



The Empire State Mason

FALL 2023



FROM UKRAINE
TO
CAMP TURK, NY



FROM THE GRAND EAST

Address of the Most Worshipful
Richard J. Kessler
Grand Master of Masons in the State of New York
to the District Deputy Grand Masters and Grand Lodge Staff Officers
for the years 2021-2024
in the Daniel D. Tompkins Memorial Chapel,
Masonic Care Community at Utica,
on Saturday afternoon, June 24, 2023.

MW RICHARD J. KESSLER
GRAND MASTER
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My Dear Brothers,
*“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for
Brethren to dwell together in unity.”*

Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master, Most Worshipful Past Grand Masters, and colleagues of Grand Lodge, Brethren, Ladies and guests: I am honored and privileged to welcome each of you to the annual Investiture Ceremony of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York at the historic Daniel D. Tompkins Memorial Chapel in Utica, New York.

It is great to once again assemble with the various Grand Lodge Corporations and our Symbolic Lodge leadership team. We continue to push forward with our agenda in order to provide the best Masonic experience for all of our members. Your steadfast commitment and positive outlook have shored up our beloved Fraternity, which has been built on the many successes that you have accomplished during the stewardship of your respective Districts and Lodges.

You have labored long and hard in the quarries of Freemasonry and have already left an indelible mark on your successes for others to build upon. For your due diligence, I cannot thank you enough. You are our boots on the ground and without your attention to detail, all of our programs would not have reached the success that they have. **You are the Best!**

Brethren, we are social creatures, and we thrive when we are surrounded by family, friends, and our Masonic Family. Once again, our Masonic Districts have made their annual pilgrimage to our Campus in Utica. They have rekindled old friendships and developed some new ones. This year we stressed family. I want to thank all of you who have brought out your family to experience a weekend of Love, Brotherhood, and Charity.

This is who we are! We are indeed a family bound together by that mystical and beloved tie called Freemasonry. Our Lodge meetings and events are once again experiencing renewed strength and attendance. How truly wonderful it is for Brethren to meet, break bread, fulfill our Masonic obligations and share our love for one another! **Amen and Amen!**

This weekend we continued to lay out the designs for our Trestleboard for the coming year and beyond. We have laid down the tracks and have empowered you all with the proper tools and utensils, initiatives, and guidance to bring excitement, education, camaraderie, and leadership to the Lodges in your District. It is my sincere hope that you will leave these solemn ceremonies re-energized, enthused and motivated.

We have accomplished so much, but our mission is not yet complete. I want to thank each of you for taking advantage of our dynamic Leadership and Educational Services Committee.

The new tools and approaches to motivate our Jurisdiction, including the Maxwell Leadership Program, have been met with enthusiasm all across the State of New York.

But wait, there's more! We, my Brothers continued to lead the way through the use of innovative methods, programs, and modern teaching techniques and philosophies to ensure our renewed prominence. New York Freemasonry is indeed in the forefront of this movement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Our Deputy Grand Master, RW Steven Adam Rubin: thank you for your friendship and your support of our initiatives, plans and activities. I thank you for your advice, eagerness to learn and willingness to be part of our team. Our Grand Wardens, RW Robert L. Hogan, Jr. and RW Peter C. Stein: you have willingly accepted all calls to perform special jobs, which I have called on you to do. RW Joseph J. Saglimbene, Grand Treasurer, and especially RW Richard T. Schulz, our Grand Secretary: you have all worked tirelessly for our Craft.

I thank you for all you do for our Fraternity and for our Grand Lodge. The continuity that a Grand Secretary brings to our Jurisdiction is what keeps us ever moving forward. I cherish our friendship and value your counsel.

I will forever be indebted to the Past Grand Masters for their support, counsel, and encouragement. The collective expertise, and experience of the Past Grand Masters is not only a great resource to draw upon, but they also provide a strong continuity of leadership that without question provides a solid footing upon which to build this wonderful legacy called Freemasonry. I both salute and thank you for your service to the Craft.

To all of my District Deputy Grand Masters and Grand Lodge Staff Officers: you have worked diligently to promote and implement the programs of Grand Lodge. Further, you continue to work tirelessly to make your District and Lodges the best they can be.

Our Grand Lecturer, RW Richard C. Friedman, in tandem with the Custodians of the Work, the Ritual Renaissance Project Committee and the team of Assistant Grand Lecturers has worked hard to teach and explain the importance of our Masonic Ritual. These Brothers continue to offer help to our Lodges to present our incoming Brethren with the excellence they deserve when receiving our three Degrees. Thank you, my Brothers, for the hard and important work that you do.

The absolute success of our Jurisdiction would be incomplete if I did not acknowledge with great fondness and gratitude the commitment, devotion and trustworthiness freely given to the Craft by our Three Precious Jewels, namely the Trustees of
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the Masonic Hall and Home, the Directors of the Masonic Medical Research Institute, and the Trustees of the Chancellor Robert R Livingston Masonic Library.

TRUSTEES OF THE MASONIC HALL & HOME

Our Trustees of the Masonic Hall and Home do an outstanding job of caring and providing for our guests on the Campus of the Masonic Care Community in Utica, New York. They ensure the proper operation, health and safety of our entire Masonic Care Community. Without hesitation, they ensure that we always keep the promise we have made to our members that they and their loved ones shall always have a secure and welcoming place to call “Home.”

Further, our Trustees are tasked with the enormous responsibility of maintaining, evolving and improving the newly acquired properties and facilities at both Henrietta, NY and the New Rochelle Campus. With equal dedication, they perform a yeoman’s job in managing our landmark buildings in New York City, which house the headquarters of the Grand Lodge and our Masonic Hall. They abide by a simple mantra: “Promises Made... Promises Kept.”

The Trustees not only manage and maintain the real and tangible properties of our Fraternity, but they also fulfill one of the most important duties of the Craft, which is to be a good role model by providing support and confidence to our Youth. In this effort, each summer the Trustees open and operate the Masonic Youth Camp at Round Lake in the Upper Adirondacks, affectionately known as Camp Turk. The year 2023 marks the Centennial of Camp Turk. I extend an invitation and I urge each of you to join in the fun and celebration at this year’s Grand Master’s Day at Camp Turk, which is being held on Sunday, July 23 to usher in the Camp’s 100th Birthday.

Furthering our efforts of extending a helping hand to our Youth, the Trustees are continuing their program of providing substantial Educational Assistance in the form of grants to the children and grandchildren of our members to offset the costs incurred with higher learning. These grants allow the recipients to take care of the many incidental expenses that are part of their education. Because they are grants and not scholarships, they have greater latitude in how to apply these funds to augment their Educational needs.

Caring and giving support to our children and grandchildren is a key part of the mission of the Masonic Hall and Home. Taking our solemn Obligation to heart, we as brother Masons pledge to help, aid and assist all worthy and distressed Brothers, their Widows, and Orphans. Keeping with thought in mind, the Grand Lodge charged our Trustees in 1893 with the establishment of the Masonic Home to care for the Orphans of our Members. This magnanimous act was followed by the purchase of Round Lake, of which Camp Turk is a part, to serve as an outdoor recreational area for the Masonic Home “kids,” as they were called.

Last year, our Trustees once again, sought a means in which to enhance the future of the Craft by investing in our Youth. On this note, the Trustees voted overwhelmingly in favor of establishing an endowment to build a Children’s Dyslexia Center within the Masonic Hall in New York City, which bears the name of my dear wife, Joanne Kessler. Let me pause for just a minute in humble gratitude to the Trustees and to

the Craft for this poignant and moving gesture. Joanne always had a soft spot for children and I know without a doubt that she is smiling upon each of us at this very moment. Thank You.

Please note that this Center will provide services to hundreds of children annually, with reading disabilities, for the foreseeable future at absolutely no cost to their families. Caring for children is truly in their DNA.

Now in their spare time, you will find that our Trustees are also responsible for the maintenance, improvement, and underwriting of the entire healthcare operation at the Masonic Care Community. All levels of care are provided here at our Utica Campus, including Assisted Living, full-time nursing and multiple rehabilitation protocols. This is a Masonic Care Community that we can all be proud of. I want to thank them all for helping us honor our obligation to provide for not only our Masonic Family, but also our Community at Large.

Lastly, I would be remiss, if I did not also acknowledge that our Trustees have done a yeoman’s job in providing a loving touch to the care of one of our Nation’s Historic and Profound Landmarks, the DeWint House, which served as the Colonial Headquarters for our Brother and General George Washington in Tappan, New York. Thank you for a job well done.

Will all of the Trustees of our Masonic Hall & Home please rise.

GRAND HONORS

DIRECTORS OF THE MASONIC MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Since 1958 the Masonic Medical Research Institute (MMRI) has been involved in the extremely valuable study of various debilitating diseases—diseases whose unrelenting destruction reign and ravage otherwise healthy individuals. The world-renowned MMRI is supported not only by the members of our Fraternity, but additional financial support also comes unselfishly through our many generous sister Jurisdictions and Concordant Bodies. To augment the MMRI’s good works, the Institute qualifies and earns countless independent and government grants, allowing the Institute to pursue the cause, treatment, and sometimes even the cure for these devastating diseases and illnesses.

The work of the Directors of the Masonic Medical Research Institute is inspiring as they help not only our members but also all of mankind. They are working on cures and strategies to ease the devastating effects of those afflicted. The list of areas of study is vast; but let me list just a few: Heart, Lupus, SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), Alzheimer, and Autism.

I am extremely pleased and happy to announce that the Masonic Medical Research Institute is on the cusp of entering upon in-depth study of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, its causes and eventual treatment protocols. I am most proud and honored that they have joined in partnership with “The Battle Within Foundation” to conduct research into ways to stem the epidemic of suicides and depression facing many of our Veterans and Servicemen and Women. Consider joining the newly formed “1958 Club.” It will allow you to support our Institute by pledging \$19.58 per month to help fund its vital mission.

Will all the Directors of our Masonic Medical Research Institute please rise.

GRAND HONORS

TRUSTEES OF THE CHANCELLOR ROBERT R LIVINGSTON MASONIC LIBRARY

Lastly, but certainly not the least, our Trustees of the Chancellor Robert R Livingston Masonic Library continue steadfastly with their responsibility toward educating our members on Masonic history and preserving the plethora of Masonic artifacts, fine arts and historic volumes on all aspects of Freemasonry and related topics for future generations. You are indeed a group of special Men and Masons and we are grateful for your service and your talent.

Our Masonic Library has made great strides under the direction of our Executive Library Director, VW Bro. Michael LaRocco; our Director of New York City Operations, Brother Alexander Vastola; and our Museum Technician and Acting Assistant Curator, Miss Ratirat Osiri. This dynamic team of Library Professionals certainly keeps our Masonic Library humming, while providing an invaluable service to our Lodges throughout the Jurisdiction.

The Trustees of the Chancellor Robert R Livingston Masonic Library under the astute leadership of their President, RW Stephen S. King, coupled with the Library Staff are propelling a wealth of information into the 21st Century on behalf of a grateful Fraternity.

The Masonic Library is located on the 14th floor of the Masonic Hall in New York City. I encourage each of you to plan to make a visit and witness a small sampling of our world-renowned Masonic collection. Further, if you are not already availing yourself of the Library's new and improved Reading Program, I highly recommend contacting one the Library's staff to enroll today.

In the meantime, our satellite library building at the Masonic Care Community in Utica, NY was in great need of repair and renovation. As such, it has been temporarily closed pending the completion of those construction projects. During this period of construction, all of the books, artifacts and fine arts maintained at the satellite facility have been temporarily and securely safeguarded at various Masonic entities throughout the State.

On behalf of all of our Brethren, I thank the Trustees of the Library and their Staff for helping to preserve our Masonic Heritage.

Will our Trustees of our Chancellor Robert R Livingston Masonic Library and the Library Staff Members present, please rise.

GRAND HONORS

Brethren, I am happy to report that your entire Grand Lodge Team is working tirelessly to strengthen and improve our Jurisdiction. The initiatives that I announced in my previous messages are being addressed and they are well on their way to bearing fruit. Part of our task is to not only attract good men of character and intentions, but to also strengthen our Fraternity by providing them with a nurturing environment needed to assist them in their growth as individual persons who will emit a positive influence within their respective

communities. It must be our goal to continue to build a stronger, more responsive and viable Craft.

The true building blocks of our Jurisdiction are in fact our members, who are bonded together by the mortar of brotherly love and affection enhanced by acts of altruistic service, both within and without the Lodge. To attract new members and develop a healthy and robust membership, your Grand Lodge Team has set a high benchmark, the aim of which is to promote a program encompassing strong education, leadership skills, spirituality, motivation, and a rigorous ritualistic agenda. We have made great strides in this direction and we have already changed the mindset and paradigm of our members. But we have only just begun.

MEMBERSHIP

The lifeblood of any organization is its membership. Freemasonry is no different. Our members are our strongest asset and we must continue to encourage them and never take them for granted. Neglect and apathy are the two biggest scourges that can devastate our numbers and the Fraternity.

The good news is that Freemasonry is undergoing a resurgence in our communities. I believe that much of this was due to the unprecedented combinations of circumstances that the pandemic created. New York Masons did not sit on their haunches and wait out the storm. On the contrary, we took advantage of a very dire calamity and turned it into a positive experience. Through Zoom meetings and other electronic means, we discovered that there was an overwhelming thirst for diverse programs and educational opportunities to grow and enhance the skill sets of our ranks.

STAYING RELEVANT:

In order for our beloved Fraternity to remain pertinent in today's world, we must be vigilant in connecting the essence of Freemasonry with the changing needs of the people at large. This proposition can be quantified as follows:

- The essence of Freemasonry is highly relevant in society today.
- We need to be more effective in expressing our relevance toward our selected target groups.
- We need to address areas of differences in the following categories: Societal and Generational.

Societal areas of concern include trust & authenticity, guidance, and division.

- **Trust & Authenticity:** Trust in institutions is currently under extreme pressure. People long for something that is real and authentic, so we need to bring our Masonic heritage and belief system into today's context.
- **Guidance:** Due to urbanization and secularization, people lose important sources of guidance that they usually derived from their small communities and religion. Our message must therefore include that our Craft provides such guidance as they may be searching for. We need to let potential candidates know that Freemasonry provides a clear path toward building men of excellent caliber. Through our Principles and Tenets we provide guidance to assist them in all facets of their life and assist them to become a leader in their community, home and work place.
- **Division:** Due to algorithms and attention to the economy, polarization is exhibited and amplified far

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beyond our actual differences. Therefore, many people experience a growing discomfort in discussing their views. Freemasonry provides a platform for creating a safe haven for a healthy exchange of differing opinions and perspectives.

- **Mental wellbeing:** People have a growing awareness of the importance of mental wellbeing and the effect mental health has on physical health. The teachings of our Craft provide men with spiritual, mental, and educational tools that will enable them to work on their mental resilience.
- **Social ties:** The need for social connection is a fundamental human need and is crucial for a meaningful life. Especially in times where we are more connected than ever through technology, yet a great many people feel alone. Freemasonry facilitates social connections through face to face connections that are real, meaningful, and character building.
- **Transcendence:** Transcendence is related to a meaningful life. When people feel connected to something greater than themselves, they experience meaning. We need to emphasize the transcendent aspect of our rituals and traditions.

Generational Difference

- **Baby Boomers:** (driving force is concern) Are proud but sometimes feel guilty about how they leave the world behind. Baby boomers are concerned about their wellbeing as they age. They are also concerned about the wellbeing of their family and society at large. We need to project that we are working toward a better world.
- **Generation X:** (driving force is work-life balance) These young people are generally skeptical, pragmatic and looking for a good balance between work and leisure. They are currently in the busy life stage and need to be prudent with their leisure hours. We need to show them the practical benefits that Freemasonry can provide in their busy lives.
- **Millennials:** (Me-centric) Millennials are me-centric, as they were brought up in smaller families than previous generations and therefore received a lot of attention growing up. We need to emphasize the self-development aspect found in Masonry.
- **Millennials:** (Networked) Millennials want to be interactive and have grown up using their online network as an advantage to achieve personal and collective goals. We need to show them how we have adapted to this new world and show benefits of Masonry's international network.
- **Generation Z:** (Pluralistic) This generation has grown up in a diverse world and has a realistic make-it-happen attitude. This philosophy has been inherited from their pragmatic parents. We need to provide proof to this generation that Freemasonry has benefits to their busy lives.

Strategies

Prepare for the arrival of the younger generations and make use of the opportunities that they offer. Make better use of the attractiveness of the internet. Let us not only inspire prospects with our rich past, but also bring the same past into the context of today.

GOAL:

To provide more awareness and recognition with the aim of improving the image and activation among young men who are curious about Freemasonry.

Approach:

- Principles: spirituality, emotionality, and intellectuality
- Messaging: clear, connective, meaningful, and inspirational
- Communication: multifaceted, consistent, and understandable
- Deliverables: We must provide timely and concise deliverables

MASONIC YOUTH GROUPS

The Grand Lodge of New York and all the related Concordant and Appended Bodies are huge benefactors of our Youth Groups. We continue to support them with financial assistance, volunteerism, and guidance. Although money is very necessary for these groups to operate, they need our physical presence at their events and meetings. Without qualified advisors, these groups would not be able to stay viable and provide the necessary nurturing environment for each to grow to their greatest potential.

The current leadership team is as follows:
The Organization of Triangles, Inc.

Miss Kaitlin Piston, New York State Representative

International Order of Rainbow for Girls

Miss Alyssa DiBartolo, Grand Worthy Advisor

New York Order of DeMolay

Brother Jorge Hernandez, New York State Master Councilor

Allow me to introduce Miss Kaitlin Piston, New York State Representative of the Organization of Triangles Inc., who will speak on behalf of our Masonic Youth Groups.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Your Grand Lodge Officers have participated in the Northeast Conference, the North American Conference, and the World Conference of Grand Masters and Grand Secretaries this past year. We have visited many foreign and domestic Jurisdictions including Michigan, Wisconsin, Rhode Island, Virginia, New Hampshire, Vermont, Canada, Finland, Italy, Israel and Bulgaria, to name a few. We have conducted Lodge Dedications and Rededications throughout the State celebrating anniversaries from 100 to 225 years. We had a wonderful Grand Master's Cruise and are now planning a destination get-together in 2024. For information on the cruise, you can check the article in the *Empire State Mason* summer edition.

Your Grand Lodge Officers conferred the Entered Apprentice Degree upon ten candidates at the George Washington Masonic Historic Site at Tappan on the same weekend as our annual visit to the West Point Academy. We awarded the first President Theodore Roosevelt Community Service Award to RW George Wacob. I was pleased to have two historic Holy Bibles present at our Installation of Grand Lodge Officers this past May. Specifically, we were honored to have the Inaugural Bible of President George Washington, which belongs to St. John's Lodge One, together with the Bible belonging to Matinecock Lodge 806, upon which President Theodore Roosevelt was Obligated as a Master Mason. The restoration of the Theodore Roosevelt Bible was another highlight of my year.

These are just a number of stops on our rollercoaster ride. Everywhere and in every instance we brought and received joy, satisfaction, Masonic Education and so much Brotherhood.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Society is more divided and polarized than at any time over the past one hundred years. Social media platforms provide many avenues for all to post their views, unencumbered by truth, morality, or the negative impact it will inflict. Freemasonry cannot be participants in this inflammatory activity. In an attempt to reign in those Brothers who may be tempted to engage in such discourse, our current policy has been fully updated. A hard and soft copy has been made available to every Secretary.

There is a need for Freemasonry in the world today, but if we don't live according to our Obligations, we will just be a part of the problem. Remember, my Brothers, the teachings found within the Charge of a Master Mason, "Make others to know always that a gentleman stands before them."

WEBSITE:

Our website will be the keystone to our connection with the world. The website reflects all that we are and why we are a worthwhile organization, where men of status can accurately research our order and look up to us as a worthy and dignified example to emulate.

Our messaging will be concise, consistent and timely. This new website was built with an eye toward developing a solid platform that will allow us to project our message. The message we will project will be clear and relevant. Our new branding scheme will answer many of the public's questions and allow those who are truly interested in joining our Craft to embark upon their journey toward the Light.

LEADERSHIP & EDUCATION:

The Leadership and Educational Services Committee (L&E) is the key to our future success. There is a boundless thirst for information throughout the Jurisdiction. The direction of the Leadership and Educational Services Committee is focused on concentrating many of the basic administrative and leadership qualities that are absent in many of our Lodges. This state-of-the-art website will not only be a tool for recruitment from the outside world, but also a safe and secure source of information for our members. A website is only as good as its information. Therefore, the maintenance, content, and administration of the site has been addressed as part of the development and upkeep for the site.

After analyzing our training philosophy, it was obvious that it was not adequately serving our Jurisdiction. Two major factors were negatively impacting our efforts. The first was that many of our District Leaders and Advisors were coming from backgrounds that did not provide leadership skills. But more importantly, our training did not go far enough. We were not reaching the Brothers in their respective Lodges. So with the help of the Trustees of the Masonic Hall and Home we initiated our first installment for the Maxwell Leadership Program. Maxwell is a "Train the Trainer" initiative that will reach into our individual Lodges.

The Maxwell Leadership Program is an intensive and holistic approach to leadership using tried and true methods developed successfully by Dr. John C. Maxwell, an internationally respected American Pastor, motivational speaker, leadership

expert, coach and author, having sold in excess of twenty-five million books on the subject.

Dr. John Maxwell has addressed the subject of the role of leadership as an invited keynote speaker before several august bodies, including the National Football League, the United States Military Academy at West Point, and the United Nations. Currently, he serves on the Board of Trustees of the Indiana Wesleyan University and his Maxwell Team is helping train leaders in more than eighty countries.

The program concentrates on his book *Everyone Communicates Few Connect*. Another benefit of installing the Maxwell Leadership Program is that it uses plain, non-convoluted words to explain his concepts. This makes his program very user friendly and adaptable to organizations such as ours. The Maxwell Leadership Program will allow us, the Masonic Fraternity, to continue to build from the bottom up.

Training will also cover the following topics:

- NorthStar Portal - what it is, its significance, how to use and administer it and the importance of keeping the portal current
- Hiram Online Learning Program
- The new and improved Masonic University of New York (MUNY)
- The importance and need for virtual learning
- Introduction to the Maxwell Leadership Program

The Maxwell Leadership program is grounded in values-based leadership principles. They have been growing leaders for nearly four decades throughout the world. Their use of practical leadership skills are used by everyday people, major corporations, and national governments, alike. Our initial core of leadership coaches continues to develop and refine our curriculum.

Our re-engineered MUNY Program is offering a vast array of disciplines. Educational modules encompassing basic fundamental business practices, as well as focusing on the esoteric, our history, Masonic Ritual, and your personal growth will lay the foundation for our educational programs. Courses will be held virtually, regionally and on a local basis.

We have now determined our direction of success. We must now educate and inspire our Brethren. The course we have chosen will lay the foundation for future generations. Our destiny is in our hands and together we will reap success. Remember that we stand on the shoulders of those who laid the foundation from which we can grow. We are now broadening our shoulders to be the foundation for those who will follow us.

MASONIC BROTHERHOOD FUND:

The Masonic Brotherhood Fund is the Charity arm of the Fraternity and has helped to raise money to help many Brothers and families in need. At this time I would like to thank you all for your generous support. The purpose is to assist our Masonic families with those unforeseen and sometime catastrophic tragedies that can destroy a family unit. In a perfect world, it is our genuine hope that no one needs to be a recipient of our donations, but history teaches us that unexpected and stressful situations arise suddenly and without due warning. It is for this reason that we must build upon our

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resources for those rainy days ahead.

Please join me in welcoming W Jerry Fillipidis, who has accepted the chairmanship. He is already working on this year's campaign. His dynamic leadership style, boundless energy, and collaborative management style will help us reach new heights.

THE BATTLE WITHIN:

I cannot adequately thank all of you who have contributed to this most worthwhile cause. As previously mentioned, since the Vietnam Era, our military has suffered unimaginable losses among our veterans upon their return from their service. The Battle Within Foundation was established in 2018 to remember those we lost and to remember their sacrifice. Many heroes die on the battlefield. For others, the battlefield follows them home. The Mission of the Foundation is two-fold: To honor all our heroes, no matter on what battlefield they fall, and to work on strategies to find and develop treatment and counseling to alleviate this insidious "22 A Day" reality we find ourselves in. Although it may be hard to believe, this disturbing trend is getting worse.

To better understand the cause and effect of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, the Battle Within Foundation announced a first round \$25,000 donation to the MMRI. This initial contribution will be used to enable the expansion of their neurocognitive disorder research. The funds garnered to make this donation were generated by your generous and selfless support.

Your donations both through the Masonic Brotherhood Fund and directly payable to the Battle Within Foundation are extraordinary and are allowing the growth and breadth of the Foundation's mission.

OUR VISION:

It is the Vision of this Grand Lodge to successfully move our Fraternity into the 21st Century and beyond and to establish a Fraternity grounded in education, spiritual development, and Fraternal bonding.

CORE VALUES:

Some of the leadership qualities that we will be stressing throughout my term in office are:

- **ACCOUNTABILITY:** Probably the most important accountability we need to work on is one's own self-accountability. We need to hold ourselves to the same standards that we hold others to. We also need to be responsible to others. This will allow us to step up our game and exceed our expectations.
- **WORK ETHIC:** In order to accomplish our mission we must be willing to persevere and work diligently, always remembering that there is no easy path. Achievement of our goals will be accomplished through hard work, dedication and adhering to ethical principles.
- **SUCCESSION:** The first lesson that we must be cognizant of is that no one is irreplaceable. Job one is to ensure that everything we are promoting and emphasizing has to be passed on. Our legacy will depend on how successful we are in getting the whole membership to adopt this new leadership philosophy. If we are irreplaceable, there is no successor. We need to pass the baton. Remember that great leaders are always successful. Our legacy, our mission, our success depend on it.

- **PERSISTENCE:** Is the acknowledgement that what is worth achieving is worth the effort to obtain your goal. The pathway to success is never a straight path; rather it is filled with pitfalls, detours and disappointment. We need to be persistent in our methods and philosophy to enable us to establish and maintain an aura of dynamic leadership.
- **RESILIENCE:** In knowing that we will rarely get things right the first time, but that we must not be distracted by setbacks. Instead we must be steadfast in our resolve that the goal we are attempting to achieve is worth all of the labor and hard work. A quote that I sometimes use is that "What is easily gained is lightly esteemed."

These bullet points are just a sampling of the leadership values that will be stressed throughout my term. The educational strategies employed by the Leadership and Educational Services Committee will assist you in becoming a success in your personal life as well as within our Fraternity. These are lifetime skills. Please freely share these teachings with everyone you know. Enhanced educational and leadership programs will strengthen us from within while projecting a successful persona to the outside world.

In closing, I want to thank each of you for all you have done and will continue to do on the behalf of Freemasonry. Please remember that this is YOUR Grand Lodge. The elected and appointed officers are here to serve you. Please do not hesitate to contact any of us with your thoughts, concerns, questions and requests. Together we can accomplish anything. Keep in your mind, Brethren, the Masonic Fraternity was not born yesterday. The first Grand Lodge was formed in 1717 in England. Subsequently, our Grand Lodge of New York was formed in 1781.

We have just passed the 241st mark for Masonry in New York and we are still very much alive and vibrant. Why are we still here? The answer is not by happenstance, it is because we have, we respect and we live according to our unique and time-tested values and principles.

The world needs Freemasonry today more than ever.

Let's be Humanity's saving grace.

Masons Make a Difference!!

God Bless each and every one of you. God Bless our Great Masonic Fraternity and God Bless the United States of America.



Sincerely and Fraternally,

Richard J. Kessler
MW Richard J. Kessler
Grand Master

Attested to by:

Richard T. Schulz
RW Richard T. Schulz
Grand Secretary

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Richard T. Schulz, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the State of New York

DEPUTY GRAND MASTER



RW STEVEN ADAM RUBIN
DEPUTY GRAND MASTER
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deputygrandmaster@nymasons.org

My dear Brothers, since the last publication of the *ESM* so much has happened: Masonic travel, the rededication of a number of Lodges around our Grand jurisdiction, scholarship presentations, the investiture of a new class of Worshipful Masters and installation of Lodge officers charged with leading our Craft in the upcoming Masonic year. We also welcomed the installation of a new Grand Monarch, MW Victor Mann, a wonderful Brother who hails from New York.

To our Worshipful Masters: While I hope that my words will provide you some guidance and insight, if I have fulfilled my obligation as your Brother then I have already extended my hand to you in brotherly love. What are my gentle suggestions? Be firm, but fair. Lead from the heart as much as from the head. Harmony is paramount.

Good ritual inspires! Ensure that your Lodge is enabling and encouraging interesting programs of Masonic history, ritual and a deeper appreciation of our philosophical and mystical connections to our past, with a clear understanding of the needs of future generations.

You can delegate duties but never your responsibilities. We do not need more members; we need more Masons—Brothers who do not merely parrot our ritual but learn it to live it.

Never forget, however, that excellent Masonic programming does not ensure that the light bill is paid or your 990 is filed. So make sure that your Lodge's financial house is in order. Make sure that your officers are fulfilling their Masonic duty, because that is your Masonic duty.

As proper and thoughtful programming will be one of your main objectives, we have begun the establishment of a Speakers Bureau. While I cannot promise that the data will be available on our Hiram System at the time of this printing, any Brother seeking a speaker may email me and I will ensure that you will have access to the database: DeputyGrandMaster@nymasons.org.

My Brothers, the Grand Master and I believe that our Grand Lodge must be a resource to you and your Lodge. That is why we have begun the work to revitalize many of our committees. For those Lodges that have questions about tax issues and other building related issues, I ask that you reach out to the Lodges and Building Committee Chairman, RW Al Bryant: amb12804@gmail.com. He and his newly formed team of Brothers can assist you in many of your building management issues.

For those Lodges that wish to establish a social media presence or create a website that offers more personality than the ones provided on OLP, please reach out to W Brother Todd Pasternack, as he heads our Lodge Social Media Development Team: Bro.paterek@blazingstarlodge694.com.

For those Brothers who wish to learn how to prepare press

releases or would like assistance in creating one for an event or program, please reach out to RW Mike Shipman. He heads our Press Release Team: shipmanship@yahoo.com.

I wish to congratulate Grand Monarch Victor Mann and his lovely wife Anjelika. Brother Victor hails from Independent Royal Arch Lodge 2, in the First Manhattan District. We are so proud to have him leading Grotto International and further, to see another New York Brother, W Brother Dominic Falcone, installed as Grand Sentinel. For a heartfelt tribute written by Brother Dom, please go to CraftsmenOnline.com, for the full blog.



Many Brothers have read the exciting news about the Grand Lodge of New York's trip to Finland in September 2024 to attend their Grand Lodge Session and celebrate the 100-Year Anniversary of the Establishment of the Grand Lodge of Finland by the Grand Lodge of New York. Within the next several months you will begin to see more information about the trip, including the opportunity to take Masonic side excursions to the Grand Lodge of Estonia (Established by the Grand Lodge of Finland) and the Grand Lodge of Sweden, each only a short ferry ride across the Baltic. VW Michael LaRocco, Director of the Robert R Livingston Library, has compiled some important dates and facts, shared within this

Continues on page 10 – Deputy Grand Mason

Continued from page 9 – Deputy Grand Mason

publication. For a more in-depth look into the History of Masonry in Finland, please go to CraftsmenOnline.com for a wonderful article, co-written by VW Christophe Lobry-Boulanger and Brother Les Joynes.

Lastly, let me speak about our project to bring Ukrainian children to Camp Turk this past summer. Bear in mind that this article was filed in mid-July, so the summer camp season has only just begun. Yet, as the children have just successfully arrived at Camp Turk, I must share the back story and effort to make this project a reality as it is truly a story of our Masonic Brotherhood reaching across the globe.

Nearly one year ago I attended Columbia Lodge 1190 in the Seventh Manhattan District. The Grand Master of Ukraine spoke via Zoom and talked about the History of Masonry in Ukraine as well as the challenges that his country was currently experiencing. Thereafter, I addressed the Lodge and spoke about how our own Brothers had contributed over \$100,000.00 for the humanitarian needs of the Ukrainian people by donating to the Grand Lodge Brotherhood Fund. I also spoke about the upcoming 100-Year Anniversary of Camp Turk (celebrated on Grand Master's Day at Camp Turk, this past July). A Brother of the Lodge, Brother Yigal Kotler, asked about the possibility of bringing some Ukrainian children to Camp Turk. I brought the idea to our Grand Master and RW G. Michael Morris, President of the Trustees of the Hall and Home, and under their leadership the funding was established. Below I share with you one photo of the children, which was taken outside of the US Consulate in Poland shortly after they received their visas and the other photo taken on their first day at Camp Turk.



I must tell you that I have a new appreciation for those who planned the Normandy Landing, because the effort to ensure that the twelve children, six boys and six girls, were brought safely to our shores, Camp Turk and thereafter New York City, has been a monumental undertaking. I am grateful to the Brothers from New York who coordinated with the Brothers in Ukraine and those Ukrainian Brothers who coordinated with Brothers in Poland, all to ensure that the children were able to cross the border and be looked after while they were awaiting their visa interviews, approval and ultimate departure for New York. I am grateful to those Brothers from the Seventh Manhattan District who have not only been instrumental in coordinating the foreign logistics, but have also provided their money and time as they drove these war-torn children to our Masonic Care Community. I am grateful to the Brothers who attended the Zoom meetings, at times three per week, to ensure that the planning was complete. I must tell you, my Brothers, the way in which all of these Brothers stepped up, not merely talking the talk, but walking the walk, makes me



proud to be a Mason. It makes me proud to be a New York Mason.

I am proud to work with WM Alton Ergun and Brother Yigal Kotler of Columbia Lodge 1190 of the Seventh Manhattan District; RW Dan Eckman, President of the Seventh Manhattan Charitable Corporation, who not only provided funding through the District's charitable arm and ensured that Brothers from the District were available to drive the children to the MCC, but also drove one vehicle himself. Trustees RW Keith Heinrich and RW Chris Hough have been the lynchpins for the Trustees' efforts, both financial and boots-on-the-ground. RW Teo Enrique, Esq. provided legal/immigration advice to our Team. Each of these Brothers deserves our thanks.

Special recognition must be extended to Molly and the Camp Turk staff. They made great efforts to ensure that these children, many of whom were suffering from the effects of war—loss of home and family—had a brief respite from its realities.

I want to recognize those Brothers and friends who worked to find lodging and programming for the children while in New York City: W Bro. Altan Ergun, Bro. Alper Ergun, Bro. Andreas Aranda, RW Dan Eckman, Bro. Jay Munshi, Bro. Alvin Cook, Bro. Yigal Kotler and his daughter Maya Kotler, Bro. Steven Shapiro, W Bro. Lorenzo Caesar, RW Peter Unfried, RW Gustavo Teran, W Bro. James d'Auguste, Bro. John Kennedy, W Tommy Gatto and Trudy Reitz, wife of RW Paul Reitz who was instrumental in obtaining entrance to the Natural History Museum. When this project is complete, there will surely be additional Brothers and friends to thank, but this is the growing list of those who have demonstrated what it means to be a member of our Masonic Family.

Those Brothers who left their families to drive the children from JFK Airport to the MCC: W Bro. Eldad Neumeire, Bro. Otabek Obidov (who drove on both legs), Bro. Bledar Asllani, Bro. Kieth Chiu and once again, RW Dan Eckman, God bless you all.

I must also thank all of our Brothers who have contributed to the Brotherhood Fund and to the Trustees of the Hall and Home. It is because of your charitable donations that we can fulfill our mission as Master Masons.

My Brothers, each day each of us has a choice: whether or not to lead, not merely in name, but in action and deed; to summon up the courage to demand what is right and accept nothing less; to carry our history, our philosophy, our obligations forward to a new generation and to new heights. Let us not squander our opportunity.

God bless you. God bless our Country and God bless our Gentle Craft.

SENIOR GRAND WARDEN



RW ROBERT L. HOGAN JR.
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Fraternal Greetings from the Grand West, my Brothers. Let us begin with a few of the Ancient Landmarks:

The government of the Fraternity by a presiding officer called a Grand Master, who is elected from the body of the Craft, is a Landmark of the Order. Many persons suppose that the election of a Grand Master is held in consequence of a law or regulation of the Grand Lodge. Such, however, is not the case. The office is indebted for its existence to a Landmark of the Order. Grand Masters are to be found in the records of the institution long before Grand Lodges were established; and if the present system of legislative government by Grand Lodges were to be abolished, a Grand Master would be necessary. In fact, although there has been a period within the records of history when a Grand Lodge was unknown, there never has been a time when the Craft did not have their Grand Master.

The prerogative of the Grand Master to preside over every assembly of the Craft, wheresoever and whensoever held, is a Landmark. It is in consequence of this law, derived from ancient usage, and not from any special enactment, that the Grand Master assumes the chair, or as it is called in England, "the throne," at every communication of the Grand Lodge; and that he is also entitled to preside at the communication of every Subordinate Lodge where he may happen to be present.

The last and crowning Landmark of all is that these Landmarks can never be changed. Nothing can be subtracted from them, nothing can be added to them, not the slightest modification can be made in them. As they were received from our predecessors, we are bound by the most solemn obligations of duty to transmit them to our successors. Not one jot or one tittle of these unwritten laws can be repealed. For in respect to them we are not only willing but compelled to adopt the language of the sturdy old barons of England: *Nolumus legem mutari* (We do not want the laws to be changed).

I close with this thought: As Masons we are builders and we have the opportunity to build the life we want. We are living stones being shaped and reshaped by our Masonic tools. That is why so many men have come to the doors of Freemasonry in the past and why they are still coming today. It is the promise of building a better life.

Our challenge is to keep that promise alive. We must make certain that Masonry provides a pathway to excellence to those who are committed, and it is our responsibility to keep the light shining so the good men will continue to find the way.



Brother visits a Brother

On July 18, Weaver had the opportunity to visit Brother Barden Conroe in Skaneateles, NY. We have corresponded for some time via email and the presentation of an award for 72 years membership in University Lodge was the perfect excuse to meet in person. It was a wonderful afternoon spent with food and fellowship. Although Raised forty years apart, this is proof of the adage that a Brother Mason is simply a friend you have not met yet.



JUNIOR GRAND WARDEN

Traveling



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Greetings, my Brothers. I thank you for the trust you have shown in me by re-electing me as your Junior Grand Warden for this term.

I just got back from our St. John's Day weekend in Utica and what a great event it was! The DDGM and SO training, barbecue dinner in the Big Top, the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new Veterans Garden, two apron presentations, the Jewish Shabbat, parade, Investiture Service, Sunday Church Service and ending with the Education Assistance Program—it was great seeing all the Brothers and families who attended.

I would like to talk about being a Traveling Man. I started traveling to other Lodges two weeks after my EA Degree. I went to Sutherland Lodge 826 to view the EA Degree that had just been conferred on me. After being Raised a Master Mason I started accompanying good friend W James Enterline, who was Master of Niagara Frontier Lodge 132 (now Niagara LaSalle Lodge 132, my home Lodge). We traveled to almost every Lodge in my Niagara-Orleans District. When I became an AGL I started traveling to other Districts in Western New York—Erie, Monroe, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua. During this time, I traveled around the state to special events such as St. John's Day, GM Day at West Point, etc.

I also travel as an instructor for the USAF and have visited Lodges across this great country of ours. I have met some of the greatest Brothers and friends every place I have traveled. If you only attend your Lodge once or twice a month, you are getting only 25% of the Masonic experience. I read a blog post the other day, titled "Are You a Traveling Man?" It was posted by an unknown author. I found it very informative and hope you will, too.

Are You a Traveling Man?

"One of the most important rights and privileges of a Master Mason is his freedom to travel. In ancient times, this privilege permitted Master Masons to work and travel in foreign lands, unlike other craftsmen. This special privilege was afforded to our craft, because their labor was required in different locations depending on which cathedral was being built at the time. As Operative Masonry gave way to Speculative Masonry, this ancient right was retained and a Master Mason was allowed to freely travel from one lodge to another, even though he is not a member of that specific lodge.

"In the modern day, 'traveling' is the primary method by which a Mason expands his Masonic horizons, gains increased knowledge of our craft and meets new brothers. By visiting another lodge a Mason gets to see variations in the work and gains insight into the different ways Masonic Lodges handle their internal business. This valuable experience will make the man traveling a better Mason and in return will make his lodge better by virtue of his experience.

"For the past four years, I have had the privilege to serve as a Grand Lodge Officer, first as District Grand Lecturer and then as Associate Grand Marshal. During this time, I visited dozens of lodges in my jurisdiction. Each lodge had its own particularities, which I found fascinating. Here are some of the differences that you will find between lodges.

- Differences in the 'Work' (floorwork, additional lectures, different officers doing different parts, etc.)
- How budgets are executed (Voting on standard items once annually, Masters discretionary funds).
- How minutes are circulated (posted, emailed, read out loud, etc.)
- Different lodge dress (Tuxes, business suits, come-as-you-are, Tails, Colonial Dress, Variant Aprons, etc.)
- Different Programs
- How candidates and new brothers are mentored
- Lodge bylaws
- How fellowcraft clubs, board of managers, temple building associations, etc. are handled.
- Much, much, more

"Many of the superior differences in operations that I experienced in other lodges, I brought back to my mother lodge and helped to implement. Many of the programs that I implemented during my two years as Worshipful Master were taken from the best practices of other lodges. The majority of the improvements implemented at the local lodge level are the product of imitation after a brother has traveled to other lodges. 'Traveling' is one of the primary methods by which we 'improve ourselves in Masonry.' Without it, your lodge and Masonry will grow stale. Unfortunately, I have met many brothers who have not traveled. Their only Masonic experience is their own lodge and their small circle of brothers. There are many brothers who sit as Worshipful Master, who have never even visited another lodge. It is important to encourage your brothers, from the youngest Entered Apprentice to the oldest Past Master, to travel. Here are some methods to get out there and to be a true traveling man.

- Attend Blue Lodge Council or District Wide Meetings and meet other brothers/officers in your area.
- Ask your lodge secretary for copies of local trestleboards to find out when other lodges are holding events and degrees.
- Many lodges have websites and Facebook pages, check these out for information.
- Meet brothers from your area at Appendant Body Meetings, such as the Shrine, the Scottish Rite, the York Rite, etc.
- If you're in the 'line' of your lodge, personally contact brothers in other lodges that fill the same position and set up a time to meet them. These brothers will be your peers when you are in the East and are an invaluable resource.
- Attend the meetings of your Grand Lodge, especially the

GRAND TREASURER



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The Say Hey Kid

Willie Howard Mays Jr., born May 6, 1931, nicknamed the “Say Hey Kid,” is a former centerfielder in Major League Baseball. He is regarded as one of the greatest players ever. Mays ranks second behind Babe Ruth on most all-time baseball lists. Mays played in the National League between 1951 and 1973 for the New York/San Francisco Giants and New York Mets. His baseball career started in the great Negro League when he was just 16 years old, with the Birmingham Black Barons in 1950. His Major League career ended in 1973 while he was a member of the NY Mets.

Graduating from High School in 1950, he was drafted by the New York Giants. He won Rookie of the Year in 1951 after hitting twenty home runs to help the Giants win their first pennant in fourteen years. After spending most of the next two years in the United States Army, during the Korean War, he was named the National League Most Valuable Player in 1954, winning the batting title with a .345 average and hitting forty-one home runs. The Giants swept the heavily favored Cleveland Indians for the lone World Series triumph of his career and the team’s last title before relocating to San

Francisco after the 1957 season.

Willie was a twenty-four-time All-Star, tying him for the second most appearances in history. He led the National League in home runs four times and in slugging percentage five times while batting over .300 and posting 100 runs batted in ten times. Mays finished his career in 1973 with a batting average of .302. In September 2017 Major League Baseball renamed the World Series MVP Award the “Willie Mays World Series MVP Award.”

Willie would likely have been the greatest home run hitter of all time if he had not played in the windy hellhole Candlestick Park at the edge of San Francisco. Also, his two years in military service took away from his home run total.

Willie Mays was Raised in Prince Hall Boyer Lodge 1 in New York City “as early as 1957.” There is not enough space for me to write about this great man and Brother. When you have time, read more of his outstanding accomplishments and learn about the other great players of the Negro Baseball League.

Visits

On April 15, 2023 Brothers of Harmony Lodge 241 visited Wyllys Saint John Lodge 4 in West Hartford, CT to perform an Exemplar First Degree. It was a day filled with camaraderie, shared knowledge and the bonds of Freemasonry.



Continued from page 12 – Junior Grand Warden

night before. Grand Lodge events are filled with meet-and-greets and hospitality rooms, which are fantastic opportunities to meet other brothers.

“Finally, ‘Traveling’ is just plain fun! Brothers love to meet someone new and welcome them as a guest. So, get out there, travel some and have some fun. You’ll be surprised at

the adventures you will have and the friends that you will make!”—masonicrenaissance.blogspot.com.

I hope you found this article as interesting and informative as I have. Until the next time, may the Great Architect of the Universe keep you safe and healthy.

GRAND SECRETARY

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Brethren, a new Masonic year has begun. Now that the fall season has arrived we return to the quarries of Freemasonry, eager to bring new members into our Lodges. We have enjoyed a season of picnics, barbecues, fishing trips and other summer events that began with St. John's weekend in Utica.

Despite the intermittent rain at St. John's in June, we had a delightful weekend full of Masonic activities that involved many members and families. Some highlights of the weekend were: the 60- and 70-year apron presentations at the Masonic Home and at Acacia Village; the wreath laying at the Veterans Monument; the dedication of the Battle Within Monument by the Grand Master; the Ladies Adirondack Train excursion; the Big Tent Barbecue on Friday evening (complete with family games); and of course, the Masonic Parade of Grand Line Officers. We held Leadership training for the District Officers and separate AGL training by the Grand Lecturer. There was considerable business to attend to, with the Annual Meetings of the Masonic Brotherhood Foundation, and the Chancellor Livingston Library Trustees. The weekend was capped off by the Shabbat Service on Friday evening, the Investiture Ceremony on Saturday afternoon, and the Chapel Service on Sunday morning. Many of the Districts as well as the Library and MMRI held social dinners and get-togethers.

Throughout July and August Lodges and Districts held picnics and barbecues that cemented the friendship of families and the brotherhood of our members. But now, here in September, we are getting back to work, aiming high in our goals for membership and participation.

There are several Grand Lodge activities this fall: Family Day at West Point (September 9), Grand Master's Day at Tappan (September 10), and the Masonic Toys for Tots events highlighted by a Dinner Dance at Russo's on the Bay on Saturday, November 18. I look forward to seeing many of you and your families at these events.

We will host another round of Florida Sojourners Luncheons

this January. The dates are:

- Wednesday, January 17 – Sarasota Sahib Shrine Center;
- Thursday, January 18 – Tampa Egypt Shrine Center;
- Friday, January 19 – The Villages at the Waterfront Inn;
- Saturday, January 20 – Palm Beach Gardens at Embassy Suites Palm Beach Gardens.

Tickets are \$10. We will have the Order of Eastern Star with us, headed by the MW Grand Matron-elect, Deirdre McCauley, and the MW Grand Patron-elect, Edward Mosso. Please see the Reservations Form in this issue; fill it out and return it to my office.

Talking about advanced planning, the Grand Lodge of Finland will hold year-long events celebrating 100 years of Finnish Freemasonry. The celebration begins with the opening in February 2024 of an Exhibition at the Finnish National Archives in Helsinki, Finland detailing the History of the Craft in Finland. There will be several International Booths at the Exhibition, including booths by the United Grand Lodge of England, the Swedish Masonic Rite and by our Grand Lodge. Our booth will highlight the Chartering of the Grand Lodge of Finland in 1924, and include a portrait of President George Washington in Masonic Regalia and other items of historical significance (photos, aprons and the Webb ritual book). Finland will hold a Centenary Jubilee Week from September 3 to 10 in Helsinki. The Centenary Program will be highlighted by a Special 100-Year Communication and a Gala Dinner. Grand Lodge officers from around the world, including the Grand Lodge of New York, will attend this week-long celebration. We expect to arrange several possible short pre- or post-tours—such as cruises to Stockholm, Sweden and Tallinn, Estonia, and perhaps a bus trip to the Lake District in Finland. We invite members and families to consider attending with your Grand Line officers next September. There are a limited number of attendees at these events and the costs have not yet been determined, but if any members are interested, please contact me via email and I will send you the latest information and plans.

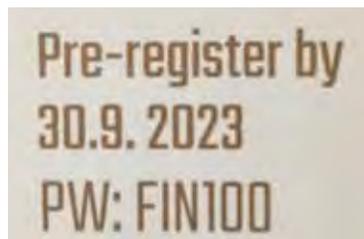
Finally, I conclude my article for this quarter's magazine, with a reminder of the principal tenets of our fraternity—Brotherly Love (which is more than mere friendship), Relief (by all our charitable endeavors, either with time or money), and Truth (by the integrity of our nature). The recognition of these principles in our daily lives and actions is what will help the world be a better place. I encourage you to follow them with a firm reliance on the Great Architect of the Universe, who loves us all.



GL Finland turns 100

My Brothers, many may not know of the interesting history and the involvement of the Grand Lodge of NY in the development of modern Masonry in Finland. In the 1920s the GLNY was the premier Grand Lodge in the world with 349,000 members strong.

In terms of celebrations, there will be a multitude of events and activities both at the Grand Lodge of NY and the Grand Lodge of Finland in 2024. The NY events will be announced via normal channels but a full breakout of the Finland events, as well as registration, you will find in this QR Code.



For a brief history see below.

1735-1756 There were four Lodges and in 1759 they became the National Grand Lodge. There were some higher Degrees based on the French Clermont Rite that came in from Sweden. This was the Sweden or Scandinavian Rite and within it were St. Andrew's Degrees.

1822 The Czar of Russia suppressed Freemasonry.

1917 Bolshevik Revolution gave them freedom.

Finland in the early 20th Century was sharply divided by two very different languages—Swedish and Finnish.

1922 Eight Master Masons in the U.S. with citizenship in Finland petitioned the Grand Lodge of New York for a Lodge in Helsinki named “Suomi,” the Finnish word for “Finland.” MW Arthur S. Tompkins went to Helsinki and consecrated the new Lodge on August 18, 1922. Twenty-seven new Masons were Initiated, chosen from eighty applicants. That evening they enjoyed a concert by Sibelius, the famous composer.

1924 with two more Lodges formed—“Tammer” and “Phoenix”—they petitioned the Grand Lodge of New York to constitute the Grand Lodge of Finland. On September 9, 1924 Brother Axel W. Solitander (one of the twenty-seven) was installed as their first Grand Master.

Prevailing over the many challenges brought on by the Nazis, Masonry eventually became strong by 1945. At that point the New York ritual was translated into Finnish as well as Swedish.

Some details taken from *History of Freemasonry in Finland* and from Brother Frederick Smyth, May 7, 1965.



Finnish Planning Committee

As noted elsewhere, the Grand Lodge of Finland is celebrating 100 years of Finnish Freemasonry in 2024. The Grand Lodge of Finland was chartered by the Grand Lodge of New York in 1924.

Discussions and planning began to take place during our Grand Lodge Annual Communication in May. Taking a break from the planning are two of the members of the Committee along with their Finnish counterpart. In the photo, left to right, are: RW Lauri Helaniemi, Assistant Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Finland; VW Christophe Lobry-Boulanger; and Brother Leslie Joynes Jr.



Celebrating: Finland Centenary 2024

by Brother Les Joynes and VW Christophe Lobry-Boulanger

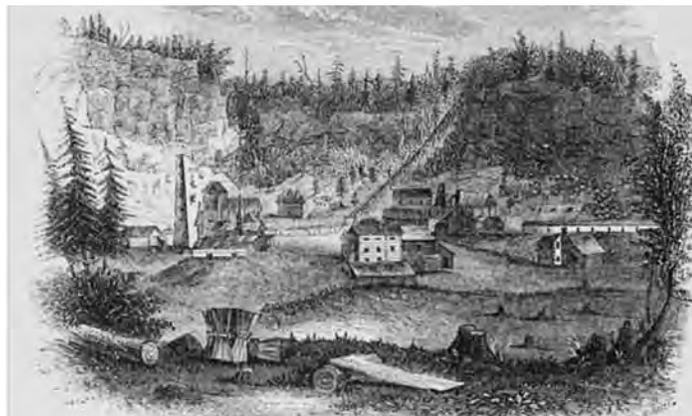
Did you know that our Grand Lodge of New York consecrated the Grand Lodge of Finland in 1924? Finland, a picturesque Scandinavian country of 5.5 millions is known the world over as “the land of a thousand lakes” (180,000 lakes, actually). Having visited Finland as a young man in the 1970s I remember the late summer nights where the sun does not set until after two in the morning, and the Finns—robust, hearty and welcoming. America’s cultural ties with Finland stretch back more than 150 years. Today there are more than 650,000 Finnish-Americans in the USA. Between 1870 and 1920 hundreds of thousands of Finns immigrated to the United States—mostly to settle in Minnesota, Ohio and Illinois. Like many communities in America, a shared priority was to keep the Finnish heritage, language and traditions alive.



Situated at the top of Europe, Finland has a history that spans 9000 years. As part of the Crusades in the thirteenth century Finland became part of the Swedish Kingdom and later was absorbed into the Russian Empire, finally declaring itself an independent state in 1917. Today, across forty locations in Finland, there are 180 Finnish Lodges and 7300 Freemasons.

Since the Treaty of Nöteborg in 1323 the region of Finland was a part of the Kingdom of Sweden and remained so for 500 years. As such, Freemasonry came also to that part of Sweden and was practiced through the Swedish Rite. In 1756, a St. Johannes Lodge was founded for the eastern province of Finland, which held sessions in Stockholm, Sweden and Turku, Finland’s oldest city located in the south. Beginning in 1762 the Lodge held some sessions in Helsinki.

Following the Russo-Sweden War of 1808-1809 Finland was absorbed into the Russian Empire, making Finland a self-governing Grand Duchy with allegiance to the Czar. Freemasonry in this region was suppressed under the Russian Emperor, Alexander I who on August 13, 1822 issued an order “...prohibiting secret societies and Masonic lodges.”



Many Finns were recruited by American mining companies to work in Michigan and Minnesota.

A few Finnish Masons continued to practice in other countries such as England, Scotland and France. Due to Russian political oppression, the economic situation in Europe and the ongoing wars, many Finns from the Russian Grand Duchy immigrated abroad. According to the Library of Congress 389,000 Finns immigrated to North America from 1870-1920, many taking hard-labor jobs in mining and tenant farming. Many Finns joined Freemasonry in the regions to which they immigrated, especially in the midwest of the United States; while Freemasonry as such no longer existed in the mother country.

Finland emerged as a sovereign nation declaring its independence on December 6, 1917, which laid the foundation for it to establish its own Grand Lodge. On May 2, 1922 Grand Lodge of New York, in the spirit of the Fraternity and supporting international Masonry, assisted in the founding of the Grand Lodge of Finland.

Grand Lodge, F. & A. M.
STATE OF NEW YORK

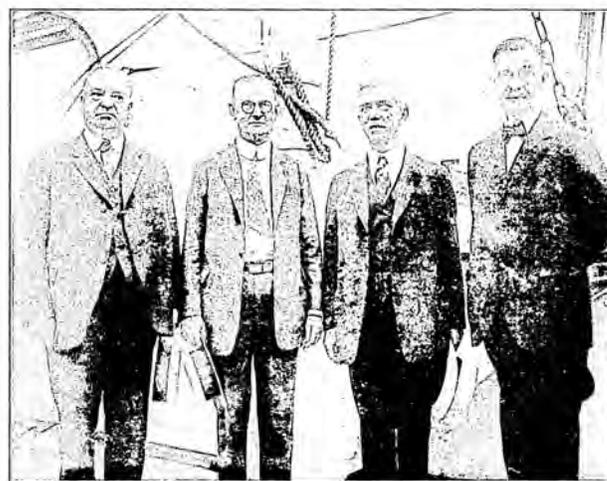


Photo by Keystone Views Co. Inc., of N. Y.
SPECIAL COMMISSION OF GRAND LODGE OF NEW YORK TO FINLAND
Left to Right—Judge Arthur S. Tompkins, Grand Master of Masons, State of New York; Robert Judson Kenworthy, P.G.M., and Grand Secretary of New York Grand Lodge; Oskari Lahti, Grand Historian of N. Y. Grand Lodge; Hon. Townsend Scudder, Past Grand Master of Grand Lodge, New York.

The Finnish automobile engineer, Brother J.E. Tuokkola, together with lawyer and Brother Toivo H. Nekto (who

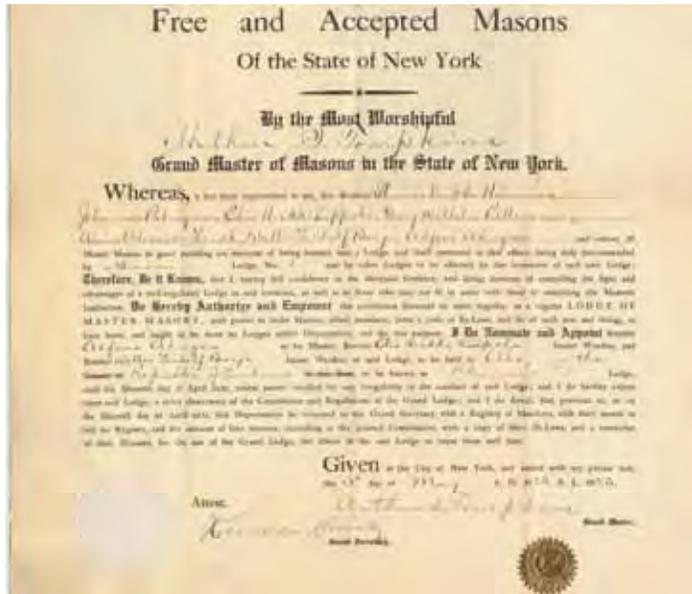


attended law school in New York), began working to establish the first Finnish Masonic Lodge, Suomi Lodge 1. Brothers Tuokkola and Nekto re-immigrated from the US to Finland and labored over a charter-member list of prospective members. These included the world-renowned composer Jean Sibelius; General C. G. Mannerheim;

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Archbishop Gustaf Johansson; the architect Lars Sonck; the painter Pekka Halonen; and composer Robert Kajanus. On August 14, 1922 (with the hope that Sibelius would serve the Lodge as Organist) it was recorded in the minutes that Jean Sibelius would compose “original, genuinely Finnish music for the lodge.” Other music performed in the Lodge, at first on a Mannborg harmonium, were classical works by Mozart and Beethoven and compositions by Sibelius—unique Masonic ritual music used in the Third Degree in 1922. To this day Finnish Lodges use the music composed by Sibelius for the Webb ritual.



**Summons to Stated Communication
Suomi Loosi [Lodge] No. 1, Dec. 28, 1922.**

Contact with Grand Lodge of New York led to results. MW Arthur S. Tompkins, U.S. Representative from New York and Justice of the New York Supreme Court, who also sat as Grand Master of Free and Accepted Masons in the State of New York, came to Finland on three occasions in 1922, 1923 and 1924. On May 2, 1922 J.E. Tuokkola sent to New York a request to establish a Lodge. On August 14, 1922 the establishment session of the temporary Suomi Maja 1 Lodge was held in Tuokkola’s residence in Helsinki, at the invitation of Toivo H. Nekton, an American-Finnish who was appointed as the Deputy Grand Master of the Finland District. On August 18, 1922 Grand Master Tompkins and four other Masonic representatives from the Grand Lodge in the State of New York performed an Induction to the Order according to the prescribed Entered Apprentice ritual and Finland’s first Lodge, Suomi Loosi—the Suomi Lodge No. 1—was born. The ceremony took place in the Säätytalo (the Finnish House of the Estates in Helsinki) as the first Masonic session of independent Finland. Twenty-seven candidates received all three Degrees on the same day. It was an august beginning to a new and truly Finnish Freemasonry in a Modern Europe and an example of American Freemasonry’s commitment to cooperation and support to the Fraternity worldwide.

This was followed by the establishment of Tammer Lodge No. 2 (in Tampere) and Phoenix Lodge No. 3 in 1923 (in Turku). The formal Consecration of the Grand Lodge was performed by MW Tompkins in September 1924 and W

Brother Axel Solitander (a member of the twenty-seven original founders) of Suomi Lodge No. 1 was installed as first Grand Master of Finland. By 1931 there was need for a Lodge at Abo (Turku) on the southwest coast of Finland.



Charter of Suomi Lodge No 1, May 3, 1923.

Whereas Modern Finnish Craft Masonry draws its ritual from an American Jurisdiction, its Royal Arch ritual draws from close ties to the Orders in London. And a Royal Arch Chapter was founded in 1930.

The 1930s marked a challenging time for Finnish Freemasons during the Great Depression and in the years approaching the Second World War, while many societies and groups faced severe persecution across Europe. Membership dipped to 238 in 1938 and the Craft officially suspended activities in 1941 but continued underground activity, notably in the form of its charitable work. At the close of the War in 1945 Finnish Freemasonry resumed its operations with zeal. In the booming 1950s it expanded with the noted establishment of the Humanities Society, which focused on speaking, Masonic education and charity. In the 1970s membership grew, from the original 300 of the 1920s to four thousand by 1980, and soon marked the first Masonic conventions held in Turku and Tampere.

As Grand Lodge of New York collaborated with Finnish Freemasons to establish a Grand Lodge of Finland, so did Grand Lodge in the 1990s collaborate with their Estonian neighbors in the establishment of Estonian Lodges, culminating in the founding of Grand Lodge of Estonia in 1999. Grand Lodge of Finland has continued to build Amity and Masonic relations with Masonic Grand Lodges in Scandinavia with regular Lodge visits. Today, Lodge ritual is performed in Finland in Finnish,

Continues on page 19 – Celebrating Finland

Continued from page 18 – Celebrating Finland

Swedish, English and German using the ritual developed by the Founding Father of American Masonry, Thomas Smith Webb (1771-1819).

The Grand Lodge of Finland and the Grand Lodge of New York will celebrate profound Fraternal Bonds in 2024 as part of the Centenary of the founding of the Grand Lodge of Finland. New York Masons are especially welcomed to join the Centenary Celebrations, which will take place in September 2024 in Helsinki. Brethren and their families are invited to attend special Lodge events and sign up for optional excursions to Sweden and Estonia to mark this once-in-a-lifetime event. Stay tuned and sign up with the links provided by the Grand Lodge of New York. For more information see freemasons.fi/100 password FIN100.

Acknowledgements:

We are grateful to esteemed brethren of the Grand Lodge of New York, including RW Steven A. Rubin, Deputy Grand Master; RW Richard Schulz, Grand Secretary; RW Richard Bateman, Grand Pursuivant & Assistant Grand Secretary; VW Michael LaRocco, Executive Director, Robert R Livingston

Library; VW Christophe Lobry-Boulanger.

And among our distinguished brethren from Finland, our thanks go to RW Lauri Helaniemi, Past Assistant Grand Master, Centenary Program Director 2022-2024, and the team of devoted Brothers who have made this project possible.

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District Grand Lodge of Syria-Lebanon Annual Gala Dinner

On Saturday, June 10, 2023 more than 200 Lebanese New York Masons met and celebrated together with their companions and wives in an atmosphere of joy and Brotherly Love at the District Grand Lodge of Syria Lebanon's Annual Gala Dinner. The District Grand Master, RW Fouad Khalifeh, addressed the Brothers, conveying the regards of both MW Grand Master Kessler and RW Grand Secretary Schulz. He highlighted Grand Master Kessler's slogan, "Masons Make a Difference," as well as the need for the Brothers to keep on "sticking together" and "loving each other" in the manner our tenets recommend.

Brother Khalifeh reiterated his own slogan, "We are all in this Together," saying that our Freemasonry challenge is built on sacrifice and commitment. We all need to keep on being true and loyal NY Freemasons, the initial trigger that drew all the Brothers to join in the first place.

He finished his address with a reading from Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* hymn which says "Joyful, Joyful we adore you, God of Glory, Lord of Love." This highlights the presence of God when two or more Brothers are together. The evening went on to be a true brotherly gathering in an atmosphere of harmony and pride.



NEW YORK STATE DISTRICT TEAMS



MASONIC CARE COMMUNITY



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Turk at 100

On December 28, 1923 something very special happened. The Trustees of the Masonic Hall and Asylum Fund purchased the Round Lake property of more than 1,500 acres in the Adirondack Park to benefit the children and residents at the Masonic Home.

To celebrate this very special 100th birthday, Masons and their families from all across New York traveled to Woodgate, NY on July 23 for Grand Master's Day. More than 400 adults and children were in attendance, including children from Camp Turk. It was a beautiful day and everyone enjoyed the carnival-themed event with games, bouncy houses, clowns, food, Brotherhood and fun. As depicted in the cover photo, making this historical event even more extraordinary were twelve teenagers from the war-torn country of Ukraine who flew to New York City and traveled to Round Lake to be part of the Camp Turk summer program.



Camp Turk is a unique place that harkens back to yesteryear. The setting and experience provided these children a safe haven from a never-ending storm. With more than thirty different camp activities—including land and water sports, arts, music, theater, hiking and biking—these teenagers had the opportunity to be kids once more.

Brothers from all across Masonry came together to make this trip possible, including the Grand Lodge of Ukraine, the Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the State of New



York and the Trustees of the Masonic Hall and Asylum Fund, who sponsored this experience for the children. With the support of Grand Master Richard Kessler, Trustee President G. Michael Morris, Deputy Grand Master Steven Adam Rubin and his team of colleagues, and so many others, these children were able to spend two weeks at Camp Turk. Following their camp session, the children returned to New York City for four days of sightseeing and activities.

We extend our thanks and appreciation to Mollie Denslow and the Camp Turk team for organizing an incredible Grand Master's Day and unforgettable summer experience for these kids. Again, the Trustees of the Masonic Hall and Asylum Fund express appreciation to everyone who attended and helped to make this 100th birthday celebration and Grand Master's Day such a tremendous success.

Brother Masons, there are a number of ways that you can help support this incredible program:

- A direct and personal charitable donation to Camp Turk.
- You or your Lodge can "Send a Kid" to camp through the camper scholarship program.
- Send your own kids to Camp Turk next summer for a one-of-a-kind experience.
- Share information and updates about Camp Turk at your Lodge meetings.
- Visit Round Lake. As a member of the Masonic Fraternity you and your family can stay at this private and beautiful location during family camping session from August 21 through October 1.
- Please feel free to reach out to me directly. I welcome the opportunity to speak with you about Camp Turk and the Round Lake property.

For more information, you can also visit the following websites:

- Camp Turk Program: <https://www.campturk.org/>
- Round Lake Family Camping: <https://masonichomeny.org/about/event-spaces/>

MASONIC CARE COMMUNITY



RW G. MICHAEL MORRIS,
PRESIDENT

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MASONIC HALL AND HOME
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Grand Opening: Joanne Kessler Children's Dyslexia Center

Caring for children is an integral part of the DNA or mission of the Trustees of the Masonic Hall & Home. It began with the establishment of a Masonic Home for Orphans in 1893, followed by the purchase of the Round Lake property and Camp Turk Summer Camp for kids in the Adirondacks. Now, continuing our tradition and commitment for the care and benefit of children of our Fraternity and the community, the Trustees voted to provide funds to establish an endowment for the Joanne Kessler Children's Dyslexia Center (CDC) in Masonic Hall in NYC. This Center, in collaboration with the Children's Dyslexia Center, Inc., will provide important resources and tools for hundreds and eventually thousands of children suffering from dyslexia to lead happy and productive lives.

The new Center was named in honor of Joanne Kessler, the late wife of MW Richard J. Kessler, Grand Master of Masons in the State of New York. As a long-time first-grade teacher, Mrs. Kessler dedicated her life to helping children learn to read.



and CDC leaders, together with New York Councilman Erik Bottcher in attendance. A proclamation from New York City Mayor Eric Adams was also read to honor the occasion as "The Children's Dyslexia Center Day." Also, as part of the Public Opening, the waiting room of the Center was named in honor of Mrs. Ann M. Haslam, late wife of RW John B. Haslam Sr., Grand Marshal.



The Grand Opening and Fundraiser of the Joanne Kessler Children's Dyslexia Center in Masonic Hall in New York City was held on Saturday, January 28, 2023 in conjunction with the International Grand Lecturers' Convention. The Trustees of the Masonic Hall and Home provided funding for the first five years of operating expenses and have built out the CDC facility, which includes eleven tutoring rooms and a large tutor-training room. A Center Director, Andrew Labrecque, was hired; to date, four tutors for the Center completed their training, and seven students are currently receiving instruction. When in full operation, the NYS CDC will be able to accommodate some 100 students per year.

A Public Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the NYC CDC was held on March 30, 2023 featuring Masonic



The Center's Board of Governors (BOG) currently consists of members from the Trustees of the Masonic Hall and Home, the Valley of New York City and the Valley of Rockville Centre. The Center's BOG has been charged to raise \$5 million over the next five years for the endowment for the Center, which will ensure its continued operation for many years to come. Additional information about the Joanne Kessler Children's Dyslexia Center can be found on the Center's website: <https://www.childrensdyslexiacenters.org/centers/new-york-new-york-city/>.



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130 Years Strong – Promises Made, Promises Kept

This year marks an important historical milestone as we celebrate the 130th anniversary of the Masonic Care Community. As legend goes, in 1842 a man by the name of Greenfield Pote, the Grand Tiler of the New York State Masonic Fraternity, laid a silver dollar on the altar of the Grand Lodge Session and asked for the creation of a home for indigent Masons, their wives and their orphans. One year later, a memorial was presented at Grand Lodge that contained the signatures of one hundred Masons and was accompanied by a sum of \$300. The group asked to raise money to do two things—build the Masonic Hall in New York City to house Grand Lodge and Masonic bodies and to establish a home for Masons.

First, the Masonic Hall in New York was built in Manhattan, where it still stands today. The revenue from that building was used to build the Masonic Home and still supports the Masonic Care Community to this day. The gift of one single dollar is a meaningful and strong demonstration of the power of philanthropy.

Often the question is asked, why Utica, New York? Utica was chosen because it is the geographic center of New York State. We like to call it the Heart of New York.



With 130 years of history, volumes could be written about the Masonic Care Community. I will highlight just a few:

- The Soldiers and Sailors Hospital opened in 1922 and had all the modern facilities, including an operating room, physiotherapy, x-ray, dental rooms and laboratories and 132 beds. The Hospital was built with money left from a Masonic World War I relief fund. The building was converted into a skilled nursing facility in the early 1900s. The Trustees of the Masonic Home and Asylum Fund opted to help us move into the 21st Century of senior care and construction was started on the Health Pavilion in 2000; renovation of the Soldiers and Sailors Hospital was begun. The Health Pavilion is now a 320-



bed capacity facility with a household model of care within neighborhood levels to create a real community and a homelike environment versus an institutional type environment.

- In front of the hospital stands a statue of Orville Parker Johnson who was killed in Torcy, France on July 18, 1918. While he was at Harvard College, war was declared in Germany and Orville was active in recruiting men from Harvard as well as the manufacturing towns about Boston. Charles Johnson, his father, was a former Grand Master. There is also a dedication plaque by the statue in honor of all Masons who have served in support of their country.
- One of the most beautiful dedications on campus is the “Spirit of Masonry” statue which depicts a soldier and sailor from World War I unclothed, as they are being protected by the Brotherhood. Dedicated by Grand Master Tompkins in October of 1922, this work of art



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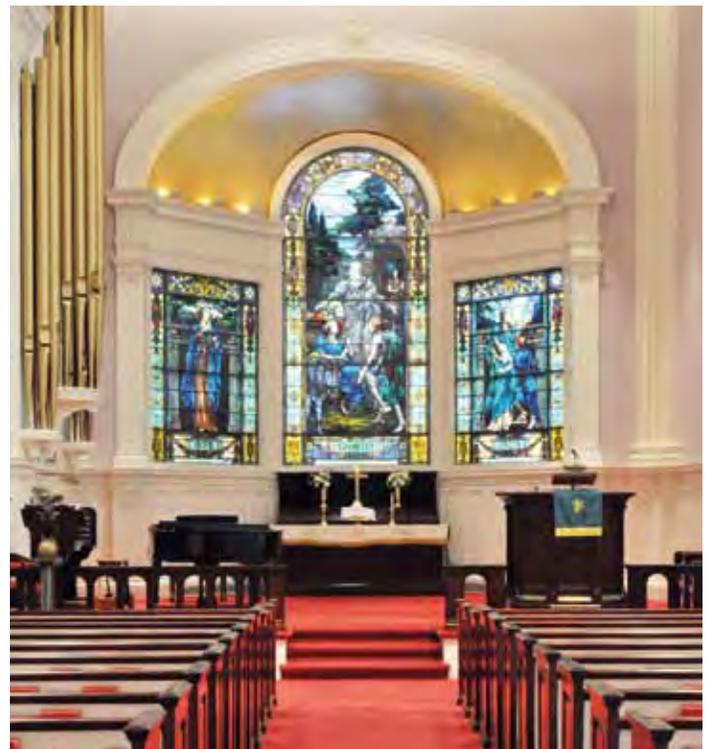
was created by Most Worshipful Ettore Ferrari who was the Grand Master of the Orient of Italy. The creation of this exceptional statue was made possible by the Lodges of the 10th Manhattan District.



- Originally built in 1928 to house boys on campus, Wiley Hall was named after William “Pop” Wiley, the longest-serving superintendent in MCC’s history, from 1906 to the mid-1940s. Wiley Hall was later converted to senior living. In the 1980s the first independent living apartments opened on the upper floors. Reconstructed in 2007, Wiley Hall now serves as an adult care facility and provides the perfect mix of services and activities to address an individual’s moderate healthcare needs.
- Pop Wiley was also involved in the purchase of Round Lake, the Masonic property in the Adirondack Mountains, and he was responsible for moving education for the children off of campus and into the Utica public schools. Children from the Masonic Home spent summers at Round Lake, which remains relatively unchanged from when it was originally built.
- The Masonic Care Community also has a beautiful Horticultural Center, a unique amenity for a senior care community. Opened in 2019 and championed by former Grand Master William Sardone, the Center was the former site of the Masonic Home laundry facility. It contains a traditional greenhouse for growing plants and an Aeroponics area where lettuce and herbs grow in towers without the use of soil. The Horticultural Center also has a community room and classroom supporting staff, residents, and childcare activities, and an outside fire pit and patio. Our bee and honey production programs are part of the activities under the Horticultural Center, including our Bee Apiary Home which houses twelve beehives and was donated by Masonic Lodges from around the state.
- The Masonic Home also had a working farm where The Neighborhoods at Acacia Village stand today. Cows, pigs, chickens and turkeys were raised on the farm, produce was grown, and milk, eggs and cheese were produced right here on campus. The farm closed in 1969 as New York state rules and regulations changed.
- Constructed in 1994, The Neighborhoods at Acacia Village began with sixty independent senior living apartments and has now grown to 135 units. To provide additional housing opportunities for elderly seniors, we recently completed the construction of sixteen new independent homes that are separate from our main Lodge

building of apartments. Residents of The Neighborhoods at Acacia Village live independently and do not require assisted living services.

- The Scottish Rite Building is the residence for the Grand Master when he visits the Masonic Care Community campus. Originally known as the Scottish Rite Cottage, it was the home for babies that came to the Masonic Home and later used as the home of the school superintendents of the Masonic Home.
- Built in 1923, the former Livingston Museum building was the home for babies. Children as young as four months old lived there. In the 1940s it became the girls’ dormitory. This was the last building to house children on campus. In 2020 the Museum space was converted to offices for MCC’s Home Care Agency.
- Between 1893 and 1982, over 900 children were cared for at the Masonic Home and we continue that tradition today. Our licensed Child Care Center provides affordable, professional childcare to our employees as well as residents of Oneida and surrounding counties. We also offer expanded childcare programming in the summer.
- Dedicated in 1893 to Daniel D. Tompkins the former Vice President of the United States., Grand Master of New York State, and Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite Supreme Council Northern Jurisdiction, the Chapel is the oldest and most historical building on campus. Here are several of the Chapel’s extraordinary features:



- The Chapel features spectacular Tiffany and Gorham stained glass windows. Masonic Lodges from across New York State donated a large number of these windows.
- In the Chapel’s entranceway stands the statue of *Silence* created by artist Augustus Saint-Gaudens for Grand Lodge. Later this magnificent stone statue was moved from Grand Lodge to the Soldiers and Sailors Hospital for the opening of the Masonic Home, and it was then

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The 2023 camping season at Camp Turk was full of a lot of new things. The camp welcomed a new Camp Director, Katie Beaulieu, and Assistant Camp Director, Aislinn Graham. We added some new activities, including a new water inflatable, a gaga pit, hammocks in the woods and a new fire pit.

Some old activities were brought back. We were not able to enjoy them in the last few years because of COVID. These included the out-of-camp hike to Bald Mountain in Old Forge, NY. Halloween, the carnival, the end of the session banquets and the masquerade ball were all big hits.

Grand Master's Day was celebrated in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the purchase of the camp property on July 23, 2023. A large crowd gathered and everyone enjoyed all the activities.

We are currently working on updating our camp website and producing a new camp promo video. Be sure to check us out at www.campturk.org. Stay tuned for the next issue for the opening day for 2024 registration.



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- moved to the Chapel in 1970.
- o The Chapel Ceiling Zodiac Light is a spectacular feature and has the signs of the zodiac in the inner circle with the names of the 39 original lodges that sponsored the fixture on the outer circle. Estimated to be the most valuable artistic feature in the Chapel a number of years ago, it was valued at more than \$1 million dollars.
- o The Chapel organ is one of the last remaining Buhl pipe organs of its type in the state of New York.

This summer a beautiful new feature is coming to the Masonic Care Community. A Veterans Memorial Garden is being created to honor the legacy of our American military

veterans. For more information, please see Mara Mulligan's article in this issue, which provides further detail about how you can join in helping to create this special space for our Military Services in honor of what they have done for our country.

For my fellow Brother Masons who were not able to join us for St. John's Day: we invite and welcome you to visit the Masonic Care Community and experience what your support makes possible. You uphold a promise started with one single silver dollar so many years ago. Please join me in celebrating 130 years of the Masonic Care Community.

MASONIC CARE COMMUNITY



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Veterans Memorial Garden

This St. John's Day something very special happened at the Masonic Care Community. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for the new Veterans Memorial Garden on the MCC campus. Grand Master Richard J. Kessler launched this project in 2022 to create a peaceful space dedicated to all five United States Uniformed Services and their respective Guard and Reserve Units. In response, the Trustees of the Masonic Hall and Asylum Fund created the Veterans Memorial Garden to honor our veterans and what they have done for our country.



Located in front of Wiley Hall on the Masonic Care Community campus, the Veterans Memorial Garden includes numerous red, white and blue plants, shrubbery and trees to reflect the patriotic spirit of those who have served their beloved country. The Garden will be a serene place for veterans and their families to have privacy in which to meditate and reflect on their loved ones who served.

You make more possible

There are a number of lead dedications available for the Veterans Memorial Garden including:

The Veterans Gazebo

Branch of Service Area Dedications



POW/MIA – “Empty Chair” Dedication

Bench Dedications

Eagle Statue Foundation

Planter Boxes

Personalized Brick Donations – See Brick Legacy Form (next page).

Brother Masons and their family members have an especially strong tradition of helping our men and women in uniform. The Veterans Memorial Garden will be a historical legacy that honors this long-standing tradition of supporting our troops.

For more information about these special gift dedication opportunities, you can access the Veterans Memorial Garden funding brochure at [MasonicCares.com](https://www.MasonicCares.com) under the “Giving” tab, or contact me and I would be glad to provide additional information.

Please join in helping to support the Veterans Memorial Garden with your generous gift today. Veterans, military members, their families and friends will have a sense of pride knowing that the community cares, honors and respects our veterans’ dedication, sacrifices and service.

Masonic Care Community VETERANS MEMORIAL LEGACY BRICK

Yes, we'd like to reserve a permanent brick. Please engrave the brick as follows

Any symbol is considered one space (period, etc.)
All text is centered unless otherwise noted.

PLEASE PRINT NEATLY AND IN ALL CAPS

\$200.00 • 4x8 brick • Max 15 characters per line • Max 3 lines

Please either return this form with your check payable to The Masonic Care Community or fill out the credit card info below and save the form to email as an attachment to mulliganm@mccny.com
Questions call Mara Mulligan at (315) 798-4703

Mailing address:
Care of Mara Mulligan
Masonic Care Community of New York
2150 Bleecker Street, Utica, NY 13501

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____ AMOUNT PAID: _____

CREDIT CARD NUMBER: _____ CVC CODE: _____ EXP DATE: _____

Please note that brick engraving orders will be placed when the required minimum order level required by the engraving manufacturer has been reached.

Masons Jump into Action

by MW William M. Sardone, PGM
Chairman – Jurisprudence Committee



Writing this article I find myself perusing our *Constitutions*, where my eyes focus on its very first page, the “Preamble,” which is worthy of our time, consideration and action. These words jump off the page: “Masonry teaches man to practice charity and benevolence...” Adding divine emphasis to these profound words, the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians encircles this thought, saying “...and now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three: But the greatest of these is Charity.”

Freemasonry teaches our members that they have a duty and a responsibility to put our talents to good use by improving, uplifting and serving our communities and society. We are taught by precept and example never to lose sight of the fact that we are a fraternal organization, a brotherhood, a family, the aims of which are threefold: to impart brotherly love, relief and truth.

The Nobel Peace Prize recipient Albert Schweitzer once said, “Example is Not the most important thing in life; It is the only thing.”

Speaking of Peace, everyone is sadly familiar with the devastation and upheaval in Ukraine. If we apply those virtuous thoughts described above, we cannot simply stand aside while our fellow Brothers in Ukraine, their family members and countrymen are subjected to the harsh realities of an unjust War.

Responding to the plea for help, our Grand Master, Most Worshipful Richard J. Kessler, took decisive action and launched a statewide appeal for financial aid on behalf of the Grand Lodge of Ukraine and the people of Ukraine. Without hesitation, the brotherhood of our Grand Lodge of New York, which is you, my Brothers, has indeed been very generous. Your donations have provided significant humanitarian aid toward helping the International Committee of the Red Cross reach out directly to thousands of Ukrainian people.

The Ukrainian philosopher, Grigori Hryhorii Skovoroda,

the namesake of Grigori Skovoroda Lodge 11 of Kyiv, Ukraine, embraced the Masonic teachings and wrote in 1784, “The Sanctity of Life lies in doing good to people.” How very true those sage words are today, written over two centuries ago.

The effects of war are not just physical. War encompasses all aspects of life, including mental, psychological and spiritual. Our Grand Master has highlighted these later ailments by spearheading the Battle Within Program, which attempts to alleviate the undercurrent of suicide and PTSD by providing a pathway to understanding and comfort for those traumatized by conflict.

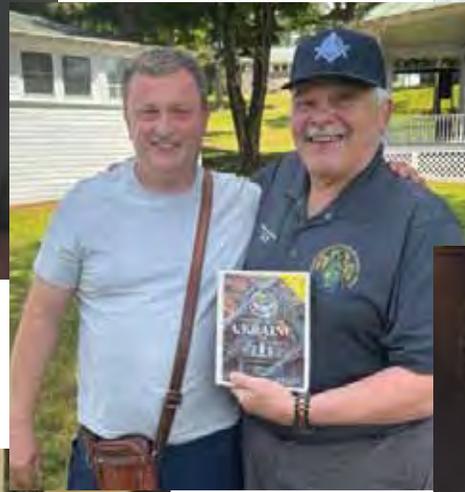
The Deputy Grand Master, RW Steven Adam Rubin, echoed these sentiments and encouraged our Grand Lodge of New York with its greater resources to take hold of an opportunity in bringing a small amount of peace and happiness to the children of Ukraine. How? By bringing a small group of children to our Camp Turk in the Adirondack Mountains at Round Lake, New York. This was an aggressive idea, considering the multiple challenges involved.

Soon the idea blossomed and came to fruition. The Deputy Grand Master, with the blessing of the Grand Master, quickly assembled and mobilized a team of skilled, talented and committed individuals with a great sense of purpose and passion. Here is a short-list of some of those who put in a tremendous effort:

The Trustees of the Masonic Hall and Home provided tuition for the Camp Session;

W Altan Ergun, Brother Yigal Kotler and additional Brothers from Columbia Lodge, the Seventh Manhattan District, the Noble Ninth Manhattan and Nassau Masonic Districts spearheaded transporting the children and establishing the itinerary in New York City;

RW Teodulo A. Henriquez, an immigration Attorney handled the legal issues and red tape;



RW Dan Eckman not only procured financial resources from the 7th Manhattan District Foundation, but also assembled a convoy of drivers from JFK Intl. Airport in NYC to Camp Turk;

The Deputy Grand Master provided the use of the Grand Lodge van to help transport some of the children, in conjunction with RW Dan Eckman;

- The Masonic Care Community provided medical support;
- All the Camp Turk staff leaned in to ensure a smooth process;
- The Grand Secretary and office staff provided logistical assistance.

Teamwork certainly is the watchword that made this humanitarian effort a big success. The combined effort resulted in twelve delightful children from Ukraine enjoying a wonderful, exciting and fun-filled two weeks at our beautiful and bucolic Camp Turk. Capping this successful adventure, the children were our guests for several days in the Big Apple of New York City touring various historic landmarks.

But there is more. During a luncheon between Trustees RW Christopher Hough and RW Steve Cohen and Ms. Lorrie Clemo, President, and Dr. Jason MacLoud, Vice President of Facilities at D'Youville University in Buffalo, RW Brother Cohen casually mentioned that the Fraternity was sponsoring several Ukrainian children attending Camp Turk this summer. President Clemo shared that there were currently five Ukrainian students enrolled at D'Youville University.

As the wheels quickly turned, a plan was hatched whereby

the Trustees of the Masonic Hall & Home would bring these students to Camp Turk to meet and mingle with the campers. The Ukrainian college students arrived on schedule and helped to welcome the young Ukrainian campers.

Another positive facet to this story involved Ms. Mary Szabat, Senior Vice President of Key Bank in Buffalo, NY. She generously arranged, through a special Foundation with which she is affiliated, to provide individualized blankets for all the Ukrainian campers.

The Ukrainian pilgrimage of children attending Camp Turk culminated on July 25, 2023 when Grand Master Richard J. Kessler celebrated the 100th anniversary of Camp Turk. During the celebration the Grand Master embraced these children with heart-felt words saying, "You are warriors at such a young age, and we feel for you. May God bless and protect you."

MW Richard J. Kessler recognized and thanked all the campers, the staff and everyone who helped make this event possible. Joining the festivities were more than 250 Brothers, guests, campers, families and friends who enjoyed the perfect weather and a perfect occasion.

For 100 years children nervously arrived at Camp, and then left in tears because they had such a great experience and made so many new friends. This year there were more tears than usual. When we say "Masons Make a Difference," think about the unselfish efforts of the Masons who coordinated to provide these special children a safe and peaceful environment: a small piece of heaven, if only for a couple of weeks.

AWARDS COMMITTEE

Awards accepts nominations for 2024 DSA

RW GEORGE R. WACOB
CHAIRMAN
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grwacob1@optonline.net



The committee will be accepting 2024 Dedicated Service Award Recommendation Forms from September 1 through November 12, 2023. At the end of August, notice of the requirements, information, timetable and the form for the 2024 Dedicated Service Award and various Community Service Awards went out. The letter was sent to District Deputy Grand Masters, Staff Officers and Secretaries of Lodges. If you did not receive it by the beginning of September, go to the Grand Lodge website: <https://nymasons.org/site/committees-departments-programs/awards-committee/> to obtain all of the information.

The committee thanks all of the Lodges that have sent in recommendations for their Brother to receive this coveted award. Those chosen to receive the DSA Award will receive notice of approval in late January from the Grand Secretary. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me for information.

Take note that as of 2017 work in the District has been considered equally with work in the Lodge as qualification for receiving a DSA. The chest medallion to be worn by DSA recipients has been a great success. This medallion is included in the DSA package provided to new recipients. All previous DSA recipients may wear this medallion in recognition of their work in the quarries. The cost is \$20.00 per medallion and may be ordered through the Lodge Secretary from Lodge Services.

I want to emphasize the cutoff date for the Dedicated Service Award Recommendation. The forms and information must be postmarked on or before November 12, 2023. There is a lengthy procedure in place for the committee review and



vote, the Grand Master's approval and the delivery of required notifications for each recipient. We encourage the timely submission of the nominations for our distinguished Brothers.

The Community Service Awards (DeWitt Clinton, Jacob Morton, and Grand Lodge Certificate of Excellence in Service to the Community) have no cutoff date for recommendations and will be processed as they are received. The Lodge and DDGM will be notified within a short period of time if the nominee has been approved to receive one of the awards.

Please take notice of the Awards Committee's web page on the Grand Lodge website: <https://nymasons.org/site/committees-departments-programs/awards-committee/>. This page will give you information, requirements and forms for the various awards. The committee will continue to provide information through its *Empire State Mason* article. It will also continue to provide information and forms on its web page at the Grand Lodge website.

Awards Committee:

- RW Gregory Noulas, Vice Chairman
- The Metropolitan Region:
RW Gregory Noulas and RW Walter Fingerle
- The Mid-State Region:
RW Thomas L. Jenison and W Alfred W. Ferguson
- The Hudson-Champlain Region:
RW Charles E. Knapp Jr. and RW Robert L. Hogan Jr.
- The Western Region:
RW William H. Greene and RW Douglas D. Airth

MASONIC BROTHERHOOD FUND



RW JERRY FILIPPIDIS
 CHAIRMAN
 718/344-3200
jerry@aresny.com
nymasonicbrotherhoodfund.org

We are at the year end of the 2022-2023 Campaign, which ended May 31, 2023. The Masonic Brotherhood Fund has received \$500,999.99 in donations from June 1, 2022 to May 31, 2023. We are currently preparing for the start of the new campaign and are working with Most Worshipful Richard J. Kessler on new thank-you commemorative gifts that we will roll out this year.

I want to thank the office staff of the Masonic Brotherhood Fund and the Grand Secretary's Office for their assistance. I also want to thank all the Brothers for being a part of the success of the Masonic Brotherhood Fund. Without all the generosity of the great Brothers of this Fraternity we would not be able to help our Brothers and their families when they

are facing times of need.

Please continue your great work in raising funds and please feel free to contact me if I can be of any assistance or support your efforts in any way.

If you would like to make a donation, please visit nymasonicbrotherhoodfund.org or scan the QR code below or reach out to your Lodge or District Brotherhood Fund Chairman. If you have any questions or need assistance, please reach out to me directly at jerry@aresny.com and 718/344-3200. If you would like to mail a check, please mail it to Masonic Brotherhood Foundation, PO Box 2497, Hicksville, NY 11802-2497.



Masonic Brotherhood Fund - 2023 - Campaign Figures

June 1, 2022 - May 31, 2023

Categories	Total
Grand Master's Allocation	\$ 242,252.29
Camp Turk	\$ 9,809.23
Masonic Medical Research Institute	\$ 126,888.93
Masonic Care Community	\$ 25,632.00
Military Outreach Program	\$ 20,057.00
Masonic Youth Program	\$ 9,715.00
MW Carl Smith Tompkins Chapel Organ Restoration	\$ 5,074.00
Livingston Masonic Library.	\$ 14,656.54
R J Kessler "BATTLE WITHIN" Fund Bear	\$ 34,361.00
Masonic Endowment Benevolence Fund	\$ 12,554.00
Total	\$ 500,999.99

Continues on to page 33 & 34 – Brotherhood

Masonic Brotherhood Fund

2023 Jurisdiction Report (6/01/2022 - 5/31/2023) - Total Donations Order

District	Members	Member	Lodge	Other	Total	Member	Lodge	Other	Total	Part %	Total \$
037 Queens	798	169	8	9	186	207	18	9	234	23.31	\$27,796.70
029 Nassau	1154	106	3	6	115	126	6	6	138	9.97	\$19,311.16
010 Erie	1645	189	2	21	212	217	8	21	246	12.89	\$18,815.00
022 Fifth Manhattan	666	35	2	1	38	43	2	1	46	5.71	\$14,960.00
035 Orange-Rockland-Sullivan	1177	139	3	2	144	192	3	2	197	12.23	\$14,955.42
043 Suffolk	1240	124	2	9	135	149	2	9	160	10.89	\$14,873.00
033 Onondaga	892	136	3	6	145	148	3	7	158	16.26	\$14,809.00
032 Oneida	1073	144	4	2	150	171	10	2	183	13.98	\$14,568.83
031 Old Seventeenth	1259	124	3	9	136	143	4	9	156	10.80	\$12,627.00
028 Mid Hudson	982	115	3	5	123	156	6	5	167	12.53	\$12,461.46
027 Monroe	1015	146	0	8	154	177	0	9	186	15.17	\$11,736.25
018 Letchworth	696	213	3	5	221	250	3	5	258	31.75	\$10,326.90
012 Fulton-Montgomery	415	110	2	7	119	148	2	8	158	28.67	\$9,356.00
039 St. Lawrence	503	111	2	0	113	142	2	0	144	22.47	\$8,351.00
021 Fourth Manhattan	945	40	0	1	41	43	0	1	44	4.34	\$8,330.00
009 Cortland-Madison	337	37	0	1	38	42	0	1	43	11.28	\$8,240.00
006 Chautauqua	530	109	0	7	116	123	0	7	130	21.89	\$7,908.50
004 Cayaga-Tompkins	430	65	2	2	69	67	2	2	71	16.05	\$7,885.50
030 Niagara-Orleans	586	88	0	3	91	97	0	4	101	15.53	\$7,720.00
025 Ninth Manhattan	766	48	8	4	60	54	9	4	67	7.83	\$7,517.00
003 Cattaraugus	270	21	0	0	21	24	0	0	24	7.78	\$7,220.00
026 Tenth Manhattan	898	45	3	2	50	49	3	2	54	5.57	\$7,220.00
046 Second Westchester-Putnam	571	60	1	3	64	63	2	3	68	11.21	\$6,938.00
045 First Westchester-Putnam	371	55	2	1	58	63	2	1	66	15.63	\$5,925.00
034 Ontario-Seneca-Yates	434	73	1	0	74	79	1	0	80	17.05	\$5,443.00
041 Southern Tier	635	47	0	2	49	55	0	2	57	7.72	\$5,422.00
002 Bronx	258	20	0	1	21	20	0	1	21	8.14	\$5,180.00
019 First Manhattan	1243	56	2	0	58	60	2	0	62	4.67	\$5,172.93
005 Central Leatherstocking	694	50	3	3	56	52	4	3	59	8.07	\$4,635.00
038 Richmond	768	49	0	3	52	53	0	3	56	6.77	\$4,630.00
044 WAYNE	419	133	3	1	137	213	3	1	217	32.70	\$4,123.00
040 Saratoga-Warren-Washington	535	60	0	0	60	71	0	0	71	11.21	\$4,110.00
036 Oswego	441	45	1	1	47	46	2	1	49	10.66	\$3,898.00
013 Herkimer	292	26	0	0	26	29	0	0	29	8.90	\$3,570.00
020 Metropolitan	491	24	1	0	25	27	1	0	28	5.09	\$3,505.00
014 Jefferson-Lewis	549	39	0	0	39	44	0	0	44	7.10	\$3,185.00
001 Allegany	245	52	0	0	52	58	0	0	58	21.22	\$3,100.00
017 Third Kings	310	16	0	0	16	16	0	0	16	5.16	\$3,015.00
023 Seventh Manhattan	411	26	0	2	28	30	0	2	32	6.81	\$2,858.00
015 First Kings	348	27	0	1	28	29	0	3	32	8.05	\$2,591.00
042 Steuben	343	21	1	0	22	28	1	0	29	6.41	\$2,405.00
007 Chemung-Schuyler-Tioga	380	43	1	1	45	45	1	2	48	11.84	\$2,291.50
016 Second Kings	290	27	0	2	29	35	0	2	37	10.00	\$1,920.00
011 Franklin-Hamilton	147	15	0	0	15	16	0	0	16	10.20	\$1,629.00
008 Clinton-Essex	277	24	0	0	24	24	0	0	24	8.66	\$1,460.00
070 Syria-Lebanon	474	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	\$ -
999 Special District	373	3	2	75	80	3	5	113	121	21.45	\$147,004.84
Totals:	29576	3305	71	206	3582	3927	107	251	4285	12.11	\$500,999.99

Masonic Brotherhood Fund

2023 Jurisdiction Report (6/01/2022 - 5/31/2023) - Total Participation

District	Mbrs.	Mbr.	Lodge	Other	Total	Member	Lodge	Other	Total	Part %	Total \$
044 Wayne	419	133	3	1	137	213	3	1	217	32.70	\$4,123.00
018 Letchworth	696	213	3	5	221	250	3	5	258	31.75	\$10,326.90
012 Fulton-Montgomery	415	110	2	7	119	148	2	8	158	28.67	\$9,356.00
037 Queens	798	169	8	9	186	207	18	9	234	23.31	\$27,796.70
039 St. Lawrence	503	111	2	0	113	142	2	0	144	22.47	\$8,351.00
006 Chautauqua	530	109	0	7	116	123	0	7	130	21.89	\$7,908.50
001 Allegany	245	52	0	0	52	58	0	0	58	21.22	\$3,100.00
034 Ontario-Seneca-Yates	434	73	1	0	74	79	1	0	80	17.05	\$5,443.00
033 Onondaga	892	136	3	6	145	148	3	7	158	16.26	\$14,809.00
004 Cayuga-Tompkins	430	65	2	2	69	67	2	2	71	16.05	\$7,885.50
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035 Orange-Rockland-Sullivan	1177	139	3	2	144	192	3	2	197	12.23	\$14,955.42
007 Chemung-Schuyler-Tioga	380	43	1	1	45	45	1	2	48	11.84	\$2,291.50
009 Cortland-Madison	337	37	0	1	38	42	0	1	43	11.28	\$8,240.00
040 Saratoga-Warren-Washington	535	60	0	0	60	71	0	0	71	11.21	\$4,110.00
046 Second Westchester-Putnam	571	60	1	3	64	63	2	3	68	11.21	\$6,938.00
043 Suffolk	1240	124	2	9	135	149	2	9	160	10.89	\$14,873.00
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036 Oswego	441	45	1	1	47	46	2	1	49	10.66	\$3,898.00
011 Franklin-Hamilton	147	15	0	0	15	16	0	0	16	10.20	\$1,629.00
016 Second Kings	290	27	0	2	29	35	0	2	37	10.00	\$1,920.00
029 Nassau	1154	106	3	6	115	126	6	6	138	9.97	\$19,311.16
013 Herkimer	292	26	0	0	26	29	0	0	29	8.90	\$3,570.00
008 Clinton-Essex	277	24	0	0	24	24	0	0	24	8.66	\$1,460.00
002 Bronx	258	20	0	1	21	20	0	1	21	8.14	\$5,180.00
005 Central Leatherstocking	694	50	3	3	56	52	4	3	59	8.07	\$4,635.00
015 First Kings	348	27	0	1	28	29	0	3	32	8.05	\$2,591.00
025 Ninth Manhattan	766	48	8	4	60	54	9	4	67	7.83	\$7,517.00
003 Cattaraugus	270	21	0	0	21	24	0	0	24	7.78	\$7,220.00
041 Southern Tier	635	47	0	2	49	55	0	2	57	7.72	\$5,422.00
014 Jefferson-Lewis	549	39	0	0	39	44	0	0	44	7.10	\$3,185.00
023 Seventh Manhattan	411	26	0	2	28	30	0	2	32	6.81	\$2,858.00
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042 Steuben	343	21	1	0	22	28	1	0	29	6.41	\$2,405.00
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019 First Manhattan	1243	56	2	0	58	60	2	0	62	4.67	\$5,172.93
021 Fourth Manhattan	945	40	0	1	41	43	0	1	44	4.34	\$8,330.00
070 Syria-Lebanon	474	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	\$ -
999 Special District	373	3	2	75	80	3	5	113	121	21.45	\$147,004.84
Totals:	29576	3305	71	206	3582	3927	107	251	4285	12.11	\$500,999.99

GRAND LODGE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



RW CHRISTOPHER J. HOUGH
CHAIRMAN
hough441@roadrunner.com



EAP: Every Year a Banner Year

Brethren, as you read this the Grand Lodge Educational Assistance Program for 2023 will be in the books. This year we had a banner year—as usual—and across the state a total of 410 students received grants towards their educational needs at college and university. Awardees were acknowledged in person in Utica, Buffalo and New York City. The range of programs these gifted students are studying is mind boggling, at least to a fossil like me. Mathematics, Engineering, Nursing, Bioengineering, Physics etc. I was very pleased to note that we have a large contingent of female students studying in the STEM programs because in my day they were very under represented.

The Grand Lodge Educational Assistance program harkens back to the days when we had young people living at our

home in Utica. Often orphans or from Masonic families who had difficulties, they came to us to be housed, educated and loved. Today, thankfully, those times are behind us but the tradition and the mission of Freemasons in the state of New York remains the same: honor, support and love the children and grandchildren of our Masonic family.

Applications for educational grants for 2024 will go live on January 1st. Please go to www.nymasons.org and hit the button for the program. The application process closes on March 31, 2024. All eligible students may receive up to four awards during their student careers. During the application period any questions can be addressed by emailing education@masonichallnyc.org.

Car show benefits hospitals

W Adam Bernstein

The Brothers of Paumanok-Port Washington Lodge 855, in conjunction with Kismet Shrine, sponsored their second Annual Exotics & Classics Car Show at the Port Washington LIRR station on Saturday, June 17, 2023. The show drew close to one hundred exotic and classic cars, along with several hundred spectators and families. Brother Ian Staley brought his food truck (The Steak Truck) and was joined by local resident Ice Cream Mel. Judges included local Councilwoman Marianne Dalimonte and trophies were awarded to Best Classic, Best Exotic and Fan Favorite. Hokey Pocus the clown

(Shrine Potentate Mitch Goodkin) entertained the children and provided them with balloon animals.

The car show was a tremendous success and the Brothers managed to raise a total of \$2,400. All of the proceeds are being donated to the Philadelphia and Boston Shriners Hospitals for Children.

Anyone interested in participating in or helping with next year's show should reach out to the Lodge at <https://www.portmasons.org/contact-us/>.



Noble Ramon Miller, Philadelphia Hospital Board of Governors; W Adam Bernstein and Potentate Mitch Goodkin



View of the show from above

Alexander hits 60 years

With wife Hilda by his side, Brother Jack Alexander received his sixty-year certificate, apron and pin at Warrensburgh Lodge 425 on Monday, June 12, 2023. Eleven Brothers came out to share this moment with Jack at their northern Warren County Lodge. All enjoyed coffee, refreshments and good fellowship.



Photo: Greg Bolton

In the back row are: Reggie Freeburn, Ron Zarczynski, Warren Kuhle, Russ Lail, Eric Klippel, Alex Szebo, Frank Allard and John Alexander. Seated in the front are Hilda Alexander, Jack Alexander and Jim Flatt and standing is Andy Templeton.

Walkkill 3rd



An excellent Third Degree at Walkkill Lodge 637 yielded three new Master Masons. The ceremonies were led by W John Konrad and his Degree team. Congratulations go to our newly Raised Brothers Charles James, Chawn Tidwell and Patrick Ward.

Lodge recognizes 40-year member

Brothers from Fortune Lodge 788 and the District Deputy Grand Master paid a visit to salute a forty-year Lodge member. Brother Paul Biellak has given forty years of service.



Pictured left to right are RW David Bindig; RW Gerald T. Coleman, DDGM Erie District; RW Albert J. Luss. Seated are Mary and Paul Biellak.

Connetquot Installs Officers



On Monday, June 26 Connetquot Lodge 838 in Sayville conducted the final Installation of Officers in the Suffolk Masonic District. With more than sixty Brothers in attendance, including many of our Scottish Rite brethren, W Julio Chea and his officers were installed to the delight of the many Brothers and guests in the audience.

CONCORDANT BODIES PAGE



32° SCOTTISH RITE FREEMASONRY

**Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite,
Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, USA.**

- Strengthens the community and believes that each man should act in civil life according to his individual judgment and the dictates of his conscience.
- Vision: We will strive to be a fraternity that fulfills our Masonic obligation to care for our members.
- Mission: Inspire our members by emphasizing our Core Values: Reverence for God, Devotion to Country, Integrity, Justice, Tolerance and Service to Humanity.
- Ensure that activities are convenient. Provide enjoyable programs and fraternal fellowship.
- Visit our website, www.scottishritenmj.org, to learn more about the Rite and to apply for membership online.
- Visit NYS Council of Deliberation website, www.nyscottishritemasons.org, to locate the Scottish Rite Valley near you.

YORK RITE BODIES: ROYAL ARCH



**Grand Chapter State of New York,
Royal Arch Masons**

Why would I want to be a Royal Arch Mason?

- To learn how to receive my wages from the Senior Warden
- To learn the *True Word* of Master Mason
- To be a member of the oldest Rite in Freemasonry
- I didn't want to stop at the 2.5 Degree – I want to complete the Third Degree
- I want to learn all the Secrets of Freemasonry
- I read the first 3 Chapters and I want to finish the book
- To make new friends from other local Lodges
- To participate in some of the most beautiful rituals in Masonry



Website: ny-royal-arch.org / email: ghp@ny-royal-arch.org

To be advised of a Royal Arch Chapter near you, email: grandscribe@ny-royal-arch.org



CRYPTIC MASONS

**Grand Council of Cryptic Masons
of the State of New York**

Why Join the Cryptic Council?

- Be a Royal Arch Mason in good standing
- Come celebrate our 200th Anniversary in 2023
- Learn the rest of the story of Hiram's Legend
- See some of the most stunning Degrees in Masonry
- See the parts you missed in the previous Degrees
- Find out what was deposited in the secret vault of the Temple
- See what happened during the final destruction of the Temple

Website: nycryptic.org

Contact the Grand Recorder's Office:

GrandRecorder@NYCryptic.org



KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

**Grand Commandery of Knights Templar
of the State of New York**

Benefits of membership as a Knight Templar:

- Study ancient Knights Templar history
- Learn who the Templars were and who they defended
- The opportunity to become Knighted as a Sir Knight
- The importance of King Solomon's Temple
- To continue the journey that you started
- Knights Templar members must have Christian beliefs and be a Royal Arch Mason

To find out more regarding our Chivalric Order:

Website: www.grandcommanderyktny.org

Email: syrknightstemplar@gmail.com



Grand Commandery of Knights Templar

State of New York

Website: www.grandcommanderyktny.org

Email: syrknightstemplar@gmail.com

The first three Degrees of Masonry illustrate the basic principles of the Craft. When a man is Raised to the Degree of Master Mason his material body, his psyche and his spirit are all united to make him a complete man. However, he has only been given the substitute for the Master's Word. By opting to travel the path of the York Rite he develops into a true Speculative Mason and continues in that path until exalted into the Holy Royal Arch where he receives the true Master's Word and becomes the perfect man: The Valiant and Magnanimous Order of the Knights Templar. Whether you have an interest in history, camaraderie, attending events, or furthering your York Rite knowledge, Knights Templar has all of this and more.

In the approximate year of 1099 a small band of Crusaders remaining after the conquest recognized the plight of the pilgrims. They bound themselves in a holy Brotherhood in arms, entering into a solemn agreement to aid one another in clearing the highways and protecting the pilgrims through the passes and defiles of the mountains to the Holy City. This was the circumstance that set the stage for Templary.

The Knights Templar were laymen who protected and defended Christians traveling to Jerusalem. These men took vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and were renowned for their fierceness and courage in battle. In 1118 A.D., nineteen years after the successful Crusade, these Poor Fellow Soldiers of Jesus Christ, as they termed themselves, were officially recognized and sanctioned and were given for their

headquarters a building on Mount Moriah, the site of the former Temple of King Solomon. Consequently, they became known as the Knights of the Temple, or Knights Templar.

In colonial days, New York City was the starting point for Masonry in the State of New York. The Craft had been in existence for many years prior to the formation of the Mother Grand Lodge in London in the year 1717. In 1814 the Grand Encampment of New York was formed. The preliminary meeting was held in New York on January 22, 1814. The first regular meeting was held in New York on June 18, 1814.

There is no proof of a direct connection between Ancient and Modern Knights Templar. Since its inception in New York State in 1814, generations of Sir Knights have continued their respected Chivalric traditions of Knights Templar on local, state and national levels.

Your acceptance into our prestigious organization must be preceded by becoming a Royal Arch Mason within the York Rite. Being a Christian Order of Masonry, Sir Knights must believe and attest to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Find out what attributes you might expect to attain as a Knight Templar in our Order.

The Grand Commandery supports important charities such as: the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, the Knights Templar Educational Scholarship Foundation and the Holy Land Pilgrimage for Christian Ministers.

Visits

On April 15, 2023 Brothers of Harmony Lodge 241 visited Wylyss Saint John Lodge 4 in West Hartford, CT to perform an Exemplar First Degree. It was a day filled with camaraderie, shared knowledge and the bonds of Freemasonry.



Confronting Bullying: a Guide

A recent study by the US Department of Education found the following:^[1]

One in five Middle and High School students report being bullied; 80% of all bullying incidents go unreported to school administrators or staff; 56% of those being bullied reported their bully had the ability to change how people perceived him or her; victims of bullying are more likely to experience depression and anxiety, skip school and drop out altogether.

These shocking statistics are a clarion call for us to act. As Masons we are a positive people. Through our traditions, ceremonies, lectures and education we are taught to accentuate the positive and be of good cheer. Our wish for the children in our lives is that they will encounter only people who bring joy, support and comfort in their lives. Sadly, we live in an imperfect world where they will encounter people who do not share our philosophy or outlook. These derive their pleasure by making other people feel less. Or they are making up for their failures or inadequacies in life. We can take positive steps to protect the children in our lives.

Bullies operate by socially isolating their victims. This can take the form of telegraphing that others may not like them, or instilling fear that if the victim speaks out he will lose friends. Concurrently, the victim may be afraid of saying something for fear that the adults in her life will think she is weak. This is why it is important to know the warning signs of bullying.

While a youth may be less likely to talk about bullying, there are a number of signs we need to be aware of:

- Changes in eating habits: skipping meals or binge eating; coming home hungry from school may suggest skipping lunch.
- Changes in sleeping habits or nightmares.
- Disengagement from school work, lack of interest in school.
- Loss of friends or a change in friends. If there has been a change in friends, it could indicate that someone in that friend group is being bullied.
- Avoiding social situations like school dances or activities.
- Unexplained injuries or bruises.
- Missing property such as jewelry, books or electronics.

Bullying also looks different between the two genders. One academic study showed that men and women bully in different ways.^[2] Males tend to be bullied via actual or threatened physical violence and are directly bullied. Females tend to engage in relational bullying, spreading gossip and are indirectly bullied.

We never want to think our child could be the problem. However, that may sometimes be the case. Some warning signs could include:

- Getting into fights or arguments.
- Have extra money or property.
- Fail to accept responsibility for actions.
- Have friends who are bullying others.
- Getting into trouble, sent to detention or the principal's office.

As adults we can be pro-active with the youth in our life. We can talk with youths about what bullying is and what they can do about it. We can set a good example for the youth. You want to model positive relations with other people, giving respect and showing respect.

Ask how school is going and get engaged with teachers, staff, the local PTA. Ask how their friends are doing and pay attention for changes in their friends. Monitor their social media. See who is liking and posting their messages. Routinely check their phone messages. Teach them to be able to say "Stop!" and walk away from a situation.

Encourage youngsters to give support to their peers and report bullying to a trusted adult, such as a teacher or a coach or a mentor. Ask them about adults whom they trust and support.

If you have questions, talk to a school counselor or a religious advisor. The Masonic Youth Committee has members who have received special training in risk management bullying prevention. Email us at Youth@NYMasons.org if you need help. Together we as Masons can make a difference in the lives of the youth.

^[1]US Department of Education. *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2018*. 2018. Via <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2019/2019047.pdf>

^[2]Iossi Silva, Marta Angélica, Beatriz Pereira, Denisa Mendonça, Berta Nunes, and Wanderlei Abadio de Oliveira. 2013. "The Involvement of Girls and Boys with Bullying: An Analysis of Gender Differences" *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 10, no. 12: 6820-6831. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph10126820>

NEW YORK DEMOLAY



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Shiver Me Timbers

NY DeMolay's River Region had an epic pirate-themed weekend on July 8, 2023 at Delta Lake State Park. With planning by Crown City's Haydn Kisner, DeMolays from Electric City, Trinity, Mohawk Valley and Crown City Chapter gathered for an exciting day at Delta Lake.

The day started with a battle royal with squirt guns, going from one end of the glen to the other. "Dad" Mark Heitmann,

Rivers Region Governor and Honorary Supreme Council Member, grilled an awesome barbecue, complete with hot dogs, hamburgers, cheeseburgers and toasted buns. Chapters brought dishes to pass. After eating, the Brothers enjoyed fun in the sun, swimming and water sports. After the ice cream, capture the flag followed. Thanks go to the MW William M. Sardone Fund for Excellence for underwriting this activity.



NY DeMolay Attends International Session

Once a year DeMolay leaders from across the world gather to discuss policy issues, plan for the future of DeMolay, share ideas and serve. From June 20 to 25, 2023 Cincinnati, OH became the DeMolay capital of the world. New York was well represented by State Master Councilor Jorge Hernandez, Deputy State Master Councilor Gavin Johnson and Rivers Region Master Councilor Brother Nick Heitmann.

Given New York DeMolay's focus on service learning and community service, the jurisdiction was asked to take the lead in organizing the annual community service project. A big thank you goes to "Mom" Anne Draves and "Dad" Ed Draves, Deputy Member, for being the key advisors for this project. For our part of this our DeMolays helped to make 1,200 sandwiches for the less fortunate, make dog toys for the Humane Society, assemble over 100 blankets for Shriners Children Hospitals, pot plants for the residents of the Ohio Masonic Homes and assemble care kits for the less fortunate.



The DeMolays heard from a number of inspirational speakers, including Frank Nordstrom of DeMolay International; Jason French of the Ohio Masonic Homes; Kari Tucker of Shriners International; MW and MEC Teko Foly; MW and MIC Monty Glover; ME David J. Kussman; Ill. Robert Cockerham; Ill. Richard Elliot; and Ill. Jim Cole, among others. The DeMolays debated a number of different pieces of legislation and discussed membership growth and ideas.



New York DeMolay received its sixth Eagle Award in the history of the unified jurisdiction, recognizing the incredible work and dedication of the young men and adults of the Empire State. It was also honored with the "Dad" Frank Sherman Land award for outstanding membership growth. This was its 12th Land award in the history of the jurisdiction.

There was also time for fun. The DeMolays attended a Reds game against the Atlanta Braves. They enjoyed dinners, lunches and mentorship with "Dad" Jeph Dais, Deputy Member; "Dad" Dennis Feldman, Deputy Member; "Dad" Ed Draves, Deputy Member; "Dad" Ricarte Abejuela, Honorary Member; "Dad" Michael Hernandez, Honorary Member; "Dad" Eric Evarts, Honorary Member; and "Dad" David Dixon Goodwin, Active Member; "Dad" Matthew Hunt, Active Member; "Mom" Draves; "Mom" Coconatto; and "Mom" Hernandez. The DeMolays were also able to take a paddle boat cruise up and down the majestic Ohio River and went out for a fun round of golf with Vermont DeMolay.

We also want to congratulate RW and "Dad" Paul Mossberg on being elected to Region II Board of Directors; W and "Dad" Gregory M. Schaeffer on being elected Region II Vice-Chairman; RW and "Dad" Dennis Feldman, Region II Treasurer; and RW and "Dad" Peter Brusoe, Region II Secretary.



DeMolays Represent NY in Contest

In an event in Kansas City, MO DeMolays James Hess of Mohawk Valley and Tristan Schulbaum of the Knights of Antiquity represented New York DeMolay in the annual International Representative DeMolay Contest. The Representative DeMolay award was created in 1924 to recognize young men who live the values of DeMolay in their daily life: love of family, reverence for sacred things, courtesy, comradeship, fidelity, cleanness and patriotism.

Brother Hess was New York's finalist in the 11th Grade and Above Category; Brother Schulbaum was in the 10th Grade and Below. Both young men represented New York very well, with Brother Tristan moving on to the finalist round across all of DeMolay International. Both young men earned cash prizes sponsored by 33rd Degree Scottish Rite Masons. Congratulations go to Brother James and Brother Tristan.



Eagle Scouts and Guests



The last meeting of the 2022-2023 Masonic year for White Plains Lodge 473 was a special night. On May 17 Scouts and families from Greater Hudson Valley Council 388 were invited to our Lodge. After a brief introduction to Freemasonry and a question and answer session with our guests, we presented two Masonic Eagle Scout Awards. It was a great event and both recipients asked how to join our Fraternity.

Potunk Installs Line

On Thursday, June 1 Potunk Lodge 1071 installed W Dominick Peppaceno and his officers for the ensuing year, with more than forty Brothers and guests in attendance. RW District Deputy Jeffrey Santorello and the District Team welcomed the new officers and offered advice for a successful year. Our congratulations go to Potunk.



INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF THE RAINBOW FOR GIRLS IN NEW YORK



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Charity is defined as a generosity and helpfulness especially toward the needy or suffering. In our beautiful ritual the lecture of charity includes not only alms for the poor and kindness for the distressed, but also the guarding against gossip and unkind words. As one of the three foundations of our organization—along with faith and hope—charity and service to others are the principles upon which our Rainbow was founded and are the important lessons taught to each of our members.

NY Rainbow is so proud of our efforts for our yearly state charity. As you may be aware, for 2021-2023 we raised funds for the Masonic Medical Research Institute, Autism research project. At the Grand Lodge VIP dinner at Marina del Ray at the end of April, our Grand Worthy Advisor Alyssa was honored to present the check for \$13,271.00 to Dr. Maria Kontaridis, the Executive Director of the MMRI, as the cumulative donation from our fundraising efforts. It was through the hard work of our members and advisors and the amazing support of our Masonic family that we were able to reach this achievement and we thank you for your support.



This year the girls of NY Rainbow have selected the state charity project as the Ronald McDonald House Charities. This organization has ensured families everywhere have access to the care and resources they need to keep millions of children and their families close to the critical care they need

and to each other by providing places of respite for parents, space for children to be children and communities of support for the entire family. Since the first house opened in 1974 they have grown to over 685 programs in more than sixty countries and regions around the world. In New York we have eight houses and eight family rooms at hospitals across the state. In support of this effort, we will again be selling our Gertrude Hawk candy bars as well as limited edition pins and Happy Meal beanie babies at the Masonic visitations.



October is designated as our charity “thon” month and Assemblies across the state will be participating in a wide variety of activities in this fundraising effort. These will include bowl-a-thons, rock-a-thons and even can-a-thons, collecting returnable cans and bottles. A walk-a-thon will kick off the campaign at our Northern area Grand Officers day in Auburn on September 30. Each participant is challenged to raise at least \$25 in pledges. So, if you are interested in donating to this project, checks may be made out to “Rainbow Charities of NY, Inc” with a notation in the memo line and mailed to our Supreme Inspector at 35 Maple St., Auburn, NY 13021. Remember, charity is not just about making a donation, it is about making a difference.

Idaho Brotherhood Night

Nicholas Bompert

As the Brothers of James W. Husted-Fiat Lux Lodge 1068 convened on Monday, June 5, 2023 in the Renaissance room, enchantment billowed in the air. The transparent theme of Masonic brotherhood was nowhere greater expressed than during our 87th Annual Idaho Brotherhood Celebration Night. It was an evening highlighted by an Honorary Membership being bestowed upon MW Harry Sherman Burger III, the Grand Master of Masons in Idaho. This is a symbol and recognition of leadership and conducting oneself by the highest ethical and moral standards—as the Grand Lodge of Idaho demonstrated in 1937 and 1938.

Joining this estimable celebration were Grand Master Richard J. Kessler; Deputy Grand Master Steven Adam Rubin; Past Grand Masters Carl J. Fitje, William M. Sardone, Steven L. Hall (Idaho); and a delegation of elected and appointed Grand Line officers. Since 1937 the current Grand Master of Idaho has traveled to New York and visited James W. Husted-Fiat Lux Lodge 1068 to receive Honorary Membership. Every member of the Idaho Grand Line looks forward to the year he gets to take this momentous journey as Grand Master.



It is not by coincidence that the Brothers of James W. Husted-Fiat Lux Lodge 1068 carry on this tradition. We apply the Masonic ideals of Brotherly love, relief and truth. Nowhere were these ideals more exemplified than by the Brothers of the Idaho Lodge in 1937. Freemasonry is traditionally apolitical but the Masons of Idaho realized then that when the moralities of humanity are violated, falling silent is contradictory to the principal tenets of our profession, notably the virtue of brotherly love. Brotherly love prescribes that Masons regard the human race as one family created by one Almighty Parent, where we should aid, support and protect one another. With this core tenet and the equally commendable tenets of relief and truth, the Grand Lodge of Idaho, with the support of its brethren, published a White Paper on the unbelievable horrors being inflicted on man and Mason in Europe.



Idaho Night is a celebration of the courage and bravery shown in 1937 when MW William H. Thompson, Grand Master of Masons of the State of Idaho, visited Fiat Lux Lodge 1079 (now James W. Husted-Fiat Lux Lodge 1068). This visit ignited a flame which culminated in the 1938 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Idaho, which addressed and criticized the silence of those whose inactivity unfortunately allowed, and arguably condoned, the widespread and unchallenged atrocities committed in Europe by the Third Reich.



The title of “brave” belongs not to those who do not feel fear, but to those who act in the face of fear. The Grand Lodge of Idaho acted upon their courage to give up what they thought was right, even during an earthquake of opposition. Thus, they became the first Masonic Grand Lodge to publicly condemn the Third Reich sending a memorandum to the world which is now embedded in the annals of Masonic and world history. And lest we forget, history has proven the action of the valiant Idaho Brothers true.

This celebration is held each year on the first Monday of June, at Masonic Hall on 71 West 23rd Street in Manhattan, New York City. It is open to the public.

MASONIC MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE



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As we enter a new season, where days are shorter and temperatures become cooler, we can only look back at the memories created during the spring and summer. The Masonic Medical Research Institute enjoyed a busy and productive season.

At the Grand Master's dinner in New York City, we were both humbled and shocked by the

presentation of a donation from the Rainbow Girls of New York for over \$13,000. It is incredible that these young ladies put so much of their time and energy into selling candy bars and stuffed animals to enable them to give so much to a cause that they truly believe in. This should be an example and a challenge to all of us. Thanks go to the Rainbow Girls.

Shortly after the Grand Lodge session we hosted the Board of Directors of the Lupus and Allied Diseases Association (LADA). We were pleased and honored to present them with a leaf on the Vine of Life for their generous ongoing support. We also presented a leaf to the 2019 Grand Matron Suzanne Peckham and the Order of Eastern Star for their generous gifts.

On May 22 nine young scientists commenced their educational journey in our Summer Fellows program. These individuals were selected from a large pool of applicants from all over the country. They teamed with our scientists for ten weeks of intense research. They presented their research papers at their graduation ceremony on July 28. I was particularly impressed by their energy, knowledge and desire to lead the science of tomorrow. I am sure they will remember where they got their start.

St. John's weekend was another great event. The Masonic Medical Research Institute hosted the friendship dinner celebrating the cooperation of the various Masonic boards. As part of the weekend we held an open house. Visitors were able to see the incredible transformation of our building and to

meet and greet our fantastic scientists and staff. On Saturday morning we hosted the ladies breakfast conference. Dr. Nate Tucker spoke about the Masonic Medical Research Institute's genetic research program. Many pertinent questions were asked, and his lecture was well received by the ladies present. During our award presentations we were pleased to dedicate our second-floor chemistry lab "In loving memory of Mrs. Theresa Rosenthal," late wife of RW Louis Rosenthal. We also presented RW Sheldon Richmond with two leaves on our Vine of Life. Dr. Kontaridis was surprised with a leaf as the recipient of the Community Builder Award from Andrew Jackson Lodge of Virginia. Lastly, RW John Haslam, Grand Marshal, was entered into the Golden Heart Society.

In August two teams of MMRI golfers, consisting of staff, scientists and Board Directors, participated in the Lupus and Allied Diseases Association golf tournament at Turning Stone Casino. Afterwards we were presented with a check for a large donation to continue our lupus research. More golf and fun were had at our first annual MMRI golf event on August 28. Thanks to many Masonic and local community donors the event was a huge success. Special thank-yous go to Dr. John Kelberman, John Romano and The Fountainhead group, and David Schneeweiss (past Chairman of the Masonic Medical Research Institute Board) for being major sponsors. If you were unable to make it this year, I hope that you can join us next year as we continue to build on this fun event.

Another project that we began this past summer was to lay down the framework to make the Masonic Medical Research Institute the National Masonic charity. We hope Masons from across the globe will embrace us as the Shriners have embraced the Shrine Hospitals.

All in all, it has been a busy but great summer. We have enjoyed the weather, advances in science and Masonic brotherhood. What could be better?

Find us on:



Peconic Lodge 349

On Wednesday, June 21 Masons and guests from across the Suffolk Masonic District traveled to the Installation of Officers of Peconic Lodge 349 in Riverhead. W John Cato and the brethren are sure to enjoy a successful year.

Prior to the installation, Brothers and guests enjoyed an excellent catered dinner. Congratulations go to Peconic Lodge.





MARIA I. KONTARIDIS, Ph.D.
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MASONIC MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE



As the Executive Director of the Masonic Medical Research Institute, I would like to use my space in this issue of *The Empire State Mason* to present our Annual Report for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2022. It is my honor to share with you the remarkable achievements of our dedicated researchers, staff and collaborators during the past year. Indeed, despite the economic, emotional and hiring challenges posed by the post-COVID-19 landscape in 2022, MMRI continued to make significant progress toward fulfilling its mission to advance biomedical research and discovery. We are proud our research programs remained productive and innovative, with a particular focus on cardiovascular disease, autoimmunity and neurocognitive disorders.

Our investigators made notable contributions to the field, with several publications in high-impact journals, numerous presentations at national and international conferences and collaborations with leading institutions across the globe. We also made significant progress in identifying and understanding the causes of disease and worked towards developing new therapies and treatments for our community's worst ailments. In recognition of these efforts, our scientists were awarded \$1.6M in new, highly competitive federal and foundational research grants for their projects this year, including three pilot award grants totaling \$150K from our local supporters of our lupus research, the Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc. These awarded funds are on top of the already garnered \$1.4M multi-year grants previously awarded to our scientists, bringing totals to \$3M in grant resources for our scientists in 2022, alone. In addition to these funds, the Battle Within Foundation (BWF) and MMRI also announced a collaboration to further the scientific understanding of PTSD. In support of this work, which was provided in memory of Lady Joanne Kessler, who passed away in December 2021, BWF pledged to raise \$250,000 to support four start-up projects for PTSD at MMRI in the coming year.

This past year also brought MMRI success in philanthropy, raising over \$1.3M in generous donations. Charitable contributions are critical and support MMRI's vital research mission. Notably, non-estate/non-planned giving gift donations increased by 62% this year, with over 400 new/first-time donors—Masons and non-Masons alike—attesting to our increasing notoriety within the community and across the country. Our development team also launched the MMRI 1958 Club Program this year, paying special tribute to our founding year and providing members with yearly commemorative and collectible pins that describe the year-by-year successes of MMRI (join today). As well, in keeping with our theme of sustainability for the Institute, MMRI created a holding company this year, preparing us for the future and providing MMRI opportunity for investment in for-profit ventures that will not only support the Institute financially but will build the research, pharma and biotech industries in

Utica, New York, as well. Indeed, our first venture, a company conducting state-wide quality assurance testing, is slated to launch soon.

In the summer of 2022 MMRI also completed its multiyear renovations, which first broke ground in 2017. What we have proudly built is a state-of-the-art research facility that houses cutting-edge science, equipment and staff. Moreover, these renovations have attracted top talent to the region and to MMRI, growing our Institute from seventeen at the project's start to the fifty+ people we have today. What is next? you may wonder.—Well, we are working to continue our expansion efforts with continued recruitment of top-talent administration, staff and scientists to fill our new space and to further the growth of our research efforts.

Importantly, MMRI remains proud and committed to community partnership, outreach and education. In this regard, MMRI launched several new branding and marketing initiatives in 2022, each designed to increase public awareness regarding the importance of biomedical research and the impact MMRI has had on human health. These efforts included collaborations with local schools, public lectures and the development of educational resources for students and the public.

In addition, MMRI ran another successful Summer Fellowship internship program for undergraduate and graduate students in 2022, an initiative that was once again 100% supported by our donors. This program provides our students with hands-on experience in cutting-edge research, which will hopefully lead to a lifelong passion for science.

Finally, the Eighth Masonic District Association of Manhattan, through its funding of the endowed Halfond-Weil Postdoctoral Fellowship Fund, again provided a \$50,000 award to a top-talented MMRI postdoctoral fellow this year. For 2023, this fellowship was awarded to Dr. Saravanakkumar Chennappan, a fellow in my laboratory whose project is focused on elucidating the role of a novel gene in the development of Noonan Syndrome.

Taken together, none of these accomplishments this year would have been possible if not for the generous support of our donors and partners. We are deeply grateful for your ongoing commitment to MMRI, which has allowed us to pursue our mission with passion and dedication. We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and look forward to continuing to work together toward a healthier and brighter future for all.

To inquire further about our research, arrange for a tour of MMRI or support us with a gift, please contact me at mkontaridis@mmri.edu and 315/624-7496. My Development Director, Stephen F. Izzo, is at stephenizzo@mmri.edu and 908/477-7966.

MASONIC MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE



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MMRI Development

The Masonic Medical Research Institute (MMRI) is working hard to keep the Masonic and non-Masonic communities informed of the new advances we are making in cardiovascular, autoimmune and neurocognitive research. During St. John's week in June, we hosted a golf outing for the Trustees and our Board members, a dinner for NY Masonic leadership, a dedication/recognition ceremony for donors, a ladies breakfast, laboratory tours and a table at the Masonic Expo. We continued to spread awareness of and garner support for our research work through our inaugural Golf Classic—an event held on August 28 at Yahnundasis Golf Club in New Hartford—that achieved success along both of those fronts.

On July 28 we concluded our 2023 Summer Fellows Program, which we have run since 1961 and which is solely funded through the beneficence of organizational and individual donors, including those from the Brotherhood of Masons. The end-of-program ceremony was attended by our Board members, state and local dignitaries, scientists and the Fellows and their families.

The increased awareness and support from all this activity could not come at a better time: MMRI is deepening its research, forging into new areas, hiring additional scientists and staff and building an Institute with cutting-edge equipment, technology and physical lab space. We need you now more than ever to achieve this growth and forward our mission: making advances in medical research that will lead to the identification of new targets, novel therapies and potential cures for life's worst ailments.

In fact, our success trajectory is dependent upon your

continued support. The research our scientists perform daily provides the building blocks to discoveries and solutions that continue to change lives for the better. Like the blocks of a building's foundation, our blocks of discovery are not always easy to see. Nonetheless, they have led to the development of the pacemaker, the defibrillator and more recently, a clearer understanding of the long-term effects of COVID in the heart. More recent projects will delve into the possible biological underpinnings of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

We invite you to learn more about these projects and findings on our website at mmri.edu. Please consider continuing your support for our life-changing work. There are many ways you can help.

- Make a one-time or recurring gift to MMRI
- Join our 1958 CLUB
- Open a Charitable Gift Annuity, a gift that also offers lifetime income
- Pledge a planned gift bequest to MMRI
- Organize an MMRI fundraiser (we can assist you)

Visit mmri.edu/ways-to-give/ to learn more about these and other ways to support MMRI. Each of us can make a difference and I invite you to help us do just that—one building block at a time. Together, we really can build a healthier tomorrow.

To inquire about our research, arrange a tour of the Institute or support us as a benefactor, volunteer or MMRI "Ambassador" please contact me at any time at stephenizzo@mmri.edu or 908/477-7966.

Thank you again. Enjoy the fall.

Find us on:



Lodge turns out for Memorial Day

On Monday, May 29 Brothers of Connetquot Lodge 838 in Sayville marched in the Sayville Fire Department's annual Memorial Day Parade along Main Street. Local parades and events are a fantastic opportunity to showcase Masonry in the community. Congratulations go to the Brothers.

American Lodge of Research

The American Lodge of Research (ALR) was chartered by the Grand Lodge of New York in 1931 and is the oldest Research Lodge in the United States of America. Membership is open to Master Masons in good standing in jurisdictions recognized by the Grand Lodge of New York. They must petition and be positively voted on by the membership.

The Lodge meets quarterly, usually at Masonic Hall in New York City, but has also met elsewhere. The ALR generates two forms of publications: articles which are shorter and intended for a wider audience and Transactions, which are printed once a year for members and include longer form peer-reviewed papers representing the best research generated in the preceding year.

There are three classes of membership in the American Lodge of Research: Active Members, Corresponding Members and Fellows. All classes of members can attend ALR meetings and receive articles and Transactions but they differ in rights and privileges. Active Members have the right to vote and hold office and they pay slightly higher dues. To become an Active Member a Master Mason in good standing must petition the Lodge, submit an acceptable paper to the Lodge and be balloted upon.

Corresponding Membership is open to Master Masons who petition and are balloted upon. The members of the ALR seek to have a membership that is inclusive of those with a genuine interest in Masonic scholarship.



Fellowship is a distinctive honor and a unique class of membership granted by the Active Members to outstanding Masonic scholars. There have been only forty-nine in the ALR's history.

We realize that we have members who cannot physically attend the Lodge. From time to time we “represent” a paper via Zoom to accommodate.

The American Lodge of Research recently held elections and installation of officers. W Conor Moran was recognized for his work and elected Master. This Lodge is ready to welcome you. For further information, including information about meetings and membership, please visit the American Lodge of Research at www.alrny.org. The membership link has information on both Active and Corresponding Membership.

The Grand Master and the International Stage

Recently members of the Grand Lodge of New York joined RMW Richard J. Kessler as he attended the Annual Session of Grand Oriente d'Italia in Rimini, Italy. This session has a global reach to Grand Jurisdictions and it was a great opportunity for the Grand Lodge of New York to meet with them.

Italy is also in Zone 1 of the CMI and MW William Sardone was there in his capacity as President. In addition to our Grand Secretary, RW Richard Schulz, our Grand Representative to Italy, RW Dominick Vitucci, and Brother James Casillo from

Garibaldi Lodge accompanied us.

Needless to say, the days were filled with meetings but when we looked for dinner venues, the local Masons took us to restaurants not on the tourist maps. This particular location was a gathering point for Masons who extended their kindness to us, with special recognition to our Grand Master and Grand Secretary. MW Richard Kessler was a hit with the Masons; and a hit with the DeMolays of Italy; and a hit with the kitchen staff.

We are all proud of the Grand Lodge of New York. It is a great feeling when Jurisdictions around the world look to us as leaders in our Fraternity. This was evident at this session in Italy.



Dia dhuit brotherdeartháir— “God be with you, Brother”

W Brian Courtney

A trip of a lifetime: I am so glad and blessed to have had the opportunity to pay a fraternal visit to Ireland, the “Ould Sod.” My name is Brian Courtney, a Past Master of Onondaga District Lodges Morning Star 524 and Crossroads United 93. Everyone has a bucket list and sometimes we are given an opportunity.

Some eight years ago I met Brendan Cowzer, from Ireland, on a veterans Facebook page. It was a couple of years later that we also realized we were Freemasons. During that time, we talked on messenger and face timed. Brother Cowzer and his lady friend were stateside a few times, but due to circumstances we were never able to meet in person. Finally, I found myself convalescing alone at home after a necessary surgery. When my overseas Brother Brendan Cowzer learned of my predicament he announced that he would come to help me. To say I was astonished....

Brother Brendan arrived at my home in Syracuse and commenced driving me to my doctor’s appointments, physical therapy and miscellaneous grocery shopping. Watching him drive on the right side of the road was priceless.

To show my appreciation for his kindness, I arranged, through the good auspices of our Deputy Grand Master, RW Steven A. Rubin, a detailed and personal tour of Lady Liberty and her Island. We were both in for a treat as the United States Parks Service embraced us as Royalty. We were able to see so many interesting things about the Statue of Liberty and New York State that few residents have the privilege of seeing. Brother Brendan had never been to New York City. We went from the Statue of Liberty to Niagara Falls and all points in between.

Although his visit was focused on providing care and assistance to me—coupled with a well-deserved vacation—Brother Brendan never forgot his Masonic roots and obligations. While visiting he rolled up his sleeves and worked benefit concerts in Buffalo to help raise funds for the Shriners Children’s Hospitals, in conjunction with the Tigris and Ismailia Shriners of the western part of the state. Brother Brendan also made time to pay a fraternal visit to the Onondaga Prince Hall Lodge. To put it all in a nutshell, Brother Brendan felt so much at home in this jurisdiction, with each Worshipful Master and Brother whom he met, he requested and was sponsored with a petition to join Tigris Shrine. Today, Brother Cowzer is the Shrine Ambassador to Ireland.

It should come as no surprise that as an Irishman Brother Brendan is an avid fisherman. As such, he was invited by W Rich Preall of Morning Star Lodge to be his guest on Oneida Lake for the day. We also went trout fishing on Nine Mile Creek, proper. And would the trip be complete without seeing an authentic football game at Syracuse University (not the soccer stuff the Irish call football, but real-deal college football)?

As the saying goes, What goes around comes around. Brother Brendan reciprocated by inviting me to visit Ireland in



W Brian Courtney and Grand Master of Ireland MW Douglas T. Grey

December of 2022. I learned that Brother Brendan arranged for me to speak with the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, MW Brother Douglas T. Grey, during their Annual Communication. Not one to let a golden opportunity go to waste, I tried my best to promote the Shriners, the Grotto and the Masonic War Veterans, since the jurisdiction of Ireland does not currently have these bodies. They listened but unfortunately did not commit. I learned that the Grand Lodge of Ireland is the second-most senior Grand Lodge in the world, having been formed in 1725, and the oldest in continuous existence.

My trip to Ireland was filled with many pleasant surprises. On my arrival at the Philadelphia airport from Syracuse, Brother Eric Scott, a Philadelphia Police Officer, kindly helped me navigate the terminal. The second leg involved a seven-hour flight on Aer Lingus, the Irish Airlines. Like clockwork, Brother Brendan was at the Dublin Airport with his brother James when I arrived at Zero Dark 30 in the morning. They had a car parked in front of the terminal, which was no surprise since James owns a taxicab company. We were off to their mum and dad’s house for a traditional Irish breakfast of Irish sausage, or bangers, blood pudding, Irish bacon, potatoes, tomatoes, eggs and toast. And of course, Guinness Stout was available even for breakfast.

Then we traveled to Belfast, where I was introduced to a fellow Mason named Ryan McCann, the proprietor of a tattoo parlor. I made plans to try one of his tattoos with a Masonic theme. I highly recommend a visit to Brother McCann’s parlor next time you are in Belfast. And bring an umbrella: it rains.

Several spectacular tourist locations became part of my itinerary. At the Titanic Museum I learned that members of the Masonic Fraternity helped to build the ship. Currently, there are Masons working at the museum. It should be noted that Catholic and Protestant did not always work well together, back in the day. And the conditions under which they worked were definitely dangerous with little or no safety measures in place. Many Irishmen lost their life during the building of the Titanic.



The next place of interest was the “Giant’s Causeway.” The *Game of Thrones* was filmed there. It was 46 degrees, probably 34 with the wind chill off the North Atlantic Ocean, and since it is Ireland, it was raining. Words cannot describe the rocks created by Mother Nature. They look like they were manufactured and purchased at Home Depot. I was awestruck.

Driving through the city of Belfast was amazing and disturbing. You can still feel an anti-Catholic undercurrent running throughout the city. The police stations in Belfast look very much like military installations with cameras and security facing every direction. To witness scenes, graffiti and telltale signs such as I saw in Belfast, it reminds me how much I appreciate the precious freedoms we enjoy here in America. Yet by the same token, I found that the people and brethren of Northern Ireland were grand and treated me with utmost respect even when I spoke about being Catholic.

I feel that the brethren of Ireland are truly interested in peace, harmony and happiness. I recall seeing a placard that said, “If you were taught what they were taught, you’d believe what they believe.” I came away thinking that it goes back to the children. Teach them to be tolerant of everyone and the world would be a better place. Is that not what Masonry is about?



**Brian Courtney, Brendan Cowzer & Ryan McCain
visiting Ulster Masonic Lodge.**

I had the honor and privilege to attend a communication at Ulster Star Masonic Lodge 133, which was filled with many Brothers who welcomed me with open arms. I became good friends with their incoming Worshipful Master, Brother David Carlisle. He plans to visit New York in 2025.

The second communication I was able to attend was at Regent Lodge 596 in Newtownards, N. Ireland. Worshipful Master RW Brother Ian McDonald welcomed Brother Cowzer, Brother McCann and me with much fanfare. We were given

Grand Honors and I am the first Worshipful Master who has ever visited their Lodge from the USA. They thanked me and all of the members of my Lodges and extended a warm greeting through me to the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the State of New York, MW Richard J. Kessler.

At the Grand Lodge of Ireland’s Annual Communication on December 27 the pomp and circumstance was over the top. The Irish Masons surely know how to put on an extravagant ceremony with perfection. In keeping with Masonic protocol, I extended warm fraternal greetings from our Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, the Permanent Members of Grand Lodge, the Tampa International Shriners and Tigris Shrine. I thanked their Grand Master for the courtesies of the day and moved to walk away. The Grand Master of Ireland called me back by name and invited Brother Brendan and me to be his guests at a wonderful luncheon with the visiting dignitaries from around the world. Our Grand Secretary, RW Richard Schulz, had given me several Grand Master Pins, which I shared with the Grand Master of Ireland and some of his officers.

When I visited Brother Brendan’s Lodge, Temple Lodge 51, I received a grand welcome as well as Grand Honors. I explained how proud they should be of Brother Brendan for coming to the aid of a Brother in the United States. That evening the work of the Lodge was the conferral of the First Degree, in which I was given a small part. After the meeting we had a delicious meal of traditional Irish shepherd’s pie and a pint of Guinness.

At the dinner that night were six potential candidates who had many questions about Freemasonry. RW Brother Paul Harvey, a senior member of the Lodge, gave them a tour around the Lodge, answered all of their questions and explained the functions of the Lodge. Seeing and hearing about the special bond between Brother Brendan and me helped them to take the decision to join the Lodge. Interestingly, in Ireland only one candidate can take the First Degree at a time.

I found that in Ireland they do much more with their ladies and the widows in the Blue Lodge than we do here in America. And I could not help but notice that everything about their Masonic ritual, grips and passwords is very different from ours.

I highly recommend that all make an effort to visit Lodges in other states and countries whenever able. On business or vacation, make contact through the Grand Secretary’s office with a nearby Lodge. Let them know you plan to attend; and receive that warm welcome and a strong handshake.



Brothers at Temple #51

YEARS OF SERVICE

80 YEARS

0710 RIDGEWOOD
James Thomas McCrary

79 YEARS

0552 HANCOCK
James E. Mills

77 YEARS

0084 AMSTERDAM
E Norman McGrattan

76 YEARS

0849 NORTH WOODS
Robert E. Harwood

74 YEARS

0049 WATERTOWN
Robert L. Anthony

73 YEARS

0950 KONOSIONI
Richard T. Lynch

72 YEARS

0822 LYNBROOK-MASSAPEQUA
William A. Pitt

71 YEARS

0039 OLIVE BRANCH
Franklin Davis II

0056 ST. ALBANS
Richard D. Frame

0543 TRILUMINAR
Clinton D. Wilcox

0586 ADVANCE SERVICE MIZPAH
A Kennedy Owens

0867 DAMASCUS
Gabriel D. Golam

0892 QUEENSBORO
Armand T. Terpening

70 YEARS

0204 PERFECT SQUARE
Robert Leinkram

0217 GOUVERNEUR
George E. Erdman

0472 TRITOWN
William G. Bailey

0785 NIAGARA RIVER LODGE
Robert C. Stevens Jr

65 YEARS

0096 MOUNT HOPE-PHOENIX
Robert A. Briley

0123 DUNDEE
Marshall W. Couch III

0126 EASTERN LIGHT
E Douglas Duntley

0130 PORT BYRON
Vernon M. Jetty

0200 GAROGA-SINCERITY
David G. Williams

0415 PULASKI
M John White

0501 LIVERPOOL SYRACUSE
George F. Bell

0568 ST. CECILE
Steven H. Pokress

0750 SHAKESPEARE
Bernard Telsey

0915 BEUKENDAAL
Douglas Ottendorf

1037 VICTORIA SEA GATE
William S. Achenbaum

1124 PAN-AMERICAN
Ruben Arecco

1126 SOUTH SHORE-LONG BEACH
Richard B. Haft

60 YEARS

0063 WANTAGH MORTON
Carl George Brodt

0290 MOUNT OLIVE
Duane R. Horton

0627 WALKKILL
James Ronald Fiser

1068 JAMES W. HUSTED-FIAT LUX
Wallace S. Johnson

55 YEARS

0020 MOUNT MORIAH
Abraham I. Hedaya

0127 LAKE CITY
Harry H. Stultz

0199 HARMONY
Reinhard Kabitzke

0273 FRANCIS LEWIS
Cesidio Di Cristoforo

0462 ATTICA
Edward W. Tokash Jr

0477 WILDWOOD
Arthur W. Whitmarsh

0579 PORTVILLE
Larry John Doner
John E. Tarbox

0649 ROBINSON
Gordon Dean Wood

0710 RIDGEWOOD
Ronald W. Mann

0791 LIVINGSTON MANOR
Thomas O. Trask

0822 LYNBROOK-MASSAPEQUA
George T. Josiah Sr

1037 VICTORIA SEA GATE
Mark Stuart Silbergitt

1068 JAMES W. HUSTED-FIAT LUX
Raymond S. Burstedt

1188 RENAISSANCE
Donald L. Davis

1911 ANI 11
Vahe Kaplanian

50 YEARS

0056 ST. ALBANS
James Julian Owens

0139 MILNOR
Gaylord W. Bulman

0145 MOUNT MORIAH
John Sixbey
Don S. Weaver

0177 BINGHAMTON
Donald E. Colpitts

0177 BINGHAMTON
Stanley Jacob Semko

0219 SUMMIT
Robert J. Patterson

0458 SHEKOMEKO
Gordon R. Flanigan

0725 SOUTHERN LIGHT
John Henry Colegrove

0813 HEBRON
Karl F. Birns

1134 DONGAN PATENT
Franklin Anthony Donato

0552 HANCOCK
James E. Mills

Model Railroading Club on Schedule

Remember when we started to collect model trains with the intent of starting this club? It was during the last term but MW Richard J. Kessler felt it should continue. So, on a very warm day in July 2023 we launched. We had a complication of skill sets, Lodges to include Prince Hall members, families and of course, children.

We did not assign tasks to anyone. Each assessed the situation and walked away with ideas in his mind and when we reassemble, we will apply ourselves to wiring, connecting, supporting, decorating and more.



Special thanks go to the Masonic Hall and Home Trustees for making Masonic Care New Rochelle available for Masons and their families. Since this July launch, we have received calls regarding more layouts and we thank the Trustees for providing this opportunity.

We are looking to expand throughout the state as time goes on. Want more information? Please contact MW Bill Sardone, wsardone@att.net.



FROM THE WEBMASTER



BROTHER KENNETH JP STUCZYNSKI
WEBMASTER, COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
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Technology and techniques are trade secrets, at first slow to spread and evolve. With the advent of printing, knowledge was spread far and wide. Craftsmen in one place were aware of better practices and tools in distant lands and added them to their knowledge and toolbox.

Then came the invention of “intellectual property.” Patents hindered the copying of an idea or invention (in principle, to ensure exclusive benefit of its creator). But ideas also became publicly known. People could build their own ideas based on them. I do not think it is a coincidence that such things coincided with the Industrial Revolution and the rise of Capital. Universal knowledge is still possible, but for the consumer, we entered an Age of the Proprietary. The average person and company is beholden to certain suppliers and licenses.

Perhaps because our secrets are symbolic, Freemasonry seems unaffected by these social and economic changes. Sure, there are printed volumes from Masonic writers far and wide, but few consider them integral to cultivating our Art. Perhaps it is because we each have our own Constitutions and interpretation of Landmarks. Masons can travel and experience variations in ritual and tradition, but most of us live and work in the confines of local quarries.

Then came the Internet and social media. Without going through Grand Secretaries or District associations, we have prolific Masonic intercourse with Brothers around the world. We share ideas and experiences. And vive la différence! Our differences give us a much deeper understanding of Freemasonry as a whole. It gives us new ideas, new programs,

new inspiration of all kinds.

But we can take this further. For a generation now, there has been a new paradigm—open-source software. People freely contribute and build upon code, design and functionality. We do not need a specialized platform to have a Masonic website. Tons of software is out there, mostly free. If I build you a website, for example, you can take it somewhere else and add or remove whatever you like—either you or a million other people who know the software. You are not beholden to me.

Imagine membership software anyone could use and customize to fit their exact needs. Imagine jurisdictions controlling their own data in-house. Some already do this to some extent. But imagine if anyone could contribute functionality that others could use, instead of being beholden to one company to develop and roll out as a feature. There is little expense in building and maintaining their own system using this model.

But let us apply this to more than zeroes and ones. How about programs, flyers and graphics, budgets, bylaws and management processes? In New York, we have the *24-Inch-Gauge*, which is a start, but how about a repository across jurisdictions? Imagine Masons everywhere freely sharing and contributing ideas and resources.

This is not a pie in the sky. Someone, somewhere, will build a digital Library of Alexandria for our Craft and perhaps fraternal organizations in general. We need only find and support artificers for this grand purpose.



Keeler Marks 90

RW Joseph Keeler celebrated his 90th birthday at Rino’s Restaurant on 5th Avenue in Brooklyn on July 9, 2023. Joe had a small party with about fifty friends, hosted by his family.

Pictured in the photo are some Masons from the Grand Lodge of New York who attended. From left to right: RW William Cohen, Brother Richard Keeler, MW Carl Fitje, RW Joseph Keeler, RW Richard Schulz, RW Arnold Genatt, RW Antonio Giannattasio and MW William Sardone.

As the days grew longer and the temperature began to rise, the golden warmth of the sun replaced a very wet spring. Humming garden tools reminded us of things to be done. A burst of energy revitalized our souls and we knew summer seas lay just beyond the horizon. The Masonic Yacht Club is tuning up the engines, planning outings with friends, anticipating the sun glistening on the quiet bay and soft sea breezes in our hair.

The recent meeting of the Masonic Yacht Club was held at the Landmark Grill in Roslyn. Twenty members enjoyed a great evening in a relaxed atmosphere of MYC business and pleasure. The Yacht Club holds only four meetings a year and it is always fun to greet each other. We are on the lookout for interested individuals and we encourage potential members to come to a meeting. This is the only Masonic group that includes women as First Mates and they are very involved in the meetings. For further information contact Bob Stein at 631/422-6559.

We are excited to welcome to the helm our new Commodore, Oscar Garcia of Trinity Lodge 12. We anticipate a great term because of his enthusiasm and leadership. He has many good ideas for activities and is looking forward to working with his Bridge Officers to keep the Club sailing forward.

The annual East End Wine excursion is a possibility. The cost of the trip would be considerably higher, as prices have soared since the pre-COVID days. The bus, alone, has increased from \$1200 to around \$2600 for the day. Restaurant prices have seen a considerable jump, as well. The trip would run about \$150 per person and we will pursue it if there is enough interest. If you have any suggestions for itinerary, please voice your opinion. We pack in many activities for this outing and would love to hear from you.

Also under consideration is a dinner cruise out of Freeport. We are currently gathering information. Keep alert for other upcoming activities.



Bridge Officers at the Dinner Dance

Our next meeting will be in September and we would love to have you there. Commodore Garcia and the Past Commodores welcome all suggestions for new activities or how to improve existing ones. This is your club and we encourage participation by all members.

The Masonic Yacht Club has been a supporter of the

Grand Secretary's golf outing for a number of years. We have sponsored a couple of holes and always have at least two foursomes representing the Club. This is a great day of golf and an evening of good food, Masonic camaraderie, raffles and awards. The course is beautiful and the tournament well run. You do not have to be a good golfer to participate; everyone can enjoy the day, no matter his level of expertise. You do not even have to golf—join the group for the dinner and evening festivities. Contact Bob Stein for further information or to sign up to participate with the Masonic Yacht Club teams in next year's tournament.



Grand Secretary Golf Outing

The annual Dinner Dance was held at Captain Bill's in Bayshore in March, a very nice gathering of friends enjoying each other's company. The food was delicious, the service impeccable and the theme was St. Patrick's Day, with green and white carnations adorning the tables and gold coins from the rainbow's end.



Some members of the MYC getting their Irish on at their Acquaintance Party at Captain Bill's



First Mates Kathy Stein and Rich Witthohn's lady, Maryann

The official opening day of the 2023 season took place at Captain Bill's on June 11. Each Bridge officer, spiffy in his stark white and crisp uniform, received the burgee of his office and was officially sworn in. To remember departed members, a memorial wreath was thrown into the water and a brief moment of silence was observed to honor and reflect. Watching the wreath toss with the sun reflecting from the blue water is always very moving. After the ceremony the guests enjoyed a never-ending brunch. Gentle music from Linda and Bud Gramer added to the guests' pleasure.



Swearing-in on the deck at Capt. Bill's

The MYC again sponsored the annual sailing regatta at Camp Turk. I encourage our Masonic Brothers and Sisters to check out Camp Turk. As a youngster, I always wanted to go to a sleep-away camp but was never given the opportunity. Those with children or grandchildren between the ages of eight and sixteen should consider sending them to Camp Turk. Visit the Camp website to see the great facilities available for a very reasonable fee. The waterfront is awesome but there are many other activities to keep one occupied—skits, games and lots of evening fun. Many of our Masonic Brothers and Sisters do not realize what a gem we have in our very own Masonic Camp for children. In addition to sponsoring the Great Sailboat Race, we have donated life jackets and sailfish and helped purchase items on the camp wish list.

Most of our snowbirds have long returned from their southern home and we are happy to see them at our meetings. Brother Vinny Savoco continues to make great strides in his recovery and the MYC is keeping him and his wife Rosanna in their prayers.

Our ship store coordinator, Bob Stein of the Trinity Lodge, has taken his new responsibilities very seriously. If you would

like to order any item, contact Bob and he will take care of you.

Brother Rick Witthohn of Copernicus Lodge continues to volunteer for the transportation unit of the Shrine by driving patients to the Shriners Hospital in Philadelphia for treatment. We thank him for his participation in this worthwhile charity.

We wish Sister Bea Garcia, of Trinity Lodge, well as she continues to devote much time to her duties in the Eastern Star Organization. We also thank Sister Bea for stepping up to the plate when the MYC needs assistance. We wish Sister Ellen Toth well as she recovers from knee surgery.

The Masonic Yacht Club is registered with Yachting Club of America and is listed in their Reciprocity Guide and on the YCA's website. As a member of the Masonic Yacht Club, you are a member of YCA, the oldest Yacht Club organization in America. A Reciprocal Courtesy Card is a requisite of your membership. It entitles you to use of the facilities of all member clubs. Some members report they have received great discounts. They were able to purchase dinner at many Yacht Clubs and receive large discounts for their boats. This included the first night free for overnight stays and reduced prices for boat dockage. I have enjoyed wonderful evenings and great food at a variety of clubs on Long Island. It is a pleasure to have a special evening out at a beautiful location that is not a public venue.

The Masonic Yacht Club and its First Mates Club is for nautically minded individuals who enjoy an evening out with friends. You do not have to be a boat owner to enjoy and benefit from membership in this organization. Please attend one of our meetings to experience what we are about. For more information or directions, call Bob Stein at 631/422-6559.



President of the First Mates Kathy and Past Commodore Bob Stein



Fortune Hosts Awards, Lunch

Fortune Lodge 788 in the Erie District honored members with a Service Award luncheon. Left to right are RW Gerald T Coleman, District Deputy Grand Master Erie District; Linda Rasmus; W Paul Rasmus, thirty-year award recipient; and W William A. Davis, Master.

GRAND LECTURER

Hiramic Legend: Overview of Freemasonry

RW RICHARD FRIEDMAN,
GRAND LECTURER
richddgm1@gmail.com



My dear Brothers, I wish a very happy holiday season to you all. May the Great Architect bless you and your family, as well as all those in uniform keeping us safe to enjoy the love and blessings that we have.

Our focus this year in our Grand Lecturer's Conventions is on the Hiram Legend. Why? The Hiram Legend presents to us the big picture of Freemasonry and many of the truths about life that our Craft is trying to get through to us. Truths about honor, integrity, remorse, anger, dignity, grief and so many other meaningful things about life, death and eternity. It is up to us to choose to take those things out of it and use them.

To do this we must avoid giving in to mediocrity and not putting in the work to do it. Be honest, look in the mirror and ask that great man a few questions. The Legend is the ultimate story that creates the foundations of the Craft.

Think about it. What is Freemasonry and its purpose? At the bottom-line, Freemasonry is about Love.

Love of the Great Architect of the Universe

Love of your family

Love of yourself

Love of your Country

Love of your Brothers

Every single thing about the Craft supports, nurtures, grows, teaches and guides your efforts in love. Love of the Craft, love of the community, love of order and structure. Knowing the discipline is a good thing when it is used to grow yourself as a Man and Mason. It is our most used word.

The legend reinforces all of the above in a live ceremony. My Brothers, if our candidates do not see the relationship between all of the actors in the drama, playing out all of the principles of the Craft, we are cheating our new Brothers who pay us for all the ritual, and it will be harder for them to get the big picture of the Craft that motivates their hearts for the long haul. No, it is not the panacea, but it is a step forward toward the positive side of the street.

Masonry is a continuous improvement program for our brain, heart and soul. Masonry nurtures and almost demands that our social skills are appropriate and that we understand, above a lot of other things, the meaning and value of true friendship—the gift we call Brotherhood.

Masonry outlines and supports a way of life that teaches us that living within the guidelines of the ritual we can get the most out of the gifts that the Great Architect has imbued in all of us. It is a daily challenge to get better in your life, a daily reminder that self-improvement never ends, and that life is what you make it.

If our goal is to become average, then do we really need Freemasonry or the ritual at all? Why be selective in membership when anyone can be average? We would have to change the ritual dramatically if average is the goal.

What can we do? We must come together with love and live out the ritual as best we can in our daily lives. We must get the fact that when you take your obligation you are choosing to live a harder life. Committed is always a harder road than non-committal. We must hold ourselves to a higher standard, thereby giving the Craft the luster of respect and integrity that makes it the great institution it is. But at this point it is up to us to show ourselves and the world those parts of who we are.

We must end the acceptance of mediocrity. We are grown men and Brothers. Men like a challenge—it is fun and brings us together. Raise the bar across the board in your Lodge. We must talk to each other like men and Brothers with love, concern and expectation of achievement. If everything is just OK then we have lost the standards that have been a foundation piece from time immemorial in the Craft. We must not surrender, run up the white flag and call “Uncle” because we cannot be bothered to learn the craft of the Craft that we joined. I am asking all of the Brothers who still care to redouble their efforts to fight against the stain of mediocrity.

We will be doing a test run on a piece of work called the Walking Charge. It is not Standard Work but we thought you may enjoy it and I have asked the Districts to put it together for the conventions or try it in Lodges without interfering a bit with our Standard Work.

The Standard Work and Lectures of the State of New York is the 2019 version. Period, end of discussion. For starters—and I have books going back a very long way—it is the best book since I have been in the Craft. The Custodians went all out to make it user friendly, and it is. It is good to read just as a read. If you are saying, I am not going to use the “new” book, I am confused. It is the book that has been adopted by Grand Lodge. Does that mean that we can choose the things from Grand Lodge that we will follow and those we will not? Welcome to mediocrity.

Also, the book that you are using as an alternative was a “new book” at some point and I can prove it. Resistance to change has killed every organization from businesses like the Eastman Kodak company to governments like the Roman Empire. It also sets a terrible example to new Brothers. FYI to everyone: No open books in Lodge.

We would also like to bring back the Harris Closing Charge, in the sense that we will try to get it done in every Lodge. We can only do this if we understand the Craft. What we are part of? What makes us up? It comprises the ritual to the philosophy, to the value system, to service to mankind, to leadership, to self-development, to structure, to discipline, and growing from our social interactions into men that people want to be around.

I am up for doing it. And I speak for the Jedi Knight AGLs that they are up for it. GUNG HO!

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VIA MAIL

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Masonic Hall and Home Trustee Nathan Lipper, Grand Master R.J. Kessler, and Trustee Mike Siegel get dunked during St. John's Day to raise support for the Masonic Care Community

