-OFF





Successful Car Show Raises Over \$8000 for MHCO

By Michael Matty

After months of preparation, the day was finally here! We opened the gates of the 4th annual Car Truck and Bike show held at the Hickory American legion Fairgrounds on June 8th. We had a long line of cars waiting to come in at 7:30! Bobby Leatherman provided the music and MC'ed the event. Alyssa Reinhardt and Jo Matty (daughter and wife of Michael Matty, PM of Conover Lodge No. 709) and Kristy Paris (wife of Marty Paris, PM of Lincoln lodge No. 137) registered the 156 cars that were at the show. Brothers from both lodges parked the cars, tended the silent auction tables, and prepared the food and drinks we had for sale!

We had several local vendors. Carpe Crustum Bakery from Newton, Patriot jerky of Conover, Sunset slushies from Newton, Girly girl ice cream and snacks from Lincoln, and Brother Rodney

Davis from Catawba Lodge No. 248 Newton, and his T-shirt design company, DM Designs.

The day got better when a kind lady named Linda Bolick arrived at the registration table and asked if she could make a donation to the MHCO. We of course said "Yes maam"... After giving us the check, she proceeded to tell us her story of being raised in the home and graduation in 1963 from MHCO. We asked her if she would like to address the crowd and share her story. She kindly agreed, and her story was incredible!

Brethren from both lodges prepared the food and fed the hungry crowd!

We closed out the day, presenting about 90 awards to the show participants and we were able to raise a over \$8000 for our charity MHCO.



Small Lodge, Big Community Impact

By Thomas Pope

A lodge doesn't have to be large to make a big impact in its community, as exemplified by Stedman Lodge No. 730 and its 105 Master Masons.

The town is home to about 1,300 residents – a tiny portion of the 330,000-plus who call Cumberland County home. Most of Stedman's lodge members live east of the Cape Fear River, which slices through the county, and normal attendance for a Stated communication is between 25 and 30 members.

That high attendance percentage fosters a sense of teamwork and camaraderie among 'brothers who can best work and best agree,' allowing the lodge to prosper as a healthy, active member of its community.

The lodge has helped sponsor Stedman's annual "Party in the Park" each May, in addition to youth sports teams in Stedman and nearby Eastover. It has participated in the state's Adopt-A-Highway program, helped sponsor appendant bodies' fundraisers, and held fundraisers featuring spaghetti and steak dinners to bring locals inside the lodge walls. Volunteers share the responsibility of mowing grass for members who are unable to do it themselves and have helped lodge widows with lawn care and yard sales.



PM Wallace Frazee (2016) preparing lunch for one of our fundraiser golf tournaments.



2023 golf tournament check presentation at MHCO

At the top of the list is its charity golf tournament, held annually since 2007, except in 2020 when it was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the years, the lodge has provided nearly \$77,000 to the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford.

"It takes a lot of money to run an institution like that, so we make Oxford our No. 1 priority," said Kenny Bell, Past Master of Stedman Lodge.

In the early years of the tournament, the lodge sent 100% of its net proceeds to MHCO. But in the past five or six years, its tournament committee saw a need to keep a portion of that to address local needs.

These include church food pantries, the Falcon Children's Home. Also benefitting from those proceeds are families who have lost their homes to fire or are facing daunting medical bills, with that money funneled through a local 501(c)3 entity.

This philosophical change "gives us the ability to help quickly if someone locally experiences a catastrophe," Bell said.

However, the money must be paid out within the time-limit parameters set by the Grand Lodge's Commission on Special Activities.

That can be a good thing, though, for the lodge's local charities that have become regular recipients. Three churches in eastern Cumberland County have received donations ranging from \$500 to nearly \$1,700 to fund projects like 'backpack buddies,'



The Cokesbury Methodist food pantry is open four days a week and has about 600 registered clients. It serves about 75 families every week.

which ensures that school children have food to take home for the weekend. Located less than 200 yards from Stedman 730's one-story brick temple, Cokesbury Methodist Church's food pantry helps residents of Cumberland and neighboring Sampson County four days a week.

Rev. Ray Burkart said that Cokesbury's food pantry serves about 600 people per month. It is listed with Cumberland County's governmental offices as a source for those needing food, and it is supplied, in part, by Second Harvest Food Bank of Southeastern North Carolina, Food Lion and farmers near and far. The financial donations from Stedman Lodge No. 730 are especially useful during the winter when fresh produce is in short supply.

"Those items we can't get at certain times, the funds from the Masons are very important because that allows us to buy what we need," Rev. Burkart said.

The lodge also began a canned-food drive among its members in January 2023. The "Worshipful Brother Kenny Kanned Food Drive" has continued in 2024 under current Master Joe Ferrand.

"They continue to have challenges keeping the stock up," Bell said, "and they continually

need support to serve the local community, and sometimes there's nowhere else to go. It's important to keep that food supply coming in because some people rely on it. It may be the only food they have for a couple of days. I think it's important that we continue the canned-food drive for years to come. The lodge is thrilled to contribute locally in any way we can, because the need will always be there.

"It also helps the public see that Stedman Lodge No. 730 is more than just a brick building on Carol Street. Not everything we do is behind closed doors, nor should it be. The people in and around Stedman need to know who we are and that we do good things."

"They'll come in here sometimes with a pallet of food that's boxed up, like, six feet above the roof," Burkart said. "It's all volunteer, and many of the volunteers started out coming to us because they had a need for food. Now they want to pay it forward. It's like a real family that has compassion and empathy because they've been there and know what it's like."



PM David Gray presenting a check to the administrator of Falcon Children's Home in 2015



By Steve Pendergrass

The Journey to Eagle Scout

By Steve Pendergrass

Celebrating Achievements in Shallotte, North Carolina

In the scenic town of Shallotte, North Carolina, a significant event took place at the Shallotte Lodge No. 727, marking a milestone for five exceptional young men—Patrick Bildt, Giovanni Palmieri, Josh Connick, Tyler Taylor, and Bryan Miller. On Saturday, October 28, 2023, at 10:00 AM, the Grand Lodge recognized these individuals for achieving the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout, a testament to their dedication, leadership, and community spirit.

Understanding the Eagle Scout Rank

Before delving into the ceremony, it's essential to understand what it means to be an Eagle Scout. This rank is the highest achievement attainable in the Boy Scouts of America program. Since its inception in 1911, the title of Eagle Scout has been earned by young men who have demonstrated proficiency in leadership, service, and outdoor skills. To earn this rank, a Scout must fulfill numerous requirements, including earning a series of merit badges and completing a community service project

that showcases their initiative and commitment to bettering society.

Ceremony at the Masonic Lodge

Presided over by Brad Conway, Master of the Lodge, the ceremony began with a warm welcome and continued with a presentation by the National Sojourners Chapter #97 in Fayetteville. This organization, comprising members who are both Masons and veterans, focuses on patriotic education and American heritage. They explained the triangular shape of the folded American flag and the meaning behind each of the 13 folds, symbolizing the original 13 colonies and the principles on which the United States was founded. Past Grand Master Speed Hallman (2018) delivered a heartfelt message, highlighting the young Scouts' achievements. In a touching moment, each Scout was called up to receive their Eagle Scout Recognition Certificate and a Letter of Recognition from the Grand Lodge of North Carolina, signed by then-current Grand Master, Kevan D. Frazier.

A Tribute to the Flag

The event also featured an educational program by Herbert Lynch from the National Sojourners, who presented the history of the American flag and the flags of various military branches. This was followed by a poignant flag retirement ceremony conducted by the Kenneth A. Gore American Legion Post 550. Commander Carl Vok led the ceremony, with a bugle rendition of “To the Colors” and “Taps” played by Ray Clement from American Legion Post #543. The ceremony included a moving remembrance segment where attendees honored veterans by placing red strips from a retired flag into a burn container, symbolizing respect and gratitude.



Community Participation

The event saw participation from various community groups, including the Shallotte Police and Fire Departments, Brunswick County Sheriff's Office & their Honor Guard, and the Calabash Elks. Their presence underscored the community's support for the achievements of these young Eagle Scouts and the values they represent.

As we reflect on this event, it becomes clear that these five young men are not just Scouts but beacons of hope and leadership in their community. Their journey to Eagle Scout is not just a personal achievement but a testament to the potential for positive change and excellence in our youth. Keep an eye on them; they are indeed set to do great things in their community and beyond.



Proudly Serving the Cause of Patriotism

By James Pugsley, Lebanon Lodge No. 391 / Carolinas Area Representative, National Sojourners Incorporated



On May 30, 2024, National Sojourners Chapter No. 97, had the distinct privilege of supporting Lebanon Lodge No. 391 by conferring the Master Masons Degree in colonial uniform by candlelight.

This special event was attended by 57 Master Masons from across North and South Carolina. The ladies of Hope Mills Chapter No. 227, Order of the Eastern Star and Camp Followers of Cornelius Harnett Camp of Heroes of '76 provided a fantastic meal fitting of the occasion. The newly raised brothers were Brother Adrian Carrillo (Phoenix No. 8), Brother Avery Delpit (Phoenix No. 8), and Brother Paul Skinner (Bladen No. 646).

You may have seen members of the National Sojourners performing color guard at annual communications or presenting patriotic programs at your lodge and may have thought to yourself who are these men dressed in funny looking costumes, what are they about, and how can I join them.

National Sojourners efforts focus on Americanism and Masonic activities. Patriotic activities include presentations, flag ceremonies, and other programs on national security and love of country, with focus on Youth through the Spirit of America Education Foundation. Our Bridge of Light Program directly supports masonry by involving Sojourners in all

Masonic activities. North Carolina has five chapters throughout the state in Elizabeth City, Jacksonville, Fayetteville, Raleigh, and Morganton.

Membership in National Sojourners is open to citizens of the United States who are Master Masons in good standing in any duly constituted Lodge of Master Masons recognized by, and maintaining fraternal relations with, a majority of the Regular Grand Lodges in the United States and who are serving, or have served honorably, as members of the uniformed services of the United States, in the Active or Reserve Component, the National Guard, or who have been elected to Honorary Membership. For further information can be found at:

<https://nationalsojourners.org>



A Legacy of Giving: One Mason's Journey to Create a Lasting Impact

By George Marut, Chief Development Officer, North Carolina Masonic Foundation

John Thompson, a dedicated Mason and long-time supporter of Masonic charities, reflected on his legacy as he approached his 70th birthday. A life devoted to the principles of brotherhood and charity, he yearned to find a way to continue making a difference even after he was gone.

John had been diligent about his retirement savings, ensuring his IRA would provide financial security for himself and his beloved wife, Mary. As he explored planned giving options, he discovered the newly created Legacy IRA, a unique opportunity to give from his IRA, receive payments for life, and leave a lasting legacy.

The Legacy IRA intrigued John. It allowed individuals aged 70½ or older to make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from their IRA, create a Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA), and receive lifetime payments for themselves and their spouses. The QCD appealed to John, as it meant he wouldn't have to pay income tax on the distribution, and it would count toward his Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), reducing his taxable income.

John's decision was solidified when he learned that the Legacy IRA included favorable terms: it could be established only once in a single calendar year, with a combined limit of \$53,000 for 2024. This amount counted towards the annual QCD limit of \$105,000, and all CGA payments would be taxed as ordinary income. Most importantly, the Legacy IRA QCD would satisfy all or some of the RMD dollar for dollar.

Excited by the potential, John reached out to the North Carolina Masonic Foundation to discuss the specifics. The foundation's representatives were thrilled to assist him, providing all the necessary information and guidance. They explained how his

Legacy IRA would secure income for him and Mary and make a profound difference in the lives of those cared for by Masonic charities.

With the foundation's support, John established his Legacy IRA CGA. John felt satisfied knowing his contribution would create a personal legacy for the Masonic community. The CGA payments provided reliable income, giving John and Mary peace of mind in their retirement years.

As he watched the impact of his gift unfold, John knew he had made the right choice. His Legacy IRA ensured his commitment to charity would endure, supporting Masonic homes, scholarships, and other vital services for years to come. John had blended financial security with philanthropic purpose, embodying the true spirit of Masonry.

John happily shares his story with fellow Masons, encouraging them to consider the Legacy IRA for planned giving. He emphasizes it's not just about the tax benefits or income; it's about creating a legacy that transcends generations, touching countless lives within the Masonic community.

John Thompson's legacy is one of love, generosity, and dedication to Masonry's principles. His story serves as an inspiration, reminding us that through thoughtful planning and giving, we can leave a lasting impact on the world and the causes we cherish. For more information on creating your own Legacy IRA, contact Chris Richardson at crichardson@mfnc.org.



Give to NCMF

www.mfnc.org/how-to-give

From Master Mason to Trustee

of Shriners Hospital for Children

By Tim Ludwig, Trustee Shriners Children, Member St John's Lodge No. 3



May 17, 2006, was a typical day for many people, but for me it was monumental. On that date I was raised wa Master Mason at St. John's Lodge #3 in New Bern, NC. I was raised with a group of brothers that I am still close to. A few months

later, I joined the Sudan Shriners. I became active in St. John's Lodge No. 3, Sudan Shriners, Sudan Cooligans parade unit, and the New Bern Shrine Club.

It was a chance meeting in 2012 with the then current Potentate of Sudan Shriners, Steve Norris, currently Senior Grand Warden, who placed me on a journey that would influence my life. After a Sudan Shriners planning meeting, I asked brother Norris if there was anything that I could do to help Shriners Hospitals for Children, as my education and career was in healthcare administration. After several follow up conversations I was nominated and elected to the Shriners Hospitals for Children, Greenville Board of Governors.

For ten years I traveled to Greenville, SC for monthly Board of Governors meetings. The Board is comprised of Nobles with varying skill sets and backgrounds. I was soon on the Executive Committee and served as Secretary, Treasurer, Vice Chairman, and two years as Chairman. I reached the maximum number of years that I could serve at the end of 2022 and transitioned to Emeritus Status.

Wanting to do more, I set my sights on the Board of Trustees for Shriners Hospitals for Children. Shriners Children's operates 20 facilities including a

hospital in Mexico and one in Canada. In addition, there are over 100 points of entries into the system through clinics and extension sites. Shriners Children's is a very large organization by any standard. The annual operating budget is greater than \$1 Billion. We are very fortunate that for over 100 years Shriners and so many others have supported Shriners Hospitals.

Shriners Children's has taken care of children from 170 of the 195 countries of the the world. Children also come to us from disasters such as fires, airplane crashes, natural born physical issues, and even wars. Imagine the fright from those children and their parents being half a world away. In most of our locations, the staff will seek out members of the community of the same nationality to visit and have friendly conversations with the child and family to make the child and family feel more at home. Many of these children will stay for weeks or even months while receiving care.

The one thing that holds Masons and Shriners together is the desire to be a better man and to make the world a better place. We all find a way to contribute to mankind and I stand in awe of the work that is done in our local lodges every day. I think of my Masonic coaches in 2006 and how they helped change my life, that there are scores of Masonic brothers all over the world coaching, serving, leading and how they have affected this world. Many thanks to all who help others see the light.



Shriners
Children's™



Do You Hear What We Hear?

By A. Gene Cobb, Jr., 33°, SGIG/PGM, and Alex Edmisten, 32° KCCH

The Scottish Rite in North Carolina is embarking on new adventures with the family of Freemasonry. Orient RiteCare Chair, Alex Edmisten, 32° KCCH, received a letter from Brother Michael Clark, 32°, of the Valley of Winston-Salem. Brother Clark is a graduate of Appalachian State University, Life Member of Thomasville Lodge No. 214, a member of the Valley of Winston-Salem Scottish Rite and holds Veteran Status with Oasis Shriners Oasis Patrol. Brother Clark is retired and currently serves as the Chaplain of Hartman Lodge No. 222 in Bluefield, VA.

In his letter, Brother Clark shared a story about his father, Mr. Chester Clark, who passed away March 16, 2022, at the age of ninety-one. Mr. Clark was born during the Great Depression and later served as an Army Combat Engineer Officer during the Korean War. He attended North Carolina State University and graduated with a Mechanical Engineering degree. Mr. Clark was a lifelong supporter of Masonic charities. Though he was not a Mason, he was a proud supporter of Shriners Hospitals for Children.

Brother Michael Clark mentioned that his first recollection of Masonry was when his father was driving one day and stopped where a group of Shriners were collecting donations. His father said to him, “Son, the Shriners are one of the few groups you can give to and know the money will only go to help others and not themselves.”

Do you hear what we hear? Due to his hearing loss during his time as a Combat Engineer in Korea, Mr. Clark needed the assistance of hearing aids, so he purchased new ones. After his passing, Mr. Clark’s son, our brother, donated his hearing aids to Appalachian State University to be used in our RiteCare Clinic to benefit a child in need.

After months of planning and collaborating with audiologist Dr. Russell at Appalachian State’s Beaver College of Health Sciences, the hearing aids arrived at our RiteCare Clinic, and a thirteen-year-old child can now hear! The Scottish Rite in North Carolina continues to help children all across our great state with speech and language disorders.

Chester Clark, though not a Mason, proves how others notice the impact we have in the world. It does not matter who gets the credit. What matters is that a child can hear and receive care through our charities.

The Scottish Rite Orient in North Carolina is proud to share this story because it demonstrates the connection we all have, share, and promote within our community and our Masonic family. We are always investigating new ways to help local school systems because when children can hear, speak, and communicate, they are better enabled to reach their full potential and make the world a better place for everyone.

Our nine Scottish Rite Valleys are hard at work and we want everyone to hear what we hear—the sounds of this wonderful life! We call it having the “Right/Rite heart!”

For more information, contact Alex Edmisten, RiteCare Orient Chairman at edmisteninc@gmail.com or A. Gene Cobb, Jr., PGM at agcobb@nccumc.org or visit us today at: www.ncscottishrite.org



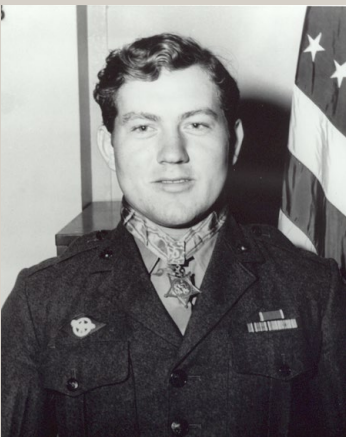


US Navy Names Destroyer for NC Mason

By Ric Carter, Editor Emeritus

The United States Navy’s first Arleigh Burke-class Flight III guided-missile destroyer was commissioned in May. It is named after the late USMC PFC Jack H. Lucas, a native of Plymouth, NC, and a member of Orr Lodge No. 104 in Washington, NC.

A naval destroyer being named for an enlisted man seems atypical. But then, 'typical' is NOT a word one would use to recall Lucas or recount his story.



When war fever gripped the US in 1942, none were more consumed than farmer’s son Jack Lucas. He was determined to be a Marine and

take the fight to the enemy firsthand, despite his atypical youth. Only 14, Jack presented a parental permission form, listing him as 17 years old, to satisfy Marine recruiters. (Some say he forged his mother’s name, others that she signed it under the glare of his determination.) By the end of 1943, after what must have felt to Jack interminable training at Camp Lejeune, New River Air Station, and San Diego, he was in Pearl Harbor attached to an amphibious unit. He was promoted to private first class in January 1944.

Jack was the youngest Marine ever and the youngest serviceman of WWII to earn the nation's highest military honor.

A year later, his patience was gone. In a far-from-typical response, Jack put some clothes under his arm and disappeared from his unit. He stowed away on a ship full of Marines, bound for the invasion of Iwo Jima. He managed to remain undetected until the day before his absence would have been declared desertion. That was February 8, 1945, when turned himself in. Authorities assigned him to a unit on board as a rifleman, and busted him to Private. Six days later he turned 17. Five days after that, he and his unit stormed Iwo Jima.

The day after their landing, Jack was one of a four-man fire team working its way toward a Japanese airfield. They stumbled across an enemy pillbox and dove into a trench for cover only to find there were 11 Japanese soldiers in an adjacent trench. Everyone opened fire. Seconds later, two grenades suddenly landed in the trench with the four Americans. Lucas threw himself belly down atop one, shoving it into the ash and sand in the trench, with his other hand he grabbed the second grenade and pulled it under him. There was an explosion.

His mates assumed the obvious, that Jack was dead, and continued to advance. In an atypical outcome, one of the grenades exploded, causing Jack great injury, flipping him over in the trench. The second one, still gripped in his hand, failed to detonate. He was found by a following unit and evacuated back to the fleet and a hospital ship.

By the end of March, he was back stateside being treated for his wounds. Over 20 operations left him with 200 pieces of shrapnel still in his body. In October 1945, on the South Lawn of the White House, President Harry Truman presented Jack and 13 of his comrades with Medals of Honor. Jack was the youngest Marine ever, and the youngest

serviceman of WWII to earn the nation's highest military honor.

Jack went to business school at High Point University after leaving the service. Several businesses came and went. By 1961, Jack had decided that the military was the place for him. He says he joined the 82nd Airborne in search of a cure for his "fear of heights" – not your typical therapy. He reportedly survived a jump in where neither of his parachutes opened properly.

He was denied when he volunteered to serve in Vietnam. He trained men headed for Nam in his final military years, leaving the Army as a captain in 1965.

Jack was a wonderful character. We typically expect our war heroes to be reserved and self-effacing, but Jack was none of that. He rightfully rejoiced in the honors he earned. He enjoyed the attention it brought him. He was jovial and always a draw at any gathering.

While living in Washington, NC, in the 1990s, Jack joined Orr Lodge No. 104. He was raised in a large gathering of Masons from around the state including sitting Grand Master Ray Norris on September 26, 1992. His degree was performed by the then well-known Third Degree team from Hiram Lodge No. 40 in Raleigh. He passed away from leukemia in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, June 5, 2008.



USS Jack H. Lucas (DDG-125) will call Naval Base San Diego homeport, the same port Jack faked his way through on his atypical childhood journey to fight the enemy.

NORTH CAROLINA
THE MASON

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

The Grand Lodge of North Carolina, AF&AM
2921 Glenwood Avenue
Raleigh, NC 27608

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

NON PROFIT ORG.
AUTO
US POSTAGE PAID
OXFORD, NC 27565
PERMIT NO. 56



WHY MASONRY?

by Dr. Russell Philbrick

When asking myself, why masonry?
I think immediately of the path we walk,
And I wonder ... how I as an individual,
Do I represent that point within a circle,
While surrounded by duties to all,
And striving to fulfill some great destiny,
As life brings new challenges each day.

Then I realize that the circle has another,
And much more significant meaning;
It signifies a bond among men,
Belief in a principal of what's right and wrong,
An acceptance of my individual responsibility,
And my enjoyment of that personal freedom,
Which so many have worked to establish,
And we have pledged to defend.

Through this difficult pathway, the circle
Reminds us that we must take a global view.
Each precious day provides opportunities to
Respond to the needs, show compassion,
And give loving care to the travelers we meet.
We are strengthened by the teachings and
Reminded by the symbols of our great fraternity,
So that one day, we can lay down our tools,
And remember the wonders of the path we trod.