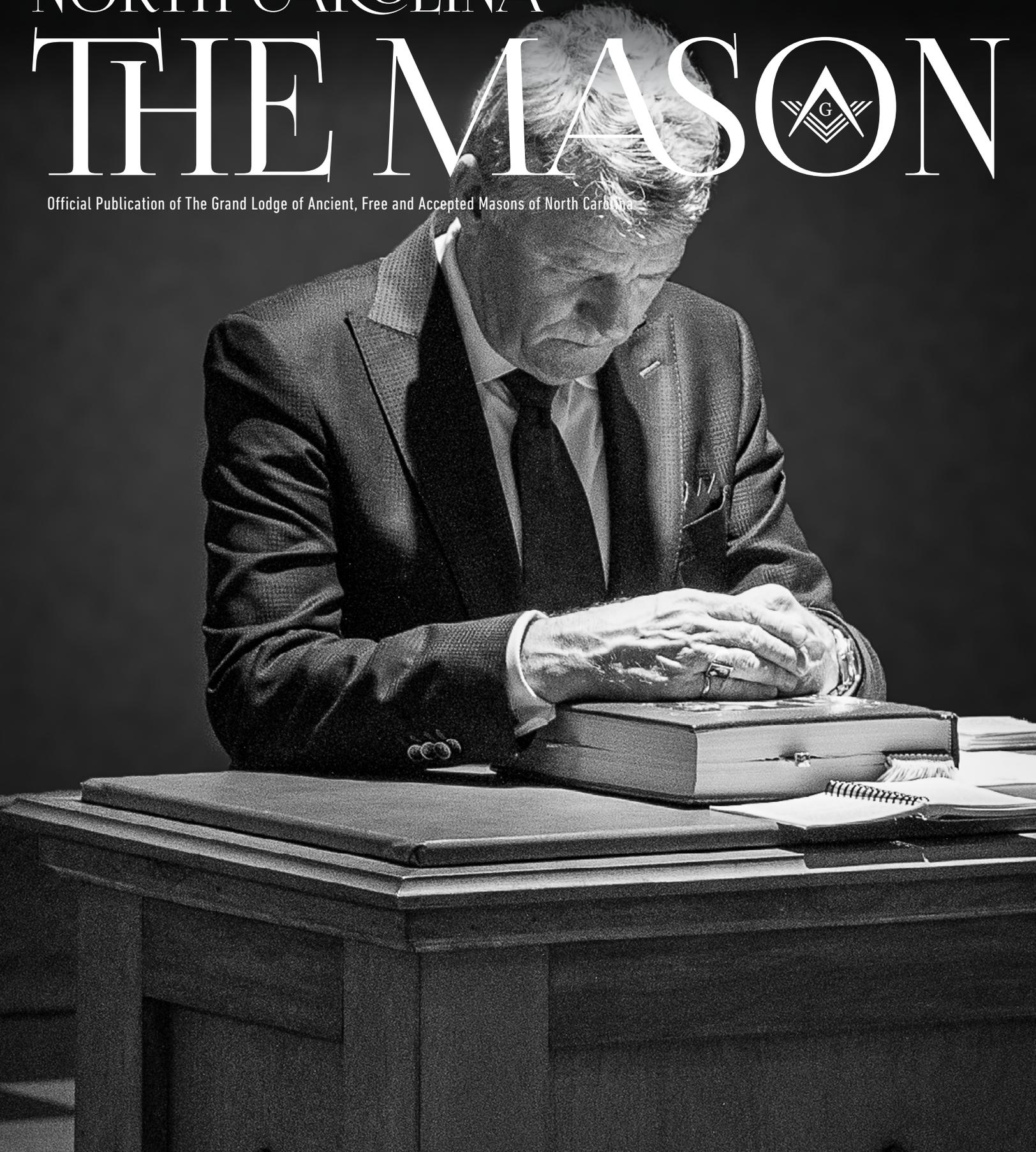


NORTH CAROLINA

WINTER 2026

# THE MASON

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



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**ON THE COVER:**

Marty Atwater, 2026 Master of J.J. Crowder Lodge No. 743  
Photo: Don Butto, Grand Photographer (MasonPost.com)

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# Sharing Freemasonry's Light: Extending the Arm of Friendship

By Steve Norris, Grand Master of Masons in North Carolina



The dashboard lights went dim and the gauge needles began to jerk erratically. My routine drive was taking a sudden turn for the worse, and I could see that this was becoming a bad day.

In March 2013, I was traveling to Roanoke for my first meeting as an officer of the South Atlantic Shrine Association (SASA). Like many of these trips before, I was excited about making new friends as well as seeing old friends like Calvin Gaddy. Calvin and I served on the public relations committee for the Grand Lodge in the late '90s.

But two hours into the trip, on the outskirts of Rockingham, I had just merged onto the new section of Interstate 73-74 and was looking forward to several hours of uneventful driving. Then it happened. I took the first exit and pulled onto the shoulder. The truck was still running but I knew there was an electrical problem, probably the alternator. I called my business partner and fellow Mason back home to discuss my dilemma. He suggested I call another brother who had an automotive repair shop and tow truck. That call confirmed my suspicion, and the brother suggested I attempt to drive to the nearest parts store, purchase an alternator, borrow their tools and swap out the old one.

Then the engine stopped. It was time for Plan B. I called PGM Bob Gresham to ask if he knew anyone in the Rockingham area who might assist. He told me to stay put and he would call me back. I assured him I wasn't going anywhere. A few minutes later MW Gresham called and informed me I would get a call from the 704 area code. It would be from a brother who could help. Shortly, the phone rang and the caller exclaimed, "Brother Steve, I hear you've got a problem, tell me where you are and the make and model of your truck." I told him, and he said he and his mechanic buy an alternator and head my way.

As I waited, I began to realize how late I was going to be for my meeting in Roanoke. This was my first official meeting

and being late would not make a good impression. My late father taught me from an early age that being late is a bad habit and is inconsiderate of other people's time. I've always prided myself on being early for business appointments as well as personal obligations. Today was going to be an exception, and though it was out of my control my anxiety level began to rise.

The front tag was the first thing I noticed as the car pulled up in front of my truck. You notice I did not say a service truck came to my rescue. I said car, a dark green early 1980s Lincoln Town Car. The passenger and driver doors opened at the same time, the occupants emerged wearing denim overalls, and the Masonic front tag, suspended by a single bolt, slowly stopped swinging.

"Brother Steve," the driver said, "I'm Chesley Greene. This is my farm mechanic Sidney, and he will have you up and running in just a few minutes." I couldn't help but notice the red hair of the older gentleman who had come to my aid and his excitement at being able to help a brother in need. We began to share our Masonic histories, finding common ground in our love for the fraternity and its ritualistic work. We were both certified lecturers and he had served on the Board of Custodians. I had served as DDGL, and we shared stories about degrees and other experiences in the lodge. The time passed quickly and soon we heard my truck engine come to life. Sidney made sure it was charging and he closed the hood.

I asked how much I owed him, realizing I had very little cash, and I was sure he didn't take credit cards. He handed me the invoice for the alternator, which included a discount for the return of the old one, taking more time out of his day. I explained

my situation and Chesley said, "Just put a check in the mail when you get home." I asked how much for their time and labor and he quickly replied, "No charge." I insisted that he let me pay him for his and his mechanic's time, but he refused, stating I had given him the opportunity to help a brother.

As I stood there checking the time and realizing I would miss my first meeting I said, "You know, I could look at this as a very bad day. I broke down on the side of the road and I'm hours late for my first SASA conference. In fact, I've missed the first meeting. Or, I could look at it as an opportunity to witness Masonry in action, to have the arm of friendship extended by a brother, and to make a new friend." Brother Chesley paused for a moment and replied, "Let's do that last one."

We shook hands as brothers and they drove away with the front tag on the Town Car swinging. I put my truck in drive and headed to Roanoke, thinking what a great day it had been!



*Sidney Pratt, MW Grand Master Norris, WB Chesley Greene.*

# Building a Culture of Connection: Keeping New Masons Engaged

By Jonathan A. Underwood, Grand Secretary



**W**e invest a great deal of time and effort encouraging good men to knock on the door of Freemasonry. We investigate them, ballot on them, confer degrees upon them, and present them with aprons and Bibles. Too often, however, we stop there and assume that the new Brother will simply “find his way.” In the world we live in now, that assumption is no longer sufficient.

Membership research and experience both tell us that the first 30 days are often when enthusiasm begins to fade if a new member doesn't hear from us or see a clear next step. By 90 days, his pattern of engagement is largely set. Organizations that neglect

this early window often see 10–30% of new members quietly slip away. Freemasonry is not immune to that reality. In a jurisdiction of roughly 30,000 Masons, even a modest percentage of new Brothers drifting off in their first year represents a serious loss of potential leadership, energy, and talent.

*Organizations that neglect this early window often see 10–30% of new members quietly slip away.*

We are not without tools to help us. In fact, we already have an onboarding program designed for this very purpose: the Lodge System of Masonic Education. It is built to walk our Entered Apprentices, Fellow Crafts, and new Master Masons through the basics of the degrees, but it goes far beyond a catechism review. Properly used, it explains that Freemasonry is not merely a civic club or social organization. It is intended to promote introspection and the building of one's inner life, which then naturally leads to deeper social interaction, lifelong friendships, and a worldwide network of men committed to making their homes, communities, and countries better than they were before.

The problem is not that we lack an onboarding system, but that we do not use it consistently. Many lodges either

only skim the surface of the Lodge System of Masonic Education or set it aside altogether. When that happens, new Brothers are left to piece things together on their own. They may enjoy the ritual and the fellowship, but they may never fully understand what Freemasonry is asking of them—or what it is offering to them.

That is also why the work now underway through our Committee on Masonic Education is so important. The Committee has recently drafted a more modern, more accessible version of the Lodge System of Masonic Education—one designed to be easier for lodges to implement consistently, and easier for new Brothers to follow with confidence. That updated draft will be reviewed through the proper channels and, once finalized, deployed for use across the jurisdiction.

That is why I am especially encouraged by recent efforts to create more intentional structures around our new members. In Raleigh, an Entered Apprentices Association has formed, bringing our newest Brothers together regularly so they can meet one another, ask honest questions, and begin to understand what it means to be a Freemason. Alongside that, discussions are underway to host monthly and quarterly meetings for new initiates and newly raised Master Masons. These gatherings would provide a practical “run down” of the Craft: who we are, what we believe, and what opportunities exist in North Carolina, nationally, and globally for Masons who want to learn, serve, and grow.

Used together, the Lodge System of Masonic Education and these emerging

associations and orientation meetings can form a powerful culture of connection. The System gives us the structure and content; the associations and gatherings give us the human face and the ongoing touchpoints. None of this replaces the personal care of a mentor, coach, or friend—it strengthens and supports those relationships.

*Building a culture of connection is not the work of one committee or one officer. It is the shared labor of the whole Craft.*

Building a culture of connection is not the work of one committee or one officer. It is the shared labor of the whole Craft. Every Brother can be a point of contact, a welcoming presence, and a patient teacher. If we will be intentional about how we receive and guide our Entered Apprentices, Fellow Crafts, and new Master Masons—using the tools we already have and the programs now taking shape—we will not only retain more members. We will help more men grow into the kind of Masons our ritual describes and our world so badly needs.



# THE PLINTH LEVEL: A Legacy of Masonic Charity That Endures

by George Marut

For generations, North Carolina Masons have lived out the timeless call of our Craft—to serve with compassion, to uplift our communities, and to leave a legacy that outlasts our own working tools. **The Phoenix Society** was created to honor those Brothers and families who chose to strengthen that legacy in a meaningful and lasting way. Among its most impactful pathways is the **Plinth Level**, reserved for those who include the North Carolina Masonic Foundation (NCMF) in their **planned giving**.

Planned giving is more than a financial decision. It is a statement of faith—faith in our values, in our Brotherhood, and in the future of Masonic charity across North Carolina. When a Brother makes a planned gift, he ensures that relief, education, and support are available not only for today's members, but for generations yet to come. These gifts become part of the Foundation's permanent strength. They enable us to respond quickly when a widow needs help, when a Brother faces crisis, or when a child strives for opportunity.

The beauty of planned giving is its accessibility. You do not need significant wealth to make a profound impact. Many Brothers join the Plinth Level by taking simple steps such as:

- Adding the NCMF as a **BENEFICIARY** in a will or trust
- Naming the Foundation as a **BENEFICIARY** of a **RETIREMENT** account
- Assigning an existing **LIFE INSURANCE POLICY** to the NCMF
- Establishing a **CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY**, providing lifetime income and future support
- Creating a **LEGACY FUND** to support their lodge or the Phoenix Society

Each of these choices reflects a Brother's commitment to ensuring the light of Masonic charity shines far beyond his own lifetime.

**Why the Plinth Level?** In architecture, the plinth is the base—the solid foundation upon which everything else is built. Planned giving serves that same purpose for the Foundation. It stabilizes our relief efforts, strengthens our ability to invest in education, and strengthens the charitable work of lodges statewide. As demand for assistance continues to grow, these legacy gifts ensure that we are never caught unprepared. They turn temporary generosity into permanent impact.

Brethren, now is the moment to consider how you want your Masonic legacy to live on. If you believe in the mission of the NCMF—if you have felt the calling to lift up our Brothers, widows, and children—then a planned gift is one of the most meaningful steps you can take.

**I invite you to join so many dedicated Brothers across the state, in securing the future of Masonic charity.**

Include the North Carolina Masonic Foundation in your estate plans.

Choose a method that aligns with your goals.

**Take your place among the Plinth Level of the Phoenix Society.**

To begin this simple, thoughtful, and impactful step, I would be honored to speak with you personally.

Contact me at [gmarut@mfnc.org](mailto:gmarut@mfnc.org) or visit [www.mfnc.org/phoenix](http://www.mfnc.org/phoenix).

**Let your legacy rise - strong, enduring, and unmistakably Masonic.**





# Masonic Home for Children at Oxford

by Christopher Allabaugh

**T**he month of February can bring many emotions. Some of us are still reflecting on the joyous holiday season that just passed, embracing the last few weeks of Winter, and holding steadfast to our New Year's resolutions. Others are counting down until warmer Spring days, the sun setting later in the evening, and the possibility of a Spring Break just around the corner. No matter which of those camps you may fall into, one thing surely holds true. 2026 is off to a blistering start, and there is no one who can slow down time.

We are faced with that reality every day here at MHCO. We are perpetually shopping for new clothes because our kids don't stop growing or growing up. Birthdays continue to pass. Milestones are achieved. Opportunities are presented and grabbed ahold of with both hands. Before we know it, school will be winding down, and we will be preparing for the thrill of Summer. As a wise friend of mine explained to me while our boys were quite young, the days are long, but the years are short.

Childhood is such a special time, and it goes by far too quickly. I can recall when I was young the eagerness with which I wanted to grow up. Now, so many of us long for those days of pure joy, free time, friendships and the spirit of boldness that comes with being a kid who sees themselves as invincible. The thought of playing with neighborhood friends,

a trip to the ice cream shop, or a camping trip on the lake all bring a smile to my face.

Our kids here in Oxford are growing up fast. I am incredibly thankful that because of your support they get the same chance at a great childhood as any other kid. I hope you will celebrate that alongside us and if you are not already investing in the lives of these children, I hope this Spring you will come visit and see all that is happening here at MHCO. It truly is a great place to be a kid! For more information or to learn how you can continue supporting the Masonic Home for Children, visit <https://www.mhc-oxford.org>.

**A single dollar can change a life.**

Donate today:  
[www.mhc-oxford.org](https://www.mhc-oxford.org)

Your generosity and kindness will go a long way!



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Lodge No.

To Brother

Initiated

Passed

Raised

# Why don't you wear your own apron?

By Steven Cates

## **A LOOK AT HOW OUR CUSTOMS HAVE CHANGED CONCERNING THE WEARING OF THE APRON THAT WAS PRESENTED TO YOU**

On their first admittance into a Blue Lodge in North Carolina, the candidate takes the obligation of an Entered Apprentice. As a newly made Mason one of their first rights and benefits is receiving their own white leather Masonic apron.

They are instructed by the Worshipful Master that the apron is theirs to wear throughout an honorable life and, upon their death, to be placed upon their coffin or urn and laid beneath the silent clods of the valley.

At the conclusion of the degree, most newly made Entered Apprentices are instructed to return their apron to the plastic wrapping and blue tube it was shipped in. They are advised by their Coach or the Master of the Lodge to store

it in a safe place until such time as they are called to the Celestial Lodge above. They are also reminded to ensure that their spouse or loved ones know its location so it can be retrieved and placed upon the deceased Brother at the time of burial or upon the urn if cremated. In some cases, they might wish to pass it on to a son or grandson who is a Mason as a permanent reminder of their Masonic bonds..

So... why were you told when you were presented your Masonic Apron to wear it throughout an honorable life and then instructed not to wear your Apron to Lodge meetings, Grand Communications, Masonic Burials, public displays of Masonic functions?

Several Masonic Lodges in other states encourage their members to wear their aprons at all Masonic functions. Why not in North Carolina?

Historically, we find that North Carolina Masons did wear their aprons. Pictures of NC Masonic figures depict them in their own personal aprons. These were aprons

created by the Mason themselves and were unique to that individual.

So, when did the practice change from wearing your own personal apron in North Carolina? We see this custom and practice in North Carolina Masonry up through World War II, research shows our practices concerning wearing your personal Masonic Apron changed in the 1950's. Why?

This may have coincided with the change of having one meeting per month on a Saturday night closest to the full moon (Leaksville Lodge No. 136) or Saturday mornings at 10:00 am (Concord Lodge No. 58) to our common practice now of having one or two meetings per month, during weeknights.

We also find the NC Grand Lodge Code provides clear directions of what defines an acceptable Masonic apron. Chapter 89-2 states that a Masonic apron can be only white and must be 15x17 inches in size

There is no direction on the wearing one's own apron but describes Masonic aprons in general. The material of the Master Mason apron can be lambskin, leather, or cloth. All Masonic Aprons that are worn by attending members and who are not an Officer of the Lodge are identical.

The description of the cloth material of the apron gives us a clue as to the reason we see complimentary aprons being provided by the Blue Lodge for its members and guests.

Given those Masons attending Lodge meetings biweekly may have come directly from work might have caused them not to

carry their aprons around with them due to the Secrecy of their membership.

To encourage these Brethren to attend the Lodge and to provide ease of wearing identical aprons, Lodges began to provide white cloth aprons for members and guests to wear during their meetings.

This practice extended further to a practice of providing Past Master aprons for wear during the meetings as well.

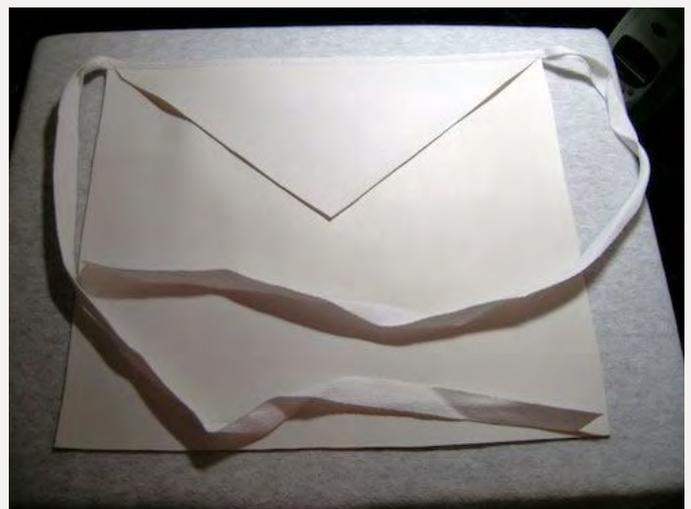
We see this practice today at our Masonic funeral services as well since most Lodges provide complimentary aprons and white gloves.

So... you can wear your own personal apron or not...That choice is yours.

The vital reminder here is to wear your Masonic apron throughout an "Honorable Life".

History of Concord Ancient, Free, & Accepted Masons, Lodge No. 58, Tarboro, NC, From 1811-1958

History of Leaksville Lodge No. 136, Eden, NC, H.C. Pace.



# From the Quarry

## Traveling Gavel

Oak Island Lodge No. 758



Our lodge reluctantly gave up the District Traveling Gavel to Federal Point Lodge No. 753.

It was a grand old time as twelve members from Federal Point lodge visited our lodge. Ed Freidrick is our WM and Anthony Welborn is WM of Federal Point.

We would be wonderful to see more of this type of engagement between lodges. When we obtained the gavel last November we had 8 Brothers in attendance which was a good time of fellowship and fraternal brotherhood with both lodges.



## 60-Years of Service

Royal Hart Lodge No. 497



WB Harry L. Williams was presented with his 60-year service award and pin on July 14, 2025 by RW Phil Johnson.

WB Williams is also a member of Royal White Hart Lodge No. 2.

## Lunch at MHCO

Kernersville Lodge No. 669



Kernersville Masonic Lodge No. 669 recently visited and provided lunch to the children at the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford. Brother Michael Queen PM led this event and Brother Chris Grubbs covered the cost of the meal.

## Halloween Candy Crawl

Conover Lodge No. 709



Conover Lodge at it again! We started out with 20 pounds of all kinds of candy, and at 3PM the goblins started arriving! The Conover candy crawl (Hosted by the Conover downtown merchants) was in full swing! There were roughly 1,500-2,000 people dresses up as EVERYTHING you could

imagine, and we gave out 20 lbs of candy to the goblins!

## Claremont PTO Donation

Conover Lodge No. 709



About a month ago the Claremont school PTO sent us an email regarding the need for help raising funds for a new playground for the kids. The playgrounds there are in horrible shape, and are beginning to be a danger to the kids that play there. I reached out to Littel Johnson from the PTO and let her know that Conover No. 709 would be happy to help with what we could, to help them reach the goal. WB Mike Matty met with Littel at the lodge at our last stated communication and we presented her with a check for \$500 towards the project. We look forward to seeing the new playgrounds, and were happy to be able to help!

## 70-Years of Service!

Kedron Lodge No. 387

WB Casion and WB Jessee Beddingfield presenting the 70 Year Service Award to recipient H. C. Duke Knief at Kedron 387 in Hendersonville on December 1, 2025. It was a full house with Installation of Officers following.



## Fraternal Friendship Program Lebanon Lodge No. 207

WB Joey Transou was recently at Lebanon Lodge No. 207 presenting a program on WhiteStone and Fraternal Friendship Program. On behalf of Fraternal Friendship and MESH, LLC, he was pleased to receive their check for \$1,650 for support of our elderly fraternally related brothers and sisters at WhiteStone and across the state who needs assistance.



In the photo l to r: Current WM Harold Nobles Jr. , Joey Transou, 2x Past Master Edward Davis. W. Bro. Davis is chair of the fundraising project.

## 60-Years of Service Hiram Lodge No. 40



Service award was presented exactly 60 years to the night he was raised. The night he was raised the weather was sleet and freezing rain and the lodge room was freezing as well. Don stated that when he joined lodge he found his people, those who thought and acted the way he did and it has made all the difference to his life.

## Spending Time with Veterans Mt Holly Lodge No. 544



Brothers from Mt Holly Lodge No. 544 had the distinct honor of hanging out with some veterans on Nov 11th during lunch and presenting them the cards, pins and plaques.

We talk about raising money for charity a lot during lodge meetings, but they will tell you that just visiting and spending time speaking with these veterans and other residents brought a smile to their faces. Our time is a huge part of the charity work we do. Spending time with someone just talking and joking can sometimes be more valuable than money.

Now, we still need to raise money for our Masonic and local charities, but don't lose sight of the most valuable resources we have, our time to make someone smile. Just something to think about.

One of the veterans we met told us he too was a Mason. When Mr. Jerome saw our Masonic rings, he smiled and immediately began talking with us. The nursing staff told us that he is constantly telling them that he is a Mason. It is an important part of his life.

## New Eagle Scouts Shallotte Lodge No. 727



Since October 2023, the three Scout Troops in south Brunswick County have "hatched" twelve new Eagle Scouts. Leamon Clemmons (Master of Shallotte Lodge), Brian Chism (Brunswick County Sheriff), Captain Seth Warden (Shallotte Fire Department) and Carl Votik (Kenneth Gore American Legion Post 550) each congratulated the Eagle Scouts in attendance for the Recognition Ceremony. The Grand Lodge of North Carolina Freemasons presented each Scout with a Certificate of Achievement and a Letter of Congratulations by Past Grand Master MW A. Gene Cobb. The Lodge's 2025 Worshipful Master, Leamon Clemmons of Supply, shared these words with the Scouts and those folks in attendance.

*"Congratulations to the newest Eagle Scouts representing Troop 201/Sunset Beach NC, Troop 262/Shallotte NC, and Troop 1262/Shallotte NC. It was the honor and privilege of Shallotte Lodge #727 to recognize these outstanding young people."*



# 60 Years of Service: Brother "Shaky"

By Larry Hudson

An assemblage of Masons from North Carolina, including brothers from Raleigh Lodge No. 500 and William G. Hill Lodge No. 218, had the pleasure to present a 60-Year Service Award to Brother Shakeep Kassem on behalf of the Grand Lodge of Virginia and North Carolina on Saturday October 11, 2025.

Brother Shakeep "Shaky" Kassem was raised by Hunters Lodge No. 156, Blacksburg, VA April 16, 1965.

Brother Shaky currently resides in Raleigh, NC and will be celebrating his 96th birthday on October 25, 2025. Brother Shaky was a legacy in Masonry by way of his father Mhmood J Kassem, a veteran of WWI who passed away when Brother Shaky was 5 years old. When Brother Shaky left home for College, being the first to do so, his mother told him: "You will find good men in the Masons"

Raleigh Lodge No. 500 and William G Hill Lodge No. 218 would like to congratulate Brother Shakeep Kassem on this momentous accomplishment and thank him for the many years of dedication to our Craft.

Masons in Attendance: W. Brother Cliff Kealoha, WM Raleigh Lodge No. 500; W. Brother Larry Hudson, Secretary and Past Master, Raleigh Lodge No. 500; W. Brother Jerry "Bear" Wellner, Raleigh Lodge No. 500; Mark Wilson, Fellow Craft, Raleigh Lodge No. 500, Jeff Kantner, Entered Apprentice, Raleigh Lodge No. 500; Stanley Serxner, William G Hill No. 218; David Serxner, William G. Hill No. 218.



# A MILESTONE OF BROTHERHOOD: Cherokee Lodge No. 146 Dedicates Its New Home

By Rory Justin Byers

On a crisp autumn afternoon in the far-western mountains of North Carolina, October 25, 2025, became a day of lasting significance for Cherokee Lodge No. 146, A.F. & A.M. Brethren, joined by friends and guests from across the 41st Masonic District, gathered to dedicate their new home.

The event opened under the leadership of Worshipful Brother Kenny White, Master of Cherokee Lodge No. 146, whose gracious welcome set a tone of warmth and fraternity. He reminded everyone that the strength of the Craft lies not in buildings or titles, but in the shared commitment to truth, charity, and brotherly love.

Among the attendees were WB Preston Cabe, District Deputy Grand Master of the 41st District from Clay Lodge No. 301; WB Patrick Howard, District Deputy Grand Lecturer of the 41st District from Junaluske Lodge No. 145; and WB Rory Justin Byers, Assistant Grand Chaplain for Area 5 from Cherokee Lodge No. 146. Their presence reflected the unity and mutual respect that define North Carolina Masonry—especially in moments of collective achievement.

WB Rory Byers offered a presentation on the rich history of Cherokee Lodge No. 146, tracing its roots through years of challenge and triumph. His words captured the essence of the lodge's endurance and its members' steadfast dedication to one another and to their community.

Interwoven with his historical reflections was a timeless message of renewal, unity, and purpose. WB Byers then led the assembly in an invocation, calling upon the Great Architect of the Universe to bless the new lodge and guide the brethren who will labor within its walls.

The dedication ceremony was conducted with solemn beauty by WB Kenny White, WB Roy Dickey, and WB Randy Curtis. Each act was performed with reverence, transforming the new space into something far greater than wood and stone. In that moment, it became a lodge, a home for fellowship, moral reflection, and the pursuit of light.

As the dedication ceremony concluded, the air filled with words of pride and encouragement. WB Preston Cabe and WB Patrick Howard each offered heartfelt remarks, congratulating Cherokee Lodge on its steadfast spirit.

Several brethren also spoke, sharing personal memories, blessings, and words of gratitude. Their collective reflections created a tapestry of voices, each one a reminder that Freemasonry's true foundation is not laid in mortar, but in the hearts of men.

Murphy Chapter No. 10, Order of the Eastern Star, served a delicious dinner, filling the lodge with the comforting aromas of home cooking and the cheerful sounds of laughter. Stories were exchanged, friendships strengthened, and photos taken, moments that reminded all in attendance that the bonds of Masonry extend well beyond the walls of the lodge room.

The brethren of Cherokee Lodge No. 146 departed with hearts full of gratitude and purpose, knowing the dedication marked not only the beginning of a new era but also a renewed commitment to service, fellowship, and the moral light that guides the Craft. Their new home now stands as a lasting testament to resilience, unity, and brotherly love, a beacon shining brightly in the mountains of western North Carolina.





# Brother Superman?

By Kurtis Archer

**S**uperman was created in 1938 by two Jewish teenagers from Ohio with no known connections to Freemasonry. Yet in almost ninety years of comics, television, cinema, novels, video games, and more, the iconic hero is shown to be a stellar embodiment of Masonic ideals such as morality, truth, self-improvement, and community service. Superman stands as a role model who uses his abilities and secrets to serve humanity by building a better world. His character can be seen as a powerful allegory for the very ideals Freemasonry seeks to cultivate within each of its members.

One publication directly linked the fraternity to Superman, with his adoptive father being a Mason in an alternate storyline for the character. Another had someone from a crowd calling out for the “Great Architect of the Universe” to protect Superman as he flew away. This is a verbatim term Masons use for their respective higher powers, as the organization accepts men of all faiths. In the vast majority of Superman mythos however, there is a complete absence of explicit connection to Freemasonry. Nevertheless, the parallels between the two reveal a shared desire for moral improvement, ethical responsibility,

and the use of one's abilities to serve the greater good. These comparisons highlight how the fraternity and the superhero serve as allegories for a more perfect humanity.

At the heart of the speculative connection between Superman and Masonry is the shared emphasis on building a virtuous life. Both Superman and Freemasonry concern themselves with individual and societal improvement.

## Several elements in Superman stories echo Masonic themes:

**Light:** Just as Masons seek knowledge and light from a higher source, Superman's arrival to Earth from another planet in the heavens can be seen as a form of “light from above”. Additionally, Superman has his unique powers only because of Earth's sun. Several times, he has used its light to heal himself and gain strength when needed.

**Secret Knowledge:** Superman's duality as the gentle Clark Kent and the powerful Superman can be interpreted as an allegory for esoteric knowledge hidden from public view. Others see an ordinary man and not the greater, hidden truth. This resonates with the Masonic tradition of reserving certain teachings and rituals only for members.

**The Lodge:** The Fortress of Solitude is a secluded retreat that serves as Superman's home away from humanity. There he can study, reflect, and even commune with his Kryptonian heritage. This mirrors the Masonic concept of a Lodge as a symbolic temple where Masons engage in ritual and reflection to seek wisdom and improve themselves.

**Anonymity:** Freemasons are taught to offer help and support to those in need without seeking public recognition. This is precisely what Superman does. Clark Kent is the anonymous face behind the public acts of heroism, allowing Superman to live a human life without being constantly mobbed by the public. This serves a similar practical function to the more discreet acts of charity practiced by many Masons.

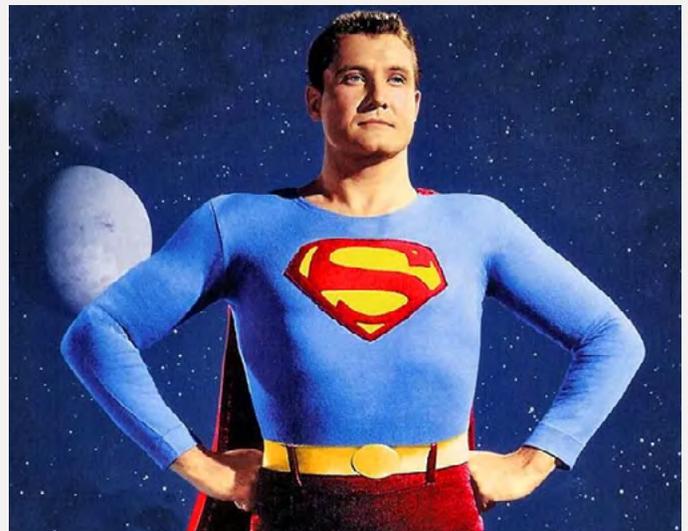
**Self-care:** Superman does not serve humanity every hour of the day. He lives enough of a personal life to have a career, girlfriend, apartment, and more. This feature of his character can be seen as a reflection of a Mason's duty to prioritize taking care of himself and his family before performing charity for others.

Superman is not who he is because of his biological heritage - his character exists because he was raised by honest and hardworking parents from America's heartland who instilled in him a good moral compass. That is his greatest power. This is reflected in the Masonic philosophy that a man's choices and actions are what make him who he is. Masons seek to accept the responsibility of living a virtuous life, and like Superman they journey toward justice and hope. Ultimately, the question of whether Superman is a Mason is less important than what the comparison tells us about the philosophical resonance between his virtuous ideals and the core principles of Freemasonry.

#### REFERENCED COMICS:

Chaykin, H., & Tischman, D. (2000). JLA: The Secret Society of Super-Heroes (No. 1) [Comic book]. DC Comics.

Millar, M. (1999). Superman Adventures Vol. 1 No. 34: Fighting Fate [Comic book]. DC Comics.





# Unanimity Lodge's 250th Celebrations

By Paul Vincent

*"It was then & there likewise agreed upon that this lodge shall be called and distinguished by the title of the lodge Unanimity..."*

— Unanimity Lodge minutes, Nov 8, 1775.

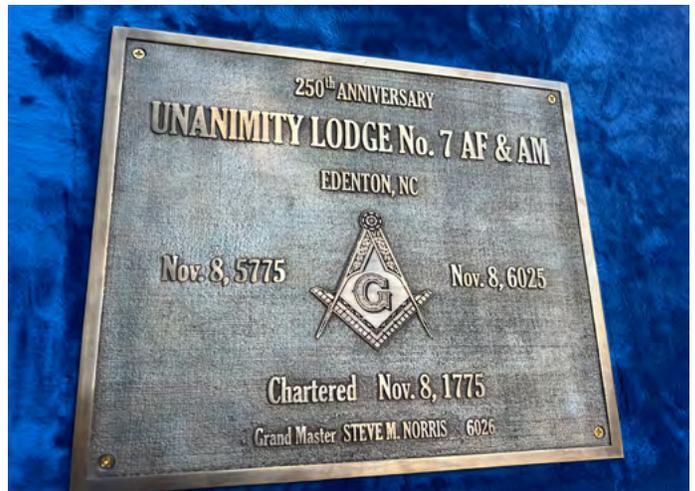
November 8, 2025, was a day of days for Unanimity Lodge, No. 7. The sunny autumn Saturday in Edenton no doubt set the stage for brethren to gather and partake in honoring one of North Carolina's oldest Masonic blue lodges. The red-letter day marked exactly 250 years since the lodge first met, then at the King's Arms Tavern, to practice the tenets of truth, relief, and brotherly love.

Brothers from across the state and beyond convened on the old Chowan County Courthouse to ring in the celebrations. Some three dozen brothers as well as several North Carolina Grand Lodge officers, including Grand Master Steve Norris, attended an emergent communication in the upstairs assembly room especially for the purpose. An encased 1738 bible, purchased for the lodge in 1778, was emplaced on the altar. It was a humble homecoming for Unanimity as the lodge held meetings at the 1767 courthouse from 1778 to 1954.

A procession followed afterward, taking the Masonic entourage from the courthouse down Court Street, then left along the fabulous Edenton Bay and back to the lodge hall. All were later treated to an outdoor

plaque dedication though the highlight of the afternoon belonged to WB Mickey Spruill. Unanimity's long-time treasurer and certified lecturer received his 50-year service award, which was dutifully presented by Grand Master Norris and Junior Grand Warden Phil Johnson.

By suppertime, guests were invited to a delicious spread of roasted stuffed chicken and bacon-wrapped filets served at the lodge hall. During the banquet Unanimity took a moment to honor their veterans with a special ceremony and recognized all in attendance who served in the US Armed Forces. A wonderful day of festivities concluded that evening with a few words from guest speakers including Senior Grand Deacon Alvin Billings, Edenton City Manager Corey Gooden, Edenton Tea Party Chapter, NSDAR, representative Beth Taylor, and Grand Historian Paul Vincent.



# Davie Comes Home to Halifax

By Jeremy Hicklin

On the cold and rainy day of December 5th, over a hundred men, women, and Masons assembled in the foyer of the William Richardson Davie house. The master of ceremonies Carl Burke welcomed everyone to the Ribbon Cutting for the house, which is now a living history site. The first speaker was Grand Master, Steve Norris, who masterfully described GM Davie's life and accomplishments. He was followed by Past Grand Master Gene Cobb, who grew up in Halifax and relayed his affections for the father of the University of North Carolina. They were followed by fundraisers, state officials and Friends of Halifax, who made this ribbon cutting and dedication a reality.

As we were finally at the event, I had been placed in the upstairs of the residence before the start of the event, which gave me an opportunity to stand where my great grandfather had lived and worked during the building of our wonderful country. After receiving our cue, we proceeded to descend the staircase in a slow, steady and pronounced manner. Upon arriving at the staircase landing, we addressed the crowd and thanked them for coming and remembering our history. Following a few final words from Mr. Burke, we made our way to the front porch, where four of us proceeded to cut the ribbon and officially open the William R. Davie historical home open to visitors.

Upon the ribbon cutting, the rest of the home's doors were opened and the guest toured and viewed the many rooms. Over a third of the visitors were Masons, many of whom were wearing aprons to honor the craft. A great time was had by all in attendance, and remember if you are ever in the North East corner of the Great North State, this jewel should be on your must-see list.

Remember the 12th of April is the 250th anniversary of the Halifax Resolves and first true independent charge of this great nation and we hope to see you then my brothers.





# Western Star Bicentennial

By Doug Tribou

**M**embers of Western Star Lodge No. 91, chartered in 1825, along with Masons from other lodges in District 38, and family and friends gathered to observe the lodge's bicentennial.

In his remarks during the ceremony, WB Gary Bridges, Master of the lodge, pointed to the new granite plaque installed in the northeast corner of the building to commemorate the occasion and explained that "masonry is not about what we do inside of this building, but rather what masons do outside of it in our communities."

The mayor of Rutherfordton, the Honorable Jimmy Dancy spoke of the rich history of Rutherfordton and Rutherford County and the fact that many of the masons from Western Star Lodge had a significant influence in the development of the town, through their active involvement in the community.

Over the course of its history, members of Western Star Lodge have served their community and government including as commissioners, congressman, and senators as well as one Supreme Court Justice and Governor of North Carolina. The lodge also is proud of its two Montford Medal recipients. RWB Phil Johnson represented the Grand Master and the Grand Lodge of North Carolina.

Following the ceremony, the lodge held an Open House in an effort to educate the public about the fraternity, its appendant bodies, and the charities they support. WB Creighton Lovelace, the lodge Chaplain and unofficial historian gave a very interesting and informative overview of the lodge's history and the history of Freemasonry in Rutherfordton and Rutherford County.



# Some New Year Resolutions

By A. Gene Cobb, SGIG - Scottish Rite Orient of North Carolina



**K**eeping New Year's resolutions is one of the most difficult challenges a human being faces every 365 days. We say we are going to do something, and we fully intend to do it, but something happens along

the way and we back off, cease, desist, and sometimes never even start to live into the resolution we made.

The ensuing year of 2026 will involve a resolution that has already begun. North Carolina Scottish Rite is restructuring how we do things as an Orient in North Carolina.

All of us can help if we make and keep a resolution that we Scottish Rite Masons, no matter how difficult that process may be. It involves changing the conversation in Freemasonry so that we can address some truth staring us in the face, but is, too often, overlooked.

Why would we ever suspend a "true brother" for non-payment of dues? The truth is that I cannot think of one good reason it should ever happen, especially if he has been faithful to his trust for many years and has reached the age of eighty. If a "true brother" is in need in any way, brotherly love expects us to help him. On bended knee we promised to help a "true brother" in need. If we are a "true brother" we will do it if possible.

If, however, the brother (note that I omitted the word "true") has a bad attitude toward or bad experience with the fraternity, that causes injury to any other person, then that brother owes it to us to meet on the level, act by the

plumb, and part on the square to be "true." When we are too quick to let someone go, we cause more harm than good.

Any departure from the fraternity raises everyone else's dues. You ask, "How's that?" It is simple. Suspensions and demits, for whatever reason, is complicity with increasing the costs of operating the Lodge, Valley, Chapter, Commandery, Council, Temple, for all "true brothers." You can add to that true knights, true nobles, or whatever "true" term applies in any part of the family of Freemasonry.

A "true brother" is one who keeps his vows and resolutions. He aids and assists another brother in need. He keeps up with him, not by just documenting his attempts through that ever-trustworthy email chain and the US Postal service, but by mouth to ear and hand to hand care and concern. A "true brother" does not separate himself from the altar at which he knelt and made his initial resolutions. A "true brother" reminds an erring brother in tender manners of the need for redirection and then aids the reformation instead of making matters worse by condoning practices that make this fraternal journey more difficult for everyone else.

It is time to change the conversation in North Carolina. It is time we resolved to be more attentive to those we have lost touch with, for whatever reason. It is time for us to understand that growth by subtraction equals lost revenue, which drives the costs of Freemasonry upward—and DO SOMETHING positive about it.

Peace, harmony, interest, involvement, and integrity come with genuine caring for instead of about our brothers. Remember we are a brotherhood, not a bargain.

When 2027 gets here, how will we have done? Better yet, how will we help change the conversation?"

# YORK RITE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

## Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of North Carolina

By Mike Hoff



As we approach the holiday season of the Nativity, we give thanks for the joyous event of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. This time of reflection calls upon us, as true Soldiers of the Cross, to renew

our commitment to the enduring principles of chivalry, Christianity, and Templary.

Let us remember our vow to be valiant defenders of our holy religion and to practice the virtues we hold so true: to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and bind up the wounds of the afflicted.

May the peace, love, and joy of Christmastide be with you and your loved ones, and may God's abundant blessings guide us all in the new year.

In a world that often sways with uncertainty, the message of Christmas remains a beacon of hope and light. We celebrate the birth of Jesus, the "Great Light" who breaks through the darkness and offers us a new hope.

This season, let us embrace the true meaning of the living Christ within us and strive to become better, more compassionate, more responsive Knights of the Cross. Let our appreciation for God's greatest gift manifest in good deeds and charitable acts.

December fraternally is going to be fast-paced with overloaded schedules for most of us. There will be Christmas observances, parades, elections, installations, along with other holiday events. Remember while we are going to all these events we must also slow down, take a deep breath, and take time to be with our families. I personally would like to wish each and every one of you a Merry Christmas.

Some may gather with friends and family for a big feast. Some may enjoy holding their loved one's hand at Christmas Mass. Some may enjoy the laughter and giggles of the children. No matter what your plans are, I wish you all peace, joy, and a prosperous new year.

- Luke 2:12-14: "And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!'"
- Matthew 1:20-21: "But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'"



# North Carolina Shriners Leadership

By Alvin Billings



Oasis Shriners installed Illustrious Sir Timothy “Tim” Marshall Farris as Potentate on January 3, 2026, at the Oasis Shrine Center in Charlotte. Ill. Sir Tim is a 45-year member of Whetstone Lodge No. 515. Operating on a seven-year progressive line, 5 elected and 2 appointed positions, Noble M. W. “Jack” Wallace, Jr. of Mint Hill No. 742 was appointed and installed as 2nd Ceremonial Master.



Amran Shriners installed Illustrious Sir Robert L. Way as Potentate on January 17, 2026 at the Amran Shrine Center in Raleigh. Ill. Sir Robert is a member Creedmoor No. 799. Amran has a 5-year elected leadership line. Samuel “Sammy” Turner Boggs of Tabasco No. 721 was elected and installed as Oriental Guide. Amran is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Amran received its charter in July 1976 in Kansas City.



Sudan Shriners election and installation, scheduled for Jan. 24, 2026, was postponed due to inclement weather. The outcome of their election and appointment will be published in a future issue.

The Grand Master of Masons in North Carolina, Most Worshipful Steve M. Norris, P.P. Sudan 2012, attended each of the Shrine Installations. He was accompanied by several of the Grand Lodge Officers at each event. Every member of the Grand Line is a Shriner. MWB Steve has stated “The lessons we are taught in freemasonry are many times exemplified more by our appendant bodies than in the lodge. That’s ok, we are family. Whatever your quarry, wherever you fit in the family of freemasonry, live it, practice it. The world needs to see.”

The love and care for children are the common bonds of all North Carolina Masons and Shriners. From Oxford to Greenville, we heed the call to

support the needs of children. Change of leadership does not change the motivation or objectives we obligate ourselves to help children. Shriners Children’s provides specialty care for children with orthopedic conditions, burns, spinal cord injuries, and cleft lip and cleft palate, regardless of their ability to pay. For more information about our mission or patient referral visit [www.shrinerschildren.org](http://www.shrinerschildren.org) or call 1-800-235-5055.

Love to the rescue!



**Shriners**  
Children's™



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

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

## **250th ANNIVERSARY EVENTS**

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**21 Feb 2026**

George Washington Birthday – New Bern

Field scout of Moore's Creek Battlefield – Currie

**7 Mar 2026**

Field scout & wreath laying, Guilford Court House Battlefield – Greensboro

**10-11 Apr 2026**

Halifax Day luncheon, tours, scout to Person's Ordinary – Halifax & Littleton

**4 Jul 2026**

Unanimity Lodge Degree in the Chowan County Court House – Edenton

Statewide Recognition of Independence Day by lodges

**25 Sep 2026**

250th Anniversary Dinner at the Annual Communication – Winston-Salem

**17 Oct 2026**

Kings Mountain Battlefield Event – Kings Mountain

**3 Oct 2026**

Victory Dinner, Phoenix Lodge – Fayetteville