

A Legacy of Love and Opportunity:



The Masonic Children's Home of Georgia

#### Grand Lodge Office: 478-742-1475

#### **Grand Lodge Officers**

**Grand Master** Mark A. Bradley (36, 766) **Deputy Grand Master** Bill Shepard (717, 214) Brian C. Coffey (271, 749, 710) Senior Grand Warden Junior Grand Warden Tom D. Bruce (42, 216) **Grand Treasurer** Jeffery L. Anderson (200, 376, 06) **Grand Secretary** Van S. McGee (26, 70) **Grand Chaplain** Douglas A. Koschel (711, 36) **Grand Marshal** Wiley A. Gammon, Jr. (729) **Grand Orator** Johnie M. Garmon (114, 137, 753) Senior Grand Deacon Scott W. Johnson (68, 376) Junior Grand Deacon Wiley Q. Forrester, III (292) First Grand Steward W. David Baxter (35) Second Grand Steward Jeff L. Smith (131, 216) Third Grand Steward Paul Carter (26) **Grand Tyler** Lucien T. Hays (36, 766, 294)

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# THE GEORGIA MASONIC MESSENGER

Vol. 137

**SUMMER 2025** 

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Please send changes of address to the Grand Secretary at 811 Mulberry Street, Macon, GA 31201 on your lodge secretary's monthly report.

The editor does **NOT** keep the list of addresses.

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	TYPE or PRINT information requested and mail to the Grand Lodge address on the back cover.
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# From the Desk of the Grand Secretary Right Worshipful Van S. "Mac" McGee

## How to register for Grand View

Below is a link to a video that will show you how to set up your user account and the step to set up your account. If you have already created your user account and forgotten your password you can click on "Forgot your password?" under the sign-in button, enter your email address in the box and click "Send me to reset password instructions."

Video link- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= Ilx-WliihfcM

- Step 1. Enter the URL for your jurisdiction. https://ga.grandview.systems
- Step 2. Click on Member Portal
- Step 3. Click on Member Registration (or you can Click the "Sign up" next to forgot password) Step 4. Enter your Lodge Number
- Step 5. Enter your Member ID
- Step 6. Enter your Last Name (case sensitive)
- Step 7. Click on Check Membership Status
- Step 8. Enter your email address
- Step 9. Enter a password that you can remember (password must contain at least 8 characters) Step 10. Enter Confirmation by entering the password again
- Step 11. Click on Submit

#### Now Available

You may now find the 2025 Georgia List of Lodges, Officers Planning Tool, and DDGM Contacts under My Portal on Grand View.

#### **Grand View Secretary Training**

The Grand Lodge Office is encouraging secretary training in all districts. Anyone can attend the training classes. Please contact the Grand Lodge Office if you are interested in organizing a training class.

# 2025 District Conventions

<u>District</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<b>Location</b>	Host Lodge
1st District	March 22, 2025	10:00AM	Statesboro	Ogeehee Lodge No. 213
2nd District	February 22, 2025	9:00AM	Bainbridge	Orion Lodge No. 8
3rd District	March 15, 2025	10:00AM	Dawson	P.T. Schley Lodge No. 229
4th District	August 16, 2025	9:45AM	Greenville Lodge No. 321	Sylvan Lodge No. 429
5th District	September 13, 2025	9:00AM	College Park	College Park Lodge No. 454
6th District	May 3, 2025	9:00AM	Griffin @ Meridian Sun Lodge No. 26	Davidson Lodge No. 334
7th District	May 9 & 10, 2025	9:00AM	Rome	Cherokee Lodge No. 66
8th District	May 17, 2025	9:00AM	Danielsville	John H. Jones Lodge No. 348
9th District	September 27, 2025	9:00AM	Gainesville	Gainesville Lodge No. 219
10th District	June 14, 2025	10:00AM	Milledgeville	Benevolent Lodge No. 3
11th District	September 20, 2025	10:00AM	Valdosta Masonic Temple	Azalea Lodge No. 216
12th District	April 19, 2025	9:00AM	Eastman	Eugene Smith Lodge No. 279

# **Grand Lodge Information**

Grand Lodge 239th Annual Communication will be held on Tuesday, October 28th convening in the EX Hall A Convention Center of the Macon Centreplex, at 9:00 AM. Out of state guests and vendors will be present. Complete information will also be posted on Grand View.

All Members including committee members must pre-register for the Grand Lodge Communication via Grand View on or before October 15th.

Please log into Grand View, and from your member portal, click Print 2025 AC Registration Credentials Sheet. If you are a member of more than one Lodge, you must pre-register in the Lodge you wish to represent. You must bring your registration scan bar paper you printed when you pre-registered to the Grand Lodge Session. It will help the Credentials Committee to check you in faster.

<u>Dues Cards Must Be Presented</u> A current Dues Card will need to be presented to the Credentials Committee at check-in and registration for the session. Failure to present a valid Dues Card will result in not being able to participate in the session. You must bring your dues card. You will be given a lanyard to slip your dues card in and will serve as your name badge. Please remember to bring your Aprons.

When you arrive at The Grand Lodge Session, please go to registration, and check in to pick up the voting doggle and voting panel. Lodge Per Capita must be up to date or your Lodge representation will be denied voting privileges.

#### 2025 Code Bills

Available on Grand View. Choose My Portal. Grand Lodge. Choose 2025 Code Bills above the calendar. On or before October 1st. The 2025 Code Bills are also available in the Fall issue of the Masonic Messenger on or before October 1st.

#### Notice for Balloting on Grand Lodge Officers for 2025-2026

After lunch on Tuesday, October 28th, as prescribed by our Masonic Code, the voting will take place for the following officers.

Grand Master Junior Grand Warden
Deputy Grand Master Grand Treasurer
Senior Grand Warden Grand Secretary

#### **Duty to Attend Session**

Every year, Worshipful Masters promise to submit to the "ancient charges and regulations of Masonry" during their installation. These charges point out the duties of the Master of a Lodge and are deemed so important that they are read to ensure accuracy. In these charges, the Master of a Lodge promises a regular attendance on the committees and communications of Grand Lodge upon having proper notice and to pay attention to all the duties of Masonry. A Lodge must be represented; thus, its presence is mandatory as referenced in our Masonic Code. The Lodge must be represented by the Worshipful Master or a Past Master of the Lodge.

#### The following Lodge must have representation at the 239th Annual Communication

Roger Wood Lodge No. 438

Failure of representation of this Lodge will result in the forfeiture of the Lodge Charter. Please do your best to make sure your Lodge is represented. If you have any questions, please contact the Grand Secretary's Office. (478) 742-1475



# Welcome to the 239<sup>th</sup> Annual Communication of the

Grand Lodge of Georgia Free and Accepted Masons
The Macon Marriott City Center Hotel is the host hotel
240 Coliseum Drive, Macon GA 31217

Telephone (478) 621 5300 (Mention the Grand Lodge of Georgia
The Hospitality Room will be supplied with goodies and open Monday through
Wednesday at designated hours for everyone's enjoyment.

ADDRESS:				
CITY:		E:	ZIP:	
**** IMP	ORTANT: NO TICK	ETS WILL BE MAILED	)****	
GRAND MASTER'S BANQUET	6:30 PM	TICKETS: \$80.00	FORMAL ATTIRE	
Will you attend the Grand Master's Ba	nquet, Monday, Octo	ober 27, 2025 Yes:	No:_	
Will your lady accompany you		Yes:	No:	
Lady's Name:				
Banquet choice you: Salmon	Roas	sted Chicken	Vegetarian_	
Banquet choice lady: Salmon	Roas	Roasted Chicken		
Ballrooms A, B, a	and C,	Marriott Centreplex		
	First Ladie	s Brunch		
	11:30	AM		
	TUESDAY, Oc	ctober 28th		
M	lagnolia Room of the	Marriott City Center		
Yes:	No: \$50.	00	BUSINESS CASUAL	

Please return to: Grand Lodge of Georgia, PO Box 4665, Macon, GA 31208-4665 by October 3rd, 2025

Grand Session and Marriott Link

GM Banquet
Tickets

First Lady Brunch
Tickets

# A Legacy of Love and Opportunity: The Masonic Children's Home of Georgia: How the Masonic Children's Home of Georgia Has Transformed Young Lives for Over a Century.

By David E. Shockley, Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Nestled in the heart of Macon, Georgia, the Masonic Children's Home continues to stand as a living testament to the enduring values of compassion, integrity, and service. As Chairman of the Board of Trustees, it is both my privilege and responsibility to help steward an institution that has quietly transformed the lives of countless children since its founding on June 14, 1905.

For over a century, the Home has provided a haven for children in need — not an orphanage, but a true home. Here, children who have faced hardship or instability find not just shelter, but a nurturing environment where they are encouraged to grow, dream, and achieve. Our mission is simple, yet profound: to provide a stable, loving family environment that supports the mental, emotional, and educational development of each child entrusted to our care.

Every child who walks through our doors becomes part of a larger family — one built not on blood, but on compassion and shared hope. Our dedicated trustees, houseparent's, staff, and volunteers pour their hearts into making sure each child knows they are seen, valued, and capable of great things. And it shows. Our alumni go on to become educators, military service members, skilled tradespeople, and compassionate community leaders.

Recent Improvements and Milestones: Thanks to the unwavering support of your Board of Trustees, our Masonic fraternity and generous donors, the Masonic Children's Home has made significant strides in the past year. Some of our improvements include:

- Renovation of Facilities: We continue to upgrade our facilities while making full use of the five cottages, which offer a warmer functional home environment. Additionally, renovations at Shellman Bluff have been completed to enrich the children's summer camp experience.
- Educational Support: The Board of Trustees and staff remain committed to evaluating each child's individual needs and exploring the most suitable educational pathways. These include public, private, and inhouse schooling options, all aimed at helping every child reach their full academic potential. For those pursuing higher education, tuition assistance is provided for college attendance.
- Governance Documents: Policies & Procedure manuals, job descriptions, and Standard Operating Procedures have been created and adopted enabling staff to operate more consistently and efficiently.
- Transitional Living Program: For those who need assistance after completing high school, we now

offer transitional living housing which bridges life from the cottage environment to the real world. We currently have two young adults in this program, and both plans to attend college this fall.

Staff Changes: Many changes have occurred. A new Superintendent, a new Maintenance & Facilities manager, Kitchen staff and Development & Donor Relations personnel have been added. Every employee and every position are evaluated for effectiveness.

Income & Expenses: The Staff and Board of Trustees carefully monitor every dollar received and every dollar spent. This year many cost-saving measures have been implemented to reduce expenses in areas such as salaries, health care, property insurance, tuition, food, contracts, and maintenance, among others.

As we look to the future, we do so with hope and determination. Our vision includes not only maintaining the high standard of care we've become known for but expanding our programs to serve more children and better equip them for life beyond the Home. We believe every child deserves a chance to succeed — and we are committed to making that belief a reality.

To those who support the Masonic Children's Home of Georgia: thank you. You are changing lives. And to those who may be learning about us for the first time, I invite you to visit, to volunteer, to give — and to witness the powerful difference love and stability can make.

## How You Can Help

Our mission is made possible by the generous support of individuals, Masonic lodges, and organizations that believe in the power of stability, education, and unconditional care. We are proud to operate without government funding-but this also means we rely entirely on investments from our Endowment Fund and private donations to meet the growing needs of our children.

Your support helps us maintain our residential cottages, fund educational programs, and provide essentials like food, clothing, transportation, and medical care. These needs are ongoing and constantly evolving.

Together, we are not just providing care – we're building legacies of hope, opportunity, and transformation.

If you'd like to learn more about the Masonic Children's Home of Georgia, schedule a visit, or make a donation, please contact us at:



Masonic Children's Home of Georgia 1417 Nottingham Drive Macon, GA 31211

**Phone:** (478) 743-1212

Website: www.masonichomeofgeorgia.com

Support Us: Visit our website or scan the QR code below to make a tax-deductible donation and help us continue this important mission.



MARK A. BRADLEY Grand Master 811 Mulberry Street Macon, GA 31201

June 5, 2025

Brother,

As Father's Day approaches, we are called to celebrate the men who have guided us, protected us, and inspired us—but also to renew our commitment to a cause that embodies the very heart of Freemasonry: charity. On this special day, we should stand united in support of our Masonic Children's Home, where hope is built, futures are shaped, and the spirit of fraternity shines through every child we serve.

Father's Day reminds us of the strength, wisdom, and compassion a father brings into a home. Yet for many children in our care, a stable father figure—or sometimes any parent at all—is out of reach. It is here, Brothers, that we step in. In the words of our beloved forefather, Bro. George Washington, "To do good is a great pleasure." By opening our hearts and wallets, we ensure these young lives know the comfort of a caring mentor, the security of a peaceful household, and the promise of an education.

Let me share the story of a little girl, a bright-eyed eight-year-old who arrived with nothing but the clothes on her back and a sketchbook full of dreams. Thanks to this ministry, and your past generosity, she now thrives in school, joins us in lodge-sponsored youth programs, and, most importantly, knows what it means to be loved. Brothers, this little girl's laughter is a testament to our collective power to change lives.

Today, I ask you to renew that commitment. Your donation—be it large or small—directly underwrites nutritious meals, safe housing, academic tutoring, and the mentorship these children desperately need. Every dollar plants a seed of confidence, every pledge becomes a building block in the temple of a child's future.

As Freemasons, we pledge ourselves to relief, to truth, and to brotherly love. There is no greater relief than to guard a child against hunger, to shield them from fear, and to kindle in them faith in a brighter tomorrow. Let us honor our fathers by extending our fatherly care to those who need it most.

Brothers, please rise and join me in this noble endeavor. Open your hearts. Your generosity will stand as a proud pillar of Masonic charity for years to come. Thank you, and may the Great Architect of the Universe bless our efforts and the children in our care. Please make checks payable to the Georgia Masonic Children's Home (Operations) and mail to: Georgia Masonic Children's Home, P.O. Box 6637, Macon, GA 31208

With Fraternal Love, Moule A. Brookly Mark A. Bradley Grand Master

Please make your check payable to the: Masonic Home of Georgia, detach this coupon and return in the enclosed postage paid envelope.

□\$25 □\$50 □\$100 □\$250 Other\$\_\_\_\_\_

If electing to donate by scanning the code, be sure to select Father's Date Appeal as your donation option.









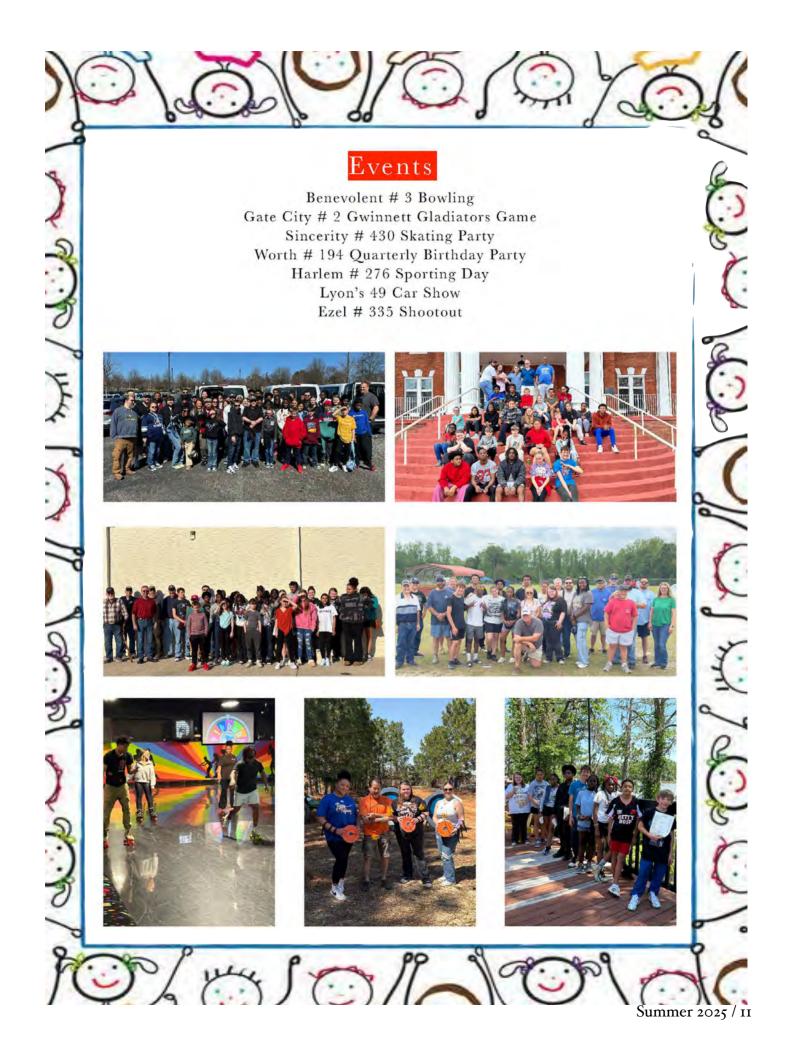
30/5

Something new we have started at the Home is honoring our Staff. Each Month our Staff votes for the employee who that Month has best represented The Home. Each Quarter: January to March - April to June - July to September and October to December the Staff Member with the highest vote total is our Employee of the Quarter.

For the First Quarter of 2025 - Janice Beard was voted as the Best. Janice has been with The Home since April of 2014. You may not know but Janice is a Cancer Survivor - she battled Colon Cancer in 2018 - unwillingly she resigned in July of 2018 and came back Cancer free in February of 2019. She is presently the Main Houseparent on WWM.

Her Co-Workers find her caring, she loves the kids - not just on her hall but all of them, goes above and beyond what is expected and is always willing to help out and do the extra.

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A Huge Thanks to all that Participated - a lot or work was accomplished. Gym, Barn, Old Hall Clean-Up and Painting the Pool getting completed were the major undertakings during this Work Day



15 S ( )



Muzzleloader Winner Joe Davis Mount Hermon # 304



Children's Garden Plots
The 5 Plots were provided by the 4th District last year. At the Workday 2nd Masonic District brought the necessary items to get the Plots planted. Squash, strawberries, tomatoes and blueberry bushes (Donated by HP James Allen).



# **PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

of the Grand Lodge of Georgia



# Brethren of the Grand Lodge of Georgia

In an attempt to standardize publication dates and deadlines, the Publications Committee has determined to put in place the following deadlines for submissions.

Spring (March) Issue: deadline for content-Feb 1
Summer (June) Issue: deadline for content-May 1
Fall (September) Issue: deadline for content- August 1
Winter (December) Issue: deadline for content- November 1

When you make a submission to <a href="mailto:messenger@glofga.org">messenger@glofga.org</a>, you should receive an automatic reply noting that your submission was received. If you are submitting a 50, 60, 70+ Award, you will get a second email notifying you when your award will run in the Messenger.

IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE A CONFIRMATION EMAIL, please check the email address or call the Editor at 770-608-6232 for issues.



# Friday, June 6, 2025 | 6:30 PM

T&S Farms, 3500 Pond Branch Rd, Batesburg-Leesville, SC 29385 Join us for an evening of fellowship, great food, and Masonic brotherhood as we reunite for the Georgia/South Carolina Masonic Exchange! Each participant will receive a commemorative coin, as well.

T&S Farms is a private working farm and event venue conveniently located minutes off Interstate 20 in Leesville, SC.

Catered by Shealy's BBQ — \$25 per person RSVP by Friday, May 23, 2025

# Menu (Buffet Style):

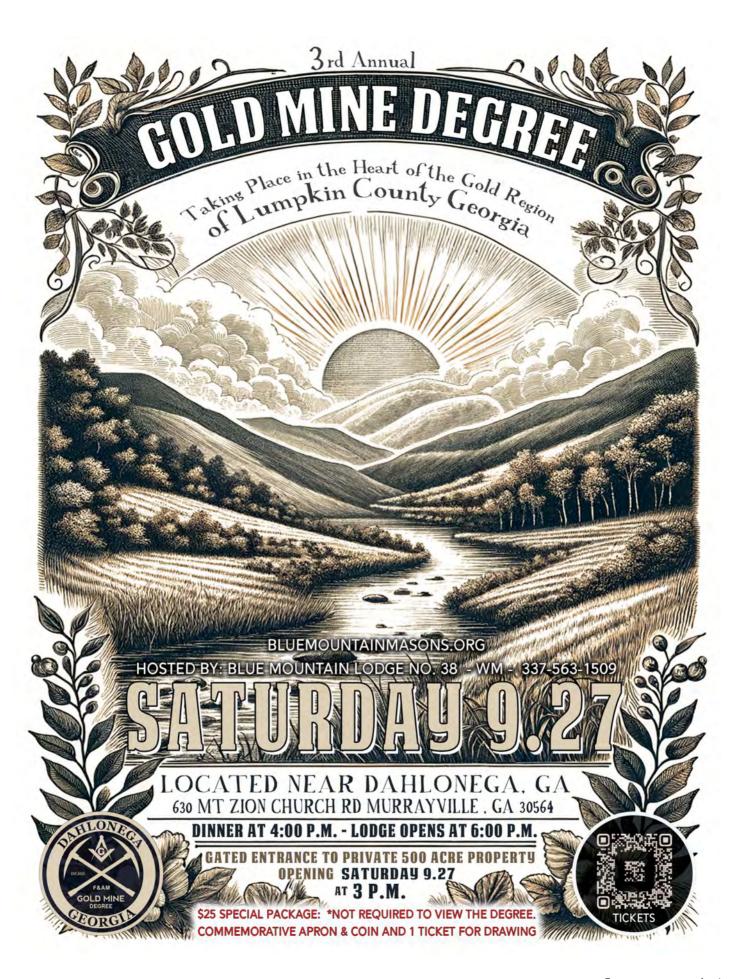
- Fried Chicken
  - ▶ Pork BBO
- · Hash & Rice
- ▶ Baby Lima Beans
  - Mac & Cheese
    - ▶ Coleslaw
- Banana Pudding & Peach Cobbler
  - ▶ Tea. Coffee, and Water

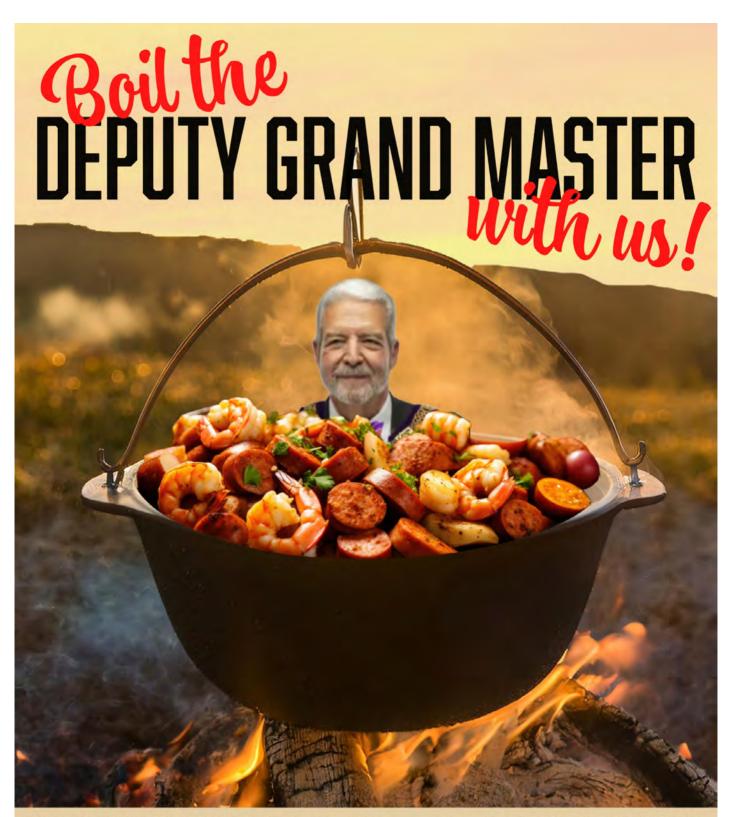
(Soft drinks may be provided by a local Lodge)





From Augusta: Take I-20 East to Exit 44 (Pond Branch Rd). Turn left onto Pond Branch Rd. Travel 4.1 miles. From Atlanta: Take I-20 East to Exit 44 (Pond Branch Rd). Turn left onto Pond Branch Rd. Travel 4.1 miles. From Columbia: Take I-20 West to Exit 44 (Pond Branch Rd). Merge onto Pond Branch Rd. Travel 4.1 miles. From Spartanburg: Take I-26 East to Exit 74 (Newberry). Take US-76 E and State Route 391 S to Pond Branch Rd (State Rd S-32-34) in Lexington County.





THE DEPUTY GRAND MASTER'S BOIL OCTOBER 11, 2025
BRUNSWICK SHRINE CLUB

SEE DETAILS & PURCHASE TICKETS (\$55) AT BRUNSWICK717.COM







# Make Plans To Attend Shady Dale's 41st Annual Rodeo



GRAND LODGE OF GEORGIA, FREE & ACCEPTED MASONS

Friday, June 6<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup>
22019 Highway 83 North
Shady Dale, GA 31085

Proceeds go to Masonic related activities and charities.

# Limited Edition Masonic Cast-Iron Mini Skillets

Landrum Lodge #48 is proud to partner with Cast Iron Savannah to present a unique set of 3 miniature cast iron skillets made by Lodge Manufacturing.

Each skillet is beautifully crafted to represent the degrees of Freemasonry: The Entered Apprentice (1st Degree) with the square, compass, sun & moon. The Fellowcraft (2nd degree) with the square, compass, and two pillars. And the Master Mason (3rd degree) with the square, compass, and sprigs of acacia. The set will come in a custom printed, individually numbered box fit for display.

Crafted in South Pittsburg, TN, its naturally seasoned cooking surface is the perfect size for serving individual cookies or brownies. Seasoned and ready to use.



Cost is \$99.99 for the set of three, with taxes & domestic US shipping included.

Orders are shipped within 2-business days

# Orders can be placed at www.landrum48.org/cast-iron



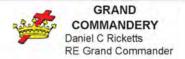












### THE YORK RITE IN GEORGIA

Editor: Michael H. Sampsell Email: mike@thesampsells.com http://www.yorkriteofga.org



Joseph F. Oelgoetz III ME Grand High Priest



John C. Miller MI Grand Master



Daniel C. Ricketts RE Grand Commander

The Grand York Rite Session was held during the first week of May and a new slate of officers was elected. Joseph F. Oelgoetz III was elected Most Excellent Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of Georgia, John C. Miller, Most Illustrious Grand Master of the Grand Council of Georgia and Daniel C. Ricketts, Right Eminent Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Georgia. Michael J. Etheridge was elected as the Excellent Grand Master of 1st Veil, Grand Chapter of Georgia. Richard L. "Doc" Tanner was elected as Illustrious Grand Steward of the Grand Council of Georgia. Eric S. Tress was elected as Eminent Grand Sword Bearer and Christopher D. Gabor was elected as Eminent Grand Warder of the Grand Commandery of Georgia.

Congratulations to all and we hope for another fantastic year in York Rite Masonry.

## 2025 Greater Atlanta York Rite Festival

# August 16th & August 23rd, 2025

Atlanta Masonic Center, 1690 Peachtree St NW Atlanta, GA 30309

- The Chapter and Council degrees will be conferred on Saturday, August 16th
- The Orders of the Commandery will be conferred on Saturday, August 23rd
- Come early each Saturday for fellowship, coffee and refreshements.
- Cost will be \$15 per person for everyone per day.
- Run all petitions/candidate fees through local York Rite body prior to the festival.
- · NO VOTING WILL BE ALLOWED AT THE FESTIVAL.

CONTACT: Edward C. Barclay, Pres. email: edwardb1966@att.net Phone: 678-472-8251

PETITION FOR YORK RITE BODIES http://www.yorkriteofga.org/bpfiles/ combpet.pdf

GEORGIA YORK RITE WEBSITE www.yorkriteofga.org FIND YOUR CLOSEST YORK RITE: http://www.yorkriteofga.org/yorkrite-by-city.html

# Critiquing Membership-decline's Causes

By Brother Norman Black Roswell Lodge No. 165

As we seek ways to increase membership, the following thoughts of people that have researched the subject extensively may be useful.

Joy Porter, a professor in the History Department of the University of Birmingham, in England, wrote in Native American Freemasonry, that Freemasonry's commitment to a ritualized, sensory world in its lodges led to its losing membership (as a percentage of population), beginning in the 1920s, to service clubs in which there was little ritual or secrecy and a lot of laughter and an emphasis on social activity. She noted that groups like Rotary and Kiwanis place little emphasis on ritual, a code of moral conduct, or in an individual spiritual journey and focus on society and business networking.

According to the Masonic Service Association of North America, membership in U.S. lodges dropped from 1929 to 1941, co-incidentally with the Great Depression of 1929 to 1939 and rose again from 1941 to 1958. After 1958, membership has declined.

Porter also assigned great weight to television as a cause of declining Freemasonry membership. She wrote that television offers never ending variety, while memorized ritual delivered meeting after meeting cannot compare with polished, constantly changing TV entertainment. She did not mention that much of members' leisure time is absorbed each year as members in newly elected officer positions learn their segments of meeting routines, leaving little time for much else for months each year.

According to Porter, TV dominates American social life, but it is only one aspect of corporate power that has increased in Americans' lives. Since the late 1960s and particularly since the early 1980s, globalization, deregulation, privatization, and free-market thinking have been essential in depoliticizing and disengaging individuals. She said that, if television has taken men away from the lodge and their peers it has done so in part by representing the interests of ever-growing global big business.

She wrote that, "With television's rise and fraternal associations' decline we have indeed lost some of what once joined families and communities together. Men

have shifted away from one of the primary sources from which they gained psychological succor, away from human associations that invoked giving as opposed to consuming. Instead, they spend their time with mediated products that place consumer choice far above decisions concerning social and community life.

In 1958, there were 4,086,000 Freemasons in the United States. That was the peak of Freemasonry membership in the U.S. after World War II. However, when measured as a percentage of the male population over 20, Freemasonry's membership was lower in 1958 than it was in 1929, the peak after World War I. In 1929, 8.6% of the male population over 20 were Freemasons, while in 1958, the percentage was 7.6%.

At its zenith, one in every 20 American males of all ages in a population of 88 million males was a Freemason. Thereafter membership has declined steadily. In 1995, it was 2,153,000, which was nearly half the 1958 membership.

Vance Packard, in *The* Status *Seekers*, said that lodges brought together a limited span of the American social order until "the upper classes abandoned the lodges almost completely in favor of their exclusive civic-type groups."

Porter asked to what extent a loss of fraternal membership points to a more widespread loss of American associational life "something long connected with the strength and vitality of American democracy itself". She wrote that Freemasons have seen the decline as a general American unease: a pervasive withering of ties that have bound the best of the country's citizens together.

One culprit that could be fixed by Freemasons is ritual. Porter said that members are tired of listening to the same old rituals in lodge, and claimed that leading contemporary sociologists have identified atrophy as the main reason for the fraternity's decline. According to her, "Freemasonry's solid constitutionalism and its refusal to modify ritual; and rules, to engage in 'goal succession' and revoke 'terminal values', are all held up as the main reasons why it will fail to prosper in the twenty-first century. It would seem that Freemasonry's

'timelessness' has somehow begun to look dated... Examining Freemasonry's decline directs our attention to accelerating social stratification, burgeoning privatism, and the ever-advancing scope of corporate influence." According to Porter, how we manage these issues is a pressing societal issue.

Robert Putnam wrote in a 1995 article in the *Journal of Democracy* that membership in Masonic lodges in the United States has been declining gradually for several decades, as has membership in religious denominations, professional societies, labor unions, book clubs, and veterans and service organizations.

Putnam, an American political scientist, writes that the cause is systemic in American society. He noted that contemporary Americans have spent less and less time in organized groups than did previous generations.

Putnam noted that married, middleclass couples with children are usually more socially committed than single people. He identified societal changes, which have changed the American family as one reason for this decline. He said that fewer marriages, more divorces, fewer children, and lower real wages are important changes, which are partly responsible for this. Since he wrote his article, the drastic decline in marriages has added to this factor of Americans' non-commitment to civic engagement.

In addition to these causes, Putnam noted that there is less face-to-face shopping in community stores, as Americans order products online. This may also be a factor that reduces the physical basis for civic engagement.

In Putnam's opinion it is possible that transformative technological trends are radically "individualizing" the use Americans make of their free time and thus disrupting chances for relational development. In his research, in the 1960s, television was identified as the main limiter of relationship developments. He said that time-budget studies in the 1960s showed that increased growth in time spent watching television dwarfed all other changes in the way Americans passed their days and nights.

Since Putnam's study was published a multitude of electronic games and solo pass times have further intensified that change. Some Americans even order groceries and meals on-line and only see people that delivery those orders. Each of these changes has made Americans less civilly connected and more "individualized".

More evidence of TV's power is found in the fact that during the second half of the 1900s, TV significantly decreased the readership of U.S. evening newspapers. Instead of buying a newspaper on the way home or having it home delivered, working people came home, sat in front of a TV set, ate supper there, and let a TV news person tell them news. That caused evening newspapers in the U.S. to cease publication.

Porter wrote that by the mid-1800s, American Freemasonry had increased the length of its rituals to a point at which British Freemasons criticized them as too long, complicated, and theatrical. Rituals have not decreased in length since, and their length and need to

memorize them leaves less time for social interactions.

One of the most relevant statements about repetitive events was made by Marcus Aurelius who ruled the Roman empire from 161 A.D. to 180 A.D. He was reckoned as the last truly capable and good Roman emperor. In his diary-like writings, which are known today as his Meditations, he observed the effect repetition has. He wrote, "As happens to you in the amphitheater and such places, that the continual sight of the same things and the

uniformity make the spectacle wearisome, so it is in the whole of life."

Few men are interested in attending lodge to see rituals repeated. Reducing degree ritual to its essence would make it more meaningful and its repetition less tiresome. Research should be done to discover what lodge-degree work is like in regular grand jurisdictions in other countries, with a goal of modifying degree work in our lodges. If ritual was condensed to its essential messages, officers could learn it quickly. And concentrate on planning and implementing social and charitable activities which would involve all lodge members. That would make lodge more interesting and attractive to attend.

Sand runs swiftly through the hourglass, and if no action is taken Freemasonry in America will continue to dwindle in numbers and effect.

# Freemasonry, A Worldwide Fraternity

By Brother Anthony Williams Atlanta-Peachtree Lodge No. 59

Ever since I was a teenager, I have sought out practices and organizations that brought more meaning and reason to our mortal existence. Growing up, I was not raised in any particular faith. My parents were both Christians, but made the decision to let me choose my own path when I was old enough. When I was 16, I decided that I wanted to be baptized and eventually confirmed in the Church of England (equivalent to the Episcopal Church). Part of my attraction to that particular Christian tradition over many others was the tradition and the ritual

associated with it: the chanted catechisms, the swinging of incense, and the mysteries surrounding the consecration of communion elements. To me, all of this added an additional layer of the sacred on top of the basic

tenets of Christianity.

Around a year after my confirmation, my father (who has been a Mason since 1974) and I were in Central London for a couple of events and had some time to spare. He

asked me if I wanted to go on the tour of Freemasons' Hall. He had previously talked to me on a few occasions about Freemasonry, but being a teenager bent on rebellion against parental authority, I had taken no interest in those conversations. However, faced with the options of being stuck with sitting in a coffee shop with my dad for a couple of hours (teenage rebellion), or doing an activity with other people, I chose the latter, and we went on the tour.

What I saw that day impressed me enormously. The tour guide not only showed us the building, with its beautiful wood-paneled corridors, marble-clad vestibule, and the Grand Temple itself (complete with the stunning mosaic work on the ceiling, and the gold thrones for the Grand Master and the Grand

Wardens), but he also explained a great deal about what Freemasonry is: the history, the ideals, the fellowship, and how it was open to men of all creeds and colors.

Upon leaving the building, I had just one question to my father: "when can I join?" By dispensation, I was initiated one year later, aged 18. I very quickly fell in love with Freemasonry, feeling that same sense of the sacred through tradition and ritual that I had previously experienced from the Church of England.

But it was more than just that. The sense of

brotherly love was something that I had never experienced before (College

fraternities do not exist in England, so that was something that I did not have the opportunity to experience). In the year following my raising I plunged into Freemasonry head-first, attending 54 meetings across 31 different lodges. I rapidly came to understand that it is our ritual that makes us unique – the

initiatory experience, the memorization, the esoteric meaning of what we do and why – it all fascinated me (and continues to do so to this day).

In 2011, aged 23, I emigrated to the USA. One of the first things I did was to seek out my local Lodge. Immediately, I saw one of the great advantages of Freemasonry in action – wherever you may go around the world, you have brothers who will very quickly become friends. As I settled into life in Georgia Freemasonry, I quickly discovered that the ritual is different in every jurisdiction, some more so than others. However, the spirit, meaning, and core values of the Fraternity are the same – and what I fell in love with in England would feel just as special and sacred here in Georgia.

# The Art of Zen in Freemasonry

By Brother Jesse Kalal Oothcaloga Lodge No. 154

In my own personal studies, I have often been surprised by the many overlapping themes between that of Buddhism and Freemasonry. Although these connections are not often discussed (at least not to my own knowledge), I cannot help but notice these striking similarities. These parallels extend upon not just their use in symbolism, but goes

beyond that, for they can also be found deeply embedded in both their teachings and philosophies. While Buddhism may not be something that comes to mind when one thinks of Freemasonry, I think with a closer examination, one may see these similarities.

It is my goal is to help highlight these overlapping themes. Not only with the hopes of possibly expanding one's own understanding of Freemasonry, but by also possibly giving a broader understanding

of Buddhism.

Something that
I not only
hold in high
admiration, but
have found much joy
in throughout my
studies. The style of
Buddhism in which I
will be referring to is
that of Zen
Buddhism. Though
are many styles of

the two main ones

Buddhism and

Buddhism. Zen Buddhism, however similar to the two, still holds its own style. One that I not only find holds a touch of humor in it, but also holds a unique perspective. A perspective of not only of the world and the life around us, but also a perspective of one's own personal being. With that said, I do hope I can offer a fresh point of view, as well as a deeper appreciation of both traditions.

there

Buddhism,

being Mahayana

Theravada

Buddhism and Freemasonry As A Way of Life

One of the first notable similarities I came across when learning about Freemasonry was the fact that neither Buddhism or Freemasonry is a religion, at least not in the conventional sense. Freemasonry could be

better described as more of a craft, practice or even a means of living or thinking. It provides one with a moral and ethical framework to live by. I refer here to our policies and codes of conduct which we Masons hold ourselves accountable to. I would even remind one to think back to our Obligations and Catechisms.

Buddhism is often mistaken as a religion, but would be more accurately described as a means of practice, philosophy, and a way of life. It is similar to Freemasonry, in that it offers ethical and moral guidelines. The

most notable among these are the "Eight Noble Truths," which include principles and teachings such as "Right Speech," "Right Thought," and "Right Action." These you might find align closely with Freemasonry's moral beliefs and teachings. take the Buddhist Action," this refers

to actions which hold a moral and ethical standpoint. It is exemplified in one that abstains from partaking in any harmful or deceitful acts, but instead engages in action that promotes peace, love, and unity. For the Freemason, our use of the square and plumb is what would come into play here. To remind us to walk upright in the moral and ethical teachings of our

and ethical

For instance,

principle of "Right

craft, and that we should always square our actions towards all mankind.

Now, although Freemasonry has the belief in a "God" or "Supreme Being," as a requirement, Freemasonry doesn't subscribe to any one certain ideology or belief. A Mason can hold various faiths and traditions such as Islam, Christianity, Judaism, or Hinduism. As long as you hold the belief and acknowledgment in a "Supreme Being," however you may describe that, you can become a member of a Lodge.

Buddhism on the other hand does not indulge in the concept of "God," at least not in the traditional sense. Instead, it focuses on the idea of one's "True Self" or "True Nature." Its teachings are more directed to the very energy that lies behind all life, without subjecting it to any fixed labels or dogmas. Although some may call that very source of all life "God," Buddhism strays away from any fixed terminology, not because it has any sort of bias against the concept of "God," but more so because Buddhism emphasizes the interconnectedness of things and the unity that brings it all together. Buddhism sees the world as one interdependent organism, which is forever evolving. Much like how Freemasonry is a living and progressive science.

Another noteworthy comparison would be the use of sacred texts in both traditions. You may note that you will find in any Lodge a copy of the Holy Bible, which in fact is what many of our rituals and legends are based upon. However, Freemasonry does not adhere to the principle that you must only subscribe to the Christian faith. Instead, it uses it as a tool, to help rule and guide us as men of the craft, instead of as a mandatory religious text.

Buddhism in a similar manner, uses things such as Sutras and Koans in its practices. Koans, which I find to be particularly interesting, challenges the student's logical mind with paradoxes to help the student find deeper insight while Sutras are more like Holy Texts. Buddhists would use these as something to meditate or to think deeply on. While formal Buddhists use these Sutras and Koans, it is not necessarily a requirement for one to do so. Just as in Freemasonry one does not

only have to refer to only the Holy Bible, Buddhists are not bound to any one text. But can use any of the other books which have been deemed "Sacred" or "Holy." In this way, both Buddhism and Freemasonry use these texts as tools for personal and spiritual development, rather than using any sort of absolute belief or dogma.

#### Use of Symbols

One of the very cornerstones of both Buddhism and Freemasonry is their symbolism. Both use them in order to convey a deeper meaning and insight. As many know, Freemasonry is made up of many unique symbols. Each one holds its own deeper meaning and significance. For example, the 24-inch gauge, which represents the balancing of work, rest, and Masonry. A tool to help remind us to practice and bring forth balance into our day-to-day life. Even the compass is a

good reminder of this as well, whereby to help us circumscribe our desires. It is another good form of balance.

Balance is also a core principle in Buddhism. It teaches us about mindfulness and being fully present and aware in our everyday actions, reminding us to live in harmony and unity with ourselves. Buddhism itself demonstrates and teaches symbolic balance. The most notable among these is the symbol of the Yin and Yang, which

represents duality: light and dark, good and evil, order and chaos. But you will also note that in the Yin and Yang, both sides hold a small dot of the opposite color. On the black side you will find a small white dot and on the white side a small black dot, symbolizing that in darkness lies light and in light lies darkness; in order lies chaos and in chaos lies order. In this way the Yin and Yang is a symbol of unity and balance. Two subjects that you will often find throughout the teachings and philosophies of Freemasonry.

I also want to note here the symbol of the common gavel. Which is taught to us for the noble and glorious use of divesting ourselves of all vices and excesses of life, thereby fitting our minds as living stones for the spiritual building. Through time and much effort, we can strip away our flaws and sins in order to bloom into a new being.

For the Buddhist, the Lotus flower represents something similar. In order for the Lotus flower to come into full bloom, it must fight its way through the mud and darkened waters. Even though its roots begin in the darkness of the muddy bottom, it fights to bloom above it all. This can also symbolize spiritual potential and non-attachment: letting go of the very things that are not needed, in order to bloom or become your full potential self, even in our most darkened conditions.

#### The Principle of Unity

This then brings me to unity, which you will find at the very core of both traditions. Both speak of unity in their own terms. For Freemasonry, it is what us Masons refer to as a brotherhood. Unity is what unites us under our shared values and principles. It is what brings two Masons together, even though they may be from two extremely different backgrounds and upbringings. They still stand together as Brothers, united together under the name of Freemasonry.

Buddhism holds this same regard, seeing us all as united under the same true nature, seeing us all as one connected organism. Although that may sound cliche in and of itself, I believe it still holds a simply beautiful perspective. To see everyone and every being as one, as truly equal regardless of any faith, dogma, practice, or belief.

In Freemasonry, we speak of the level and the square. For us Masons, we meet upon the level and part upon the square. Meaning we meet and come together on the same level, as one. Regardless of titles and status, we meet as Brothers. We speak of parting on the square which teaches us to square our actions towards all mankind and that charity being the most important of virtues.

Buddhism speaks much on the topic of unity, in Sanskrit they use a word called "Aikyam" meaning "Oneness." In Buddhism they see the world through the perspective in which nature is all one, all coming from the same source of energy. The endless knot being a symbol in Buddhism that symbolizes our interconnectedness throughout the three stages of life: birth, life and death. The Buddhist holds the perspective of reincarnation, that we forever move through the ever evolving stages of life. That it is an endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth in which we

are all different perspectives of life simply experiencing itself. Accordingly this means that we are all inescapably one, forever united together by the same oneness that flows through all of us. We can only become divided by our own perspectives and differences.

Buddhism and Freemasonry both share this same value in unity. Although expressed in different ways, whereby one is expressed through brotherhood and the other expressed in an all-encompassing oneness. They both hold a great value in unity and express it through their own teachings and practice.

#### Conclusion

While at first glance, Freemasonry and Buddhism may seem unrelated, but with a deeper look you may start to see surprising parallels between the two. Both traditions offer moral and ethical guidelines to not only provide self-improvement, but also to offer spiritual development. They both use symbolism to help convey deeper meaning and insights and to also help emphasize the principle of unity: amongst humanity or among Brothers. Neither tradition adheres to the requirement of any certain rigid belief or dogma, but instead both promote and encourage the development of oneself.

Recognizing and acknowledging these connections, we not only gain a new fresh point of view of Freemasonry, but also find a new understanding and perspective of Buddhism. In the end, both these traditions encourage us to seek out wisdom, balance, and deeper insight into ourselves and the world around us in hopes to not only make a difference within ourselves, but possibly the lives around us.



# The Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences and Our Understanding of God

By WB Jackson Fussell East Point Lodge No. 288

Within the vast realm of Freemasonry are found innumerable symbols, lectures, lessons, and rituals used to teach and illustrate life-changing lessons. Few of these are so enriched with education and philosophy as the Staircase and Middle Chamber lectures. Staircase lecture provides a variety of lessons and insights, wherein are taught the creative power of God; man's ability to experience His creation; and the knowledge necessary to fully understand and serve God in His creation. And as one ascends the sacred Staircase, they find themselves in the presence of the Middle Chamber. In this lecture it is revealed that the Middle Chamber is symbolically the Holy of Holies. This hallowed epoch inculcates the gnosis of the ancient freemasons, their prodigious understanding of God, and the continued lineage that still exists in modern Judeo-Christian practices.

The three degrees of Masonry are emblematic of youth, manhood and the wisdom of old age. The Entered Apprentice degree builds a foundation on the lessons of brotherly love, relief and truth, much like our baptism lays the foundation of our faith through the lessons of forgiveness, faith, and understanding. The Fellowcraft Degree, through the importance of education and the attentive ear, instructive tongue and faithful breast, leads us towards a successful manhood. Following the Christian pattern, this would be akin to Confirmation, where the individual is taught the history, lessons, structures and core beliefs of the faith in order to build them into strong and knowledgeable christians. The Master Mason's degree teaches the inescapable lesson that time and patience will accomplish all things, this is akin to lesson that is learned pretty early on in the christian faith and relearned throughout life; no matter how much we plan or pray, God's plan takes time and by having patience we can see his good works.

The Fellowcraft degree is the Entered Apprentice's first glimpse into the allegory of King Solomon's Temple, through the individual's journey up a set of winding stairs and into the Sanctum Sanctorum of King Solomon's Temple. This symbolic journey begins on an outer porch, here we are greeted by two massive pillars, adorned with lilies, network, and pomegranate,

these foreshadow that which we hope to achieve by reaching the Middle Chamber at the end of our journey; peace, unity and plenty. We also are looked over by physical representations of God's infinite creative power, the terrestrial and celestial globes. We then reach the all important threshold of the Temple, upon entering we are instructed that the entrance to the middle chamber was on the right side of the house, in Mackey's Encyclopedia we learn that the staircase is flanked by two chambers one on either side of the entrance, for use by the priests. One chamber for the Priest to store his vestments and the other for depositing the sacred vessels (Mackey, 483-483).

Before we take the winding stairs up to the Middle Chamber, it would be inappropriate not to explain the large structural significance of the layout of the Temple as explained in chapter 6 of The First Book of The Kings and how it directly correlates to the structure of ancient churches and the celebration of the Mass. What exactly are these two rooms and how do they correlate to the imagery and lessons of the staircase and middle chamber? If you have ever stepped foot into a Catholic church, whether Anglican, Orthodox or Roman, even some Episcopal churches, you have probably heard the term vestry or sacristy. If you have not, these terms are used as preparation rooms for the Mass or holy services. In ancient, predominantly eastern churches the term used for these rooms collectively was the pastophorion which was made up of two rooms (In King Solomon's time the pastophorion referred to the Priests' quarters and the treasury), the Diaconicon and the Prothesis. The Diaconicon was situated on the south side of the altar and Prothesis on the north. In ancient eastern churches the Diaconicon was used as a preparation room for Priests and other clergy and the Prothesis was used to prepare those vessels and elements used in The Mass. Both rooms are traditionally off limits to those not a member of the Clergy (Taft). The Diaconicon was used to prepare priests to perform those solemn services which pertain to such an office but how do we prepare ourselves to experience God and his creation? By taking a journey through an outer porch, up a flight of winding stairs, through an outer and inner door, on our way to a place representing the Sanctum Sanctorum or Holy of Holies.

We have already entered through the outer porch, much like the beginning of our Christian journey, we have someone guide us through without having to put in much effort or be able to vouch for ourselves. Just like in baptism someone else vouched for us and not

we ourselves. The Order of

Holy Baptism found in the Book of Common Prayer, asks a series of questions which are then answered by the Godparents. Explained simply, the god parents are promising that they will guide this individual in the faith, and teach them the way that they shall go. This is very similar to the beginning of our Masonic Journey where two people vouched for us when we could not vouch for ourselves and promised to guide and mentor us. As we cross the threshold, we are presented with the winding stairs of our faith.

We now stand before the Winding Staircase, which leads to (at this time) the mysterious Middle Chamber of King Solomon's Temple. We see a series of steps grouped together, 3 steps, 5 steps, and finally 7 steps. We now have to perform such tasks as to prepare us to receive the blessings of what awaits us in The

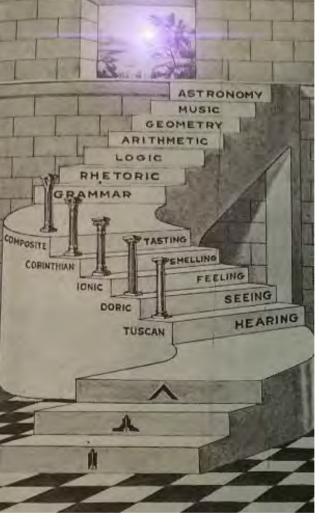
Middle Chamber. The series of steps each have a symbol or word associated with them. The first set shows representations of the Level, Plumb and Square, the second contains the words, Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Composite, or hearing, seeing, feeling, touching, smelling and the final set contains, Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy.

The first three stairs we come to are representative of the working tools of a Fellowcraft and allude to the three principal officers of a lodge, the Junior Warden, Senior Warden and Worshipful Master. We are taught very early on that the lodge is supported by three principle supports; wisdom, strength and beauty which are each represented by a principal officer; The Junior Warden represents that of beauty, Senior Warden represents that of strength, and Worshipful Master represents that of wisdom. These three steps are representative of God's power to create. We have

beauty to adorn, strength to

support, and wisdom to contrive. God adorns the universe with beauty everywhere you look, if a man truly believes in the existence of God and appreciates that which is around him it is impossible to miss the absolute beauty we are surrounded by. God supports our world with strength. If you look around, it is no secret that we are not perfect creatures, we commit sin, we destroy that which is beautiful, we damage each other but in the end we have the strength to overcome. Wisdom to contrive is the final step in this series, if vou have ever built something from the ground up, without guidance or instructions, if you have truly contemplated the vastness of space or even just that of the ocean, then you know the power of wisdom God has to contrive all of that. These three steps are taken by masons and teach the

contrive all of that. These three steps are taken by masons and teach the inescapable lesson of God's creation and his title of the Great Architect of the Universe.



We are now greeted by a series of five steps and a series of columns. These steps are representative of the five Orders in Architecture and the five senses of the human body. Through the lessons of this section we are taught to experience the beauty and complexity of God's creation. The first three senses of hearing, seeing, and feeling are particularly important to Masons, as we hear the words when spoken, see the sign given, and feel the grip where we may know one brother in darkness as well as in light. We are able to

utilize the senses to experience the vastness of God's creation.

We now approach the last remaining set of steps, emblematic of the seven liberal arts and sciences, In some rituals, the seven liberal arts and sciences are each only briefly described, in others they are enumerated without detail except of course geometry which is expounded upon greatly. Many are thought to interpret the Fellowcraft Degree teachings as merely a vague message encouraging an education generally. However this could not be farther from the truth as we explore the origins of the seven liberal arts. Their origin lies in classical antiquity, and their role in the development of Western civilization has been immense. It is unfortunate that what was once a precious adornment of our tradition has so soon become simply a footnote in our second degree.

We are able to see a correlation between the winding staircase and our journey towards God in many jurisdictions. Walter Leslie Wilmshust, in his writing The Ceremony of Passing, explains how the perambulation of the candidate is led around the ground level, squaring as he walks. This gives way to spiral movement when the staircase is reached Linear motion gives way to circular: the candidate is no longer merely progressing forward but up. "By this motion change, this spiral ascent, is implied that the time has now come where the candidate must level the level of the sense- world and rise to the supra-sensual; must divert his thoughts and desires from sensuous objects and concentrate them on the insensible and much more real things of the world of the mind (Worrel pg. 35)"

The lesson of the winding stairs is a lesson of life. As we advance in life, it is like climbing a winding staircase, we cannot see far ahead. Progress requires courage to carry on and grow and mature

without a full understanding of what lies ahead. This is the Christian definition of faith, the lessons inoculated by the seven liberal arts and sciences extend far past just the educational component. The lessons taught by the seven liberal arts and sciences can be used to interpret God's word, delve into understanding Him, and grow ourselves to understand our purpose here. In order to fully understand the lessons of the final set of stairs we must first understand the history surrounding the seven liberal arts and sciences and how we can grow that knowledge towards our understanding.

The history behind the seven liberal arts and sciences is rather interesting and can be traced back to

teachings of Pythagoras, Plato, and St. Augustine who were prominent in framing the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences. Pythagoras was not just one of the greatest mathematicians and philosophers of his time but was also considered a master Greek Theologian. His students spent a large portion of their time looking for and making connections between the sacred art of Geometry and the Divine. They also developed relationships between music, arithmetic, and astronomy and the divine which is why Pythagoras is often associated with the quadrivium or the last four of the seven liberal arts and sciences. Plato focused on writing about the importance of education and emphasized logic, philosophy, and dialectic. Plato believed logic represented our highest cognitive faculty, the ability to see both sides of an argument and understand it. St. Augustine of Hippo lived in the third century AD, and is considered one of the greatest teachers of rhetoric in the known world. He believed that if one wished to defend truth one must be eloquent to refute falsehood through oratorical power. He rounded out and completed the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences with his emphasis on grammar and rhetoric (R.D. Marcus). In today's fraternity, many misunderstand the meaning behind the seven liberal arts and sciences because of how differently we use the term liberal today. Today we tend to connect it to a broad or eclectic education in contrast to a much more specialized technical or professional education. But, the term liberal in the context of the seven liberal arts and sciences means "suitable for free men." and the term "arts" has to be thought of in the sense of "skills' (Worrel)'.

In antiquity the trivium and quadrivium are treated as subjects to prepare for the highest type of knowledge. These two groups were composed of the seven liberal arts and sciences; trivium: grammar, rhetoric and logic; and the quadrivium of arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. William Stahl explains "the people who were most interested in the full span of subjects were philosophers; and the seven liberal arts were in essence, and always remained, a philosophers' curriculum. (Worrel pg 36). Grammar involved not only parts of speech and rules but also literature, reading, exposition, etymologies and linguistics. Rhetoric is the training of the orator or development of speaking to the level of a form of art. Logic is the study of formal logical methods. Arithmetic was the art of computation but with a strong focus in its mystical and symbolic implications due to influence from the Pythagorean traditions. Geometry was not what we picture as geometry until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that complete translations of Euclid became available. Music was a theoretical, mathematical and speculative science. Astronomy was of great interest as were all things involved with the heavens.

Grammar teaches us to express our ideas in appropriate words, which we afterwards learn to adorn and beautify with rhetoric. Logic teaches us how to think and reason with propriety, making languages subordinate to thought. Arithmetic is the science of numbers and the art of computation. Geometry treats the powers, properties and proportions in general (R.D. Marcus) .

Grammar is the first step taken in this series of steps, grammar at its core is the first task given to Adam by God, name all things. He is told to name them and by naming is given dominion over them. Grammar revolves around giving words and things meaning and just as it is one of the first tasks given to Adam, it is one of the first subjects we learn in elementary school. Grammar is divided into technical and exegetical grammar. Technical grammar is what we typically associate when we hear the term grammar, this involves sentence diagramming, verb/subject usage, and sentence structure. Exegetical grammar however involves learning the meaning of words, nuances and how to fit them into different settings. We are taught in the Fellowcraft degree to always keep a tongue of good report and we are directed to have an instructive tongue. A tongue of good report and instructive tongue allow us to better communicate and clearly and concisely deliver our point (R.D. Marcus).

Rhetoric and persuasion are synonyms, the study of rhetoric is to not only study speaking but also writing as a means to persuade. Rhetoric is one of the most commonly needed of the seven liberal arts and sciences and is essential in the study of law and regulation. We see examples in masters of rhetoric in our very fraternity, Roscoe Pound, Albert Mackey and Allen Roberts were some of the greatest writers on jurisprudence. Rhetoric can add elegance and power to our thoughts, as we improve in the practice of rhetoric, we can captivate with both strength of argument and beauty of expression. Mastery of Rhetoric allows us to entreat and exhort our brethren to charitable acts, admonish our brethren, and to applaud excellence in deportment and conduct. Discussion within the lodge allows us to practice training our attentive ear. Rhetoric teaches us to appreciate and understand the poetry of language and the order of words. A perfect example, we know that faith, hope and charity sounds better in that order than charity, faith, and hope. This skill is a development of rhetoric and allows us to grow in elegance of speech and attentiveness in listening (R.D. Marcus).

Logic is the final portion of the Trivium. We are guided and directed toward truth using logic. Logic guides us to conclusions based on our knowledge and understanding. Logic trains us to use our skills of conceiving, judging, reasoning, and disposing of questions all to more clearly see what is before us. Sincerity and plain dealing should be the distinguishing traits of a Freemason. Logic teaches us to employ critical thinking to weigh the pros and cons to find the best or better choice, observe the world, patterns and relationships, make predictions using inductive reasoning and make proofs and syllogisms. We learn through the inclusion of proofs and deductive reasoning that we use to determine what actions help one person do not always help another, we learn to discern fact from fiction and utilize knowledge for the betterment of ourselves.

The quadrivium is the second portion of the seven liberal arts and sciences, which is associated with science and learning the mysteries of the universe. Pythagoras is primarily responsible for these four branches: arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. Arithmetic is the first in the list of the quadrivium, which involves the computation or reckoning of numbers. We render many things unintelligible with the ignorance of numbers, In order to perceive the world in an accurate manner we need. Mathematics is a progressive science, we learn to count before we add or subtract, we then learn to multiply and divide, which then turns into more complex equations and concepts. From profound masonic writers we are taught that through arithmetic we are to

"Add to our knowledge

Never subtract from the character of your neighbor Multiply your benevolence to your fellow creatures Divide your means with those in need.(R.D.Marcus)"

We are taught to find beauty in arithmetic and mathematics. We discover symmetry and proportions. We experience wonder at the beauty of mathematics in the world, we see fractal patterns in biology, chemistry, and physics that repeat, we see the Fibonacci spiral in conch shells, we determine that some proportions are right and some wrong, which indirectly teaches us about morality. (R.D. Marcus).

Geometry combines the roots *geo* and *metric* or earth measurement. Through geometry we discover unmeasured areas by comparing them to previously measured areas, geometry can be synonymous with self-knowledge, the understanding of the substance of a being. As freemasons, a special emphasis is put on geometry. The tools of geometry are the plumb, square and level, they are the basic tools of an operative mason and as speculative masons we use them to teach the lessons of right-behavior, rectitude and truthfulness. The sense of seeing is developed through geometry, we grow in perceiving which structures are in order and which ones are poorly arranged.



Music is the second in the quadrivium and Pythagoras was keen on studying music as a science and not a mere hobby. Music is a part of who we are, our heartbeat is a basic pattern, we are ourselves a musical instrument from the first cry as a newborn baby to our last gasp for air as we grow old. The sense of hearing is improved, so that we grow to recognize the subtleties of music: specific rhythms, syncopations, tones and patterns. Vibrations cause sound, pitch is determined by the frequency of those vibrations. We develop skills to hear major, minor and chromatic scales, we attempt to match pitch when singing, though it takes discipline we learn to achieve harmony (R.D. Marcus).

Astronomy is the science which rounds out and completes—the seven liberal arts and sciences. Astronomy is the science in which we contemplate the cosmos, stars, planets and even the Grand Architect of the Universe. Through the study of astronomy we seem to be dwarfed by time and space, we feel tiny when we look at the vastness of the Milky Way and that of God's creations. We often hear that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. We are greeted for the first time as Fellow Crafts by two globes atop the pillars of the porch of King Solomon's Temple, one of these representing the celestial bodies of the cosmos. We are taught to appreciate the passing of

time and to contemplate our lives as we gaze into an hourglass in the chamber of reflection, time and space are two astronomical forces which we must aim to contemplate but seldom will be able to fully understand (R.D. Marcus).

The seven liberal arts as a means to the knowledge of God finds visible expression in the cathedral at Chartres. In Thierry's own handbook on the seven liberal arts, he defined the specific role of the quadrivium as illuminating the mind and that the trivium as making its expression. Klibanksy informs us "to attain through knowledge of the structure of the created world, knowledge of the Creator. As the world... is ordered according to number, measure, and weight, the sciences of the quadrivium- arithmetic and geometry, music and astronomy-- are the instruments which the human mind has at its disposal for recognizing the art of the creator. Music Most beautiful and universal language, all creatures can appreciate music and humanity has developed the ability to understand the emotion behind music. Music allows us to dive down into the recesses of our hearts and learn who we truly are in ways we do not entirely understand. This allows us to see the complexity and the strength of emotion.

We are taught as Masons to appreciate and contemplate God's creations and what better way than through the study of the seven liberal arts and sciences and following the Winding Stairs. Freemasonry gave us the road map to get closer to God and understand his creation and our place in it. It is not for me to tell you what your particular place is but it is all of our duty to use the tools we have been given to find our own place and contemplate the beauty of our creator. Wilmshurst is of the opinion that the winding staircase, which includes the seven steps representing the seven liberal arts and sciences, is considerably more than just a brief explanation that education is important but that the winding stairs are a vehicle of the ascension into the spiritual realm. moment of ascending the winding staircase, the candidate is mentally leaving the outerworld more and more behind him and rising into an inner invisible world. He is making what has often been called itinerarium mentis in deo, or the ascent of the mind to God (Worrel).

# The Sunbury Oak Chair?

By Most Worshipful Brother Jan Giddens Kennesaw Lodge No. 33

Every Georgia Mason knows about Solomon's Lodge No. 1 in Savannah. Solomon's Lodge has a long and storied history complete with the "Holy Relics" of Georgia Masonry. Many of us have seen the Oglethorpe Bible, presented to the Lodge at the time of its organization in 1734, a framed copy of their original charted issued by the newly formed Grand Lodge of Georgia, dated December 27, 1786. The George Washington chair,



that is still used by the Worshipful Master and was used by George Washington upon his visit to the Lodge in 1791. Several very old and ornate aprons, and of course the gavel made from the oak tree in Sunbury in which the first masonic meeting was held in the Colony of Georgia.

But did you know there was a chair made from that same oak tree? Recently I was reading the Grand Lodge proceedings from the time of MW Brother Samuel Lawrence, who served as Grand Master from 1869-1872 and who was the only Grand Master from Kennesaw Lodge No. 33. MWB Lawrence lead our Grand Lodge through the difficult years of Reconstruction following the Civil War and helped put us on the road to becoming a functioning Grand Lodge once again.

In the Grand Masters address from the Grand Lodge session in 1870 I ran across something I had never heard of, let me quote the Grand Master describing a visit to Savannah.

"April 27, 1870—At the request of the Bethesda Union Society of Savannah, I convened an Occasional Grand Lodge, and laid the Corner Stone of a new edifice at Bethesda, ten miles below the city, on the original grounds donated the Society by the

celebrated George Whitfield, Charles Wesley, Selenia, Countess of Huntington, and others.

The brethren brought with them, to grace and sanctify the occasion, "the oak chair made from tree under which General Oglethorpe held the first Masonic Lodge, at Sunbury, Georgia; also the Bible which was used on that occasion in the year 1733-both the property of Solomon's Lodge No.1, of Savannah, Georgia."

I have visited Solomon's Lodge on numerous occasions and talked with their learned Brethren and seem the wonderful treasures they have; I have even set in the George Washington chair as many visitors have. I never heard the speak of an oak chair from the Sunbury tree. If anyone has any further light to shed on this subject, please the Masons of Georgia know, our history is long but the artifacts that connect us to the past are few.

## Someone Else Died

By Most Worshipful Brother Jan Giddens Kennesaw Lodge No. 33

I regret to inform you of the death of "Someone Else." All of us knew him well and counted on him all of the time. Because of this, his work in the Lodge was unequalled. It is very strange, but it seems like he always was on at least four or five committees at once. In fact, just the other day I asked a member if he would like to serve on a committee, and he quickly replied, "see if you can get someone else to take the job." That was when I realized how much Someone Else got around.

But all good things come to an end. Now that Someone Else has passed on, what are we to do. Someone Else was always chairman of committees or filled one of the high offices. I do not know where he found the time to do all the things he did, but he did. Lt's time for each and everyone to speak up and say "I'd like to serve in Someone Else's place." Wouldn't Someone Else be proud of what we are doing?



(author unknown)

Brethren, does someone else in our lodge do all the lectures? Does someone else confer the degrees? Does someone else look after the lodge building, the members or the widows? Someone Else left us a great fraternity, it's our turn to step up and fill the shoes of Someone Else. If not us, who?

# The Best is Yet to Come

By Worshipful Brother Thomas Chapman St. Mary's Lodge No. 109



Bring the principles of masonry into your daily life. Just like that young man you just raised, watch him do the work and learn from him as he does you. Study. Seek the instruction of your brethren. Practice.

Look for ways in your everyday life to employ the fundamental principles of Freemasonry. The principles of Brotherhood, Charity, Justice, Belief, Loyalty, Obedience, and Morality. Be ever mindful of your Masonic obligations. Take time often to stop and reflect.

To all my Masonic Brethren I would offer that admission into this honorable institution is not the final destination, not the end of the path. Indeed, it is but the beginning. To all my brethren I assert that this transformation of becoming a better man through Masonry is indeed possible, if you endeavor to work at it. It is an incremental, often imperceptible process, a process that is not easy but rewarding and takes a lifetime to achieve. Enjoy being a Mason.

# Do I Know You?

By Worshipful Brother August A. Beyer, IV Mt. Hermon Lodge No. 304

Last year, while traveling to Europe, our immediate past DDGM for the 4th Masonic District, Sub-District A, WB Roger W. Buterbaugh, fell victim to a lifethreatening illness that required immediate medical attention. This illness caused WB Buterbaugh to stay in a German ICU for 3 full weeks, where he and his wife were told many times that he had a small chance of surviving. Thankfully, the Masonic Brotherhood did precisely what we say we'll do. Fourteen members of Mt. Hermon Lodge #304, who are also plural members of the American-Canadian Grand Lodge of Germany (ACGL) came to his distress. Some of these brethren are also Grand Lodge Officers in their ACGL Grand Jurisdiction. In addition to their usual vocations, family life, and Masonic duties as Grand Lodge Officers, they helped whenever and wherever they could, and we honestly credit WB Roger's survival, in part, to them.

They visited him in the hospital, took care of his wife, saw that logistics were handled, and even got his luggage sent back to the United States for far less than the exorbitant price his wife was quoted. Notably among them are WBs Cameron Davis and Frank Ullmann.

Think about your wife being in a foreign country where she doesn't speak the language, doesn't know anyone, her husband is in the ICU, not expected to survive, and some men that she's never met come to her aid, and helps her through one of the most stressful, trying times of her life.

Mt. Hermon Lodge #304, is about to celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in October, and we currently have Brethren who live in 5 different countries, and 17 states. To say that we have "global reach" is a true statement.

On 20 Feb 25, the Brethren of Mt. Hermon Lodge #304 of Columbus, had the honor of visiting Midland Lodge #144 for many reasons. Fellowship, food, and honoring one of our Affiliated Brothers from the ACGL Jurisdiction, WB Tarik Eker. WB Eker is a Plural Member of Mt. Hermon, as well as being a member of Turkay Lodge #995, ACGL.

WB Eker currently serves as the Senior Grand Warden of the ACGL and was in the United States to attend

the Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America. It's the largest gathering of Grand Masters of Masons in the entire world and took place in South Carolina this year.

WB Eker's visit didn't coincide with our Regular Meeting night, but he wanted to visit a lodge in Georgia while in the States, and I believe he's glad to have had the opportunity. Traveling with him was the PGM of the ACGL, MWB James E. Barrett, who is currently serving as the ACGL's Grand Secretary (pro tem), and it was a great turnout with upwards of 40 Brethren in attendance. We honored WB Eker, where the Worshipful Master of Mt. Hermon Lodge #304, WB Joseph E. Davis, presented him with his Perpetual Membership Certificate and Lapel Pin. Eker attended Midland Lodge #144, WB Buterbaugh presided as the Worshipful Master (pro tem) where he offered his profound thanks for what the brethren did It was a fun night which was a little for him. emotional a few different times when we realized that we had so many thanks to give for our overseas brethren who upheld their obligations as Masons.

Lastly, Mt. Hermon Lodge was able to secure one of Midland Lodge's many Traveling Gavels, which hasn't happened in a few years.



Pictured, L to R, standing, WB John Adams, WM, Midland Lodge #144, WB Roger Buterbaugh, WM (Pro Tem), Midland Lodge #144, WB Siaki Mane, Mt. Hermon Lodge #304, MWB James E. Barrett, PGM, ACGL, WB August A. Beyer, IV, #304, Brother Wesley Oliver, SW, #304, WB Joseph E. Davis, #304, WB Baron Conklin, #304 (obscured), WB Rand Albrecht, #304, Brother Jim Lewis, JW, #304, WB John Ohrt, #304, and RWB Tarik Eker, #304 and Senior Grand Warden, ACGL.

# Cornelia Masonic Lodge Lays Cornerstone

By Worshipful Brother Richard McCoy Cornelia Lodge No. 92

On April 13, 2025, the Grand Lodge of Georgia ceremoniously laid the cornerstone for Cornelia Masonic Lodge #92 F&AM. The ceremony was conducted by Brother Mark Bradley, the Most Worshipful Grand Master of all Masons in Georgia, accompanied by several Grand Line officers and around 89 friends, members of other Lodges and wives. Refreshments were served after the ceremony.

The Masonic cornerstone ceremony is a traditional ritual in Freemasonry that involves the symbolic laying of a cornerstone for a building, representing the foundation of the structure and the values of the organization. Cornerstones have been part of the construction or dedication of many federal buildings and seats of state government since the beginning of our country. Benjamin Franklin, while Grand Master of Pennsylvania, established the tradition beginning with the cornerstone laying of the state house in Philadelphia, and George Washington laid the cornerstone of our Nation's Capitol building.



Today, Freemasons around the country are proud to carry on the tradition that our forefathers began centuries ago. We are also proud to uphold truth and the moral characteristics associated with the cornerstone, and understand the necessary sacrifices we must make to better our lives and communities. Such sacrifices in pursuit of character and truth are necessary to live into the promise of its symbolism in our degrees.



### Camden Lodge Helps Raise Four Fellowcrafts



Hazelhurst #283 requested courtesy work from Camden #476 to confer the Master Mason Degree on four Fellowcraft Masons. WB and Past Master of Camden Lodge Harrell Smith conferred the degree. This was a called communication on March 1, 2025

## Wool Hat Boys Confer Master Mason Degree at Grayson Lodge



On Saturday, March 15, The Wool Hat Boys conferred the Master Mason's degree on Brother Kyle Reese at Grayson Lodge #549. Welcome to the Fraternity Brother Reese!

## Lavonia Honors First Responders

At the March 25, 2025 meeting of Lavonia Lodge No. 241, F&AM, Worshipful Master John L. King, Sr. recognized a number of Franklin County First Responders for their recent act of heroism. In front of a crowd of Lodge members, guests, friends and family, Mr. Stephen Bailey, Paramedic; Mrs. Chelsea

Frady, A-EMT; and W. Bro. Charlie Strickland (Bowersville Lodge No. 595), Paramedic, were recognized for a recent act of heroism.

On March 11, 2025, Bailey, Frady, and Strickland responded to a call for service. Upon arrival, they found Mrs. Patsy Chastain, who had suffered from a cerebrovascular event. They provided emergency life-saving assistance, and their rapid response helped to save the life of Mrs. Chastain. Their actions on that day exhibited the highest standards of the Emergency Medical Service and their profession.

Brother Scott O'Barr, Senior Warden of Lavonia Lodge No. 241, was also recognized. Bro. O'Barr, also a member of the Franklin County Emergency Medical Service, recently made a presentation to the members of the Lodge about recognizing the signs of strokes/cardiac emergencies and how to react quickly. The training that he provided assisted W. Bro. Buddy Chastain in recognizing Mrs. Patsy's symptoms and responding quickly and appropriately.

Pictured are, from left to right, Brother Scott O'Barr, Mr. Stephen Bailey, Mrs. Chelsea Frady, W.Bro. Charlie Strickland, and Mr. Brandon Gibson, Franklin County EMS Director. Not pictured is Ms. Brittany Cannon, Franklin County 911 Dispatcher, who assisted the Chastains and got Mrs. Patsy the help she needed.



## Altamaha and Hinesville Lodges Come Together to Aid the Community

On March 8, 2025 members of Altamaha Lodge No. 227 and Hinesville Lodge No. 271 combined manpower and resources to contribute to the relief of local residents who were in dire need of repair of their rickety wheelchair ramp. Caroyln Nash and her disabled husband Ivv are retired and on a very meagre income. prayed for a miracle. They needed their wheelchair ramp repaired and reached out to the local community through social media. Past Master Jim Shrilling saw a need and brought it to the attention of the Lodge's current Worshipful Master Chris Driggers. His assessment was the old ramp was not in need of repair but complete replacement. Chris made a call to a fellow Worshipful Master of Hinesville No. 271. Worshipful Master John Brayley got the call, and within minutes, it was agreed that Chris and John bring this need before their respective Lodges. Within days both Lodges had agreed to build the ramp and began researching the resources, creating plans for an upto-date ADA compliant ramp and bringing Brother's tools needed.

After four weeks of preparation the Brethren from both Lodges met up to meet the needs of the family. First the removal of the old ramp the guideline was ran and staked in. Spray paint marked where the holes for the 4x4 post would go, and the auger began to dig the 36-inch holes.

All plans have a hiccup and when the building supplies didn't show up, WM Chris jumped into action with a list of materials and a couple of Brothers with a truck and another with a trailer. The first load arrived and the 4x4s were dropped All plans have a hiccup and when the building supplies didn't show up, WM Chris jumped into action with a list of materials and a couple of Brothers with a truck and another with a trailer. The first load arrived and the 4x4s were dropped into the pre-dug holes plumbed, leveled, and began bracing in place. It took approximately 7 ½ hours of cutting, hammering, and driving hundreds of screws to create Mrs. Nash's work. The Mason saw it as meeting a need with their hands, sweat, and love.



### Hinesville Lodge Hold ChIP Event

On March 29th Hinesville lodge #271 participated in the annual Small World Festival in downtown Hinesville. In just five hours 12 brothers and 7 lovely ladies of the lodge assisted in creating 49 Georgia Childhood Identification Program packets.



#### Mount Zion Lodge Feeds First Responders

Mount Zion Lodge # 316 in Cumming hosted its 28th annual BBQ fundraiser on Saturday, April 5th. In addition to raising money, the Masonic Lodge continued its tradition of community service.

The Lodge delivered 260 meals to first responders in the cities of Gainesville and Cumming, and the counties of Hall, Forsyth, Lumpkin and Dawson. Recipients were professionals in law enforcement, firefighters, EMS and dispatchers/

Three pulled pork butts were donated to Good News at Noon in Gainesville, enough to feed 60 homeless men and women. The LifeSouth Bloodmobile was on site collecting pints of donated blood. The Dawson County Humane Society brought four friendly, adoptable dogs in search of "furever" homes, resulting in several prospective new pet owners.

Dan Corell, Worshipful Master of Mount Zion Lodge, said, "This BBQ was a success in every way. We fed first responders, provided the homeless with a delicious meal, helped replenish the blood bank, and showcased homeless animals. Plus, we raised money to help finance our ongoing projects."



## Flowery Branch Lodge #212 presents Eagle Scout Award



Evan Sudderth became the 28th Eagle Scout in Troop 228 since it was formed in 2008. The troop initially met in the Flowery Branch Lodge dining room and then moved to the newly build hut behind the Lodge which is believed to be the only Scout hut on Lodge property in Georgia. Steve Harris, 9th District Representative for the Youth Council for the Grand Lodge of Georgia presented the Grand Lodge of Georgia Eagle Scout Award. Pictured left to right is Steve Harris, Evan Sudderth, Evan's mother Shawna and Worshipful Master David Snipes

#### Grand Master Visits A.J. Miller Lodge No. 204 in Thomson; Presents 50-Year Award



Most Worshipful Grand Master Mark Bradley had the honor of making an Official Visit to A.J. Miller Lodge No. 204 in Thomson on 3 February 2025. The evening was filled with fellowship, recognition, and heartfelt celebration!

In a special moment, MWGM Bradley presented a 50-Year Service Award to Worshipful Brother Wayne Collins, acknowledging his unwavering commitment to Freemasonry.

A well-deserved standing ovation echoed through the lodge room!

Worshipful Brother Collins was Raised on 11 January 1974 at Richmond Lodge No. 412. He served as Worshipful Master of A.J. Miller Lodge No. 204 in 2005 and served as District Deputy Grand Master of the 10th Masonic District from 2008 to 2019.

Worshipful Brother Collins is a life member of the Scottish Rite, Valley of Augusta, and he is a member of the Augusta Shrine Club. In addition to his perpetual membership at A.J. Miller Lodge No. 204 in Thomson, he is also a life member of Richmond Lodge No. 412 in Augusta, Banack Lodge No. 3-7-77 in Bannack, MT, and honorary member of several Lodges including Franklin Lodge No. 11 in Warrenton, Hyde Park Lodge No. 370 in Jacksonville, FL and Lugoff Lodge No. 411 in Lugoff, SC.

Over 25 Brothers and guests gathered for this memorable occasion, enjoying a mouthwatering spread of pulled pork, baked beans, coleslaw, and potato salad before the meeting.

## Triangle Lodge Donates Stuffed Animals to First Responders



Members of Triangle Lodge 708 recently donated stuffed animals to Lee County Fire-EMS and the Leesburg Police Department to help comfort children during emergency situations.

The idea was sparked when Brother Dana Ashley witnessed a touching moment: a firefighter handing a stuffed animal to a young child during a traumatic call. Seeing how much comfort that small gesture brought to the child moved Dana deeply. He shared the experience with his fellow Masons at Triangle Lodge 708, and together, they took swift action.

Thanks to their combined efforts, both departments now have a supply of stuffed animals to offer children during difficult times—helping to bring a sense of calm and reassurance when it's needed most.

"It may seem like a small thing, but it can make a big difference to a scared child," one member said. "We're proud to support our local first responders and the families they serve."

Triangle Lodge 708 hopes this donation will encourage others in the community to find simple ways to show compassion and make a meaningful impact.

## Sincerity Lodge Hosts Public Safety Appreciation

On April 26th Sincerity Lodge No. 430 hosted its annual Public Safety Appreciation Day in Gray, GA. They invited all the First Responders out to the Fairgrounds for a day of games, music, a car show and more. Tickets were drawn for some nice prizes and the Lodge provided the meal with plenty of deserts provided by the Pilot Club.



#### Sincerity Lodge Hosts Children's Skate Party



On March 9th, Sincerity Lodge No. 430 hosted the kids and house parents to a Skate Party in Gray, GA. They enjoyed skating, games, laser tag and had Pizza after. Everyone had a great time.

#### Grayson Lodge No. 549 Presents Scholarships



Worshipful Brother Charles Grady and Worshipful Master Hugh Woodruff of Grayson Lodge No. 549 presented two \$1000 scholarships to graduating seniors of Grayson High School for them to use to begin their college careers.

## VETERANS CORNER

By Worshipful Brother Rick Conn

VA Benefits for Veterans' Spouses, Dependents, and Survivors

Brothers, did you know that family members and dependents of service members and Veterans may be eligible for VA benefits. These benefits may be used to advance in a career, get an education, or provide supplementary income. Surviving spouses may benefit from VA-guaranteed home loans, too. There is also a veterans and spouse's pension with Aid and Attendance they can apply for. I reported on this several years ago in my article but there have been some updates and improvements.

Compensation - The Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) program provides monthly benefits to surviving spouses and dependent children in recognition of the economic loss caused by a Servicemember's death during military service, or by the death of a Veteran as a result of a serviceconnected disability. VA also pays these benefits to the survivors of a Veteran whose death is not serviceconnected, but who was rated by VA as being totally disabled due to a service-connected disability for a specified period of time immediately preceding death. In addition to the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation program for surviving spouses and dependent children, surviving dependent parents of Servicemembers or Veterans, whose deaths were service-connected, may be eligible for Parents' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation if they meet the income requirements. To see if you are eligible you can go to the website below. This is a tax free service

#### www.va.gov/family-and-caregiver-benefits/ survivor-compensation/dependency-indemnitycompensation/

Go to the website and find out what other benefits you or your dependents qualify for. Your spouse may even be eligible for an ID card and care in the VA Hospitals. Don't forget the Veterans Tag and also now you can shop in the military exchanges on base and online. You can apply for a VA ID Card that will gain

you access to the Base and the military exchange system.

For all you Persian Gulf War Veterans, we have new information. VA has extended the presumptive period to Dec. 31, 2026 for qualifying chronic disabilities rated 10% or more resulting from undiagnosed illnesses in Persian Gulf War Veterans to ensure benefits established by Congress are fairly administered. If an extension of the current presumptive period was not implemented, service members whose conditions arise after Dec. 31, 2021 would be substantially disadvantaged compared to service members whose conditions manifested at an earlier date. Limiting entitlement to benefits due to the expiration of the presumptive period would be premature given that current studies remain inconclusive as to the cause and time of onset of illnesses suffered by Persian Gulf War Veterans. VA presumes certain medically unexplained illnesses are related to Persian Gulf War service without regard to cause, including, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, functional gastrointestinal disorders. Also included are undiagnosed illnesses with symptoms that may include but are not limited to abnormal weight loss, cardiovascular disease, muscle and joint pain, headache, menstrual disorders, neurological and psychological problems, skin conditions, respiratory disorders and sleep disturbances.

Persian Gulf War Veterans who are experiencing any of the symptoms listed above and other unexplained medical issues are encouraged to file a compensation claim for them.

For you Vietnam vets in case you didn't know. The VA announced on the 27th May, 2021 two major decisions related to presumptive conditions associated with Agent Orange and particulate matter exposures during military service in Southwest Asia. VA will begin implementing provisions of the William M. Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act (Public Law 116-283), adding three conditions to the list of those presumptively associated with exposure to

herbicide agents, more commonly known as Agent Orange. Those conditions are bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism. Many of our Nation's Veterans have waited a long time for these benefits," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "VA will not make them wait any longer. This is absolutely the right thing to do for Veterans and their families." VA will apply the provisions of court orders related to Nehmer v. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which may result in an earlier date for entitlement to benefits for Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Vietnam War era Veterans and their survivors who previously filed and were denied benefits for one of these three new presumptive conditions will have their cases automatically reviewed without the need to refile a claim. VA will send letters to impacted Veterans and survivors.

Particulate Matter Exposures: The Secretary recently concluded the first iteration of a newly formed internal VA process to review scientific evidence to support rulemaking, resulting in the recommendation to consider creation of new presumptions of service connection for respiratory conditions based on VA's evaluation of a National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine report and other evidence. VA's review supports initiation of rulemaking to address the role that particulate matter pollution plays in generating chronic respiratory conditions, which may include asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis for Veterans who served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War and/or after September 19, 2001, or in Afghanistan and Uzbekistan during the Persian Gulf War. VA is establishing a holistic approach to determining toxic exposure presumption going forward. We are moving out smartly in initiating action to consider these and other potential new presumptions, grounded in science and in keeping with my authority as Secretary of VA," said Secretary McDonough. VA is initiating rulemaking to consider adding respiratory conditions, which may include asthma, sinusitis and rhinitis, to the list of chronic disabilities based on an association with military service in Southwest Asia, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan during the covered periods of conflict. VA will conduct broad outreach efforts to reach impacted Veterans and it encourages them to participate in the

rulemaking process. To learn more information, google <u>Airborne Hazards and Burn Pit Exposures</u> – <u>Public Health</u>. And visit the website to answer all your questions.

Brothers, your Veterans Committee has been working for the past ten months to gain permission from the VA Cemetery Administration to have a monument Honoring all Masonic Veterans placed on the Walk of Fame at the VA Cemetery in Canton. I have most of the preliminary work done. Waiting on the Contractor that is going to pour the pad to send in his form to submit to the VA Cemetery System. I got the idea from a friend in Rhode Island. The Grand Lodge of Rhode Island has a monument where they lay a wreath every Memorial Day, honoring all Rhode Island Masonic Veterans. I am designing ours similar to theirs. Three steps (EA, FC, MM) leading up to a Square monument with the Branches listed on 3 sides, Memorial Plaque on the face side with a Broken Column resting on top. While I am waiting on the Government approval I am seeking vendors that can make the monument and the cost thereof. It is past time for our Georgia Masonic Veterans to be recognized for their service to not only our Craft but to the Nation and Flag they served with distinction and dedication. This monument will Honor all Branches and all wars Past, Present, and Future. The Government wheels turn very slow. I learned this when I was part of the team to get the Seabee Monument laid at the Canton VA Cemetery. We set it last year after 2 1/2 years of work. Thanks to Chief James Anderson who spearheaded this event and the contacts he made, hopefully ours will not take as long. Brothers, I look forward to seeing this to fruition and the monument honoring all our Masonic Veterans in place. I will post more later on this as it develops. So far the Canton Walk of Fame only has four monuments set: Submarine Sailors, Navy Seabee Veterans, Fleet Reserve Association, and the Daughters of the American Revolution. I am working hard to make ours number five.

Thanks for your service to our great Republic and serving the Greatest Flag to ever fly on land, on the sea, in the air, and in outer space. Long may it wave. God Bless all and remember all those who are deployed on foreign shores. Remember them and their families in your prayers.





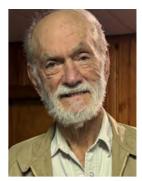
Ronald B. Wolbert Zerubbabel #15



Louis Oglesby Bay Branch #575



George R. McGlaun, Jr., Marion #14



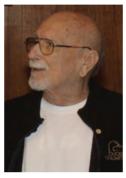
Wendell P. Boss Fergus #135



Cliff Williams Oostanaula #113



Donald Bagley Oostanaula #113



Gary Fuller Greenville #321



Jesse L. Powell Social #1



Jackie Thomason Matt #694



James E. Bailey Ocean #214



Chris Key Senoia #82



B. Clay Morris Richmond #412



Arcus A. Barker Philologia #178



M. Kent Sharp Roswell #165



Willian A. Buntyn, Jr Hampton #70



Rey L. Kineard Magnolia #86



David A. Atkins Magnolia #86



Charles N. Swann Flowery Branch #212



Alvan E. Duke Carroll #69



Wayne Collins AJ Miller #204



Larry R. Welch Eton #509



George McFarlin Palmetto #74



Ralph E. Washington Villa Rica #72



Roy M. Smith Villa Rica #72



Stan Kennedy Seminole #83



Jerry H. Cohran Řex #251



Kenneth Bone Dallas #182



James P. Dawson Morrow #734



Joseph M. Spradlin Morrow #734



Paul Edwards, Jr. Morrow #734



Stanley V. Ashmore Morrow #734



Ralph H. Flynt Chappell #511



Bobby W. Jones Chappell #511



Robert H. Kendrick Chappell #511



Irvin L. Parker Thomasville #369



Carl E. Patterson Ocoee #201



Larry C. Davenport Samuel G. Dover Ocoee #201



Ocoee #201



Phillip J. Green Ocoee #201



Ocoee #201

Jeff R. Ferguson Ocoee #201



Roy E. Barnes Latham #12 55 Years



O.C. "Skip" Grounds Latham #12 55 Years



Wendell Murphy Young Cane #597 55 Years





Raford Chambers Stockbridge #691



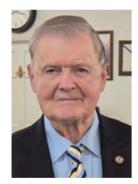
W. Dale Hice Oothcaloga #154



Alfred J Campagna Lawrenceville #131



James H. Hobgood Nelms #323



Donald A. Macleod, Sr. Roswell #165



Jack C. Bolen Palmetto DL #755



Wallace J. Collins Oostanaula #133



James Jay Quitman #106



Raymond Swanson Quitman #106



George R. Hill Dallas #182



Clifford L. Cobb Snellville #99



Roy E. Whitaker Latham #12



William Hardy Latham #12



Jerry D. Shelton Dallas #182



Kenneth M. Roberts Oak Bowery #81



James K. Jenkins Mountain Park #729



Howell R. Strickland Dallas #182



Coy Whittington Hampton #70 65 Years



Samuel D. Thomas Oothcaloga #154 65 Years



Kenneth J. Hood Springville #153 65 Years





Ralph W. Johnson Tilton #291



Robert Penrose Palmetto #74



Bernard L. Williams Metro DL #743



J.C. Earnest Orion #8 75 Years



William E. Norton, Sr. Hapeville #590 75 Years

# In Memoriam

#### Members Reported Deceased February 2 to May 1, 2025

Odom Jr., Ernest Jerome	1
Stokes Jr., Charles Henry	1
Adams, James Richard	3
Medders, Marvin Arthur	3
Gay, Jimmy Carl	13
Wilkes Jr., Theron	13
King Sr., Kenneth Edward	15
Blalock, Alvin Hoyt	16
Farr, Harry Steven	27
Finch, John Edward	28
Brooks Jr., James Howard	33
Whorton, John Aaron	37
Davenport, Lawrence Franklin	40
Gheesling, Kerry Donald	42
Harcrow, Garvin Lafayette	42
McCurry, Alton Richard	42
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