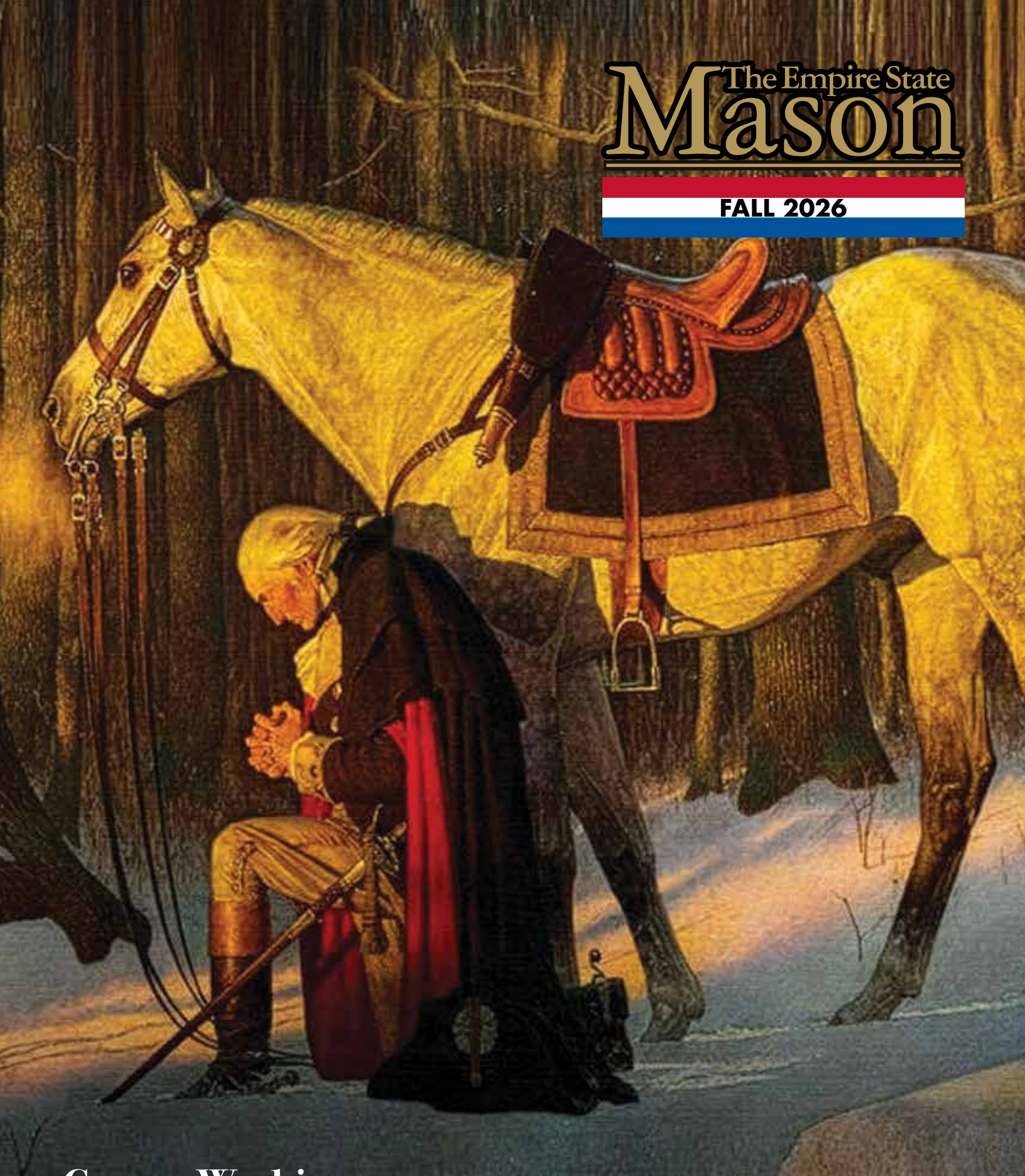
The Empire State
Mason
FALL 2026



George Washington
Praying in Valley Forge

From the Grand East



MW ROBERT L. HOGAN, JR.
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Greetings from the Grand East:

I am pleased and honored to share with the Craft the poignant painting of our First President and fellow Brother, George Washington, humbly kneeling before the Great Architect on the cover of our Empire State Mason. This scene speaks volumes about the genuine values held by our beloved fraternity and the moral quality expected of our Leaders in that we should always give due reverence to God.

Approaching the 27th day of September, when we will gather together with our families at the Masonic Historic Site in Tappan, NY, we are reminded of our unique connection to the War of Independence knowing that then General George Washington stood on that very ground from September 28 to October 7, 1780, during which time he signed the warrant of execution of the captured British spy, Major John André. Conspiring with the American traitor, General Benedict Arnold, Major André entered into plans to concede to our enemy the strategic West Point encampment.

General George Washington returned to the DeWint House in 1783 to receive the British General, Sir Guy Carleton, for the expressed purpose of negotiating the vanquished British Army's departure from the City of New York. Indeed, it was George Washington's Headquarters, the DeWint House, that due to the wise and prudent foresight of our beloved fraternity, it still stands preserved today as an enduring and pivotal testament of our founding father's courage and determination to give birth to our nation.

It is my desire to share with you a detailed accounting of this hallowed property in Tappan, NY and the luminaries that graced it, which originally appeared in the short book written in 1932 by Past Grand Master and Past Grand Secretary, Most Worshipful Charles H. Johnson, titled "*The Washington Masonic Shrine at Tappan, New York*" copied as originally written below:

DEDICATION

May 1, 1932
By Charles H. Johnson

It is my privilege as Grand Master of Masons in the Strate of New York to dedicate the Dewindt House to use and enjoyment by the American people so long as human ingenuity and fostering care can preserve that priceless relic. The house is now owned by the Grand Lodge of Masons of the State of New York, which comprises more than 1,000 constituent lodges. It will be faithfully guarded and carefully managed by that Body; but the general public, whether in any way connected with the Masonic Fraternity or not, will always be welcome to visit it; and the fraternity itself, as owner and custodian, will always deem itself the trustee for a possession that in the largest sense belongs to the American Nation.

If any reader chances to wonder why the Freemasonry of New York, rather than some patriotic society, or the State itself, came to purchase this Shrine, the matter can be best explained by an account of the incidents which led me, as Grand Master, to make to the Craft my recommendation for its purchase. Subsequently to Bro. George Washington's last visit to it in 1783, and after the Dewint descendants themselves no longer used it, the house passed through many hands, but always in the form of private ownership and for private use. During this century and a half patriotic societies have now and again contemplated its purchase, but always have been prevented for one reason or another. From 1879 to 1931 the New York State Assembly entertained Bills to take possession but in each instance the project, so wise and so right, was smothered in the convolutions of politics. And various wealthy and patriotic individuals who at times have considered its purchase have for various reasons been prevented.

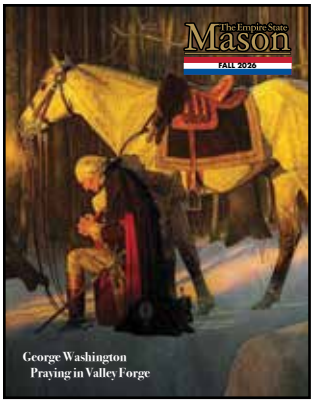
Such abortive attempts to preserve in perpetuity a property belonging to the same class of Revolutionary monuments as Mount Vernon itself might have continued indefinitely had not recent developments brought the matter to a crisis and given to the preservation of the house a "now-or-never" urgency. When in 1931 a new highway was begun between the great new George Washington Bridge and Nyack, to pass near the house, it became common knowledge in Rockland County that certain private interests were planning to purchase the house for use as a "tea shoppe" or even as a roadhouse.

The last-mentioned possibility sent a shudder through every sincere American citizen. The mere thought that the oldest still-standing authentic Washington headquarters might someday be padlocked led myself and my colleagues in the Grand Lodge to declare that "this will never be."

We took prompt action. A check was sent as a binder on the property and on November 21 the purchase contract was signed. There was not time to call an emergent Grand Communication of the Grand Lodge to consider the matter, nor did I believe that any such step was needed, for I was confident in my Brethren's instant and whole-hearted support for such a project the moment it was brought to their attention.

The Annual Communication of Grand Lodge to be held in May, 1932, will mark the end of a year during which the chief feature of special Craft activity has been the celebration throughout our Lodges of the two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of George Washington. This was done in response to an appeal made by the National Government, but even if no such appeal had been received our fraternity would have held their celebrations on its own initiative because it feels a ceaseless interest in Washington as a Mason and every November commemorates the anniversary of his invitation. During these months hundreds of celebrations and countless speeches have been made, either to eulogize Washington as a man and Mason, or to point to him as a model of that citizenship to which Freemasonry has ever been devoted. All the familiar hymns of our patriotism have been sung again

Continues on page 4 – From the Grand East



Front Cover

The legend of George Washington praying in the woods describes him kneeling in the snow at Valley Forge during the harsh winter of 1777–1778. Originally recounted by a local Quaker named Isaac Potts, the story became a famous symbol of Washington's faith and the spiritual foundation of the United States. Painted by Henry Brueckner.

EDITION DEADLINES:

SPRING: JAN. 1
SUMMER: APR. 1
FALL: JULY 1
WINTER: OCT. 1

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Continued from page 2 – From the Grand East

and again; moving pictures have been shown of Washington's career; Worshipful Masters have read the Constitution of The United States to their Lodges or mailed printed copies to all their members; and by way of climax the whole Brotherhood has in its various communities celebrated the dedication of the Washington Memorial at Alexandria, Virgina, one of the noblest monuments the human race has ever erected to one of its heroes.

All this was in every possible way admirable and valuable – how valuable only time itself can compute, but the season called for an even more signal mark of the Craft's devotion to its land and to the father of that land, something more lasting than words, more durable than music, more concrete than pictures, calling for actual deed and for a measure of that willingness to make sacrifices which is always the final test of the sincerity of professions of faith.

The opportunity for the purchase of the Dewint House came as by an act of Providence to offer just such an occasion by which we might seal our own profession of faith in the leadership of Washington himself and of the national ideal he left us. Now that it has been obtained, and provisions made for its maintenance and perpetual use, the Brotherhood can feel that its patriotism is more than of the lips only.

If the general public accepts this house as a token of the genuineness of the Masonic Fraternity's Americanism and patriotism it will not err. Freemasonry never participates in politics, local or national; it stands aloof from all sectional, sectarian, or racial controversies; it never seeks to influence government, and acts as a representative for man rather than of men, a spokesman for that which all the people value in common.

For such reasons we do not wish the DeWint House to stand as a monument to what "Masons did to win the Revolution" or what Masons did "to make America." No Lodge or Grand Lodge took any official action whatever, one way or another, concerning the Revolution. Indeed, after the war was won, and the States had achieved their independence, many Masonic leaders were so imbued with the proper Masonic spirit that they could not see in the successful Revolution any good reason why American Provincial Grand Lodges should sever their old-time ties with the Grand Lodge of Britain. There had been Lodges and Masons on both sides. In our capacity as Masons we can ever wish the DeWint House to be a reminder to us of the British Brethren and their many Lodges of that period, military and otherwise. The war came and went, mankind remained the same. It is with man as man that Freemasonry concerns itself.

It is therefore out of this Masonic faith, and in the name of all my Brethren, , that I can sincerely and whole-heartedly dedicate the DeWint House to all the people for their use and enjoyment. Let no person upon entering that historic structure feel himself an intruder, as if he had wandered into a region to which he is not entitled. All are welcome, women and children as well as men, those of all faiths or none, from any race, from any land or any section of this land. Nothing is asked of them except that they may remain long enough within the rooms where Washington lived for weeks at a time to recapture the sense of his presence, to feel the mood in which he lived and fought for this nation, and mayhap to dedicate themselves anew to those mighty hopes which make us Americans.

In the name of the Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons, State of New York, and as its Grand Master for the present year, I herewith dedicate to the American people the use of the DeWint House, in the expectation that so long as it stands it will serve at once as a shrine of patriotism, an altar of citizenship, and a memorial to him who was the first, as he still remains the chief, American."

May 1, 1932.
Masonic Hall, New York, N.Y.

I hope to see each of you as we celebrate and pay homage to our wonderful Masonic and National heritage on the grounds of the George Washington Masonic Historic Site at Tappan, NY on Sunday, September 27, 2026.

God bless and keep you, this day and onwards.
See you in the Quarries!!



CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE, PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING.

Articles for the Empire State Mason are due as follows:

Winter Issue: OCT 1, 2026 Spring Issue: JAN 1, 2027 Summer Issue: APR 1, 2027 Fall Issue: JUL 1, 2027

Submission guidelines for publication in the *ESM*

FILE PREPARATION

- Your full name, title, Lodge name and contact phone number at the beginning of the file.
- Save text copy as .txt .rtf or .docx. Please do not save as PDF or as odt. Files saved as .pub and .odt will NOT be accepted.
- Save photographs as .jpg, with at least 300 dpi to qualified as High Resolution.
  Save graphics as .eps.
- (Do not transmit photos and copy in the same email or file. Transmit photos as individual attachments not embedded as part of email or part of word doc.
- If submitting pdf format be sure that pictures are originally in CYMK color and type are set in black not registration color. When saving the file into a pdf format colors are set to "Do not color conversion" "Do not downsample" and "embed your fonts".

EMAIL:
To: GrandSecretary@NYMasons.org
Subject: ESM Submission - 'Your Article Title'

VIA MAIL
Send photographs via United States Postal Service or other delivery service to:

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Grand Lodge F & AM New York
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Please strictly adhere to the guidelines and formatting instructions provided by the Assistant Editor noted above.

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I Love New York

"I Love New York" is the iconic slogan used to market New York State since 1977. But it has taken on a life of its own, becoming more than just a slogan or logo. It describes the joy and pride that we all have in being New Yorkers, whether we live in Albany, Brooklyn, Bronx, Canandaigua, Delhi, Duanesburg, Elmira, Schaghticoke, Syosset, Inwood, Rensselaer, Riverhead, Staten Island, Syracuse, Latham, Plattsburgh, Queens, Rochester, St. Lawrence or Williamsville. It also captures the excitement that we can look forward to as New York Freemasons.

Across the jurisdiction, we have just completed our somber yet magnificent ceremonies of investiture and installation. The beauty of this season is also one of a new beginning, as marked by our recent St. John's celebration and the historic commemorations of the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the United States of America. Likewise, we pride ourselves on the antiquity and history of New York Freemasonry with the confidence that our ceremonies and ritual will satisfy future generations. That future will also demand a better understanding of what Freemasonry really is.



L to R: RW Rochie Santos, Deputy Grand Marshal; MW Robert L. Hogan Jr., Grand Master; RW E. Oscar Alleyne, Deputy Grand Master; RW Daniel Campis, Junior Grand Deacon; RW Demetrios Milliaressis, Deputy Grand Standard Bearer.

I personally thank each of you for the trust you have reposed in me as your Deputy Grand Master. Just as exciting as Brothers reaching out to voice their enthusiasm for the journey that is ahead for our Grand Lodge, so is the realization that NY Freemasonry's potential is entirely in our collective hands. Your Grand Line officers, in support of our Grand Master, fully understand the assignment before us: "Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can."

So, what is the plan? To build a real Strategic Plan. Our actions will define how we get from where we are today to where we want to be. This will set context for how New York Freemasonry sees its growth and evolution while serving as a bridge to our future generations. With this vision set by our Grand Master, we aspire to moving from → to:

Maintaining the status quo → Demonstrating a pioneering mindset

Operating from a "space of fear" → Operating from a "brave space"

Being reactive as an entrenched organization →Being proactive and open to new ideas



To get a clear picture of how we want to grow and what will help us put the creation of our Grand Lodge's Strategic Plan into action, Grand Master Hogan has charged us to engage you to survey your perceived value and satisfaction with your membership. With your feedback and direct participation we can help foster improved relationships, programs and pipelines for both member and leadership development. We will be able to strengthen and align our Lodges and Districts with local, need-based resources. We will retain existing and recruit new members through community building, mentorship, member engagement and belonging.

Yes, this may look like a lot, but it is all essential. Plus, our work is never hard when performed together with purpose and vision. That purpose and vision is simple: We Love New York! See you in the quarries, my Brothers.

DATE TO REMEMBER

September 19, 2026 – Annual Picnic hosted by Archimede-Roma Lodge 854 at Eisenhower Park, East Meadow, NY

September 26, 2026 – Oktoberfest hosted by the Medford Square Club, Smithtown Masonic Temple

September 26, 2026 – Grand Master's Day at Yankee Stadium

September 27, 2026 – Grand Master's Day at Tappan

October 3, 2026 – The Grand Master's Ball, Albany, NY

October 6, 2026 – The Masonic Medical Research Institute's Telethon

October 12, 2026 – The Columbus Day Parade in NYC

November 15, 2026 – DeMolay Legion of Honor, Spartan Masonic Temple, Baldwin, NY

November 21, 2026 – Masonic Toys for Tots, at Russo's on the Bay, Howard Beach, NY

SENIOR GRAND WARDEN



RW JOHN HASLAM, SR.
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Power of a Personal Visit

One of the greatest blessings of serving as Senior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of New York is the opportunity to travel throughout our remarkable jurisdiction and spend time with the brethren where Freemasonry truly comes alive—in their own Lodges. From the shores of Long Island to the hills of the Southern Tier, from the Adirondacks to the banks of Lake Erie every Lodge has its own history, traditions and personality. Yet, wherever I travel I find the same unwavering spirit, good men who are proud to call themselves Masons, who care deeply about their Lodges and who want our Fraternity to remain strong for generations to come.

Those visits have reminded me of a simple truth. The greatest strength of Freemasonry has never been our buildings, it has never been our titles, it has never been our ritual books. Our greatest strength has always been the men who choose to live the principles of Freemasonry, every day.

We live in an age when communication is instantaneous. Email, text messages, social media, websites and virtual meetings have become valuable tools that help us stay informed and connected across a large and diverse jurisdiction. They allow us to share information quickly and efficiently and they have become an important part of how we conduct the business of our Fraternity.

Yet for all the advantages modern technology provides, there is one thing it can never replace: a personal visit. There is something special about walking through the doors of a Lodge, greeting old friends and making new ones, sharing a meal before the meeting, enjoying fellowship afterward and simply spending time together. A handshake, a smile, a conversation. Those moments remind us why we became Masons in the first place.

Freemasonry has always been and always will be a Fraternity built upon relationships. Throughout my travels I have discovered that the healthiest Lodges are not necessarily the largest or the busiest. More often than not they are the Lodges where Brothers support one another beyond their own four walls. They attend installations, Degree work, anniversaries, Table Lodges, community events and charitable activities. They celebrate one another's successes, offer encouragement during difficult times and genuinely enjoy each other's company. That, my Brothers, is what I simply call Brotherhood.

In fact, whenever someone asks me why Masons travel hundreds of miles to support another Lodge, attend an installation, confer a Degree, comfort a Brother in need, or simply share a meal and fellowship together, my answer is always the same, "It's called Brotherhood." (GM Rubin 2024-2026). Those three words speak volumes. They remind us that Freemasonry is not confined to the walls of a Lodge room. It lives in our willingness to be there for one another, to encourage one another and to walk together through both the celebrations and the challenges of life. Every personal visit strengthens our Craft. It encourages a Worshipful Master. It inspires a newly Raised Master Mason. It reminds a longtime Brother that he remains a valued part of our Masonic family.

Sometimes the most meaningful thing we can do is simply show up. As Masons, we speak often of "Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth" (GM Sullivan 2012-2013). Those are not simply words we recite; they are principles we are called to live. Brotherly Love is demonstrated through kindness and presence. Relief is often found in a listening ear, a helping hand or a visit when someone needs encouragement. Truth is reflected in the sincerity with which we fulfill our obligations, not only to our Fraternity, but to one another.

Over the years, I have been blessed with remarkable Masonic mentors but none had a greater influence on my journey than MW Edward G. Gilbert. He was my mentor, my friend, my leader and a man whose example continues to inspire me every day. He taught me that leadership is never about position, it is about service. He showed me that the finest leaders are those who listen before they speak, encourage before they criticize, and place the needs of others before their own. Most importantly, he taught me to "lead from the heart" (GM Gilbert 2008-2009). Although he is no longer with us in person, his lessons, his wisdom and his example remain with me throughout my Masonic journey. Every Lodge I visit, every Brother I meet and every opportunity I have to serve reminds me of the standard he set and the legacy he left for all of us.

As I travel throughout New York representing our Grand Lodge, I am continually reminded that although our Lodges may differ in size and tradition, our purpose remains the same. It is to make good men better, strengthen our communities, support one another and leave our beloved Fraternity stronger than we found it.

One message I have shared across our jurisdiction has become a guiding principle for me: "Organization + Communication = Success." Strong organizations are built upon clear communication, mutual respect and a shared commitment to excellence. When those qualities are combined with personal visitation and genuine fellowship, remarkable things begin to happen. Lodges become stronger. Leaders become more confident. New members become engaged. Experienced members become mentors. Brotherhood flourishes.

Another principle I have come to believe with all my heart is simple, yet profoundly true. "Together Everyone Achieves More" (GM Thomas 2014-2016). No single Brother can accomplish the work of Freemasonry alone. But when we combine our talents, our experience and our willingness to serve, we create something far greater than ourselves. That is the true power of our Fraternity.

Freemasonry is not something we practice only on meeting nights. "It is a way of life" (GM Williamson 2016-2018). It is reflected in the respect we show others, the compassion we extend to those in need, the encouragement we offer a struggling Brother, and the example we set in our homes, our workplaces and our communities.

"Freemasonry never stops" (GM Sardone 2018-2021). Neither should our commitment to one another.

As we move forward together, I encourage every Brother to make one additional visit this year. Attend a neighboring Lodge. Support a Degree. Visit a Brother who has been absent. Invite a newly Raised Mason to travel with you. Encourage someone who may be quietly wondering whether anyone has noticed he has been missing. You may never fully realize the difference that one visit can make.

I can assure you that I will continue doing the same. As long as I have the privilege of serving this great Fraternity I will continue traveling our jurisdiction, visiting our Lodges, shaking hands, renewing old friendships, making new ones and reminding every Brother I meet that he is an important part of something much larger than himself. Because when we make the effort to be present, we communicate something far more meaningful than words ever could. My Brothers, you matter. Your Lodge matters. Our brotherhood matters. Because, in the end, those simple messages strengthen our Fraternity one handshake, one conversation and one personal visit at a time.

As I conclude, I leave you with a thought that has become one of my deepest convictions. "Masons make a difference" (GM Kessler, 2021-2024), not only inside our Lodge rooms, but also in our families, our neighborhoods and our communities, reminding us, "Freemasonry All Day/Every Day" (GM Hogan, 2026-2028).

My dear Brethren and friends of Freemasonry, take every opportunity to remind those you love just how much they mean to you. Life is a precious and a fleeting gift, and the opportunity to say "I love you" is one of life's greatest blessings. Never leave those words unspoken, for they have the power to comfort, to heal and to become a cherished memory that lives forever in the hearts of those we hold dear. For, in the end, it is not the wealth we accumulate or the titles we hold that define our lives, but the love we shared and the lives we touched.

May God continue to bless you, your families, your Lodges and the Grand Lodge of New York as together we preserve our rich traditions, embrace the opportunities before us and continue building an even brighter future for the generations of Masons yet to come.

St. John's Day Photos



MW James E. Sullivan, PGM



RW George Filippidis,
President of Trustees Masonic Hall and Home



The Shrine Clowns



(l to r) RW Richard W. Bateman, Grand Pursuivant and
RW Charles Semowich, Grand Organist



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Why Does Your Lodge Exist?

Stated another way: "What is your Lodge's purpose? Why did your Lodge receive its Charter?"

The simple answer is that a group of Masons petitioned Grand Lodge to form and constitute a Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, proposing a name for the Lodge and a location for it to meet. After some investigation by the Charters Committee, the petitioning Brothers were found worthy and ultimately a Charter or Warrant was issued to form your Lodge. This simple answer largely addresses the mechanics of forming a Lodge but fails to address the purpose.

For an answer, let us take a look at a Lodge Charter. The last paragraph provides some profound insight as to the purpose of a Lodge.

"*And further, the said Lodge is hereby invested with full Power and Authority to assemble upon proper and lawful Occasions, to* **Make Masons**, *and to* **Admit Members**, *as also to do and perform all and every such Acts and Things appertaining to the* **Craft** *as have been and ought to be done, for the Honor and Advantages thereof; conforming in all their Proceedings to the* **Constitution** *of this Grand Lodge, otherwise this* **Warrant** *and the powers thereby granted, to cease and be of no further effect."*

And there it is! The most important document in the possession of any Lodge spells it out in no uncertain terms. The purpose of a Lodge is to Make Masons and Admit Members.

I state our purpose in the most forthright manner possible because it is an imperative that we seem to have lost sight of over the years. Yes, we go through the motions. We hold meetings. We practice our ritual. We recognize Masonic and or civic achievements. We march in parades. We support charities, both Masonic and secular. Yet, as a Jurisdiction our numbers have been declining for decades. It is hard to argue that we are fulfilling our obligation to Make Masons when the hard truth of our declining numbers is all too evident.

My intent is not to lament the glory that once was but to find a way forward. There are Lodges who are thriving, visible in their communities, with an enthusiastic membership, making Masons and growing their Lodge. We need to replicate those successes across the Jurisdiction. Those success stories need to be told so that others can revitalize and rejuvenate their Lodge.

If you are looking for a blueprint to revitalize your Lodge there is a success story in our sister jurisdiction of Ohio. RW Daniel D. Hrinko, author of *The Craft Driven Lodge*, details his own experiences after joining the Craft. His book examines the fundamental principles that are vital to the long-term health and well-being of a Lodge. If your Lodge membership is declining, if attendance at meetings is not what it used to be, if the regular meetings are somewhat dull and boring, this book may just provide an idea or two that you can use to help revitalize your Lodge. The book is available through Macoy publishing and is printed on demand, so expect about two to three weeks between the time you order and the arrival of your book. It is a paperback book, a relatively easy read, and with a price in the $20 range it should not be beyond anyone's resources.

My Brothers, we need to get serious about addressing our declining numbers. The responsibility to Make Masons and Admit Members is not just a Lodge responsibility. It is a responsibility that we all share and it is a process that is only just beginning when we confer the Entered Apprentice Degree. Are we mentoring our newest members? Are the meetings meaningful and engaging? Have you ever walked out of a Lodge meeting and thought, "Well, that was a waste of my time."? As an experienced Mason, you might just chalk it up to a meeting that went off the rails but to a new member attending one of his first few meetings it might be more like "I've got better things to do for two nights every month." Are we engaging in our communities? Do we hold public events and invite the community to attend? If we allow the myth of a secret society to proliferate, how can we expect to attract new members?

We do not need more Galas. We do not need more men in tuxedos. We all need to shoulder the burden of revitalizing our Lodges. In a world where it is all too easy to put your feet up at home and consume entertainment from one of the hundreds of cable channels or streaming services, it is absolutely critical that our Lodges provide a meaningful experience at each and every meeting. This takes work. This takes planning, and let me be clear that this burden is not the Master's alone.

Does all our business need to be hashed out in a Lodge room where the formality of waiting to be recognized to introduce a comment or an alternate thought often gets in the way of an open and frank discussion? What if we had a pre-meeting dinner and provided an agenda of all the items that were expected to be brought up at the meeting? What if we were able to have an open and frank discussion around the dinner table while enjoying each other's fellowship and company? If we do this we can adjourn to the Lodge room for our constitutional meeting and simply ratify everything that was discussed during dinner. The meeting would run smoothly and efficiently and could likely be concluded in 45 minutes or so. Less time spent on the business of running a Lodge means more time available for guest speakers and special programs—time that could be used to explore the esoteric side of Masonry.

My Brothers, thank you for electing me as your Junior Grand Warden. My quest for my time in office is to be a coach, motivator and cheerleader for our Lodges. We really are at an inflection point in addressing our declining membership. In our Degrees we are taught that to preserve the reputation of the Fraternity must be our constant care. Likewise, as members of a Lodge whose Charter clearly imposes the duty of Making Masons, we are duty bound to preserve this Fraternity by Making Masons, by living a life guided by Masonic principles, by supporting our Lodges and working to see that they are vibrant once more. Be the change. Be the example. Be the Brother your Lodge needs.

RW JOHN T. HANSEN
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Preserving History Through Service

As New York's Freemasons commemorate the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Lynbrook-Massapequa Lodge 822 stands as a testament to the enduring principles of fraternity, civic responsibility and service that have strengthened both our nation and our Craft for generations. The modern Lynbrook-Massapequa Lodge 822 was formed in 1986 through the merger of two distinguished Lodges: Massapequa Lodge 822, chartered on June 26, 1897, and Lynbrook Lodge 1018, chartered on June 23, 1923. Rather than losing their individual identity, the two Lodges combined their traditions and rich histories, preserving nearly 130 years of Masonic heritage while adapting to the changing needs of their members and communities. By retaining the historic number 822 the Lodge maintained a direct connection to its original charter and the generations of Brothers who came before.

The Lodge's story is marked by significant milestones. In 1897 Massapequa Lodge 822 received its charter under the leadership of its first Master, Right Worshipful Thomas R. LeCount. The Lodge's earliest meetings were held in the Odd Fellows Hall opposite the Rockville Centre railroad station. In 1920 the Lodge established a permanent home by purchasing the former Rockville Centre Club at 28 Lincoln Avenue and converting it into a Masonic Temple. More than a century later, the building continues to serve as an important center of Freemasonry on Long Island.

As with many organizations, the Lodge faced significant challenges during the late twentieth century. Rising operating costs between 1979 and 1986 forced both Massapequa and Lynbrook Lodges to sell their respective buildings. Rather than allowing these hardships to diminish the Fraternity, the two Lodges united in 1986, demonstrating resilience, adaptability and unity that have long characterized Freemasonry.

Among the Lodge's most treasured artifacts is the historic Lion's Paw Gavel, a unique piece of New York Masonic history. Crafted in 1917 from metal salvaged during renovations of the former Grand Lodge building on 23rd Street in Manhattan, the gavel continues to be used ceremonially by each Worshipful Master. Few Lodges possess an active ceremonial implement with such a direct connection to the history of the Grand Lodge of New York.

While preserving its history, Lynbrook-Massapequa Lodge has never lost sight of its commitment to serving others. The ideals that inspired America's founders—service, civic responsibility and devotion to community—remain central to the Lodge's mission today.

Throughout the year, the Lodge participates in and supports numerous charitable and community service initiatives. These include District-wide Christmas in May projects benefiting senior members and Masonic widows in Utica, donations to the Smile Train Foundation, annual fishing trips supporting the Brotherhood Fund, wreath-laying and flag placement ceremonies at Pinelawn National Cemetery, Salvation Army Operation Bell-ringer, Memorial Day and Independence Day parades, Scottish Rite and Nassau District turkey drives and Masonic education and leadership programs throughout the Nassau Masonic District.

The Lodge also joins neighboring Lodges in supporting local causes. Valley Stream Lodge conducts annual coat and sock drives for those in need. Wantagh-Morton Lodge sponsors food drives benefiting veterans and survivors of domestic abuse. Nassau and Suffolk County Masons work together during the annual Bus Demolition Derby, raising thousands of dollars for the Brotherhood Fund. Individual Lodges also honor military veterans by inviting them to share their stories, preserving their experiences while recognizing their service to our nation.

Service has remained the defining characteristic of Lynbrook-Massapequa Lodge throughout its history. Since 1897 more than twenty-six Brothers from the Lodge have been honored with the title of Right Worshipful through their service to the Grand Lodge of New York and the Craft. Continuing that tradition, I have the distinct privilege of becoming the first Brother from Lynbrook-Massapequa Lodge 822 to be elected to the Grand Line, serving as Grand Treasurer of the Grand Lodge of New York. This milestone reflects not only personal honor but the enduring legacy of leadership and service that generations of Brothers from our Lodge have exemplified.

As America celebrates 250 years of independence, Lynbrook-Massapequa Lodge 822 demonstrates that while buildings may change and generations may pass, the principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth continue to unite Freemasons in service to their communities. By honoring its past while embracing the future, the Lodge remains a living example of the values that have strengthened both Freemasonry and our nation for well over a century.

October 1, 2026 is articles due date for the Winter edition of the *Empire State Mason* magazine.

Grand Secretary



RW RICHARD T. SCHULZ
Grand Secretary
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New York, NY 10010
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Dear Brethren,

As we begin a new Masonic year this September, I find myself filled with gratitude for the tremendous support for my reelection as Grand Secretary. I hope to continue to earn your trust and admiration.

I have had several conversations recently regarding managing the Grand Secretary's office, and it occurred to me that the membership may be interested in this topic. We have a well-run and increasingly efficient office, with many dedicated employees. We have improved our office procedures over my time as Grand Secretary. In many cases, we have been very successful, such as: permanent dues cards, the web portals, external access to workstations and many other improvements. Individual staff members have started to incorporate artificial intelligence (AI) functions and software in their regular work processes. We continue to stay alert to AI applications that may benefit the performance of our duties in the office.

As you may well notice, in terms of customer service, we try to respond to your inquiries as quickly and as forthrightly as possible. We do outreach via Grand Secretary Zoom Nights to educate Lodge and District Officers about our Grand Lodge procedures and in the use of our database, collectively known as Groupable, M2 and MORI.

In terms of office administration, we have adopted third-party software as our administrative system for Human Resources (HR). Not only does it record the time the employee checks in and out, but it also has many online features regarding vacation and sick-time benefits. It allows the employee to request vacation and personal time, access the Employee Manual online and track health benefits information. Grand Lodge employees receive a performance evaluation annually and each employee discusses his or her goals for the subsequent year when reviewing that evaluation. Also, he or she must take the NYC Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Course annually.

The Employee Manual outlines our office procedures and allows for disciplinary action, if necessary, including termination. It is continually updated on a regular basis to remain in full compliance with Federal, State and Local laws. It is the guideline for our office HR procedures.

We have access to our office work stations from outside the office and from home. This allows us to have a hybrid workplace, where we can Work-From-Home (WFH) when allowed, usually one day per week. This has been our setup for roughly six years. We can access more than just our emails, including the intranet and hard drives we use to store our work. We use the latest office technology (much of which is based in the Cloud), and we have backup, anti-virus and firewall systems in place for our internal drives and servers.

Over my tenure we have streamlined procedures and staffing without losing productivity. We are mindful at all times of office expenses and have kept a lid on the budget for the office.



We recently hired a new Curator for the Chancellor Robert R Livingston Masonic Library. In hiring her (and others in the past), I reviewed multiple applicants for the open library position. I engage other members of our staff, the Library Trustees and the Grand Lodge leadership to meet and interview the applicants for these positions when they become open. Ultimately, as the Chief Administrator and Manager of the office I make the final decision, based on the collaborative input received. Our new Curator, Mrs. Samantha Tubbs, has joined our Library and Museum staff: Executive Director, RW Michael LaRocco and our New York City Director of Operations, Brother Alex Vastola.



Before concluding this article, I want to acknowledge the Grand Post of the Masonic War Veterans for their tremendous support and effort on behalf of our Grand Lodge. I am filled with much gratitude and love as they recently honored me with the Mason of the Year Award. A special thank-you goes to both RW Donald T. Kuhner Jr., who served last year as the Commander-in-Chief, and to RW Vincent Scandole as this year's Commander.

Finally, I know that God loves us all. I put my trust in Him. I am sure He comforted me in my grief in the past two years after losing Grayce. I have no doubt that He will continue to guide my judgment today and every day and in my decisions as your Grand Secretary. Thank you for your kind attention, warm support and fraternal friendship, as always.

To the Craft, In Celebration

MW Robert Leslie Hogan Jr.
Grand Master of Masons in the State of New York

July 3, 2026

Dear Brethren All:

Tomorrow we celebrate our semiquincentennial of independence, originally held on July 4, 1776, as a Sovereign Nation, a singular distinction that sets us apart from any and all countries within the Western Hemisphere. Those countries in this part of the world that approach this precedence, but do not quite match our seniority are Argentina (1816), Chile (1818), Haiti (1804), Mexico (1821) and Paraguay (1811).

Most nations in the Western Hemisphere shared a similar destiny with our beloved United States, having broken away from their European colonial rule. The grip of colonial rule was significantly weakened by exploitive economic frustration combined with the onset of philosophies of enlightened ideas about liberty, the rights of man and self-governance.

Spearheading these revolutionary ideas were prominent and learned men with strong ties to Freemasonry, Liberty and Patriotism. Men such as Brother George Washington, Brother Benjamin Franklin, Brother John Hancock and Brother Paul Revere are credited amongst the founding fathers of the United States of America; Brother Simon Bolivar and Brother Jose Ballivian, the primary founding fathers of Bolivia; Brother Juan Pablo Duarte, the founding father of the Dominican Republic; Brother Jose de San Martin, credited as the founding father of Argentina, Chile and Peru; Brother Francisco de Miranda, the founding father of Venezuela; Brother Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, the founder of Mexico; and Brother Toussaint Louverture and Brother Jean-Pierre Boyer, early architects of the independence of Haiti.

Reflecting on this roll call of Masonic Countrymen, we can clearly surmise that the history of the Western Hemisphere is profoundly intertwined with Freemasonry. It was the teachings of Freemasonry that inspired these prolific founding fathers to greatness. The core values encapsulated within our Masonic Charges and Obligations were instrumental in binding the diverse groups of colonial citizenries into a cohesive force that was determined to resist tyranny and instill moral discipline. Out of these bonds the early American colonies fostered mutual trust, loyalty and respect for each other while developing a true sense of brotherhood.

The language incorporated into our treasured Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States of America deeply reflects the core philosophical beliefs of the American colonists, which in part was derived from the Masonic concept that "all men are created equal," that they are endowed by the Creator with "unalienable rights" and the government derives its power from the "consent of the governed."

As Masons, we all meet upon the level, therefore, we are spiritually and morally equal when we enter the Lodge, regardless of our social, economic or political standing.

As Masons, we strongly believe in preserving individual liberties, civil freedom and absolute freedom of thought and speech. These are all human rights that have been given to every man, woman and child as a divine gift from God and cannot be taken away by any man or government.

Lastly, as Masons we believe that governments exist for the stewardship of human rights, whose authority derives from the people in the form of a Democracy. This concept mirrors the internal structure of our Masonic Lodges, which operate and function in keeping within the due bounds of the Laws and Constitutions enacted by its own members and governed by the Worshipful Master and Officers, duly elected by the Ballot of its own members.

Following the Constitutional Convention of 1787 in Philadelphia, whereupon delegates were tasked with drafting the Constitution, the question arose about what form of government, a republic or a monarchy, was to be established in the United States. Brother Benjamin Franklin famously replied "A Republic, if you can keep it"; meaning, in contrast to a monarchy, a successful republic operates on active participation by its citizens having shared values and civic vigilance.

Fortunately, today, we can indeed celebrate and look back upon two and one-half centuries of independence as a true republic. The republic is still alive and thriving in the world in what can be called the new American Era. It is still a work in progress and with the divine help from our Almighty Father in Heaven, we will hopefully and prayerfully be found worthy of divine approval. In the inspirational and sage words of the author of our Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, let us never lose sight of "the Supreme Judge of the World for the rectitude of our intentions" and continue as our forefathers have done before us to "pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our Sacred Honor" to uphold the principles of our Great Nation.

In conclusion, I humbly ask you to join me in prayer and supplication to the Lord our God:

Almighty Father, we stand in your presence with hearts full of reverence and joy, lifting up our beloved country into Your powerful hands. We thank You for all of the blessings of this life, our homes, our families, our communities and Fraternity. Grant our leaders wisdom to govern with justice and integrity. Inspire every citizen to act with compassion, honesty, and in the spirit of service, so that we may all live in peace and harmony. We thank You for the liberties we enjoy and for Your constant protection over this land. We ask that You provide strength, courage and safety for all of our men and women in uniform. We ask that You continue to bless, guide and protect us all, this day and forevermore. Amen.

With a kind fraternal salute, I remain your Brother,

Masons Celebrate 250th USA Birthday Across New York State

Read what these Fellow Mason Lodges did to celebrates!

250th Parade Cobleskill Lodge #394 Mounts Float For Parade



We pulled in our local Abe Lincoln re-enactor and our Village Mayor for our parade. Representing the Lodge were current officers: Worshipful Master, Chaplain, Senior Warden, one Master of Ceremony and our Secretary.

Our vehicle entry was nicely decked out in bunting and sported our Masonic lawn signs. Conveniently, it carried our older folks, owing to the high temperature, and the Mayor took a ride to wave to the crowds.

Historic Lodges Unite as Fort Stanwix

by RW Ross V. Stoltz
MMRI Development Officer

As our nation commemorates the 250th anniversary of American independence, two historic Masonic Lodges with roots stretching back more than two centuries have united. They thereby honored their shared heritage and the ideals upon which America was founded.

Roman-Hatheway Lodge 223 of Rome was originally chartered in 1799. Brothers from Camden in 1808 petitioned Roman-Hatheway to form Philanthropic Lodge 164 the following year. The two have officially united to form the newly named Fort Stanwix Lodge 164.

The merger brings together two respected Lodges with almost 230 years of Masonic history, traditions and fraternal bonds under a name rich with symbolism and local significance. "Fort Stanwix" pays tribute to the historic fort in Rome, a lasting symbol of perseverance, unity and courage during the American Revolution. The fort was defended by Colonel Peter Gansevoort, a Brother himself, whose steadfast leadership and devotion to liberty reflect the same principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth that continue to guide Freemasonry today.

The timing is especially meaningful. As Americans reflect on the vision, sacrifice and unity that gave birth to our nation 250 years ago, the formation of Fort Stanwix Lodge 164 serves as a reminder that Freemasonry has long been woven into the fabric of American history. The Fraternity's commitment to character, civic responsibility and service continues to strengthen communities, as it has for generations.

More than a consolidation, this union represents a renewed commitment to Brotherhood, Masonic education, community service and ensuring that the light of Freemasonry continues to shine brightly for future generations.

As one chapter closes and another begins, the brethren of Fort Stanwix Lodge 164 move forward together, united in purpose and strengthened by history. Inspired by the enduring ideals that have shaped both the Craft and our nation for a quarter of a millennium, they are ready to carry that legacy forward.



Fort Stanwix National Monument—Rome, NY.
Photo courtesy of National Park Service

Granville 55 Marks 250th In Parade

Granville Lodge 55, of the Saratoga-Warren-Washington District, was born in the shadow of the Declaration of Independence and the events which led to the formation of the United States of America. Chartered in 1796, our roots run deep. Many of our early Brothers had taken up arms to defend our Freedom and Liberty. Granville 55 celebrated them and our nation's 250th anniversary by participating in our local parade, sponsored by American Legion Post 323.

Our division stepped off with a Color Guard from our sponsored Boy Scout Troup 44. We joined with our Parade Marshal, Grand Master Bill Sardone. Some of our Brothers marched displaying a banner of the organizations we support; and others rode in Masonic-flagged golf carts. In amongst it all maneuvered the Oriental Shriner mini Karts. We are proud Americans and proud Freemasons.







O-R-S Brothers Dress Up For Independence



Members of the Orange-Rockland-Sullivan Masonic District donned historically accurate Revolutionary War and Civil War era uniforms to add authenticity to a local event. Brother Ken Alutin of Cornerstone Lodge 231 and VW Kyle A. Williams of Wallkill Lodge 627 participated in the Town of Shawangunk's America 250 Celebration on Saturday, July 11.

Throughout the afternoon, the Brothers engaged with community members, sharing stories, examining weapons and artifacts while they interpreted the rich Revolutionary War and Civil War history of Ulster and Orange Counties. Through their living-history presentations, they helped bring the past to life while highlighting the important role the Hudson Valley played in our nation's history. The festivities concluded with a fireworks display, providing a fitting tribute as America honors the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.



Districts Join Forces



On a sweltering Saturday, July 4 a throng of Brothers of the Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Districts gathered together. They marched and rode along the lengthy route of the Mayville 4th of July parade.

The strong showing represented many of the bodies of Masonry that have been active in the two Districts. The delegations were pleased to show the Fraternity's deep respect and love of our country.

America 250 in Astoria

by Brother Brete Murphy with W Richard Alan Araya

Advance Service Mizpah Lodge 586 has turned post-pandemic restoration into an America 250 partnership with the Greater Astoria Historical Society—using local history, civic engagement and one remarkable Revolutionary-era artifact to reconnect with its neighborhood and strengthen the future of the Craft. In recent years, many Lodges across New York have faced a common challenge: how to recover not only attendance and activity, but also momentum, visibility and connection with the communities around them.

For Advance Service Mizpah Lodge 586 in Astoria, Queens, that process began with repairs to the temple and grew into something much larger. What started as post-pandemic recovery became restoration. Restoration became public engagement. Public engagement became partnership. And that partnership has become one of the Lodge's most meaningful contributions to the America 250 commemoration.

At the center of this effort is a simple lesson. When a Lodge is visibly at work in its community—through service, stewardship and sincere partnership—it not only honors its principles it also often rediscovers them.

As with so many Lodges, Advance Service Mizpah did not disappear during the pandemic years but it did grow quieter. Meetings continued. Officers carried on. The charter remained. Yet Degree work slowed, fellowship narrowed and the ordinary rhythm of Lodge life was interrupted in ways that could be felt both inside and outside the building.

The first response was practical. The temple needed care. Exterior stone was cleaned and repainted. Architectural details were refreshed. Gold lettering was restored to the façade. The entrance was improved, lighting renewed and the building gradually reclaimed its place on the avenue.

Then something important happened. Neighbors noticed. Passersby began asking questions. Brothers came out to help. The public responded to visible labor and visible pride. The building no longer suggested quiet decline; it suggested life. That visibility changed the Lodge's outlook. Once the temple began drawing attention, the Lodge recognized an opportunity not simply to restore a structure, but also to rebuild a relationship with the neighborhood around it.





The Lodge responded by becoming more public-facing. Community events, charity work, blood drives and a stronger online presence followed. So did one especially fitting development in an America 250 season: the temple began serving as an official polling place during early voting. That mattered. In a year focused on the nation's founding, a Masonic building in Queens was doing more than preserving its own past. It was supporting one of the most basic acts of civic life in the present. The lesson for us was clear: one of the best ways to explain Freemasonry is not through slogans but through useful work.





That same spirit led naturally to a partnership with the Greater Astoria Historical Society. The connection was a strong one from the beginning. The Lodge was working to restore its visibility and usefulness in the community. GAHS was already engaged in preserving and sharing Astoria's history with the public.

America 250 provided a timely framework for bringing those goals together. For the Lodge, the anniversary offered a chance to move beyond symbolic commemoration and take part in local historical education. For GAHS, the Lodge offered something increasingly valuable: a historic, community-based setting in which the public could encounter that history directly. The result was more than a one-time collaboration. It became a model of what a Lodge and a local historical society can accomplish together.

The early success of the partnership was evident in public programming, including an author event connected to Long Island City 1776. That program reinforced something both organizations had begun to see more clearly: people are eager for history when it feels local, tangible and connected to the places where they live. That shared understanding led to the most striking element of the partnership: the Blackwell Door.

As part of its America 250 programming, the Lodge and GAHS have hosted an exhibit centered on this remarkable surviving artifact tied to the Blackwell family of Ravenswood and the Revolutionary era in Queens. The door is substantial—roughly eight feet tall, five feet wide and weighing about 400 pounds. But its historical significance is what gives it force. Dating to about 1765, it still bears the "Arrow of Confiscation," or crow foot mark, carved into it during the British occupation of 1776, when the Blackwell estate was seized for the Crown.







For an America 250 program, it is difficult to imagine a more fitting object. It is not a reproduction. It is not a secondary telling. It is a surviving artifact that bears the literal scar of the Revolutionary period.

In Astoria, that has made all the difference. The exhibit, along with walking tours and related events, has invited visitors to see the Revolution not as a distant national abstraction, but as a lived local reality that unfolded in their own community.

The partnership has also produced an outcome that many brethren will immediately recognize as significant. Along the course of this shared work, a lifelong Astoria native became a candidate for admission into Advance Service Mizpah Lodge 586. That is more than an incidental detail. The young man encountered the Lodge not merely as an idea, a mystery or a reputation. He encountered it as a working institution: restoring its building, preserving local history, opening its doors and participating seriously in neighborhood life. That is an encounter that matters.

The qualities he brought into this collaboration are the same qualities that strengthen the Craft: intellectual curiosity, historical seriousness, devotion to truth and a desire to serve the common good. His interests in local history, public education and community engagement will not only serve him well in Masonry, they also will benefit the Lodge and the Craft more broadly. His candidacy is an encouraging reminder that when Lodges are visible in the right ways, they do not simply attract attention. They may also attract thoughtful and worthy men.

The work underway in Astoria has reminded us that a Lodge becomes strongest not when it withdraws from public view, but when it finds faithful ways to be present in the life of its community. For Advance Service Mizpah Lodge 586, America 250 has been more than a commemorative milestone. It has been a framework for reconnection: with neighbors, with local history, with civic purpose and with the future of the Craft itself.

The partnership with the Greater Astoria Historical Society has shown what can happen when a Lodge opens its doors not only to preserve the past, but also to interpret it, share it and let it do useful work in the present. For our Lodge this work has been a reminder that history is most meaningful when it is not only remembered, but also encountered, shared and placed in the service of the living community.

Brother Murphy is Historian of Advance Service Mizpah Lodge 586, Queens, New York. Reach him at AstoriaMasons.org.

GEORGE, BEN, AND GILBERT

When Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette
Came to meet his friend and brother George Washington
He brought him an apron that no one would forget
Which had been sewn by hand for this grand occasion

When Ben Franklin went to the Lodge of Nine Sisters
He was a conductor for that night's candidate
Who was known as Voltaire the great philosopher
And in Paris it was a really special date

Do George, Ben and Gilbert sit in the great beyond
Having a drink or three and smoking a pipe too
Reminiscing those days on both sides of the pond
That altered history for them and me and you



Written and copyrighted in 2026 by RW Francis Dumaurier,33, MSA, KYCH, and illustrated by the author with assistance from AI. This poem is part of a collection of 66 illustrated rhyming stories which are all available at brotherlyrhymes.com. Scan the QR code at the left for more poetries.

America 250: OSY Engages Communities

As our nation celebrates America's 250th Anniversary, the Lodges of the Ontario-Seneca-Yates District have embraced the opportunity to honor our country's history while continuing the Masonic tradition of service to our communities. Throughout the District, Brothers have come together to commemorate the values of liberty, patriotism, remembrance and charity that have helped shape our nation for nearly two and a half centuries.

One of the most visible celebrations occurred on July 4 in Geneva. When the City of Geneva had no official Independence Day program scheduled, the Brothers of Geneva-Ark Lodge 33 stepped forward to fill the void with a community-wide celebration marking the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The event featured patriotic music performed by the Andy Stobie Brass Band, readings of historic American speeches and a public reading of the Declaration of Independence, itself. Despite challenging weather, approximately sixty attendees gathered to celebrate our nation's heritage. Local Masons and community members participated in readings from Abraham Lincoln, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr. and other iconic voices from American history. The event also included a donation to the Geneva Fire Department in appreciation of their support of the celebration (they displayed a massive American Flag from their hook and ladder truck).



Brothers Jim Petropoulos and Victor Nelson reading I Have A Dream

Geneva-Ark Lodge's commitment to community service was further demonstrated on June 12 when the Lodge hosted a blood drive to support the ongoing needs of the American Red Cross while honoring the spirit of service that has always characterized both our nation and our Fraternity. The success of this effort reflects the Masonic principle that patriotism is best demonstrated through action and service to others.



RW Michael S. Simmons, DDGM O-S-Y Donating Blood

In the southern part of our District, the Brothers of Eagle Lodge 619 in Honeoye opened their grounds on July 3 to members of the community attending the Village of Honeoye's fireworks celebration. Visitors were welcomed to park on Lodge property and enjoy the festivities. To further enhance the evening, Brothers provided hot dogs and bottled water to those in attendance. This simple but meaningful act of hospitality exemplified Freemasonry's commitment to fellowship and community involvement while helping local families celebrate America's birthday together.

The District also came together to honor those who sacrificed for the freedoms we enjoy today. In Waterloo, recognized as the Birthplace of Memorial Day, Brothers of Pocahontas Lodge 211 in Seneca Falls organized a strong Masonic presence in the community's Memorial Day Parade. Brothers from throughout the District and neighboring areas assembled to march together. The occasion was made especially memorable by the participation of Grand Master Robert L. Hogan Jr. and several members of the Grand Line. Their attendance underscored the importance of remembering those who gave the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our nation and its ideals.



Grand Master Hogan with Brothers from the OSY District and surrounding areas getting ready to March in Celebration of the Birth of Memorial Day in Waterloo, NY 31 May 2026

Looking toward the future, the Ontario-Seneca-Yates Blue Lodge Council has commissioned a limited-edition challenge coin commemorating America's 250th Anniversary. This unique keepsake serves as both a tribute to our nation's founding and a reminder of the role Freemasons have played in the American story from the earliest days of the Republic to the present.

As these events demonstrate, the Lodges of the Ontario-Seneca-Yates District are not simply celebrating a milestone anniversary; they are actively living the principles upon which our nation was founded. Through community service, patriotic observances, charitable endeavors and public engagement, our Brothers continue to strengthen the communities we serve while honoring the remarkable legacy of the United States of America.

As we continue this historic anniversary year, may we remain mindful of our duty to preserve the freedoms entrusted to us. Let us leave our communities stronger for future generations—just as our forefathers did 250 years ago.

RW JERRY FILIPPIDIS
Chairman
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As we closed the 2025–2026 Campaign on May 31, 2026, I am pleased to report another outstanding year for the Masonic Brotherhood Fund. Thanks to the generosity and unwavering support of our Masonic Brothers throughout the jurisdiction the Fund received an incredible $560,729.80 in contributions.

These donations directly strengthen our ability to fulfill one of Freemasonry's most important commitments: caring for our own. During 2025 the Fund provided more than $100,000 in financial assistance to distressed Brothers, widows and orphans. Every contribution, regardless of size, helped ensure that relief was available to those facing difficult circumstances.

This past year also marked continued progress in expanding awareness of the Fund. The launch of our new website has made it easier than ever for Brothers to learn about our mission, stay connected and contribute. We have also been encouraged by the continued growth of the 1781 Society, whose dedicated members demonstrate an exceptional commitment to preserving our Masonic values through sustained philanthropy. Their generosity continues to make a lasting difference.

As we prepared to begin the next campaign, we were honored to work alongside MW Robert L. Hogan Jr. in advancing the mission of the Masonic Brotherhood Fund. Together, we look forward to building upon this year's success and expanding our ability to serve those who depend on our assistance.

On behalf of the Fund, I extend my sincere gratitude to every Brother who supported this campaign. Your kindness and dedication make our work possible and embody the principles of brotherly love, relief and charity that define our Fraternity. I encourage each of you to carry this spirit of generosity into the coming year. With your continued support, we can ensure that the Masonic Brotherhood Fund remains a source of hope and assistance for Brothers and their families when they need it most. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if I can assist you or support your fundraising efforts in any way.

Brotherhood Fund Campaign Figures

6/1/2025 to 5/31/2026

Categories	Total	Categories	Total
Grand Master's Allocation	$ 272,596.07	Tompkins Chapel Organ Restoration	$ 2,985.00
Camp Turk	$ 18,002.35	Livingston Masonic Library	$ 12,411.00
Masonic Medical Research Institute	$ 110,750.37	Masonic Endowment Benevolence Fund	$ 11,674.90
Masonic Care Community	$ 90,029.61	Other	$ 205.00
Military Outreach Program	$ 27,017.00	**Total**	**$ 560,729.80**
Masonic Youth Programs	$ 15,058.50		

Masonic Brotherhood Fund - Total Participation and Donation Order
can be found on pages 20 and 21

Babylon Lodge 793 Raises Large Class

In the sacred bonds of our ancient Craft, where the Square of Morality guides our steps and the Compasses of Wisdom circumscribe our desires, we embrace the divine principle of Brotherly Love. United as one, Babylon Lodge 793 conferred the Sublime Degree of Master Mason upon sixteen worthy Fellowcrafts.



We labored not as isolated stones but as a seamless Temple, each supporting the other with fidelity and zeal. Through this fraternal affection, no noble goal shall elude us, whether erecting the edifice of charity, truth or justice. Together, in harmony and strength, we build for eternity. It was an honor to be present to assist in bringing these newly made Master Masons to true Masonic Light.

Masonic Brotherhood Fund

2026 Brotherhood Fund Report (6/1/2025 to 5/31/2026) - Total Participation Order

		– Contributors –			– Contributions –				
District	Mbrs	Mbr	Lodge	Other	Mbr	Lodge	Other	Part %	Total $
016 Third Kings	287	107	2	2	109.00	2.00	2.00	38.68	$ 4,718.00
017 Letchworth	626	232	2	5	312.00	2.00	5.00	38.18	$ 12446.00
012 Fulton-Montgomery	326	102	0	1	170.00	0.00	3.00	31.60	$ 8705.00
042 Wayne	343	99	1	0	118.00	1.00	0.00	29.15	$ 3592.00
035 Queens	697	169	6	8	260.00	11.00	9.00	26.26	$ 20684.14
006 Chautauqua	423	96	0	6	136.00	0.00	6.00	24.11	$ 7085.00
036 Richmond	733	136	0	1	153.00	0.00	1.00	18.69	$ 6170.40
032 Ontario-Seneca-Yates	431	75	1	4	107.00	2.00	4.00	18.56	$ 7272.90
010 Erie	1365	205	2	11	286.00	2.00	15.00	15.97	$ 17407.00
037 St. Lawrence	441	68	0	1	95.00	0.00	1.00	15.65	$ 4679.00
041 Suffolk	978	134	4	7	190.00	4.00	8.00	14.83	$ 14250.99
025 Mid Hudson	707	95	2	6	181.00	4.00	9.00	14.57	$ 14891.57
007 Chemung-Schuyler-Tioga	324	46	1	0	59.00	1.00	0.00	14.51	$ 2711.00
031 Onondaga	848	116	3	4	183.00	4.00	4.00	14.50	$ 26083.38
020 Fifth Manhattan	565	67	4	2	105.00	9.00	5.00	12.92	$ 27561.00
033 Orange-Rockland-Sullivan	990	115	3	3	246.00	7.00	3.00	12.22	$ 132874.45
026 Monroe	885	98	3	5	159.00	3.00	5.00	11.98	$ 8715.88
001 Allegany-Steuben	385	44	1	1	67.00	1.00	0.00	11.95	$ 5450.00
023 Tenth Manhattan	938	106	2	1	124.00	2.00	2.00	11.62	$ 6676.43
028 Niagara-Orleans	475	51	1	3	70.00	2.00	4.00	11.58	$ 6683.00
044 Second Westchester-Putnam	450	44	2	3	67.00	2.00	3.00	10.89	$ 8397.35
027 Nassau	765	75	3	3	106.00	5.00	3.00	10.59	$ 19201.41
011 Franklin-Hamilton	162	17	0	0	24.00	0.00	0.00	10.49	$ 2051.00
004 Cayuga-Tompkins	404	37	3	1	45.00	4.00	1.00	10.15	$ 5193.57
015 Second Kings	262	26	0	0	43.00	0.00	0.00	9.92	$ 4365.00
030 Oneida	1181	96	1	5	138.00	1.00	5.00	8.64	$ 17680.00
002 Bronx	279	22	0	2	45.00	0.00	2.00	8.60	$ 3299.00
038 Saratoga-Warren-Washington	508	41	1	1	62.00	1.00	1.00	8.46	$ 3197.00
009 Cortland-Madison	278	23	0	0	29.00	0.00	0.00	8.27	$ 2340.00
022 Ninth Manhattan	703	48	4	6	95.00	4.00	7.00	8.25	$ 9260.00
034 Oswego	400	28	0	2	41.00	0.00	2.00	7.50	$ 2270.00
043 First Westchester-Putnam	453	32	1	0	55.00	1.00	0.00	7.28	$ 3880.00
029 Old Seventeenth	1116	76	2	2	131.00	2.00	2.00	7.17	$ 10712.50
013 Jefferson-Lewis	475	33	1	0	54.00	1.00	0.00	7.16	$ 3535.00
005 Central Leatherstocking	614	39	2	2	46.00	3.00	2.00	7.00	$ 4135.00
039 Southern Tier	562	36	1	2	41.00	1.00	2.00	6.94	$ 10953.00
003 Cattaraugus	198	11	0	2	16.00	0.00	2.00	6.57	$ 8165.00
024 Metropolitan	489	26	1	1	28.00	1.00	3.00	5.73	$ 5168.00
008 Clinton-Essex	261	12	1	0	22.00	1.00	0.00	4.98	$ 2594.00
014 First Kings	284	11	0	3	15.00	0.00	5.00	4.93	$ 2566.15
021 Seventh Manhattan	422	19	0	1	28.00	0.00	1.00	4.74	$ 2063.00
018 First Manhattan	1314	37	1	5	53.00	1.00	5.00	3.27	$ 11702.94
019 Fourth Manhattan	873	28	0	0	33.00	0.00	0.00	3.21	$ 9750.00
105 Lodges of Research	355	0	0	1	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.28	$ 25.00
070 Syria-Lebanon	399	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	$ –
999 Special District	0	0	0	57	0.00	0.00	0.00		$ 69568.74

Masonic Brotherhood Fund

2026 Brotherhood Fund Report (6/1/2025 to 5/31/2026) - Total Donation Order

		– Contributors –			– Contributions –				
District	Mbrs	Mbr	Lodge	Other	Mbr	Lodge	Other	Part %	Total $
033 Orange-Rockland-Sullivan	990	115	3	3	246.00	7.00	3.00	12.22	$ 132,874.45
020 Fifth Manhattan	565	67	4	2	105.00	9.00	5.00	12.92	$ 27,561.00
031 Onondaga	848	116	3	4	183.00	4.00	4.00	14.50	$ 26,083.38
035 Queens	697	169	6	8	260.00	11.00	9.00	26.26	$ 20,684.14
027 Nassau	765	75	3	3	106.00	5.00	3.00	10.59	$ 19,201.41
030 Oneida	1181	96	1	5	138.00	1.00	5.00	8.64	$ 17,680.00
010 Erie	1365	205	2	11	286.00	2.00	15.00	15.97	$ 17,407.00
025 Mid Hudson	707	95	2	6	181.00	4.00	9.00	14.57	$ 14,891.57
041 Suffolk	978	134	4	7	190.00	4.00	8.00	14.83	$ 14,250.99
017 Letchworth	626	232	2	5	312.00	2.00	5.00	38.18	$ 12,446.00
018 First Manhattan	1314	37	1	5	53.00	1.00	5.00	3.27	$ 11,702.94
039 Southern Tier	562	36	1	2	41.00	1.00	2.00	6.94	$ 10,953.00
029 Old Seventeenth	1116	76	2	2	131.00	2.00	2.00	7.17	$ 10,712.50
019 Fourth Manhattan	873	28	0	0	33.00	0.00	0.00	3.21	$ 9,750.00
022 Ninth Manhattan	703	48	4	6	95.00	4.00	7.00	8.25	$ 9,260.00
026 Monroe	885	98	3	5	159.00	3.00	5.00	11.98	$ 8,715.88
012 Fulton-Montgomery	326	102	0	1	170.00	0.00	3.00	31.60	$ 8,705.00
044 Second Westchester-Putnam	450	44	2	3	67.00	2.00	3.00	10.89	$ 8,397.35
003 Cattaraugus	198	11	0	2	16.00	0.00	2.00	6.57	$ 8,165.00
032 Ontario-Seneca-Yates	431	75	1	4	107.00	2.00	4.00	18.56	$ 7,272.90
006 Chautauqua	423	96	0	6	136.00	0.00	6.00	24.11	$ 7,085.00
028 Niagara-Orleans	475	51	1	3	70.00	2.00	4.00	11.58	$ 6,683.00
023 Tenth Manhattan	938	106	2	1	124.00	2.00	2.00	11.62	$ 6,676.43
036 Richmond	733	136	0	1	153.00	0.00	1.00	18.69	$ 6,170.40
001 Allegany-Steuben	385	44	1	1	67.00	1.00	0.00	11.95	$ 5,450.00
004 Cayuga-Tompkins	404	37	3	1	45.00	4.00	1.00	10.15	$ 5,193.57
024 Metropolitan	489	26	1	1	28.00	1.00	3.00	5.73	$ 5,168.00
016 Third Kings	287	107	2	2	109.00	2.00	2.00	38.68	$ 4,718.00
037 St. Lawrence	441	68	0	1	95.00	0.00	1.00	15.65	$ 4,679.00
015 Second Kings	262	26	0	0	43.00	0.00	0.00	9.92	$ 4,365.00
005 Central Leatherstocking	614	39	2	2	46.00	3.00	2.00	7.00	$ 4,135.00
043 First Westchester-Putnam	453	32	1	0	55.00	1.00	0.00	7.28	$ 3,880.00
042 Wayne	343	99	1	0	118.00	1.00	0.00	29.15	$ 3,592.00
013 Jefferson-Lewis	475	33	1	0	54.00	1.00	0.00	7.16	$ 3,535.00
002 Bronx	279	22	0	2	45.00	0.00	2.00	8.60	$ 3,299.00
038 Saratoga-Warren-Washington	508	41	1	1	62.00	1.00	1.00	8.46	$ 3,197.00
007 Chemung-Schuyler-Tioga	324	46	1	0	59.00	1.00	0.00	14.51	$ 2,711.00
008 Clinton-Essex	261	12	1	0	22.00	1.00	0.00	4.98	$ 2,594.00
014 First Kings	284	11	0	3	15.00	0.00	5.00	4.93	$ 2,566.15
009 Cortland-Madison	278	23	0	0	29.00	0.00	0.00	8.27	$ 2,340.00
034 Oswego	400	28	0	2	41.00	0.00	2.00	7.50	$ 2,270.00
021 Seventh Manhattan	422	19	0	1	28.00	0.00	1.00	4.74	$ 2,063.00
011 Franklin-Hamilton	162	17	0	0	24.00	0.00	0.00	10.49	$ 2,051.00
105 Lodges of Research	355	0	0	1	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.28	$ 25.00
999 Special District	0	0	0	57	0.00	0.00	0.00		$ 69,568.74
070 Syria-Lebanon	399	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	$ –

Address

The Most Worshipful Robert L. Hogan Jr.,
Grand Master of Masons in the State of New York
To the 2026 – 2028 District Deputy Grand Masters, Grand Lodge Staff Officers and Assistant Grand Lecturers in the Daniel D. Tompkins Memorial Chapel,
Masonic Care Community at Utica, New York
Saturday, June 27, 2026

Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master; Right Worshipful Elected Grand Lodge Officers; Most Worshipful Past Grand Masters; Permanent Members; the Appointed Grand Line and Appointed Grand Officers of the Grand Lodge; my Brothers all and especially our Ladies, our families and our guests: Good afternoon.

I stand here in absolute awe of this moment and all that it represents. Today, as Masons, we celebrate the nativity of St. John the Baptist, one of the Patron Saints of our Craft, which aligns with the summer solstice, the advent of a new season and the beginning of a new era of Masonry in the Empire State. It also marks the longest day of the year and I assure you that my address shall not live up to that definition.

As I look out I see men, good men, who are willing to dedicate themselves to the cause of Freemasonry for the betterment of their brethren; your unwavering commitment to education, our Masonic Ritual, and the basic tenets of our precious Fraternity is inspiring. The fact that I will have the opportunity to serve our Beloved Craft alongside worthy Brothers like you is truly an honor, and something I will cherish for the rest of my life.

Knowing from where I draw my strength to humbly lead our Craft, I ask you to please pray with me…

"Dear Lord, my Savior, I give You thanks and praise. I come before You seeking the courage, the stamina and confidence to lead. When the road becomes difficult and the burden of responsibility feels too heavy to carry, grant me the resilience to firmly stand upon Your chosen path. Provide me with the knowledge, wisdom and tolerance to make kind and sound decisions. Grant to me the humility to serve those whom I guide with the grace to listen with an understanding heart. Inspire my thoughts, my words, and my deeds thereby influencing others to reflect Your Light. All of which I humbly ask in Thy Holy Name, Amen."

I was raised by a schoolteacher and a New York State Police Senior Investigator, who prior to that was a Drill Instructor with the United States Marine Corps. Yeah, I was raised in "Bob's Boot Camp" on Potter Blvd. in Bay Shore, Long Island.

My dad wasn't warm and fuzzy, but I knew he loved me – and I learned a great deal by watching him as I grew up. He was a leader with the State Police, a leader at church, and a leader in the community. The most valuable thing I learned from my dad, as big and imposing a figure as he was – he led by treating everyone with respect and kindness.

Watching my dad, I learned that leadership is not about holding a title or being the man in charge. It's about influence, responsibility and the impact we leave on others. The most powerful way to lead is to show respect and kindness to others.

Respect means listening—really listening—to others, even when we disagree. It means valuing people for who they are, not just for what they can do. It means treating everyone, from the Grand Master to the newly Raised Brother, with the same dignity. That is the true meaning of being on the level. When people feel respected, they feel seen, heard and valued—and that is the foundation of trust.

Kindness, on the other hand, is often mistaken for weakness. But in truth, kindness is courage. It's choosing empathy when it's easier to judge. It's being patient when we're frustrated. It's offering a hand when we see someone struggling. Kindness creates a culture where people are not afraid to speak, to try new things, and to grow. Kindness is having the inner strength to remain compassionate, gentle and tolerant in the face of harshness and rudeness.

When we lead with respect and kindness, we don't just create better teams or form more positive environments—we create stronger human connections. We therefore need to model the kind of behavior that encourages others to do the same. And slowly, but surely, that shift in priorities can certainly transform an entire community.

Our Masonic Ritual dovetails with this message of respect and kindness, sculpting our inner spirit to be disciplined to accept our labor and work ardently toward fulfilling a higher purpose in life, without it becoming a dull, tedious and strenuous chore. Thereby, transforming the mundane and inconsequential routines of our daily lives into occasions whereby our core beliefs can take shape and be observed by the community at large.

By realigning our Fraternity with its original core values, specifically practicing what we preach and aiming for excellence, high moral character, and Esprit de Corps, we essentially become a band of extraordinary gentlemen and Brothers. However, we all march to our own drum beat. How you lead is up to you. But, you want your leadership to be effective and to make a difference. You never know who you may touch, or how many people you may influence by your words and actions.

The phrase "Well done is better than well said" had been coined by one of our founding fathers, Brother Benjamin Franklin. It alludes to the role for which we as Masons are best known, which is to establish trust by aligning one's behavior with our own words. To be a Freemason, each of us builds his reputation upon honesty and reliability. In essence, to be upon the square.

As Masons, we need to continue the vision of our founders and forefathers. Freemasonry owes its longevity and its appeal to those very core principles embedded in the precepts and teachings of the Craft, which have been an indelible and indispensable part of the Fraternity since its earliest beginnings.

My Brothers, our Fraternity teaches that you were first prepared to be a Mason in your Heart. And therein lies the

trust that each of you have in God. Freemasonry simply does not come from a book; it is part of your Soul and Being. This attribute of Masonry has great personal meaning to me. And therefore, as a Leader of the Craft, it is my solemn obligation to keep sacred and inviolate our principal tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, both within and without this Grand Lodge.

Freemasonry All Day / Every Day.

Believe me, my Brothers, I know from whence you came. I have first-hand knowledge of the great effort and the personal sacrifices that you have endured to reach the chair that you now occupy. And I applaud you for the due diligence and noble commitment that you have unselfishly made in the name of Freemasonry.

Working my way through the chairs of the Lodge while simultaneously raising a family and building a successful career in Law Enforcement was certainly no easy task. Although, this balancing act did have its ups and downs, the commitment of time, talent, treasure and a little sweat and tears was well worth the price of admission.

I fondly remember my time serving as the District Deputy Grand Master of the former Dutchess Masonic District under the Grand Mastership of MW William J. Thomas. Developing my Masonic sea-legs, I embraced the genuine work of several Lodge and District positions and served on various Grand Lodge Committees. Most rewarding of all was my participation and direct involvement with the Masonic Brotherhood Fund, both on a Lodge and District level, which clearly aligned with my altruistic and caring principles.

Of course, my having an extensive background as a career member of the New York State Police did indeed have a profound effect on my character. It engrained within me a highly specialized, objective and experience-based skill set coupled with the ability to effectively communicate and to critically listen to resolve conflicts. As such, I was chosen to be a valued asset on the Grand Lodge Committee on Law Enforcement, eventually becoming its Chairman.

Our Masonic Ritual places a great deal of emphasis upon the Working Tools of a Mason. The working tools are central to our Fraternity's teachings, acting as practical metaphors for ethical living, self-improvement, and toward building our inner temple. Amongst the tools, we are taught that the 24-inch gauge is emblematical to the 24 hours of the day. Somehow, my gauge has been divided into 28 inches… where has all the time gone?

I am very cognizant of the fact that each of you has a very busy life. Balancing God, Family, School, Work and Masonry into your over-crowded lives can be quite a juggling act. I know… I have been there.

More importantly I don't want those people sitting up there within the balcony, your wives and family members, to be cross with me. Rest assured, I am very acquainted with the concept that Masonry is a "volunteer" organization.

This brings me to an important point. Education: Education is the touchstone of Freemasonry. Harvey Firestone, the founder of the Firestone Tire & Rubber Company, when asked about his success, replied "You cannot sell your product, if you don't know your product." This is precisely why we as a Fraternity need to know, understand, and live Masonry. Masonic Education serves as the core mechanism that distinguishes and transforms the so-called Social Club into a Masonic Lodge, a place that inspires and generates a life-time pursuit of moral and philosophical self-improvement.

With this thought in mind, I wish to emphasize the importance that all Masons, especially our Lodge Wardens and Masters, seek further Light in Masonry and avail themselves of the many courses on Masonic Education that are actively being taught. The Master's Chair, the Twenty-Four Inch Gauge, the Road to the East, and the Masonic Development Course, to name a few.

I am not an unreasonable taskmaster, and I'd like to maintain the notion that most of the Wardens and Worshipful Masters of our Lodges have completed or intend to complete these courses in due time. Yes, this is a volunteer organization. But I'm going to be hopeful that they all volunteer to get those courses under their belt as soon as possible. After all, a well-informed brotherhood is a brotherhood well prepared to represent Freemasonry. To sell Masonry, you need to know Masonry.

Be ever mindful that the Brother who lends himself toward fulfilling that inner thirst for knowledge by availing himself of the wealth of information found within these erudite courses will eventually be able to lead his fellow Brothers along the same path with the real possibility of attracting new members to the Fraternity.

Following this thread, I have endorsed and plan to continue the Lodge of Excellence Program into my tenure in office. It is both healthy and proactive to continue to evaluate ourselves in a fair and equitable fashion. We need to be honest, frank and look beyond the veneer when performing the process of evaluation. Covering up or making undue excuses for substandard work and other irregularities hurts both the underperforming Lodge as well as the Fraternity as a whole. Remember, we are only as strong as our weakest link.

If you discover or know of a Lodge or Lodges that are struggling, cannot open and/or confer a Degree, we as YOUR Grand Lodge need to know. We have far too many Lodges that are barely surviving, and if we're honest with ourselves, they're not surviving. We cannot offer help or solutions, if these unfortunate situations are not brought to Light. As mentioned earlier, Trust is the foundation of our Masonic Fraternity. Deceiving your Brothers into believing that all is well, when in fact the Lodge is drowning, denies the Lodge much needed help while perpetuating the downward spiral of our Fraternity. This negative momentum is truly unacceptable, and I want to leave you with the legacy that we are addressing the root causes for these problems and constructively implemented resolutions, whereby we get our troubled Lodges and Districts back on their feet.

To this purpose, I have asked RW Christophe Lobry-Boulanger, a Trustee of the Chancellor Robert R Livingston Masonic Library, to be the point person to undertake the task of collecting the data on the "state of our Lodges," which you will supply, so that I and my team of advisors can formulate an accurate picture of Masonry in New York. This databank will serve as a useful tool in getting a firm grip on the health and welfare of our Jurisdiction.

I am very pleased that my team of District Deputy Grand Masters, Grand Lodge Staff Officers, and Assistant Grand Lecturers are present in the Chapel and joining us this afternoon. As such, I, as your Grand Master, direct you to make an honest assessment of the Lodges in your respective Masonic Districts, compiling a list of struggling Lodges that

Continues on to page 22 – Grand Master's St. John's Address

Continued from to page 21 – Grand Master's St. John's Address
in your opinion would benefit from a potential merger with a healthier and sustainable Lodge or Lodges.

You are to forward this important information to your assigned Liaison Officer who will send it up the line to RW Oscar Alleyne, the Deputy Grand Master and RW Christopher Lobry-Boulanger. I will review the information compiled and make various comparisons with our Deputy Grand Master in a concerted effort to find a lasting solution.

The ship of Freemasonry may be listing a wee bit to the port-side, but the good news is that we are not taking on water. In fact, we are going to take aggressive and decisive steps to begin righting the ship of this Grand Jurisdiction and returning to a steady course.

In tandem with the collection of data, we intend to review those Lodges that appear to be in trouble and may be able to alleviate their distress through a potential consolidation. The same course of action may also involve the consolidation of weak Masonic Districts. I plan to work closely with the Committee on Charters, the Grand Secretary's Office, and the Judge Advocate to see if we can cut through some of the legal red tape and augment a simpler process.

Our next project will be to tackle Masonic Protocol and Masonic Etiquette. Both Masonic Protocol and Masonic Etiquette are essential and paramount within the teachings and charges of our Order as Brother Masons. The maxim, "Let them know always and everywhere, that a gentleman stands before them." This short and memorable statement expresses a simple truth, that as Masons we conduct ourselves in a chivalrous and proper manner with civility.

Likewise, all Masonic meetings and communications, whether on a Lodge, District or Grand Lodge level, we are to uniformly practice the same code of conduct, the same ritual, show respect for the Flag, due reverence during prayers, come to the Sign of Fidelity when addressing a superior, uniformly bestow Grand Honors, and follow the same protocols when making an entrance or retiring from a Lodge. Stay tuned as more details are to follow.

In thinking about our Grand Jurisdiction, I as Grand Master can never say thank-you enough for the support that I have received and for the work that the officers, committees and Brothers have done and continue to do for our beloved Fraternity.

RW Oscar Alleyne, Deputy Grand Master, thank you for your friendship and support, for your advice and the integral part you have taken as part of our team.

I also extend my heart-felt gratitude to RW John Haslam Sr., RW William H. Toth II, our Grand Wardens, and to RW John T. Hansen, our Grand Treasurer, for your untiring devotion and service to our Craft. Your willingness to accept the special jobs which I will be calling on you to do is appreciated beyond measure.

RW Richard T. Schulz, our Grand Secretary. My dear Brother, our time together has truly been very special to me and I look forward to working closely with you during my tenure. Thank you so much for your support and constructive advice that you have given. The members owe you much thanks and gratitude for the many hours that you spend, along with your staff, for your dedication and labor on their behalf. Our time together, whether on the road to our sister jurisdictions or visiting the special events to which we were invited by our Lodges and Districts, or our meetings within my office, are very precious to me.

Our Past Grand Masters continue to be a most valuable resource for our Grand Lodge. MW Past Grand Masters, I thank each of you for the good counsel you have freely given to me as I progressed through the chairs. Thank you, again.

I call upon the appointed Grand Line Officers to please rise: Thank you for the dedication to duty and service you have and are about to give to this Grand Lodge. Many of you have and will travel in the van far and wide with me and with the Deputy Grand Master, which makes those long and arduous trips a pleasure and positive experience. In a word, you are FAMILY. Thank you.

I call upon the District Deputy Grand Masters, the Grand Lodge Staff Officers and Assistant Grand Lecturers to please rise: My Brothers, you are all committed toward working diligently to promote and implement the programs of the Grand Lodge and to spread my message to the Craft. Thank you for all that you have done and will do for our Grand Lodge, your Districts and Lodges, and especially for your Grand Master.

At this time, it is my pleasure and privilege to recognize RW George Filippidis, Trustee President and his fellow Trustees of the Masonic Hall and Home, who have been a great help to Grand Lodge as they grapple with the immensity of the responsibility that comes with their territory. To further acknowledge their good work, I wish to recognize the great care and dedication they have shown toward the successful operation and maintenance of these wonderful and magnificent grounds at the Masonic Care Community in Utica, as well as at the picture perfect and pristine Camp Turk in the Adirondack Mountains.

In addition, I note the Trustees' fine upkeep and diligent preservation of the seat and showcase of Masonry, our Masonic Hall at 23rd Street in New York City, which due to their untiring stewardship has been kept a shining jewel and prominent point of interest in the Big Apple.

As if these many duties and responsibilities were not enough, our Trustees also oversee the successful operation of the Empire State Mason magazine, the Grand Lodge Educational Assistance Program, and the George Washington Masonic Historic Site at Tappan.

Would the Trustees of the Masonic Hall and Home please stand and be recognized with a round of applause? These stalwart Brothers have been doing amazing work for us. You heard from them in March as well as in May at our Grand Lodge Communications. Thank you so much my friends and dear Brothers.

Another group of diligent and hardworking Brothers comprise our second treasured jewel, the Directors of the Masonic Medical Research Institute headed by their Chairman of the Board, RW David F. Schneeweiss, jointly with their President, RW Paul G. Huck. Together with their fellow Directors, they continue to amaze and inspire us as they work for all mankind. Through their scientific achievement they bring honor and recognition to the Grand Lodge of New York and to Freemasonry. Their strategic business plan is prudent, fiscally responsible and essential to securing the future of the Masonic Medical Research Institute and the continuity of its research.

Earlier this year, the MMRI launched the 3-5-7 campaign – a fundraising awareness initiative rooted in the symbolic 3, 5 and 7 steps that all Freemasons recognize as part of our journey

to becoming a Master Mason. Right now, the campaign seeks the earnest support of Brothers and Lodges throughout this Jurisdiction by freely contributing sums of $357.00 to help support this mission.

I can tell you that the Grand Lodges of Connecticut, Rhode Island and South Dakota each have pledged 100% of their respective Lodges' charitable drives in full support of our Masonic Medical Research Institute's 3-5-7 Campaign. Can I hear an Amen?

My Brothers, our Research Institute sits right over there, literally in the middle of New York State. What a proud day this truly is when three of our sister Grand Lodges put skin in the game.

Now the ball is in our court… How about we lead by example and achieve 100% participation in this noble endeavor? $357.00 from each New York Lodge, or through the generosity of our brethren willing to step up and support this important life-changing cause. It's 3 steps toward hope, 5 steps toward discovery, and 7 steps toward a cure.

To show my absolute support for the Masonic Medical Research Institute and its Mission, I have declared the Masonic Medical Research Institute the "Charity of Choice" for my Term in Office.

You will all receive a supply of my Grand Master's Masonic Pins. However, I am not selling them. What I am doing is asking for donations from the Brothers that you give them to. All of the monies collected from those donations will go directly to the Masonic Medical Research Institute to help further their Campaign.

Would the Directors of the MMRI please rise and be recognized along with Dr. Maria Kontaridis, the Director of Research? How do we greet them? Applause. Thank you for doing a yeoman's work with steadfast dedication.

In previously referring to the shining jewel of Freemasonry in New York State, I would be remiss in not addressing our third precious jewel, namely the Chancellor Robert R Livingston Masonic Library, under the leadership of RW Rodney K. Couto, Library President and his fellow Trustees.

Brethren, I truly believe and trust in the very capable abilities of this Board of Library Trustees, that through their prudent and diligent ethical management of our prized collection, our Masonic heritage is indeed in good and loving hands and will remain an important asset for future generations of Masons.

Keeping this capital in mind, we owe it to ourselves and to future generations to pass on this enormous and invaluable legacy of Masonic literature, artifacts and heritage in as good if not better condition than we find it today.

Would the Library Trustees and their Executive Director, RW Michael LaRocco, please rise? Thank you, my brethren, for your continued support of this historic legacy.

On another note, I would like to touch upon a program that showed much potential when it was first introduced by Past Grand Master Carl J. Fitje in the mid 2000s and I'm bringing back: The One-Day Grand Master's Class.

On August 22nd this summer, at the Troy Masonic Center, we're going to offer the opportunity for men who have been properly investigated and vetted by their prospective Lodges to take the three Degrees of Masonry and be Raised as a Master Mason all in one day. Further, we are offering a "Chance-to-Advance" to all current Entered Apprentices and Fellowcrafts to complete their Degrees on that day, as well.

Since the One-Day Grand Master's Class will commence during the year that our Nation celebrates its 250th Anniversary, and the region around Troy, New York contains some of our oldest Lodges, which are numbered 3, 4, 5 and 6, I'm figuring this Degree will have a Colonial flavor to it.

This Degree will be the First One-Day Grand Master's Class in a series. We're planning to host more One-Day Grand Master's Classes in 2027, which will take place in various locations around our Jurisdiction, such as the proposed April 10th One-Day Grand Master's Class at New York City's Masonic Hall. My plan is to stagger these Degrees so that I can personally attend the One-Day Degrees at all of the locations.

Planning and executing endeavors like this take time, patience and know-how. I selected two Brothers who have my absolute confidence that these Degrees will be a resounding success: RW Stewart C. McCloud II, Chairman of the Ritual Renaissance Committee and RW Richard C. Friedman, Past Junior Grand Warden.

A number of years ago, these two Brothers eloquently expressed their sentiments about Masonic Ritual in their Annual Committee Report, which still rings clear today, saying "the Masonic Ritual is the bedrock that sets our Fraternity apart from and above all other fraternal organizations that can be found today in our communities. When its principles and tenets are taken to heart and put into sincere practice, Freemasonry comes alive and instills in each of us a renewed sense of faith, integrity and trust."

Thank you both, from the bottom of my heart, and welcome back, Brother Rich.

News Bulletin! I'm very proud to report that the Grand Lodge of New York will be hosting the World Conference of Regular Masonic Grand Lodges in November 2027. When our Grand Lodge was represented at the World Conference in 2024 held in Brazil, we placed our name in a bid to host the World Conference in New York in 2027.

Just last month, while our delegation was attending the 2026 World Conference in South Africa, our delegation received the favorable consent of the Conference that the Grand Lodge of New York has been unanimously selected to host the World Conference of Grand Lodges for 2027. We have not had the privilege of hosting such an august body of Freemasonry since MW Earle J. Hino, Jr., presided at the World Conference in 1998. What a wonderful feather in our cap!

To ensure the smooth and successful orchestration of such a major event, I have recruited the services of Past Grand Master William M. Sardone, our Grand Secretary, RW Richard T. Schulz, our Chairman of the Grand Lodge Convention Committee, RW Donald P. Mattson and Wor. Michael D. Radigan, our Administration and Registry Clerk. I wish to extend my gratitude and thanks to these four magnificent Brothers for accepting the challenge and for immediately getting the wheels of Grand Lodge turning. Truth be known, I know they started before I even stepped off the plane from South Africa.

My dear Brothers, we are men of honor and of integrity. A good leader leads his Brothers with honesty, fairness, generosity, kindness and **Respect**. The former President and former NYC Police Commissioner, Brother Theodore Roosevelt in describing the benevolent quality of a good leader said, "There is not a man of us who does not at times need a helping hand to be stretched out to him and then shame upon him who will not stretch out the helping hand to his brother."

Continues on to page 25 – Grand Master's St. John's Address



The DeWint House

The DeWint House, in Tappan, New York, is one of the oldest surviving structures in Rockland County and is an outstanding example of Hudson Valley Dutch Colonial architecture. It was built using brick and indigenous stone in 1700 by Daniel DeClark, a Hollander, who emigrated to America in 1676 and bought the land from Native Americans in 1682. The date of construction is marked by glazed bricks incorporated into the façade.

In 1746 Johannes DeWint bought the house. His spouse Antje Dewint, daughter, Anna Maria, and her husband, Major Fredericus Blauvelt, lived in the house.

The DeWint House became a temporary headquarters of George Washington while he was Commander-in-Chief during the American Revolution. Washington was a guest in the south parlor twice in 1780 and twice in 1783.

Washington first stayed at the Dewint House from August 8–24, 1780 and returned from September 28 to October 7 for the trial of British spy Major John André. Washington signed the execution warrant in the house and Andre was subsequently hanged. Andre had been captured in Tarrytown after plotting with Benedict Arnold to surrender West Point to the British. André was held in the Old '76 House in Tappan, a tavern which is now a restaurant. Washington provided meals from his table at the DeWint House to André at the '76 House. A stone on André Hill Road at Gallows Hill marks the site of André's hanging.

Washington and his key staff headquartered at the DeWint House from May 4–8, 1783, while negotiating the final withdrawal of British troops from New York City with British General Sir Guy Carleton. It was said to have been a friendly conference combined with an elegant dinner prepared by Samuel Fraunces, owner of Fraunces Tavern in New York City, who came up to prepare the dinner for Washington and his guest.

From November 11–14, 1783, a terrible snowstorm forced Washington to seek shelter in the DeWint House on his trip to visit West Point and later New York City.

Grounds and renovation

The property was in disrepair when it was acquired by the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York in 1932. The site was declared a National Historic Landmark and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1966.

The site has undergone extensive restoration and upgrading. The house's two first-floor rooms have been restored and furnished to reflect the period of Washington's occupancy. A replica kitchen, as Washington might have known it while he was a guest of the DeWints, was completed in 1996.

The grounds include a 19th-century carriage house that contains displays of artifacts uncovered at the site during archaeological digs, as well as items related to Washington, André and Arnold, and the Masons. At the rear of the house stand seven small grave markers each bearing one to three initials, which came from a nearby property. It is believed these markers came from a burial ground for slaves on that property.

The house and grounds are open to the public daily.



RW GEORGE R. WACOB
Chairman
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grwacob1@optonline.net



Awards Committee Accepts 2027 DSA Nominations



The committee will be receiving 2027 Dedicated Service Award Recommendation Forms from September 1 through November 12, 2026. At the end of August, a letter was sent detailing requirements, information, timetable and form for the 2027 Dedicated Service Award, as well as the various Community Service Awards. The letter went to the 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. See Grand Secretary's Page and you may obtain all the information you will need.

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 notice that as of 2017, work in the District has been considered equally with work in the Lodge as a qualification to receive a DSA. The chest medallion to be worn by DSA recipients has been a great success. This medallion is included in the DSA package for new honorees. Earlier DSA recipients may also obtain and wear this medallion in recognition of their work in the quarries. The cost is $20.00 per medallion and it may be ordered through the Lodge Secretary from Lodge Services.

I want to impress upon you that there is a cutoff date for the Dedicated Service Award recommendation. The forms and information must be postmarked on or before November 12, 2026. There is a lengthy procedure in place with the committee reviewing and voting, the Grand Master approving and the required notifications being made for each recipient. We encourage the timely submission of 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 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 webpage on the Grand Lodge website at the Grand Secretary's Page. This page will give you information, requirements and forms for the various awards.

The committee will also continue to provide information through its Empire State Mason article.

Awards Committee:
RW George R. Wacob, Chairman
Metropolitan Region: RW John Hansen and RW Carl Strievski, Mid-State Region: RW William Trinder and W Alfred W. Fergerson, Hudson-Champlain Region: RW Francis Burek and RW Daniel Elliot, Western Region: RW William H. Greene and RW Douglas D. Airth

Continued from to page 23 – Grand Master's St. John's Address

I try to be a person of value – who adds value to others. That's the mark of a true leader. I try to be fair and nice to people. I'm not a pushover by any means. As a former law enforcement officer, I certainly know how to run interference, but I still try to be friendly and courteous to everyone. I don't insult people or think that I'm better than anyone.

I try not to judge people. People make different choices than I would, but you know what – I have no idea what's going on in their lives, so I don't judge them. I try to talk to them so I can understand them better.

Let's choose to lead this Craft in a way that makes others feel safe, supported and inspired. Let's lead with respect. Let's lead with kindness. Because in the end, how we treat others will always matter more than the titles we hold or the accolades we earn. Let that be our legacy.

Leadership is not about being the loudest voice in the room; it's about being the voice that lifts others up. Not about being right all the time but about doing right by others. That's the kind of leadership that lasts.

Good leaders listen to people. and when you listen to people – you win their hearts. When you win their hearts, they will listen to what you have to say and want to follow you. You see the title of Leader is not given, it is EARNED.

That's the style of leadership that I learned from my dad. It's the style of leadership I led as a supervisor with the State Police, and that's the style of leadership that I've always tried to lead as an Officer in Freemasonry. The Code of Ethics devised by the founder and first Superintendent of the New York State Police, Dr. George Fletcher Chandler, emphasized service, honesty and fairness; all of which closely dovetail with the lessons that I learned in Freemasonry.

Brothers, it's the way that I intend to lead our beloved Craft as your 107th Grand Master. As a true leader, I invite you to join me on this fabulous journey through Masonry. Brothers, can I count on YOU?

May God bless each of you…
May God bless our beloved Freemasonry…
May God bless our men and women in Uniform
and May God bless America!

Masonic Youth Committee

W ED DRAVES, DSA
Chairman
716/208-3346
eddraves@gmail.com

Brothers, as our Nation celebrates its 250th birthday, we look towards a great future. Our Fraternity is empowering the young people who will lead the USA into its next 250 years.

The Patriotism displayed by our three youth groups, DeMolay, Rainbow and Triangle, at different events this spring and early summer did my heart good and gave me hope in the future. My social media feed was full of young men and ladies planting flags, cleaning grave markers and visiting veterans. Locally here, in Buffalo, DeMolay and Triangle came together to place flags at the Battle Within Memorial for their annual Memorial Day service. As Masonic groups, we feel a special connection to our country's founders, and DeMolay, Rainbow and Triangle teach Patriotism to the young people who join.

As a Committee, we would like to thank the Lodges that invite our Masonic Youth to your patriotic celebrations and events. Be it a parade, flag-folding demonstration or a talk from a veteran's group, engaging our youth encourages them to learn about and love our country. Remember, a single interaction or event can light a spark in a young person and make an impact. Although they hear about patriotism from their parents, teachers, Chapter Dads and Advisors, sometimes seeing things from a less familiar person can light a spark. Does your Lodge invite the local Masonic (or other youth groups from Scouting, a local school or a church) to your celebrations? You should consider it. It is a great way to be active in the community and can even grow your Lodge.

On a different note, members of your Grand Lodge Masonic Youth Committee and their wives were very active at this year's DeMolay International Session in Chicago, Illinois. Committee members Peter Brusoe, Mike Ferraro (with his wife Suzanne), my wife Anne and I worked the "neon party" along with NY DeMolay Advisor John Ferretti and some dedicated DeMolay Advisors from other States. The party was a reward for the young men's efforts in raising money for the Jed Foundation, surpassing their $10,000 goal. The Jed Foundation is a non-profit that protects emotional health and prevents suicide in our youth, giving them the skills and support they need to thrive.

Seeing NY DeMolay and your Masonic Youth Committee taking a lead role in rewarding the young men was a very special moment. Personally, I was given a renewed appreciation for the tremendous support we receive in NY. When speaking with people from other jurisdictions, I hear that not all States are as forward-thinking as ours.

Our Committee member, Peter Brusoe, was also appointed DeMolay Grand Orator at the session. Mike Ferrero, my wife Anne and I were appointed to the Youth Services Committee. That is committee members making a difference.

In closing, does your Lodge utilize their Masonic Youth Liaison officer? Does someone in your Lodge visit DeMolay, Rainbow or Triangle and report back? Do they check the social media of our three youth groups to see what is happening around the State? If not, volunteer to take on that duty; you will find the experience uplifting. Please contact me at EdDraves@gmail.com if you have any questions, want to be a youth group volunteer or want an introduction to Masonic Youth Group adult leadership.

Sublime Degree and Rocket's Red Glare

As residents of our cities and towns set off fireworks this evening in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the independence of the United States of America, we wanted to share a few photos from our very special Master Mason Degree. Wappingers 671 celebrated the Raising on July 4, 2026.

Most Worshipful Grand Master Robert Hogan and Deputy Grand Master RW Oscar Alleyne (and Past Master of Wappingers Lodge) performed key roles in the ritual. We were honored to have these leaders from the Grand Lodge of the State of New York Free & Accepted Masons present this morning.



Masons were present and involved at the formative beginning of this country. Brother Paul Revere alerted the residents of Lexington, Massachusetts in 1775 of impending danger; Brother John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, was first signer of the Declaration of Independence; Brother George Washington, on July 4, 1776, exactly 250 years ago today, was preparing the Continental Army and the residents of the City of New York for an impending invasion from Britain. On this evening let us remember our shared blessings and those who have sacrificed over the past 250 years for the freedom, liberty and democracy that all who live in our nation cherish.

MOLLIE DENLOW
Camp Turk Administrator
315/392-2081
campturk@campturk.org
www.campturk.org

New Traditions at Turk

As another incredible summer comes to a close we are filled with gratitude for everyone who helped make Camp Turk such a special place for our campers. This season was filled with exciting firsts, meaningful traditions and opportunities to introduce even more families to the Camp Turk experience.

One of the highlights of the summer was our very first Rookie Day. This special event was designed to give children who had never attended camp the opportunity to experience Camp Turk before committing to a full session. The day was a tremendous success, welcoming twenty-five prospective campers and their families to camp. Even more exciting: six new campers registered to attend camp after experiencing everything Camp Turk has to offer. We look forward to growing this event in the years to come and welcoming many more first-time campers through our gates.

We were also honored to host Grand Master's Day, a wonderful celebration that brought together campers and members of the Masonic Fraternity. The day included a delicious lunch shared by campers and Masons, followed by a friendly—but highly competitive—Masons vs. Campers kickball game. The laughter, teamwork and camaraderie made for an unforgettable afternoon and showcased the special bond between Camp Turk and the Masonic community that has supported our camp for generations.

Another exciting milestone this year was our first-ever Alumni Weekend. Former campers and staff returned to Camp Turk to reconnect, reminisce and experience the camp they love once again. It was heartwarming to see friendships rekindled, stories shared around the campfire and generations of the Camp Turk family coming together. The weekend exceeded our expectations and many attendees have already asked that Alumni Weekend become an annual tradition—and perhaps even be expanded into a longer event in the future.

Our outreach efforts also extended beyond camp this summer. Camp Turk proudly participated in the Boilermaker Expo, where the camp staff spent the day sharing information about camp with families from across the region. Hundreds of flyers were distributed, countless conversations were held and many new families learned about the life-changing experiences Camp Turk provides. Events like these help us continue growing our camp community and ensure that more children have the opportunity to discover the adventure, friendships and personal growth that Camp Turk offers.

None of these successes would have been possible without the unwavering support of our volunteers, staff, alumni, donors, Masonic organizations and camp families. Your dedication allows Camp Turk to continue creating lifelong memories while introducing new generations of children to the magic of summer camp.

As we begin planning for next year, we are excited to build on the success of this summer with even more opportunities for campers, families, alumni and supporters to become part of the Camp Turk tradition. Thank you for making this one of our most memorable summers yet. We cannot wait to see what next year will bring.







The 2026 Grand Master's Ball Honoring M∴W∴ Robert L. Hogan Jr. Grand Master of Masons in the State Of New York



Saturday, October 3, 2026

6pm - 11pm
The Crowne Plaza Desmond Hotel
660 Albany Shaker Rd.
Albany, NY 12211

$165 per person

Reservation Deadline: September 27, 2026
Dress: Formal Attire
Free valet parking
6pm Cocktail Hour Reception
Followed by Dinner and Dancing.
Banquet with choice of entrees.

For Hotel Reservations under the Grand Master's Reserved block, call the Hotel direct at 518-869-8100 and use Group Code GMQ, scan the QR code or use link:
tinyurl.com/AlbanyGMQ2026

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Seating Preference: Lodge No/Name: _____ District: _____ Other:_____
Meal Preference: Chicken Francese _____ Salmon Picata _____ Filet Mignon _____
Dietary Restrictions: _____

Any questions can be raised to Michael Siegel
michaelrsiegel@mac.com or (845)428-1426.

2026 - 2028

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Free and Accepted Masons
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In Honor of

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RW VINCENT SCANDOLE
Commander General
Grand Post
516/650-1076
vscandole76@gmail.com

Across the years, the accomplishments of the Masonic War Veterans have been many. We have organized and maintained Posts throughout the State. We have created a spirit of comradeship among Brothers who understand the sacrifices of military life. We have helped extend the usefulness of Freemasonry by adding color, ceremony, and patriotic spirit to Lodge functions throughout New York. We have assisted District Deputies at official visits, participated in youth rallies, and taken part in patriotic programs that remind our communities of the values for which our veterans served. We have supported Lodges by helping to increase attendance and by offering unique presentations and programs inside the open Lodge

Our service has also extended beyond the Masonic Lodge. The Masonic War Veterans has participated in community functions that sponsor youth activities such as junior league baseball, scouting, and similar programs that build character in the next generation. We have conducted visitations to Veteran Medical Centers to support presentations, celebrations, and distributions, bringing encouragement to those receiving care. We have also assisted in securing admission to veterans hospitals for those in need and in helping Brothers obtain other veterans' benefits. In doing so, we have lived up to our responsibility not only to remember veterans, but to care for them.

One of the great strengths of the Masonic War Veterans is that it serves multiple purposes while staying true to one mission. It is a place of brotherhood for veterans who are Masons. It is a service arm of Grand Lodge. It is a presence in the Districts. It is an advocate for veterans. It is a partner in community life. And it is a reminder that the values of military service and Masonic duty are not separate callings, but complementary ones. Together they produce men of character, action, and conscience.

As we mark seventy-seven years, we also look to the future. Our organization is strongest when men of good will step forward to continue the work. Every Post benefits from active members. Every District benefits when the Masonic War Veterans is represented and engaged. Every Lodge benefits when Brothers bring color, ceremony, and patriotic spirit to its proceedings. Every community benefits when Veterans and Masons stand together in visible service to others.

The invitation, therefore, is simple and sincere. To all Masons who are veterans, or who meet the eligibility requirements, we invite you to join us. To those who already understand the meaning of brotherhood, honor, and loyalty, we invite you to stand with us. To those who wish to serve their Brothers, their Districts, their Grand Lodge, and their communities, we invite you to become part of this proud tradition. There is room in our ranks for men who believe in service, who value fellowship, and who are willing to help carry forward a legacy that began in 1948 and continues with purpose today .

The Masonic War Veterans has always been more than a name. It is a living commitment. It is the memory of those who served. It is the fellowship of those who continue to serve. It is the promise that Veterans and Masons will remain bonded by brotherhood, honor, and loyalty. And it is an invitation to every eligible Brother who wishes to be part of that mission: join us, serve with us, and help preserve this.

NYGL rededicates Herkimer Monument

On 28 June 2026, following the Grand Lodge's annual St. John's Day celebrations in Utica, the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York concluded the day's events with a historic rededication of the General Nicholas Herkimer Monument in Little Falls, New York. As commemorations began throughout the nation in anticipation of the Semiquincentennial (250th Anniversary) of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Grand Line performed the ceremonial relaying of the monument's cornerstone, reenacting the original cornerstone ceremony conducted in 1896 by Grand Secretary Edward M. L. Ehlers.

The Grand Master, MW Robert Hogan, and theGrand Line were introduced by Deputy Grand Historian Emeritus, RW Lee Justo, who offered historical remarks and explained the protocols for the ceremony. Mr. Edward Heinrichs, Director of the General Nicholas Herkimer Home and Monument for the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, formally opened the ceremony by reading passages relating to General Herkimer and recounting the events of the Battle of Oriskany on 6 August 1777.

During that fierce engagement, General Herkimer was mortally wounded when he was struck in the leg by a musket ball. Despite his injury, he calmly directed the Tryon County Militia from beneath a beech tree while his men, together with their Oneida and Tuscarora allies, fought against British regulars, Loyalist forces and warriors from several nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. General Herkimer succumbed to his wounds ten days later at his home near Little Falls.

Although the Battle of Oriskany is less widely known than Yorktown, Saratoga or Bunker Hill, it was one of the most

consequential battles of the American Revolution and played a pivotal role in disrupting the British strategy to seize control of the Hudson River Valley. At the time, Lieutenant Colonel Barry St. Leger was besieging Fort Stanwix in present-day Rome, New York. Upon learning that General Herkimer and the Tryon County Militia were advancing to relieve the fort, St. Leger dispatched a force of indigenous warriors under Brother Joseph Brant and Loyalist Rangers commanded by Brother John Butler to intercept the American column. On 6 August 1777, Brant's force ambushed Herkimer's militia in a deep ravine near the native village of Oriska, now Oriskany. The opening moments of the battle inflicted devastating casualties upon the militia. Nevertheless, despite suffering heavy losses and the mortal wounding of their commander, the surviving American militiamen and their allies regrouped on higher ground and fought with remarkable determination.



After hours of brutal combat, the engagement ended in a stalemate, forcing the British, Loyalists and their allies to withdraw to St. Leger's camp.

While historians often describe Oriskany as a costly or pyrrhic American victory, the extraordinary resilience displayed by the Tryon County Militia and their allies profoundly affected the Saratoga Campaign. Their determined resistance weakened St. Leger's expedition, contributed to the abandonment of the siege of Fort Stanwix and strengthened American resolve during one of the Revolution's most critical campaigns.



General Herkimer was not the only Freemason present on the battlefield. Approximately 172 participants were Freemasons, as were many of the principal officers serving on both sides of the conflict. Many had sat together in Lodge as members of St. Patrick's Lodge 4 in present-day Johnstown, while others belonged to Lodges such as Union Lodge 1 in Albany.

The present ceremony was conducted by the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York, escorted by Battle of Oriskany Post 55 of the New York State Masonic War Veterans, including Past Commander General Stephen Dreizler and Third Lieutenant General Garry Visconti. Also in attendance were Oneida District Deputy Grand Master Michael Smith, brethren from throughout the Oneida District and Masons from across New York State. Military honors included an eleven-gun salute presented by the Oriskany Battle Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution and an eleven-cannon salute fired by the 2nd Continental Artillery of the New York State Sons of the American Revolution.

The public is encouraged to help make the 250th Anniversary of the Battle of Oriskany a memorable and fitting commemoration by attending the anniversary observance. This is to be conducted on 6 August 2027 at the Oriskany Battlefield in Oriskany, New York.



For more information about the Battle of Oriskany, please visit the Oriskany Battlefield Museum website: https://www.oriskanymuseum.com/. For information about the General Nicholas Herkimer Home State Historic Site, please visit: https://parks.ny.gov/visit/historic-sites/herkimer-home-state-historic-site.

Photographs by Don Bray and Logan Costantine.

Digging Up Bones: Scipio Origins and Tracks of Early Brothers

by RW Stephen L. Zabriskie,
Custodian of the Work

Organization and Hall

When the village of Aurora was the western frontier, an early settlement on the Military Tract, a baker's dozen of Freemasons petitioned the Grand Lodge of New York for a charter to establish a Lodge. The petition dated 1795 was granted and Grand Lodge issued a charter dated March 22, 1797. Grand Master Robert R Livingston and his officers signed the instrument. The members of Scipio Lodge 58 met in a few different locations, including the new Cayuga Academy from 1801 to 1805, before building a home in 1806.

In 1819 the newly formed Aurora Royal Arch Chapter, comprising most of the members of the Lodge, commissioned a builder to raise a Chapter Hall. The builder was at the time engaged in erecting the wooden Presbyterian Church meeting house diagonally across the street from the Lodge. When that building was finished, contractor Jacops Hovey commenced the Chapter Hall on a next-door lot. Its design bore a remarkable resemblance to the church, sans steeple, and the two properties must have looked like bookends. DeWitt Clinton laid the cornerstone with Masonic honors on August 18, 1819. Not until October 6 did the members consummate the acquisition of the land under the structure from the Trustees of the Cayuga Academy, many of whom were also members of Scipio 58.

A handful of years later, the Morgan Incident and the Anti-Masonic movement made membership in a Lodge a liability for thousands of citizens and the village of Aurora was not exempted. The Scipio Lodge and the Aurora Royal Arch Chapter went dormant for roughly fifteen years, from about 1830 to 1845. During this period, however, there were tenants in the building. Brother Samuel Mandell had his carpenter shop in the lower room, probably from the building's completion until about 1835. In that year St. Paul's Episcopal Church fitted up the space for worship and they occupied it until 1871.

In 1843 Lewis Henry Morgan founded the Grand Order of the Iroquois, which was based on the Indian culture that fascinated him throughout his life. In 1844 and '45 the local adherents, the Wolf Tribe, met in the Lodge room. A general assembly in 1845 brought members of other "tribes" and keynote speaker Henry R. Schoolcraft.

Some of the Wolf Tribe members here were former members of Lodge and Chapter. In March of 1845 someone called a special meeting at the Lodge and those present agreed to petition Grand Lodge for a new charter in order to resume operations, in the now friendlier climate of the post-Anti-Masonry period. In June 1846 Grand Lodge re-issued the original 1797 charter, under the new number 110. A few years later the Chapter petitioned the Grand Chapter for renewal of its charter and this request was similarly granted, in 1849.

In these days the Lodge and the Chapter had an arrangement with the Order of Odd Fellows for use of the Lodge room. This covenant required certain improvements and the provision of fuel and lights to the Lodge and Chapter; it was continued on a year-to-year basis until concluded in 1854, and the Lodge offered to purchase certain furnishings—chairs, carpeting, cushions, lamps, stove and nine spittoons—for the sum of $80.

From 1873 to 1877 the Chapter rented the Lodge room to Aurora Lodge 975 Independent Order of Good Templars, a temperance organization and one of the first societies to admit women members. For a long number of years, into the late 20th century, the property owners leased the lower room as a polling place for municipal elections. Early in the 1990s a charter grade school held instruction in the lower room.

In 1899 Aurora Royal Arch Chapter 64 surrendered its charter and ceased to function. Scipio Lodge 110 succeeded to full ownership of the premises. For over 100 years the Lodge entity and individual members have contributed funds and personal labor to preserve and maintain their historic home. In 2004 the Aurora Masonic Center was chartered by the NYS Regents as a Historical Society charged with preservation of the historic structure and its collections; Scipio Lodge continues as perpetual tenant.

The Men

In Storke's *History of Cayuga County New York, 1789-1879* there is this passage (p. 414):

> Following are the names of some of the early members [of Scipio Lodge 58], with the years in which their names first appeared upon the records, though many of them are known to have joined earlier than the years indicated: John Tillottson and Seth Sherwood, in 1797; August Chidsey, Andrew Simpson, Abner French, Daniel Shepard, Edward Paine, Edward Richardson, Edward Wheeler, Elisha Durkee, Fred'k Delano, Joseph Richardson, Jas. Barnes, Joseph Barnes, Jas. Bacon, Jonathan Richmond, Jonathan Hastings, Osborn Parson, Perley Kenney, Peres Brownell, Roswell Franklin, Victor S. Towsley, Walter Wood, Zebulon Taylor, Dudley Avery, Erastus Spalding, Stephen Downing, Matthew N. Tillottson, Phineas Rice, Jabez Bradley and George Barkley, in 1799; Thos. Luckey, Robert L. Tracy and Luther Gere, in 1800; Samuel Knapp, Wm. L. Morgan, Edmund Wright, Jedediah Morgan, James M. Devit, Christopher Morgan, Cornelius Cuyler and Benjamin Ledyard, in 1802.

There are references throughout Storke to many of these men as they began to settle the new territory in the early 1790s, some coming to what is now Aurora, some to Northville, or King Ferry, some Levanna and Scipioville and Genoa in the town of Milton. Much of the area was part of the original county of Onondaga and town of Scipio until smaller divisions were made. Imagine the inconvenience of traveling the five to eight miles to Aurora from King Ferry or Scipioville or Sherwood—or even twenty miles from Hardenbergh's Corners, later Auburn—on horseback or otherwise, to attend a Lodge meeting. Many of these Lodge members assumed

civil responsibilities in their disparate geographies and these and their occupational endeavors are variously highlighted. It is difficult, however—in this and other sources—to trace definitive accounts of either their origins in Freemasonry or their service in the Revolution. Although it is fair to point out that these may have coincided and that many of these soldiers may have got their legitimate Initiation in one of the many Military Lodges.

Historian and Scipio Lodge member Temple Rice Hollcroft in 1940 produced a little *History of Scipio Lodge 110 F. and A.M., 1795-1940*, which identifies the thirteen signers of the 1795 petition to the Grand Lodge. A distinction of petitioning to form a new Masonic Lodge carries the not illogical requirement that all petitioners must already be Masons in good standing. Of these thirteen, four do not appear in the Storke catalog above or in Hollcroft's list of the forty-eight members on the rolls of Scipio 58 in 1798. This might suggest any number of explanations: in the few years since the 1795 petition they may have moved on; they may have lapsed in their dues payments or attendance and been de-listed, possibly to be restored in the future; or some may have been Masons from Lodges farther to the east helping to plant a new Lodge in the wilderness and were never members of Scipio in the first place. Despite the paucity of information we know these early leaders were shaped by their service on behalf of a country coming into being, by the harshness and the rewards of building a life in raw, untouched environment, and by service to the ideals of Freemasonry.

It is common for researchers to refer to their Revolutionary War subjects with the rank they ultimately achieved, without much distinction paid to the chronology of it all. So, for example, we see that Colonel Comfort Tyler was the Charter Senior Warden when the Scipio Lodge 58 was brought into existence in 1797. In point of fact, Tyler, born on Washington's birthday in 1764 in Ashford, CT, was 13 or 14 years old when he entered service at West Point. It was not until the war of 1812 when he entered the army that he served in the capacity of Assistant Commissary General to the northern army, attaining the rank of Colonel.

His Masonic record does not appear among NY Grand Lodge archives. He was a surveyor after the war, laying out the boundary between New York and Pennsylvania, the Military Tract and the Cayuga Reservation. While he was busy in this area he was designated SW of the new Lodge in Aurora. He was not an original petitioner; he served one year and did not advance to Master; his name is recorded in the 1798 return to Grand Lodge as PSW, or Past Senior Warden. He then became active in the Syracuse area of Onondaga County in various official capacities and in the development of public infrastructure and he settled there. In 1802 he appears as a petitioner to form Onondaga Lodge, which was warranted in January 1803. Mid-year, Tyler was elected Treasurer and in November, Senior Warden of Onondaga Lodge.

Seth Sherwood, born in 1747 in Connecticut, was a mature 50 years old when he assumed the position of Charter Worshipful Master of Scipio Lodge. During the Revolution his father Seth was Quartermaster throughout the war; younger brother Adiel joined as a Lieutenant in 1775 and made Captain in 1776; Seth also joined the Levies as a Lieutenant. When he went into the NY Militia after the war he was promoted Captain in 1786 and to Major in 1795.

In Ft. Edward around 1784, young Seth and Adiel, who had joined an Albany Lodge in 1776, petitioned to form a Lodge at that place—actually in the tavern run by Adiel. Washington Lodge was chartered in 1785 with Adiel Sherwood as Charter WM and Seth Sherwood as Charter SW. Father Seth was made a Mason in 1762 in Fairfield, CT but he died in Albany before he could join his sons in Washington Lodge. Seth's Lodge of origin and his record are not identified but he must have had suitable standing to be assigned the second position in the start-up Lodge at Ft. Edward and the principal office at Aurora a little more than ten years later.

Other names: Uriah Polley was a signer in 1795. I can find that he was a soldier in the Connecticut Line from the town of Lebanon in 1781 and maybe to 1783. (Lists and Records.)

In a long listing of "Early Courts, Counselors and Cases," Storke says the first court in Onondaga County (which included Cayuga, Seneca and part of Tompkins) in 1794 was held in Asa Danforth's corn house. Danforth was a partner of Tyler in the salt business and they came in around 1788. Andrew Englis assisted at a court in 1794. Englis was a signer on the 1795 petition. The names of judges and jurors throughout this recitation are recognizable as belonging to residents and Masons across the whole jurisdiction: Mumford, Morgan, Watkins, Stoyell, Hardenbergh, Shepard, Cuyler, Marsh, Tillotson, Burnham; also from our list, Jabez Bradley, Augustus Chidsey, Walter Wood.

Augustus Chidsey hosted the first town meeting in Scipio in April 1794. Among the officers elected was Elisha Durkee, Commissioner of Roads. For a long time the village at Aurora was about the center of the Onondaga County and it was therefore the County Seat. When Cayuga County was erected in 1799 and Seneca County taken off in 1804 Aurora found itself on the western edge and various other centers vied for the honor. In 1804 Augustus Chidsey and John Tillotson were appointed commissioners to fix the spot of the new Seat. They agreed with Judge Sherwood to locate it at Sherwood. A new set of commissioners of a more remote and disinterested nature was promptly established and they settled on Auburn in 1805.

Elisha Durkee came to this part of the country with Roswell Franklin in 1789 in a trip that was not unusual for its level of hardship. He helped Franklin build the first white man's structure and went on to start his own holding a little way north. These men and others believed they had legal claim but found they were on Indian lands and were removed. Durkee moved on to Scipio in 1791, but not before his daughter Betsey was born near Levanna in 1790, likely the first white child born in the county.

Jabez Bradley arrived early and set himself in the town of Milton, King Ferry area. At the first town meeting, also April 1, 1794, Bradley was elected Commissioner of Highways. He hosted the organizing meeting of the Union Society, the 1st Congregational Church, at his home in 1804. He was involved with his Brother Mason John Tillotson in the Christian life in Northville, and in fact leased his land for the erection of the meeting house. Bradley was also a tavern keeper.

In the online National Archives NextGen Catalog there are thousands of pages of "Case Files of Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Applications Based on Revolutionary War Service…."

Continues on page 35 – Digging Up Bones

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Electric City Turns Out Volunteers

by W Justin P. Cook, DSA, Beukendaal 915

In early May the Electric City Chapter of DeMolay International in Schenectady learned that the Bernard and Millie Duker Children's Hospital at Albany Medical Center needed volunteers for its annual Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Reunion. This cherished event brings together for an afternoon of fun former NICU patients, their families and caregivers and the doctors, nurses and staff who cared for them. The reunion helps foster a strong sense of community among those connected by the shared experience of receiving care at Upstate New York's only children's hospital.

When the Chapter leadership team learned of the opportunity, they had a decision to make: continue with their long-awaited laser tag event or adjust their plans to volunteer at the reunion. For the Chapter's leaders, the choice was clear.

When asked about the decision, Master Councilor Brayan Backaus replied, "I can't think of anything in our term plan that could be more important than this."

With that, the Chapter and the young ladies involved in the Sweetheart Program answered the call to service. On June 14 the youth leaders arrived ready to serve and immediately got to work, assisting with parking and helping welcome families as they arrived. As more and more guests filled the reunion grounds, the youth leaders transitioned to supporting the event's many kid-friendly activities, helping create a fun and engaging experience for the NICU graduates.

Throughout the afternoon, the youth leaders could be found wherever an extra set of hands was needed—guiding activities, playing with children and helping ensure the event ran smoothly. Their willingness to serve reflected DeMolay's commitment to leading with empathy, serving others and making a positive difference in their community.

By choosing service over recreation these young leaders demonstrated that leadership is about putting the needs of others first and that service is fun. Their efforts helped create lasting memories for hundreds of children and families whose stories began in the NICU but have since become stories of resilience, hope and the compassionate care that helped them thrive.

One moment captured the spirit of the day. As one child was leaving he stopped for a moment, turned toward the members of Electric City Chapter, waved and said, "Goodbye."

Though brief, the gesture served as a heartfelt reminder that even the simplest acts of kindness can leave a lasting impression. Through their actions the members of Electric City Chapter and the Sweetheart Program embodied the ideals of DeMolay—showing that even small acts of service can have a meaningful and lasting impact.



NY State DeMolay Convention

The NY State DeMolay Convention has just concluded in Glens Falls, NY. Those in attendance got to witness the "collaring" of great Advisors to the young men of NY DeMolay. The Ceremony was the result of a unanimous vote by Active Members of the International Supreme Council whose yearly Session recently concluded. Our very own Ed Callaghan III, and Craig Riha along with Mark Alvarado from the Rivers Region are now Deputy Members of the International Supreme Council. Ed Draves and Eric Evarts were voted upon and are now Active Members of the International Supreme Council. Attached is a picture of our new ISC Members and the New York ISC Delegation who attended the collaring event.

At New York State DeMolay Convention delegates elected Joseph Ferraro as the 2026-2027 State Master Councilor. Brother Ferraro from Tuscarora Chapter in Western NY. Locally, Tristan Schulbaum, who was recently named the "2026 International Congress Brother of the Year" is now the newest Past State Master Councilor. I am sure we will not see the last of him at DeMolay events.



Please save two important dates for upcoming events.

September 16th (Wednesday) - our very own Ed Callaghan, Sr. will be honored at Spartan Lodge, receiving his 65 year apron. The meeting will be open, so come one, come all.

November 15th (Sunday) - our Preceptory will be conferring the Legion of Honor, again at Spartan Lodge.

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There is not much that is definitive here unless one has specific corroborating detail or unless it is an extraordinarily unique name, such as Uriah Polley. Frankly, many men have the same name and there are a variety of spellings and unless you can narrow the search to, say, MA, and have some idea of date of birth, it may be useless data. Also, these handwritten depositions are difficult to decipher and details hard to resurrect.

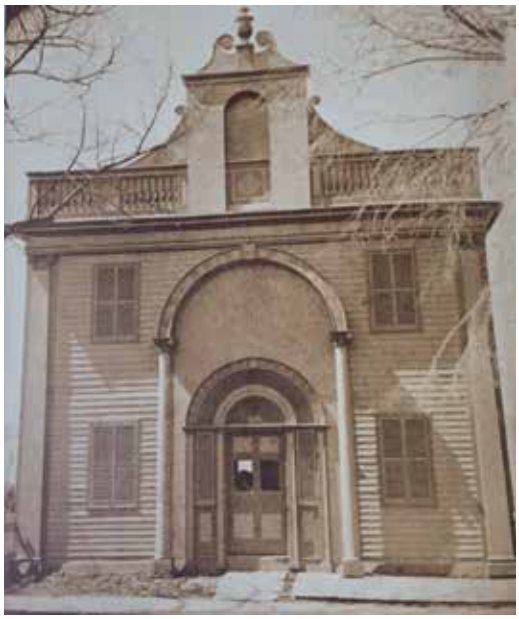
I found a Phinehas Rice, which could be Phineas Rice from our list. He was from Framingham, MA and his story is interesting. He entered service in the militia in the summer of 1776 "as a substitute for my father ____ Rice who enlisted or was drafted to go to Noddle's Island." Phinehas was marched to the Island and worked two to three months "making a fort [Ft. Strong]." In 1778 he was drafted to the militia at Cambridge and guarded prisoners of war, taken under Gen. Burgoyne, for three months. In 1779 his father enlisted for service in Rhode Island and Phinehas went again as a substitute. Some man named Hovey was his Captain, he thinks from Brooklyn. His concluding assertion may disqualify him from our consideration: "I was a resident of Framingham and have always made that place my home."

Perley Kenney has to be one of ours. He was a doctor when he settled here near Sherwood from CT in or about 1797. His script is mostly illegible but I could make out that he enlisted as a private in 1775. He was variously from Berkshire County, MA and Milford, CT. He served in New York. He was drafted a Sergeant in 1778. At some point he became wagon master and was involved with the Artillery around West Point.

In April of 1778 Osborn Parsons enlisted in a Regiment from CT under Col. Phillip B. Bradley, "until Peace in the year 1783." He served in a battle at Jamestown in Virginia, commanded by the Marquis de La Fayette. He was "at the siege of Yorktown and taking of Lord Cornwallis beside a number of small skirmishes." He is 55 years old at the time of this deposition in 1818. Note once again the young ages of these kids: born in 1763 he was 15 when he joined. Parsons states "I am a distiller by occupation."

This petition was entered at New York City. In 1824 he made application to a court in Hamilton Co., OH. His statement says he had, two or three years prior to 1818, "possessed considerable property in the City and State of New York." The failure of his Mercantile House in NYC brought him down and all his property was seized by his creditors.

These Aurora notes are a few examples of what can be overturned with a bit of scratching. Military records should be good sources but names without other specific markers can be inconclusive. Lodge records through respective Grand Lodge archives should be able to shine some light as to actual membership at a point in time. But individual Lodge records are usually, unfortunately inaccessible. This is where the persistent researcher can dig in and flesh out his story.



"Image probably about 1900, before electricity and before raised sidewalk.… Note the polychrome paint scheme and fully visible column stone plinths along with original corner pilaster wood bases."—Condition Report, 2016; Crawford & Stearns, Architects & Preservation Planners.

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Happy Birthday, America!

New York Rainbow has been so proud to celebrate the founding of our country through participation in numerous parades and other patriotic events throughout the spring and summer, further showing our lesson of Patriotism is alive and well in our organization. Our support of our country, our service members and the future of our organization is reflected in the 2026-2027 state charity project: Blue Star Mothers. We have already started our fundraising in selling our famous Gertrude Hawk candy bars, stuffed eagles and red, white and blue bears and patriotic ribbon pins. We also have tried to be creative in making wristlet keychains in a variety of patterns and other fun items. Be on the lookout for ways you can participate to help us raise funds for this amazing program that assists our active-duty service members and their families. We will also be holding our state-wide walk-a-thon on Saturday, October 3 on Long Island. Please reach out if you would like to sponsor or donate.

We are still in great need of advisors and members in the LeRoy/Batavia area or Ontario District and Rockland/Westchester areas. We need assistance in revitalizing the Assembly in Walden. If you can offer any help, we would be most appreciative.

Please reach out if you would like someone to come and speak to your Lodge or Chapter about our youth groups. We can let you know all you can do for them and all they can do for you. We would love the opportunity to visit any of your Lodge or District events. We want to share who and what we are and do and give you the chance to meet our girls and make the difference in the lives of your Masonic youth.

Our girls work very hard to make the most of their membership, learning leadership, community service and kindness along the way. But we need your help and support. Please follow our social media channels on Facebook at NY Rainbow, Instagram @nyiorg and TikTok @nyiorg for more information on what we are doing and how you can get involved. Our NY Masonic youth groups want and need your attendance and participation as well as referral of youth to our programs. Please reach out to any of us to connect. We look forward to hearing from you soon.











Youth Rep Addresses Full Chapel at Utica

by Eliza Burley

Grand Master Mr. Hogan, Deputy Grand Master Mr. Alleyne, Attendees, Masonic family and friends, all: Good afternoon! My name is Eliza Burley, and I am the State Representative for the Organization of Triangles, Incorporated. I am very thankful for the fact that I could be here today and speak on behalf of our three incredible youth organizations in New York.

I bring greetings from Miss Niessa Cruz, the 2026 Grand Worthy Advisor for the International Order of Rainbow for Girls in the State of New York; Mr. Tristan Schulbaum, State Master Councilor, New York DeMolay; and most importantly from our members and advisors. This year for St. John's Day I would like to share a little more information about our respective organizations and the ideals that Triangles, Rainbow and DeMolay are built upon.

The Organization of Triangles, Inc., a group for girls ages 10-21, was founded officially in 1927 by Mrs. Rose E. Scherer who was in Eastern Star. Although the three duties represent our Triangle and are rooted within our organization, we recently created our embodying values of Leadership, Service, Friendship and Growth. These four essence words describe the different varieties of qualities we offer the young women and members of our organization.

Leadership in the Organization of Triangles, Inc. means serving others, guiding peers and growing through responsibility— not just holding a title. Rooted in our three angles, members develop leadership skills such as public speaking, organization, teamwork, decision-making, event planning and fundraising through hands-on experience. With adults serving as mentors, members build character and confidence in an inclusive, service-oriented environment.

Friendship in Triangles means sisterhood built on respect, loyalty, trust and support. Members learn to encourage one another, celebrate successes and stand together through challenges and ensure no one is left out or put down. Through these actions, they become dependable friends who build confidence, honesty and lasting friendships while strengthening their Triangle.

Service in Triangles means giving your time, talents and compassion to help others and strengthen your community. Through service projects, fundraisers for charitable causes, and volunteer activities members learn to serve selflessly with kindness, developing empathy, teamwork, leadership skills and a lifelong commitment to making a positive difference.

Growth in Triangles is the journey of becoming your best self through personal development, strengthening your character and becoming a confident leader with integrity, compassion and purpose, while also committing to our core values. Through education, service, sisterhood and leadership, members challenge themselves, accept responsibility, support one another and make a positive difference in their chapters, communities and lives.

The International Order of Rainbow for Girls is also a group for girls ages 10-21 and was founded in 1922 by Reverend W. Mark Sexson, who was a Master Mason. Rainbow instills a multitude of success-driven skills within their girls so they have a purposeful adulthood with exceptional character and high leadership development. The core values taught and embodied within Rainbow are represented by the colors within a rainbow.

Red represents Love. To Rainbow, red is a symbol of a woman's love and devotion, teaching the members love of home and family from within.

Orange represents Religion. This station allows girls of Rainbow to understand religion as a Supreme Being and membership in a place of worship of your choice.

Yellow represents Nature. This station makes members grasp the importance of nature and what nature can do for us all.

Green represents Immortality. Immortality teaches that death is only the beginning, and that though it can be scary, death is nothing to fear.

Blue is represented by Fidelity. This station teaches girls the importance of loyalty, allowing girls to lay a foundation for true happiness by staying loyal to those around them.

Indigo represents Patriotism. This station, with our American flag seated by its side, teaches girls to be proud and responsible citizens and to defend the flag of one's country.

Violet represents Service. This last station, however—one of the most important—teaches girls to be of some service each day. Service guides girls to provide unselfish acts of kindness towards others.

DeMolay is an international all-boys Masonic youth organization founded in 1919 by Frank Land. This organization has a strong emphasis and endeavor to make strong leaders and is the largest fraternal organization for young men. Within DeMolay they focus on the Seven Cardinal Virtues.

Filial Love represents love for parents. This virtue teaches the young men to love their parents and to never forget what your parents gave up to have you.

Reverence for Sacred Things represents the respect for

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religious objects. Within DeMolay no one religion is preached or given emphasis. It is about being tolerant in thought but also believing in a higher power. Courtesy represents respect towards people. This teaches the young men to respect others regardless of who they are or even where they are from.

Comradeship represents friendship. This teaches you to be a good friend and care for the people close to you. Fidelity represents loyalty and honesty. To keep secrets and be a person of your word.

Cleanness represents the action of keeping yourself clean not only in physical body form but also in mind and spirit.

Lastly, Patriotism represents the love you should have for your country and to always be a good, upstanding citizen.

Our respective Masonic youth organizations in the State of New York are purposeful and unique in their own ways. But it is important to know that each of us has the similar goals of spreading kindness, giving youth a safe place to be themselves and create lasting friendships, and at our heart performing service and making the community a better place. By supporting charitable causes throughout the state, the International Order of Rainbow for Girls and the Organization of Triangles, Inc. work to make a positive difference in the lives of others through their state charities while fostering personal growth and strengthening the bonds of sisterhood.

This year as State Representative I have chosen to spread awareness for a nonprofit group, Sandy Hook Promise. Sandy Hook Promise was founded and is led by several family members of loved ones that died in December of 2012 at Sandy Hook Elementary School due to gun violence. Their mission is to honor those loved ones by turning this tragedy into a moment of transformation. As a mentor of a youth organization, ensuring our members are safe is of utmost priority. Sandy Hook Promise has created multiple programs to teach and empower both youth and adults how to recognize warning signs and make students feel safe, heard, and supported to prevent gun violence not only in schools but also in homes and the community as a whole. Through these programs it is confirmed that nineteen planned school shootings were prevented. During my term, I will be fundraising and spreading as much awareness as possible for this crucial cause.

New York Rainbow has chosen to embrace the legacy of our country and organization as they adopt the Blue Star Mothers program in support of our active duty service members. They are a nonprofit organization made up primarily of mothers, stepmothers and grandmothers of people who are serving or have served in the U.S. military. Their mission is to support service members, veterans, military families and one another. The organization was founded during World War II in 1942 and today has more than 200 chapters across the United States.

As well, Rainbow is starting their own fundraising efforts as they work towards hosting the 2030 International Supreme sessions in New York. Their own Mom Gale is presiding as the Supreme Worthy Advisor.

We would appreciate it if you took a small amount of time out of your day to stop by our designated booths to learn more about our individual charities. Consider taking a look at the goodies being sold and making a donation in support of these life-changing organizations.

The opportunities and lifelong benefits provided through our Masonic youth groups are far-reaching, and the examples shared today are just a glimpse of what members can gain from their involvement. Through Rainbow, Triangle and DeMolay, members build character, learn to work effectively with others, gain self-assurance and prepare to make meaningful impact in their communities. These organizations and their future leaders thrive because of the support of others and we sincerely appreciate everything you do for our members.

I hope today's presentation has given you a greater appreciation for the impact our Masonic youth organizations have on young adults. Thank you for the time, the opportunity to speak and the courtesies extended to me and my traveling companions. I hope to see you throughout the rest of the day.

Thank you!

Oops: Correction

In the article in the spring issue of the *Empire State Mason* that described the Lodge of Excellence program there was an unfortunate—and unintentional—omission. Columbian Lodge 0484 of the 4th Manhattan District should have been recognized as a due recipient. Apologies are extended.



Stamp Club Holds Potential

by MW William Sardone, PGM

Recently, at the Masonic Model Railroad Club, a few members asked about starting a stamp club. As luck would have it, our Model Railroad Club received a nice donation of trains from Mrs. Eleanor Frey and stamps were included.

I spoke to the Grand Master and he approved moving ahead with this program. I know there were larger stamp groups at one time. This will be meant for enjoyment for anyone who wants to participate.



The good news? This is a rain-or-shine activity. We can do this in person, via Zoom, after a Lodge meeting or during a special day where we have classroom space. If you want to be part of this, let me know at wsardone@att.net. You never know—we may be able to lick this new program into shape quickly.

Skaneateles Lodge 522 Presents Dewitt Clinton Award

On Wednesday, May 20 the Brothers of Skaneateles Lodge 522 proudly presented the Dewitt Clinton Award to Dr. Bill Nichols, DVM of Skaneateles for his years of service to the community. The

DeWitt Clinton Award honors exceptional voluntary community service by non-Masonic individuals or organizations, reflecting the values of service and civic responsibility exemplified by DeWitt Clinton.

In his remarks Dr. Nichols credited much of his success, both as a man and veterinarian, to the guidance and influence of his late father, Dr. William Nichols, DVM. He also acknowledged the impact the late Dr. Bruce Widger, DVM, Past Grand Master of Masons of the State of NY had on his career.

Congratulations go to Doc Nichols on this well-deserved honor. His commitment to others, with the obvious love and support of his wonderful family, continues to make his community proud. Big thanks also go to W Tim Gannon and W John Covell for organizing the event.





Golf for MMRI

On Sunday, June 7 the Chautauqua District held their annual Masons and Friends golf tournament at Maplehurst Country Club in Lakewood, NY. The tournament this year had one of the largest turnouts, as well as tee-box sponsorships.

The successful event raised $2500 for the Masonic Medical Research Institute. RW Douglas Mulson, DDGM of the Chautauqua District, presented a check to Executive Director Maria I. Kontaridis, P.H.D. at the St. John's Day weekend events in Utica in June.

Photo of the check presentation at St. John's Day. The tournament organizers and team along with the 1st place winners.Master of Forest Lodge with Lodge members and friends with their tee-box sponsorship sign.



Family Traditions

Black Lake Hammond Lodge 319 recognized an unusual and striking example of devotion to the Fraternity. At the Lodge's 112th annual Rose Banquet with our Canadian brethren, RW John Wilson and Brother Ken Wilson were called out for years of service awards. The father/son presentation acknowledged John's seventy years and Ken's forty years of membership in the Craft.

Left to right: RW Tim Pitcher, WM; Brother Ken Wilson, 40 years; RW John Wilson, 70 years; RW Brenton Taylor, present DDGM; RW Andrew Kennedy, incoming DDGM; RW Naaman Lowry, incoming Grand Sword Bearer.



Midnight Sun to Future: Living Legacy

by W Amer B. Abu-Houran,
Master of Norsemen Lodge 878

Recently, while reviewing old Norsemen Lodge 878 communications, photographs, newspaper clippings and historical records, I wondered whether the brethren who created them ever imagined that another Master would read their words more than a century later. Those records were once new, written by Norsemen of their own time as they wondered what their Lodge might become. Looking at them, I suddenly realized that our own words and photographs will one day be read in the same way by brethren whose names we do not yet know. That thought changed how I saw my place in the East. Every Master hopes to leave his mark, and I am no different. Yet the chair I now sit in exists only because generations of brethren built the Lodge and passed it forward.

The story began on March 17, 1909 when twenty Masons of Norwegian birth or descent gathered at Prospect Hall in Brooklyn. W Jacob T. Andersen, remembered as "The Father of Norsemen Lodge," encouraged the formation of a Lodge where Norwegian brethren could practice the work of the Grand Lodge of New York while serving their community and preserving a shared heritage. They organized as the Midnight Sun Club, with W Louis M. Johnson as President and W Jacob T. Andersen as Secretary.

Their by-laws stated the purpose plainly: "to organize a Norwegian Lodge in the City of New York." On May 2, 1909 the brethren unanimously adopted the name "Norsemen Lodge." After months of preparation, they received a dispensation on October 26, with W Louis M. Johnson serving as their first Master. The Grand Lodge granted its charter on May 5, 1910 and Norsemen Lodge 878 was constituted on May 20 with forty members.

From the beginning, Norsemen expressed its identity through Masonry and heritage. Early gifts included American and Norwegian flags and a miniature silver Viking ship. The Lodge supported Norwegian charitable institutions and remained connected to the community from which it emerged. In 1936 it honored five Norwegian explorers and aviators, including Bernt Balchen and Thor Solberg, and dedicated a Norse section in what is now the Chancellor Robert R Livingston Masonic Library and Museum. In 1987 Sandalphon Lodge 836 consolidated with Norsemen, bringing its brethren and history into the Lodge we know today.





The lesson of stewardship is not confined to our distant past. About a decade ago, when Norsemen faced serious challenges in attendance and financial stability, Past Masters RW Antonio Giannattasio, RW Ronald Shepard and RW Thomas Stanten helped steady the Lodge and restore its strength. Their commitment showed me that preserving a Lodge requires men willing to serve, sacrifice and keep the light burning when circumstances are difficult. Norsemen stands today in part because they refused to let it fade. I stand on their shoulders with the same responsibility to preserve and strengthen what has been placed in my care.

Today, Norsemen continues to build strong men through ritual, education, mentorship, charity, fellowship and service. We preserve our records, reconnect Brothers, welcome new generations and carry forward the traditions that make our Lodge unmistakably Norsemen. Our membership now reflects many backgrounds but our Norwegian character remains a living part of who we are.

We are not trying to recreate 1910. We are honoring its purpose in the world we now inhabit. One way we do that is through the Viking Degree and Valhalla Feast, a newly established tradition we intend to continue in the years ahead. This Norsemen Degree is not an official Masonic Degree, but rather a unique expression of our heritage, centered on fellowship, remembrance and celebration. It gives renewed life to what was entrusted to us and helps ensure that the Norsemen spirit remains worthy of being passed forward.

Perhaps one day another Master will search the archives and find this article. He may look at our photographs as I looked at the records of those who came before us and wonder what we hoped to build. The world around him may be almost unrecognizable. Still, I would like to believe that, whether here in New York, elsewhere in this galaxy or beyond, Norsemen Lodge will continue gathering good men, building strong men, preserving its heritage and guarding the light entrusted to it.

We do not merely inherit Norsemen Lodge from our predecessors; we borrow it from our successors. Our responsibility is not to leave our mark for its own sake but to leave the Lodge stronger and prepared for those we may never meet. May future brethren find that we were worthy of both the men who built this Lodge and the men who will one day carry it forward.



An AI-assisted artistic composite symbolizing continuity and stewardship across generations of Norsemen Masters Created from authentic archival portraits and a current photograph

The Cross and the Sword

By Rt. Em. S.K. John J. Mullin
Grand Commander Knights Templar of New York

A History and Heritage of the GCKT

The Grand Commandery Knights Templar of the State of New York represents a unique and enduring branch of Freemasonry, distinctly characterized by its Christian character and chivalric traditions. Unlike the symbolic Lodges or the Scottish Rite, which welcome members of all faiths to unite under a belief in a Supreme Being, the Knights Templar—forming the apex of the York Rite—require their members to be Christian Masons pledged to defend the faith.

Drawing inspiration from the medieval military order founded during the Crusades, the Grand Commandery of New York has evolved from an 18th-century fraternal leader into a modern powerhouse of historical preservation, moral cultivation and widespread philanthropic outreach. The lineage of the Masonic Knights Templar in New York is rich, complex and deeply intertwined with the early history of the American Republic.

Medieval Monks to Modern Masons

While romantic legends attempt to draw a direct line of continuity from the original Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon (dissolved by Papal Bull in 1312) to modern Freemasonry, historians generally view the connection as esoteric and allegorical. The Masonic Templar Degrees began emerging in the mid-to-late 18th century, likely in Great Britain or Western Europe, before crossing the Atlantic. Consequently, the definitive origins and exact transitional pathways of these Degrees remain a compelling topic of further research for Masonic historians and scholars, alike.

The history of New York Templary is also a testament to profound organizational resilience. Following the infamous Morgan Affair of 1826 in Batavia, New York—where the disappearance of an anti-Masonic writer sparked a severe wave of political Anti-Masonry—the Fraternity faced unprecedented public scrutiny and hostility. Despite many symbolic Lodges closing their doors during this period of societal upheaval, the structural framework of the Grand Encampment and its constituent bodies remained steadfast. By anchoring themselves firmly to their Christian foundations and chivalric principles, New York Templars weathered the storm, eventually entering an era of rapid expansion and renewed civic respect.

Foundation in New York

In New York the earliest recordings of the Templar Degrees trace back to individual Lodges and Royal Arch Chapters conferring the Orders of Knighthood as early as the 1780s. Morton Commandery 4 (originally Morton Encampment) and Columbian Commandery 1 in New York City were among the foundational bodies that helped formalize the rite.

In 1814 a sovereign state governing body was formed under the leadership of DeWitt Clinton—the eminent statesman, Governor of New York and Mayor of New York City. Clinton served as the first Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of New York (later renamed the Grand Commandery) and concurrently became the first Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of the United States in 1816. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the Grand Commandery of New York expanded rapidly, establishing local Commanderies across the Empire State—from the tip of Manhattan to the rural stretches of Western and Upstate New York—serving as pillars of community leadership and civic pride.

Core Values and Chivalric Virtues

The modern Knights Templar of New York substitute for the steel weaponry of the Middle Ages spiritual and moral armor. The organization teaches a system of morality based on the ancient codes of chivalry, adapted for the contemporary world.

Candidates entering the Commandery are instructed in the traditional knightly virtues, which serve as the bedrock of their conduct. Unfeigned Piety means a deep, active devotion to God and the teachings of Jesus Christ; Integrity and Honor demand accountability in public and private life, adhering strictly to one's word; Universal Benevolence manifests an unremitting urge to assist the downtrodden, the weary and those in distress; and Courage demonstrates the moral fortitude to stand up for truth, justice and Christian ideals in an increasingly secular world.

Candidates seeking to clothe themselves in this moral armor do not receive progressive Degrees but are instead conferred three distinct Orders of Knighthood. The journey begins with the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross, which emphasizes the immutable power of Truth. This is followed by the Order of Malta (incorporating the Mediterranean Pass), where the

Continues on page 42 – Knights Templar

Concordant Bodies

32° Scottish Rite Freemansonry	York Rite Bodies Royal Arch	Cryptic Masons	Knights Templar
scottishritenmj.org nyscottishritemasons.org	ny-royal-arch.org grandscribe@ny-royal-arch.org	NYCryptic.org grandrecorder@NYCryptic.org	grandcommanderyktny.org syrknightstemplar@gmail.com

Continues from page 41 – Knights Templar

candidate receives New Testament instruction and is invested as a Knight of Malta. The path culminates in the Order of the Temple, the crowning glory of the York Rite, where the candidate undergoes a solemn spiritual pilgrimage and knightly warfare to emerge as a Sir Knight.

The Foundation of Christian Faith

The defining characteristic of Templar Masonry is its explicit adherence to the Christian religion. It is the only major branch of mainstream Freemasonry in the United States that enforces a specific religious test for membership. To receive the Orders of Knighthood a petitioner must be a Royal Arch Mason and must firmly swear a vow to defend the Christian religion. The ritualism is heavily Christocentric, drawing deeply from New Testament scripture, particularly the Gospels and the Book of Revelation.

The Grand Commandery of New York and its constituent Commanderies observe a strict calendar of religious holy days. Annual attendance and solemn services are held across the state for Easter Sunday, celebrating the Resurrection of Christ; Ascension Day, commemorating Christ's ascension into heaven; and the Christmas Libation, a traditional toast and reflection on the birth of the Prince of Peace. Through these observances, the Templar uniform—with its black regalia, white-feathered chapeau and prominent red passion cross—becomes an open testament to the wearer's public witness of faith.

Philanthropy and Global Charities

The faith of New York Templars is not passive; it is dynamically expressed through substantial humanitarian and charitable endeavors. The Grand Commandery works in concert with the Grand Encampment of the United States to fund and administer major philanthropic initiatives.

The primary philanthropic mission of the order is the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, a humanitarian charity whose mission is "To render financial assistance on a nationwide basis for those who need surgical treatment and care of the eyes." The foundation pours millions of dollars into pediatric ophthalmology research grants, aiming to eliminate blindness in children. New York Commanderies consistently spearhead local fundraising campaigns, dinners and walkathons to ensure that sight-saving research remains fully funded.

Demonstrating their commitment to Christian education, the Knights Templar sponsor the Holy Land Pilgrimage. This program funds fully paid spiritual pilgrimages to Israel and Jordan for Christian ministers who might otherwise never have the financial means to visit the historic landscapes of the Bible. By sending pastors to walk where Jesus walked, the Commandery seeks to enrich local ministries, revitalize Sunday pulpits and strengthen Christian communities across New York State. But due to ongoing military action and heightened geopolitical tensions in the Holy Land, certain scheduled pilgrimages have had to be temporarily suspended or rescheduled to ensure the absolute safety and security of the participating ministers.

On a local level, the Grand Commandery of New York maintains an Educational Foundation that provides scholarships to deserving undergraduate students, irrespective of any Masonic affiliation. Additionally, local Commanderies engage in localized charity, supporting food pantries, disaster relief efforts and youth organizations within their distinct geographic regions.

The Grand Commandery Knights Templar of the State of New York bridges the gap between ancient Western heritage and modern fraternal benevolence. For more than two centuries its members have sought to live out the mandate of their historical namesake, encapsulated in their timeless Latin motto: *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed Nomini Tuo da gloriam.* (Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name the glory.)

By combining the structural brotherhood of Freemasonry with an uncompromising dedication to Christian charity, spiritual devotion and community service, the Sir Knights of New York continue to carry their banners forward, ensuring that the noble ideals of chivalry remain vibrant in the 21st century. To this end, all Christian Masons are warmly and earnestly encouraged to explore the sublime path of the York Rite and embrace the opportunity of becoming Knights Templar. Within the Commandery, a Brother will find his Masonic journey beautifully fulfilled, his faith fortified and his capacity for meaningful service profoundly expanded.

Mt. Vernon Salutes Member Service

The officers and Brothers of Mt. Vernon Lodge 263 held their 2026 Years of Masonic Service Awards presentation on Thursday, May 21. It was the honor of GLSO RW Ted Catlin to present the following awards: W Christopher Kremer, W Michael Wood and W Ted Habgood for twenty years. Brother James Hicks has twenty-five years. W Ralph Marsocci has thirty. W William P. Funter is a thirty-five-year member, while W Garry Hutchurson has forty years. W John Cooper and Brother Dale Tucker are forty-five-year members.

Following these awards, Past GLSO RW William Spencer Jr. was escorted to the East to present Brother Wayne Keller with his sixty-year Masonic Service certificate, pin and apron. While in the East, Brother Keller also received a certificate from the Grand Lodge of the State of New York celebrating his 92nd birthday.



MW WILLIAM J. THOMAS, PGM
Chairman
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wjthomasnyc@gmail.com

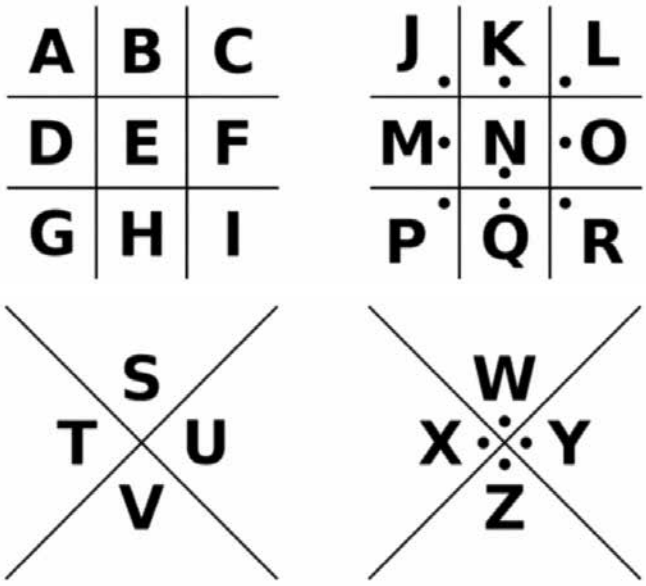


What Is The Masonic Cipher?—And Why It Still Matters

The **Masonic Cipher**, often colloquially termed the **Pigpen Cipher**, is far more than a historical curiosity; it is a fundamental pillar of the "Secret Arts" that defines the speculative identity of Freemasonry. While it emerged into prominence during the 18th century as a functional tool for securing correspondence, its true value lies in its role as a ritualistic safeguard and a profound symbolic metaphor for the transformation of the initiate.

The Architecture of the Grid

At its core, the cipher is a geometric substitution system that mirrors the Mason's reliance on the **Square**. The alphabet is partitioned into four distinct frameworks: two 3x3 grids (resembling the "tic-tac-toe" board) and two "X" shapes. To encode a message, the scribe draws only the specific lines and dots that border a letter. This process strips away the common appearance of language, replacing it with a series of right angles, squares and triangles—visual echoes of the Working Tools used to "square" a stone. To the uninitiated, these marks appear as meaningless architectural sketches; to the Brother, they are a coherent, silent language.



Ritualistic Utility and the "Secret Vault"

In a ritualistic context, the cipher serves as the literal "Key" to the Fraternity's most sensitive information. It is not merely used for general privacy, but specifically to protect the "**Sacred Words**" and "Pass-words" communicated during the progression through the Degrees. By recording these words in cipher within ritual monitors or Lodge minute books, the Fraternity ensures that even if a document is lost, the "mysteries" remain well-governed.

This practice reinforces the ritualistic concept of the "**Secret Vault**"—the allegorical space within the mind where the most precious lessons of the Craft are stored. Just as the vault in the York Rite contains the lost secrets of the Master Mason, the cipher acts as a physical representation of the initiate's duty to "keep and conceal." It necessitates an active effort to decode, mirroring the Mason's journey from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge.

The Symbolic Dimension: Squaring the Word

Symbolically, the cipher is a testament to the "**Architecture of Silence.**" It teaches that truth is often veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. By utilizing the lines of the Square and the angles of the Compasses to form a language, the cipher suggests that a Mason's communication should be "squared" according to the principles of Morality and Virtue. It represents the "Point within a Circle," where a Brother must circumscribe his words and actions within the bounds of his obligations.

Furthermore, the cipher serves as a bridge between the **Operative** past and the **Speculative** present. Just as an ancient stonecutter used marks to identify his work, the modern Mason uses the cipher to mark his documents with traditional authority. It is a reminder that the "internal" man is what truly matters; the external symbols (the cipher marks) are merely a shell for the profound truths (the hidden letters) contained within. Whether found on a 17th-century headstone in Trinity Churchyard or a modern Grand Lodge charter, the cipher remains a silent sentinel of the Fraternity's enduring legacy.

And here is the Important Part:

Freemasonry never used ciphers because it wanted to hide truth. It used them because truth requires effort. The cipher is a lesson in itself. Not everything is meant to be handed to you. Some things are meant to be worked for. Even today, while we no longer pass notes in pigpen symbols, the principle remains.

Whether it is online security or personal growth, the lesson is the same: Knowledge without discipline is noise. Understanding requires work. Do not stop here. Go research. Go decode. Go learn. That is how Masons have always done it.

TEAM – Together Everyone Achieves More



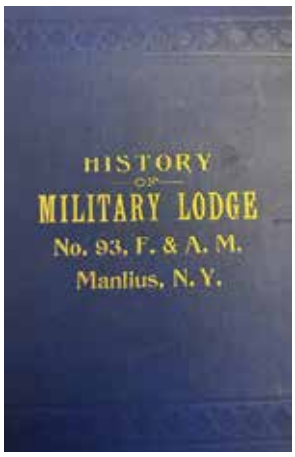
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Library Exhibits Military Lodge 93

by RW Jeffrey Santorello, Trustee
Chancellor Robert R Livingston Masonic Library

On Saint John's Day Weekend, the Chancellor Robert R Livingston Masonic Library opened the doors to its newly renovated Library and Museum on the Utica Campus. Among the treasures displayed for the first time was the minutes book of Military Lodge 93, a Lodge formed by veterans of the War for American Independence.

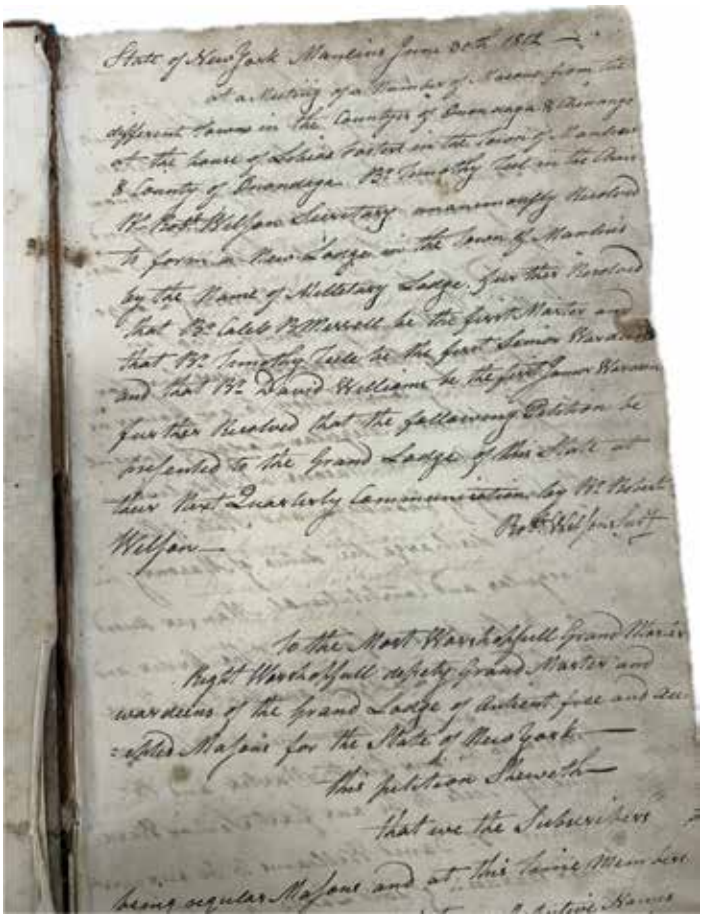
On September 2, 1802, in Manlius, New York, nineteen Masonic Brothers from neighboring towns and various Lodges petitioned the Grand Lodge to establish Military Lodge 93. Their purpose was to create a Lodge composed of men who had served in the struggle for American liberty. The library's exhibit highlighted the military service of four Brothers: Samuel Wilcox, Robert Wilson, David Williams and Barak Holbrook.



Captain Samuel Wilcox fought at the Battle of Bunker Hill under Brother George Washington and later served under Generals Benedict Arnold and Richard Montgomery, both members of the Masonic Fraternity. Captured by native forces allied with the British, Wilcox spent the remainder of the war confined aboard a British prison ship. In recognition of his suffering and service, General Washington granted him a substantial tract of land in Onondaga County, where he later settled.

Brother Robert Wilson was among the youngest officers to serve in the Revolutionary War. As a Sergeant, he was selected by Alexander Hamilton to accept the surrender of British flags following the Battle of Yorktown. Because General Cornwallis refused to appear, claiming illness, Washington delegated the formal acceptance of the surrender to his subordinate officers. To further insult the British, Hamilton in turn passed the acceptance of surrender to several American Sergeants, including Wilson. For his role in the surrender, Hamilton presented Wilson with one of the surrendered British swords, which Wilson later gifted to Military Lodge 93 for use as its Tiler's Sword.

Brother David Williams was one of the three militiamen who captured British Major John André, a fellow Freemason. André was subsequently convicted of espionage for his role in Benedict Arnold's attempted betrayal of West Point. André was tried and executed at the DeWint House in Tappan, a site deeply connected to Washington's wartime headquarters and is now a museum maintained by the Grand Lodge of New York.



Brother Barak Holbrook served as a Major on General Washington's staff. In that role he contributed to the administrative and strategic operations that sustained the Continental Army.



As the nation celebrates the 250th Anniversary of the United States, the Trustees of the Robert R Livingston Masonic Library invite all Brothers and visitors to explore the library's resources. Discover the role Freemasons played in the American quest for independence.

RW PAUL G. HUCK
President
MMRI Board of Directors
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The Masonic Medical Research Institute's 357 campaign is fully explained in Ross Stoltz's article herein. It is the first full fundraising effort for MMRI since Grand Master Swits in 1988-1990, which raised $5 million—that is over $12.6 million in today's dollars—strictly from New York Masons. This is also the first full-blown fundraiser ever done by MMRI and the first one reaching out to Masons beyond New York; not just across America but across the world. We are also reaching out to non-Masons and institutions to achieve our goals. We thank our Grand Master, MW Robert L. Hogan, for making MMRI his main charity during his term and look forward to surpassing what GM Swits did in 1988-1990 during the next two years.

The MMRI Board and I are fully engaged in fundraising and have and are willing to travel. That said, we are cognizant of our finances and will limit our travel in the sense that we will utilize MMRI's budget where we already have pledges/expectations far surpassing expenditures or where the host is fully covering all of our expenses. We need to get out the word about MMRI across the world. If we continue to hear from some NY Masons that they are not aware of what MMRI does, there is still a lot of work to do to get the word out in NY State and around the world. I thank Board member Mark Suckle who attended the Rocky Mountain Masonic Conference and I thank Board member Wilber Salazar for arranging and being with me for an international trip.

I understand that the current economy has many people scrambling to make ends meet; however, there are others who are doing well. I ask your assistance to reach out to friends and family who are prospering and may wish to donate to medical research that may benefit them or their families. Invite them to check out mmri.edu and if they like what they see they can reach out directly to me. While I do not guarantee that I will always answer my phone, you can trust that should someone leave a message asking about MMRI, I will get back to him or her. I have a dream that we can add thousands of individuals who become part of MMRI. They can say with pride, as I do, "Whenever there is a discovery coming out of MMRI, I had a part in it."

Please remember that every discovery and scientific advancement that comes out of the Masonic Medical Research Institute clearly shows who we are as Masons. That what we stand for is the betterment of humanity.

Find us on:

Gramercy Sweethearts Salute Program Grads

On June 14 the brethren of Gramercy Lodge 537, accompanied by the devoted Gramercy Sweethearts, fulfilled another meaningful act of service by sponsoring the refreshments for the graduating class of the Faith Formation Program at Ascension School in Elmhurst, Queens, New York. This charitable gesture reflects the Lodge's continued commitment to the principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth and stands as a testament to the enduring Masonic tradition of supporting the moral and spiritual development of the youth within our community.

The Faith Formation graduates, having completed their year of religious instruction and personal growth, gathered with their families and teachers to celebrate the important milestone. The presence and support of Gramercy Lodge 537 added warmth to the occasion, reminding all in attendance that the Craft remains steadfast in its dedication to uplifting the next generation.

The administration and faculty of Ascension School expressed sincere appreciation for the Lodge's contribution, noting that such acts of kindness strengthen the bond between the school and the wider community. Through this simple yet meaningful offering, the brethren and the sweethearts demonstrated that service performed with humility and goodwill enriches both the giver and the recipient.

Gramercy Lodge 537 continues to uphold the values of Freemasonry by engaging in charitable endeavors throughout Elmhurst and the greater Queens area. The Lodge remains committed to fostering harmony, supporting educational and spiritual programs and exemplifying the virtues that guide every Mason in his daily life.



MMRI
Masonic Medical Research Institute

SAVE THE DATE

MMRI Telethon

TUESDAY,
October 6, 2026

7:00 P.M.

Join us to support the only medical research institute in the world ***founded by, governed by, and supported by*** Masons like you!



HOSTED BY PAST GRAND MASTER
M.·.W.·.William Sardone

TO LEARN MORE AND WATCH, VISIT:
mmri.edu/telethon

3 Steps To ***Hope***
5 Steps To ***Discovery***
7 Steps To ***A Cure***

RW ROSS V. STOLZ
Development Officer
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Campaign, Telethon Bring Masonic Values To Modern Med

The Masonic Medical Research Institute (MMRI), a nonprofit research institute established almost seventy years ago, is the only research institute in the world founded by, governed by and supported by Masons. Within its laboratories, scientists are studying heart disease, autism, lupus, PTSD and many other debilitating ailments.

Researchers, for example, are examining how the heart produces and uses energy. In individuals with obesity or diabetes, this process can become disrupted, leading to serious metabolic conditions and heart failure. By identifying the biological pathways involved, our scientists are discovering ways to protect the heart—work that may eventually lead to new treatments for heart disease.

In addition, our researchers are exploring how novel genetic mutations are linked to the development of lupus, autism and congenital heart diseases. We are steadily building the momentum needed to translate knowledge into meaningful therapies.

At its core MMRI is about improving lives through discovery. But this is not done in isolation and without donor support. One way to support our research mission is through the recently launched 3-5-7 Campaign:

3 Steps towards hope
5 Steps towards discovery
7 Steps towards a cure

As many of you know, these specific numbers hold deep meaning in Freemasonry. Our 3-5-7 initiative creates a natural bridge between a Lodge's lessons and the work of modern science. The 3-5-7 campaign offers a simple framework for something that can otherwise feel complex:

Three Steps towards Hope reflects how research begins as our scientists work to understand the root causes of disease, secure funding needed to pursue important questions that need to be answered and build the team and expertise needed to move those answers forward.

Five Steps towards Discovery represents progress made in fields such as molecular biology, genetics and chemistry. They also highlight our utilization of technological advancements to help our researchers move faster and more efficiently than ever before.

Seven Steps towards a Cure traces the long path from bench to bedside, which often involves collaborations, regulatory approvals and partnerships. Ultimately, research brings new therapies to the people who need them the most. While the 3-5-7 steps are intricate, the idea behind them is straightforward: begin with a question about human health and follow that question toward a solution that helps people live longer and healthier lives.

This is where the connection to Freemasonry becomes especially powerful. Not every Mason is a scientist, and not every family member will step inside a laboratory. Yet, through the 3-5-7 Campaign everyone has an opportunity to take part in this work, to make a difference. It is a familiar truth: when many people give what they can, the result becomes far greater than any one person can achieve alone. For Masons, the idea of building something that endures is nothing new. Whether constructing a Lodge, strengthening a community or preserving a tradition, the goal has always been to create something lasting and meaningful.

That same spirit of service will be on full display during MMRI's first-ever Telethon on Tuesday, October 6. With a bold goal of raising $1 million for lifesaving medical research, MMRI's Telethon will bring together Masons, researchers, patients and supporters to celebrate the discoveries already made and to inspire the breakthroughs yet to come. Whether you watch the Telethon, share the mission with others or make a gift, the Telethon offers every member of our Masonic family an opportunity to take another step on the journey from hope to discovery to a cure.

Through our 3-5-7 Campaign and first-ever Telethon, we are asking you to make a commitment to our research and mission to help humankind. Your pledge of $357 per Lodge or $5 per Mason can be the difference that one day saves the life of someone you love. Visit mmri.edu/telethon to learn more or to donate.

Find us on:



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MMRI Masonic Medical Research Institute

Season of Momentum: Generosity, Brotherhood, Future of Research

The momentum continues at MMRI as we reflect on an extraordinary season of philanthropy, fellowship and shared purpose. From a record-setting 1958 Gala to the annual St. John's Day festivities and a sold-out August Golf Classic, our supporters continue to demonstrate an unwavering commitment to advancing medical discovery and improving lives.

Our recent 1958 Gala welcomed a record-breaking 400 guests, our largest gathering to date, including community leaders, supporters and friends celebrating the transformative power of medical research. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our sponsors, attendees and contributors, the event grossed more than $220,000, creating meaningful momentum for scientific discovery and innovation.

The evening was a powerful reminder that breakthroughs begin with people who believe in our mission. Every guest, sponsor and donor played an important role in the Gala's success and we are deeply grateful for your partnership. Together we are advancing the research that will shape a healthier future.



MMRI Gala

Each year, St. John's Day provides an opportunity to celebrate the enduring relationship between MMRI and the Masonic Fraternity, while recognizing the partnerships that help advance our mission. This year's activities welcomed members of the Fraternity, Board members, staff, donors and friends for a weekend of fellowship, appreciation and discovery.

A memorable highlight of the weekend was MMRI's donor recognition ceremony held on Saturday, June 27. Joined by Grand Master Robert L. Hogan Jr., MMRI leadership and staff recognized more than ten dedicated supporters whose longstanding commitment has made a lasting impact on MMRI's work. During the ceremony Grand Master Hogan also announced that MMRI has been selected as his charity of choice, reaffirming the Masonic Fraternity's enduring commitment to advancing biomedical research. Congratulations go to all the honorees and we thank them for making scientific discoveries possible.

Throughout the celebration, guests also participated in a room dedication honoring Brother Westley Villazon, a donor welcome cocktail reception, research poster presentations and guided laboratory tours. These experiences gave supporters a firsthand look at the innovative research taking place across the Institute and demonstrated how philanthropic support is accelerating discoveries that improve health and change lives.





MMRI Recognition Ceremony

We are grateful for the tremendous response from golfers, sponsors and supporters who made our 4th annual MMRI Golf Classic on Thursday, August 27 a sell-out again this year. That enthusiasm reflects the growing investment in MMRI's mission and ensures another outstanding tournament benefiting heart disease research at MMRI.

Every gathering, every contribution and every partnership brings us one step closer to discoveries that improve health and transform lives. To our Fraternity members, donors, sponsors, volunteers, Board of Directors, staff and friends of MMRI: thank you for your confidence, your partnership and your steadfast commitment. Together we are building a healthier future through scientific discovery, collaboration and generosity.

The Origin of the Candidate Called to Account

by Kenneth Thomas Bower Jr.
Senior Steward, Rip Van Winkle Lodge 468

Before every temple stood a stone.
Before every initiate stepped forward,
he first stood alone.

Some are born seeking —
not applause, not title,
but the quiet insistence that something
greater waits beyond the self.

A pattern beneath noise.
A structure beneath chaos.
A purpose not declared, but felt.

Forced to understand early that life is the art of overcoming,
I chose to measure myself against what was greater than me.

Since infancy, my body has known storms —
seizures that demanded stillness before strength, awareness before certainty.
They carved discipline long before identity.

At twelve, I learned that Julius Caesar bore the same affliction.
History had carried what I carried.
What once felt isolating became instructive —
that adversity is often the first gate.

Dyslexia shaped another discipline.
Language was not given — it was earned.
Clarity required labor.

What I would later recognize as initiation had already begun long before I knew its name.

In searching for models of becoming,
I found not comfort, but refinement —
and in that search, I recognized a lineage:
men shaped by examination before influence,
measured before remembered.

Across civilizations there have always existed those refined by trial —
writers, builders, thinkers —
lights that endure beyond era,
bound not by time, but by responsibility.

Through Cicero's De Oratore, I began to see that eloquence is not talent —
it is character made audible.
Formation before expression.
Initiation before authority.

The seeker eventually learns
that longing without discipline drifts,
but longing governed becomes direction.

And so I arrive not perfected, but prepared.

Prepared to take the reins of my own conduct.
Prepared to be measured by principle rather than preference.
Prepared to learn restraint, to subdue what must be governed, and to improve what stands before you.
Prepared to answer for my words, my labor, and my silence.

I stand where others once stood —
not seeking elevation,
but alignment.
Not recognition,
but responsibility.
Not light to be seen —
but light to be carried.

Hudson River Scrounges, Donates Bench

Hudson River Lodge 309 partnered with the Trex Decking Company to support a soft plastics recycling program. The program requires the collection 1,000 pounds of soft plastic, which material is then formed to manufacture an outdoor bench.

Worshipful Anthony Tangredi spearheaded the recycling efforts and the Lodge was able to create a bench. Worshipful Nolan Padilla found it a worthy home.

On June 25 the bench was delivered to Cornwall on the Hudson Elementary School. Children, parents and the faculty will make use of it as they await each other. Present for the dedication were the fourth-grade Student Council and Carolyn Pinhiero (Teacher of the Year).

Mrs. Pinhiero and the teachers of Cornwall on the Hudson Elementary school constantly support Hudson River Lodge 309 in our charitable efforts. These include the yearly Toy Drive for St. Luke's Hospital in Newburgh and our Scholarship fundraisers.







Years of Service

77 YEARS

0750 Shakespeare — Robert L. Anthony

76 YEARS

0352 Homer — George C. Wood

74 YEARS

0020 Mount Moriah — Jerry Cedar
0543 Triluminar — Clinton D. Wilcox

72 YEARS

0039 Olive Branch — Paul H. Joslin
0166 Forest — William H. Block
0689 What Cheer — Robert W. Tharrett
0890 Joshua — Lawrence M. Greebel

71 YEARS

0084 Amsterdam — Robert B. Singer
0653 John Jay — Fischel Myers

70 YEARS

0085 Bethlehem — Joel L. Levy
0223 Roman-Hatheway — Cameron Ross Johnston Jr
0772 Rescue — Clarens Russell Wagner

65 YEARS

0664 Amicable — Donald A. Fowler
0839 Athelstane — David I. Goldman

60 YEARS

0141 Erie Canal — David E. Hazer, Melvin J. Marshall
0177 Binghamton — Paul D. Mittan
0203 Munn — Michael E. Margaretten
0533 Round Hill — Robert G. Muir
0555 Yorktown-Diamond-Thistle — David J Tauber
0647 Aurora Grata-Day Star — Alexander C. Stuart
0671 Wappingers — Michael P. Skok
0737 Guttenberg — Jerry G. Albert
0917 IMA — Stephen R. Berg
1188 Renaissance — Arthur R. Bird, Max C. Ross

55 YEARS

0009 Unity — Joseph P. Gontier
0095 General Sullivan — Edward C. Dalrymple Jr
0178 Cornerstone — Hon. Louis R. Rosenthal
0438 Marathon — George J. Walter
0602 Iroquois — Ronald Jackson
0649 Robinson — Homer A. Erway
0819 Composite — Richard M. Frome
0863 Dunwoodie — Howard E. Berman
9101 UNKNOWN — Stephen Brent Morris

50 YEARS

0063 Wantagh Morton — Carl Louis Erickson
0155 Fraternal — Jay K. Perry
0178 Cornerstone — Jerry R. Frank
0199 Harmony — Hardy T. Renninghoff
0223 Roman-Hatheway — Rodger F. Seidel
0252 Enchanted Mountains — William E. Bigley
0462 Attica — Thomas Fournier Jr
0565 Guiding Star-Angle — Lloyd J. Ayres
0682 Nunda Station — Jack E. Morgan
0822 Lynbrook-Massapequa — Tommy Wrenn
0915 Beukendaal — Robert William Hatt
0948 Sweet Home — Alan R. Mollot
1175 Fellowship — George Oliver Stanley
1188 Renaissance — Gilbert G. Adams

United District Kicks Off Activities

Newly formed from the two named entities—Allegany and Steuben—the Allegany-Steuben District had a presence as Stony Brook 115 marched in the 58th annual Dogwood Festival at Dansville in May. The District then held an Investiture Ceremony for the new Masters of Macedonia 258, Corning-Painted-Post 168, Addison-Union 118 and Stony Brook 115 Lodges.

Now the Allegany-Steuben District has minted Challenge Coins to commemorate the union of the two Districts in the Western Region. The coins are available for $15 (including shipping) by contacting DDGM Dennis King at DDGM@stonybrook115.org or Venmo @dck22.





Marcinek—Hall of Famer

Brother Frank Marcinek, of Copernicus Lodge 545, was inducted into the New York State Veterans Hall of Fame for his outstanding work with the veterans of New York State. Brother Marcinek and his wife Pam are also extremely involved with Copernicus Lodge. He currently serves as Master of Ceremony and his wife Pam is a dedicated member of the Copernicus Lodge Sister circle.

Brother Frank enlisted in the United States Air Force and achieved the rank of Sergent. He served from September 1972 to 1976. When he joined the Air Force it was at a pivotal time in his young family's life. He was married and had one son with another on the way.

During the Vietnam Era, Brother Marcinek completed forty-seven weeks of intensive training at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi, becoming an Air Traffic Controller Radar Repairman. He was assigned to the Air Force Communications Squadron at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana and tasked with maintaining radar systems supporting the 8th Air Force and 2nd Bomb Wing.

After four years of active duty, Brother Marcinek returned to Long Island and began a forty-one-year career with Con Edison. Starting as a helper at the East River Power Plant in Manhattan, he advanced to Control Operator-A and later joined Systems Operations, serving in multiple critical grid management roles. Brother Marcinek also developed computer systems, contributed to the replacement of the Energy Management Systems and helped design three electric grid control rooms.

Despite demanding rotating shifts, Brother Marcinek remained deeply committed to his community. He coached youth sports, supported Girl Scouts and earned a Bachelor of Science in Leadership and Management from Manhattan College, graduating magna cum laude in 2002.



(l to r) VW Richard Witthohn and his Lady Maryann; Brother Frank Marcinek and his wife Pam; Lorraine Puckhaber and RW Roy Puckhaber

A dedicated member of the American Legion since 2011, Brother Marcinek served as Post Commander during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown and again in 2023, leading repairs, stabilizing finances and guiding reopening efforts. He has also served as an EMT with the Levittown Fire Department and organized numerous programs honoring veterans, first responders and local heroes.

Brother Marcinek's leadership extends to the Levittown Lions Club, Hicksville Elks Lodge, AMVETS and regional veterans' organizations. He leads ongoing food drives, supports veterans at the Northport VA Medical Center, organizes Narcan trainings and advocates for struggling veterans service organizations. Brother Frank Marcinek's tireless volunteerism—spanning food security, youth mentorship, veteran advocacy and community restoration—reflects a lifelong commitment to service, leadership and compassion.

Forest Lodge Celebrates Own History

On the eve of the semiquincentennial of the United States, the members of Forest Lodge 166 were celebrating another anniversary, a 50th. On July 3, 1976 the members of Forest Lodge gathered to dedicate and consecrate their new Lodge building at 321 East Main St. in Fredonia. The previous Lodge building, which had been their home for close to 100 years, sustained major damage in a fire which originated in a restaurant next door in 1973. Thankfully, there were firefighters who were members of the Lodge. They located and saved the charters, records, jewels and many portraits of Past Masters dating back to 1816.





During this year's ceremony, remarks were made by the Worshipful Master Richard Ryan. A history of the Lodge was given by RW Richard Newton, PDDGM. Fredonia Mayor Michael Ferguson and Town of Pomfret Supervisor Daniel Pacos gave their congratulatory greetings. They then read proclamations thanking the Lodge for service to the local community for 210 years.

Idaho Night: Legacy of Moral Courage

by Brother Alex Ubieta
Trustee, James W. Husted-Fiat Lux Lodge 1068



"If not me, then who?" For nearly nine decades James W. Husted-Fiat Lux Lodge 1068 has carried forward a remarkable Masonic tradition. It is one born from a moment when courage, conscience and brotherly love mattered more than comfort or convenience.

On June 1, 2026 Fiat Lux Lodge celebrated its 90th annual "Idaho Night," welcoming a delegation from the Grand Lodge of the State of Idaho. They were led by MW Randy King, Grand Master of Masons in Idaho. Joining the Idaho delegation were officers of the Grand Lodge of the State of New York, including MW Robert L. Hogan Jr., Grand Master of Masons in the State of New York; MW William M. Sardone, Past Grand Master; and MW Steven A. Rubin, Immediate Past Grand Master.

The evening celebrated the enduring friendship between two Masonic jurisdictions while reflecting on a timeless question at the heart of the Craft: When faced with a difficult choice will we choose what is right over what is easy? MW King shared that message with the brethren and guests gathered in the Lodge room, reminding everyone that Masons must remain faithful to their principles. "We must always follow our own ethos to do what is right, over what is easy or expeditious," MW King said.

A Mason for fifty-three years, MW King followed his father and grandfather into the Fraternity after being Raised in Iowa in 1972. After a career as a bank vice president, he retired in 2025 to devote himself fully to serving as Grand Master. Throughout his Masonic journey, he has held leadership positions in five states and remained active in civic organizations, including the Kiwanis and Lions clubs. His personal philosophy—"If not me, then who?"—reflects the spirit of service that defined his remarks and the legacy being celebrated at Fiat Lux Lodge.

MW Hogan also addressed the gathering, reinforcing the message that Freemasons must remain true to the timeless principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. He spoke of the importance of moral clarity and integrity, reminding brethren that the tenets of the Craft are not simply ideals to be studied, but principles to be lived.

The evening was hosted by W Devashish Agarwal, newly installed Master of James W. Husted-Fiat Lux Lodge 1068. In addition to welcoming the visiting delegations, W Agarwal presented MW King with honorary membership in Fiat Lux Lodge, further strengthening the bond between the two jurisdictions.

The origins of Idaho Night reach back to 1937, when MW William H. Thompson, then Grand Master of Idaho, traveled to New York City and visited Fiat Lux Lodge. His visit was centered on the Lodge itself. While in New York, Fiat Lux brethren welcomed him into their home Lodge, honored him in a special Masonic gathering and shared with him the spirit of their community. They also took him throughout the city, introducing him to landmarks including the newly completed Empire State Building and Radio City Music Hall. But the most important part of his visit took place inside the Lodge room.

Fiat Lux brethren shared firsthand accounts of the persecution, disappearances and murders affecting Jewish families and friends in Europe as the Nazi regime expanded its campaign of oppression. Those personal stories deeply affected MW Thompson and transformed a fraternal visit into a moral call to action.

In 1938, following his return to Idaho, MW Thompson and the Grand Lodge of Idaho issued a historic White Paper condemning the Nazi regime. It became the first public condemnation of the Third Reich by a Masonic Grand Lodge anywhere in the world. At a time when many organizations remained silent, Idaho Masons recognized that defending human dignity was not a political matter but a moral responsibility consistent with the fundamental principles of Freemasonry. Such moments of moral clarity echo the wisdom of yet another legendary Mason, Benjamin Franklin, who famously remarked, "Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are." In 1938 the Masons of Idaho refused to remain unaffected. They understood that silence in the face of suffering was incompatible with the obligations of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

Grand Chaplain RW Shlomo Bar-Ayal connected the story of Idaho Night to a broader Masonic obligation, reflecting on the biblical account of Moses and the responsibility to defend those who are vulnerable and oppressed. RW Bar-Ayal reminded the brethren that moral courage requires action, especially when others choose silence. The evening also recalled another powerful example of Masonic brotherhood during the American Civil War. When Confederate Gen. Lewis Armistead was mortally wounded at Gettysburg, Union Capt. Henry Bingham, a fellow Mason, set aside the division of war to comfort his dying Brother. That act of compassion is memorialized by the Friend-to-Friend monument at Gettysburg.

RW Leonard Berlin emphasized that Idaho Night is not merely a remembrance of past events, but a celebration of fortitude, courage and the responsibility each Mason carries. The evening concluded with a meaningful connection to the past as the Purple Apron belonging to MW Thompson was passed around the Lodge room, allowing brethren to experience a tangible link to the Masons whose courage created this enduring tradition. The moment also recalled the deeper symbolism of the Masonic apron itself—the emblem of an honest life, honorable labor and faithful service.

Nearly ninety years after that historic visit, the lesson of Idaho Night remains unchanged: Freemasonry is measured not only by its traditions and ceremonies, but by the willingness of its members to stand for what is right when doing so requires courage. The question continues to echo through Fiat Lux Lodge: "If not me, then who?"

Red Pocket Square

by RW Michael La Rocco
Exec. Director, Livingston Masonic Library

We have a tradition in the Nassau and Suffolk Masonic Districts of presenting each Master-Elect with a red pocket square at their Investiture. We attribute this custom, at least in our area, to RW George Emmons, Past Grand Marshal of the Grand Lodge of the State of New York, who presented them on behalf of the Long Island Past Masters Association. Its meaning carries a deep, multi-layered emotional symbolism.

First, it has become an outward sign that you are a Master or Past Master of a Lodge, and that you have received the secrets of the Chair. His interpretation was that beyond the symbolic lodge, the red handkerchief connects us directly to the symbolism of the Holy Royal Arch, representing the fervency, zeal, and unbroken lines of our Craft.

RW George's story has become a sort of masonic urban myth. His version of the story is the legacy of this token dates back to the Mexican-American War (1846–1848). The story is told of a single, continuous red handkerchief passed down through the generations, a symbol of Masonic relief extended from one Brother to another on opposite sides of the battlefield. When a Brother found himself in real distress, it was this token of recognition that bound them together, proving that the tenets of the Craft supersede national borders and political allegiance.

This custom and its token supposedly survived through every subsequent American conflict: afterwards. In every era, the red handkerchief should stand as a testament to an unbroken chain of brotherly love, passed from the hands of



the relieving Brother to the relieved.

The most sublime truth this represents is that we belong to an incredible Fraternity whose responsibilities and privileges transcend the most extreme of human conflicts: War itself.

Even though at this time we are unsure of the facts, the red pocket square worn by Worshipful Masters and Past Masters on Long Island is a visual testament to our core purpose. What are we all about? What is the most repeated word in all of our ceremonies? It is... Love!

Presentation reconstructed by RW Michael LaRocco, W Terry Maccarrone, and RW Jeff Santorello. In memory of RW George Emmons

Christmas in May

by Andre C. Reece
Junior Deacon, Lynbrook-Massapequa Lodge 822



For 60 years, the Nassau District has partnered with the Masonic Care Community in Utica to host the annual Christmas in May event. This year, we joyfully provided another exciting experience for the residents, featuring exciting prizes, games, delicious snacks, Christmas music, and a surprise appearance from Santa Claus!

To make this tradition possible each year, Christmas in May is held on the weekend following Mother's Day. The Masonic Care Community generously provides complimentary lodging for the event each year, which includes an annual breakfast, as well as an







annual breakfast for the volunteers

Ultimately, true service is an act of the heart, requiring neither an apron nor a badge. The Christmas in May event is consistently a highlight for residents, who often speak about it long after it is over and eagerly anticipate its return. As Freemasons, our mission is to provide service, friendship, and charity to the world.

GRAND LECTURER



RW MARK J. LOUGHRAN
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Markloughran61@gmail.com

Let's Do Some Ritual

Warm greetings, dear Brothers and friends. This is my first article as your Grand Lecturer. I can already see that the position is going to be both challenging and incredibly fulfilling. It is challenging in part because my immediate predecessors, RWs Gregory Noulas and Richard Friedman, set a bar that seems almost unachievably high. Both men devoted so much to the office and the Craft and are deserving of our profound gratitude and each has been immeasurably helpful in helping me prepare for the coming two years. It will be fulfilling because our ritual is so beautiful and few things could be more pleasing than having a hand, however slight, in its preservation and transmission.

In particular I wish to thank MW Robert L. Hogan, Grand Master of Masons in the State of New York, a true leader of men and one of the most upright and honorable souls to grace our Fraternity, for placing his trust in me. His guidance has animated the direction that Grand Lodge and the office of Grand Lecturer will take.

Our goals for the coming two years are fundamental. Ritualistically, we will move ahead by looking back. Assistant Grand Lecturers (hereafter, AGLs) will embrace a view of their positions not unlike the role filled by ancient priesthoods. (This is an analogy only. Remember, we are not a religion.) Our ritual—at least certain foundational aspects of it—is without doubt thousands of years old and contains eternal truths that have been safeguarded by the initiated for those many centuries. We—you—are the keepers of the flame.

Often described as a "beautiful and profound system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols" our ritual defines us, teaches us and binds us together by the strongest ties. We will focus for the next two years on accuracy, preparation and delivery, heavily emphasizing the importance of understanding—deeply understanding—what it is that our ritual represents. We will work diligently to pass the light to the generations that follow.

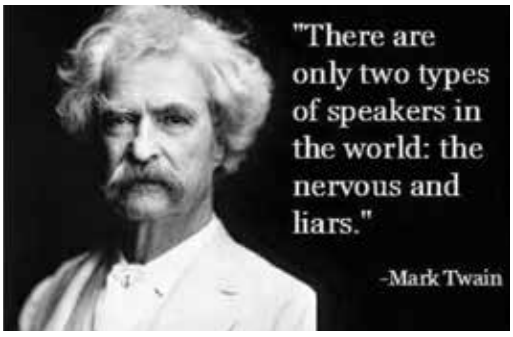
How? Emphasizing work in the Entered Apprentice Degree, AGLs and Ritual Directors will energize ritual work through a thoughtful and consistent adherence to the principles of stagecraft and a renewed approach to the learning of ritual by understanding what it is that is being said. Why the EA Degree? As Brother Will Rogers said, "you never get a second chance to make a first impression."

Glaring Wal-Mart lighting will be disfavored, while softer and sometimes more colorful hues will be employed. Appropriate background music will accompany ritual, either performed live if the Lodge has that capacity, or via Bluetooth speakers.

To my dear Grumpy friends, these are not gimmicks. These are techniques that have been key to ritual success since very ancient times. Consider the sensorial aspects of our Chambers of Reflection or the incantations of monastic orders. The ancients without doubt managed the use of light and sound as ways to enhance and focus the initiate's experience. Consider that many ancient temples dating back to the Neolithic era (and possibly beyond) were deliberately oriented to employ the light of the sun in their religious experiences. (See Ireland's Newgrange.) Many others, such as the builders of Hal Saflieni Hypogeum in Malta, erected elaborate and precise stone chambers capable of amplifying and distorting sound to further concentrate and stimulate the minds of men during the rituals held within them.

Beyond stagecraft, focus on delivery will be emphasized. Understanding exactly what is being said and saying it with the correct tone, inflection, pronunciation and cadence will be a must. One of the beautiful aspects of Masonic ritual is that it does not change with the wind. A corollary of that, however, is that we are very often confronted with historical references, language and diction that often fall outside the scope of everyday knowledge. It is the task of AGLs, Ritual Directors, and indeed, all Master Masons to understand what is being conveyed fully to the extent that we are able to accurately pass this knowledge to our successors with meaning.

Leaders, especially in the field of ritual, need to actively endeavor to understand the several succeeding generations that inhabit the Lodges. Much has been made of the likes and dislikes—the most effective learning tools and the personalities of Gen-this or Gen-that. We really need to understand and accommodate these Brothers to accomplish our task of passing the Light from generation to generation.



One more thing: We will all—from the fifty-year Brother to the newly Initiated—do our absolute best to provide support, reinforcement and comfort to any Brother who undertakes our ritual. Be ever mindful that public speaking ranks with falling from trees and snakes in our hierarchy of not-fun things.

I hope that you will find our Grand Lecturer Conventions informative and fun. They will be a mix of the above discussion and exemplification of sections of the Entered Apprentice Degree. We will conduct Bond Competitions and, where

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appropriate, bestow the Potts and Meacham awards. And we will absolutely ensure that the Drama of the Hiramic Legend is conferred upon all new Master Masons, without exception.

None of the goals and tasks described above can be a one-man show and I am blessed that this office comes equipped with a cadre of more than eighty AGLs and Regional AGLs who are, to a man, some of the most talented and devoted Brothers I have ever met. The Grand Jurisdiction owes them all a huge debt of gratitude for the countless hours and miles they log on behalf of our Craft.

In addition to the AGLs and RAGLs, there are countless dedicated Brothers who lend their expertise to make the trains run on time. You know who you are and you have my undying admiration and thanks.

And so, it is off to work in the quarries we go. Let us do some ritual and have some fun.

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