

Reports

of

The Grand Master

The Grand Treasurer

The Grand Secretary

Boards, Commissions and Committees

at the

236th

Annual Communication

of

The Grand Lodge of

Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons

of North Carolina

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

September 29-30, 2023

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Report of the Grand Treasurer

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

I herewith submit my interim report as Grand Treasurer as of July 31, 2023, including projected expenditures for the year and suggested budget for calendar year 2024.

Total Funds available 01/01/2023

(General Funds & Special Funds)	\$1,269,193
Total Receipts YTD	718,752
Total Disbursements YTD	(407,864)

Total Cash	1,580,081
Unrealized Gain from Alex.Brown	73,568
Total Cash To Be Accounted For	\$ 1,653,649

Deposits:	Amount			
Petty Cash			100	
First Citizens Bank (operating account)			5,281	
Money Markets:				
North State Bank	VARI	32,827		
PNC Bank	VARI	163,112		
First Citizens Bank	VARI	109,985		
Total Money Markets			\$ 305,924	
			Unrealized	
Fixed Income Securities:	12/31/2022	7/31/2023	Gain	
Alex.Brown	\$598,901	\$605,474	\$6,573	\$ 605,474
Investment:				
Alex.Brown	\$669,875	\$736,870	\$66,995	\$ 736,870
Total Cash & Cash Equivalents				\$ 1,653,649

Special Funds Summary	12/31/2022	7/31/2023
Special Contingency Reserve	200,000	200,000
Emblems and Awards Reserve	21,592	21,592
Automobile Reserve	34,809	19,338
Operation Reserve	185,762	206,435
Building Reserve	138,287	156,977
Office Equipment Reserve	3,299	3,299
Legal Fees Reserve	9,000	9,000
Retirement/Health & Life Ins.	8,000	8,000
Charity Fund	79,293	82,173
Library Fund	225	225
World Conference Reserve	<u>4,000</u>	<u>11,000</u>
Total Special Funds	\$ 684,267	718,039

Total General Funds Available	935,610
Total Of All Funds 07/31/2023	\$1,653,649

Respectfully Submitted,
Lewis R. Ledford, PGM, Grand Treasurer

Report of the Grand Secretary

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

I herewith submit my interim report as Grand Secretary as of July 15, 2023, including projected expenditures for the year and suggested budget for calendar year 2024.

Grand Lodge of North Carolina 2023 Proposed Budget

	Account Name	Budget 2022	Actual 2022	Budget 2023	Actual 2023 through July 15	Proposed Budget 2024
INCOME	30,000 Actual					
	4,960					
	25,800 Actual					
	25,800 Actual					
	800					
	1,489					
EXPENSE	800-00					
	800-03					
	800-04					
	800-06					
	800-07					
INCOME	Master Masons @ \$25 Per Capita Tax (2023)		\$786,240	\$781,700	\$781,700	\$750,000
	50-year members exempt from Per Capita (2024)		(105,000)	(105,000)	(105,000)	(124,000)
	Master Masons @ \$25 Per Capita Tax (2023)	702,000	681,240	676,700	684,813	645,000
	GWNMA @ \$1.00		27,000	26,900	26,900	25,800
	GWNMA @ \$1.00	(27,000)	(27,000)	(26,900)	(26,900)	(25,800)
	Initiation Fees @ \$21.00 (2023)	16,800	14,448	16,800	14,073	16,800
	[NC Charities @ \$10.00]	(8,000)	(6,880)	(8,000)	(6,700)	(8,000)
	[GL Building @ \$5.00]	(4,000)	(3,440)	(3,350)	(4,000)	(4,000)
	[GWNMA @ \$5.00]	(4,000)	(2,333)	(3,350)	(4,000)	(4,000)
	Initiation Fees Retained @ \$1.00					
	Endowed Members	31,000	34,265	32,000	33,123	32,000
	Penalty for Late Returns	500	2,275	500	1,710	500
EXPENSE	Dividends and Interest	12,000	183	12,000	14	12,000
	Miscellaneous Income	1,000	19,326	1,000	651	1,000
	Total Income	\$ 720,300	\$ 739,084	\$ 724,300	\$ 719,684	\$ 672,300
EXPENSE	Philanthropy					
	Charity	29,000	33,000	29,000	1,500	29,000
	VA Hospital Visitation	250	-	250	-	250
	Masonic Youth Organizations	4,250	2,125	4,250	-	4,250
	Wilkerson College/Scholarships	1,200	1,200	1,200	887	1,200
	Total	\$ 34,700	\$ 36,325	\$ 34,700	\$ 2,387	\$ 34,700

Grand Lodge of North Carolina 2023 Proposed Budget

	Account Name	Budget 2022	Actual 2022	Budget 2023	Actual 2023 through July 15	Proposed Budget 2024
810-00	Salaries and Fees					
810-01	Grand Secretary	75,729	75,579	79,515	45,100	79,515
810-03	Office Personnel	167,616	189,462	207,906	103,536	216,000
810-04	Retirement/Health and Life Insurance	48,864	50,475	57,800	26,782	59,350
810-05	Social Security Tax	18,596	20,195	21,964	11,473	22,100
810-06	Unemployment Tax	950		1,000	210	1,000
810-09	Summer Intern, Office Assistant	1,500	1,266	1,500	383	1,500
810-10	Drewry Memorial Grand Secy. Fund	(18,000)	(19,167)	(18,000)	(3,000)	(18,000)
	Total	\$ 295,255	\$ 317,810	\$ 351,685	\$ 184,484	\$ 361,465
820-00	Administration Costs					
820-02	Printing	11,500	7,448	12,500	1,284	14,500
820-04	Office Expenses	12,000	16,487	13,000	5,877	13,500
820-05	Postage	7,000	10,632	7,500	4,170	7,500
820-06	Office Equipment	2,250	4,209	2,300	385	2,500
820-07	Office Equipment Maintenance	9,500	11,910	11,000	6,318	11,000
820-08	Telephone/Internet	7,500	8,714	7,650	4,451	7,750
820-09	Membership Services Expense	42,000	34,075	42,000	9,826	42,000
	Membership Services Fees	(45,000)	(42,970)	(45,000)	42,308	(45,000)
820-11	Auditing/Tax Services	10,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
820-13	Legal Fees	3,000	21,071	3,000	1,931	3,000
	Background check fees	16,000	14,490	16,000	8,538	16,000
820-14	Background check expenses	(20,000)	(21,365)	(20,000)	(11,370)	(20,000)
	Initiate Packet @800 x \$38.00 expense		-	(30,400)	-	(30,400)
	Initiate Packet @800 x \$38.00 income		-	30,400	30,400	30,400
	Masonic Foundation Reimbursement		(16,000)	(16,000)	-	-
	Total	\$ 55,750	\$ 63,701	\$ 48,950	\$ 119,118	\$ 67,750

Grand Lodge of North Carolina 2023 Proposed Budget

	Account Name	Budget 2022	Actual 2022	Budget 2023	Actual 2023 through July 15	Proposed Budget 2024
830-00	Building Expenses					
830-01	Utilities	10,000	15,676	12,500	9,096	16,000
830-02	Building Grounds Maintenance	20,000	30,240	20,000	10,459	20,000
830-03	Building Equipment Maintenance	5,000	6,729	5,000	2,445	5,000
830-04	Hazard Insurance	8,000	8,232	9,000	7,144	9,000
830-05	Bldg Reserve-Transfer to Building Reserve	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	20,000
	Total	\$ 68,000	\$ 85,877	\$ 71,500	\$ 54,144	\$ 70,000
840-00	Membership Fees and Dues					
840-01	Masonic Service Association	2,250	1,821	2,250	375	2,250
840-02	Conference of Grand Masters	750	600	750	61	750
840-03	GMC Committee on Recognition	100	-	100	100	100
840-05	Northeastern Regional Masonic Conf.	300	-	300	490	300
	Total	\$ 3,400	\$ 2,421	\$ 3,400	\$ 1,026	\$ 3,400
850-00	Travel and Officers Expense					
850-01	Grand Master's Travel	8,000	8,367	9,500	7,329	9,750
850-02	Grand Master's Automobile - Reserve	6,500	6,500	8,000	321	10,000
850-03	Grand Master's Office	250	1,262	250	-	250
850-04	Grand Secretary's Travel	7,000	9,853	8,000	4,952	9,000
850-05	Grand Secretary's Automobile - Reserve	4,500	4,500	6,000	6,000	8,000
850-07	DDGM/DDGL November Orientation, Other	11,000	15,094	10,000	20,466	17,500
	Total	\$ 37,250	\$ 45,576	\$ 41,750	\$ 39,068	\$ 54,500

Grand Lodge of North Carolina 2023 Proposed Budget

	Account Name	Budget 2022	Actual 2022	Budget 2023	Actual 2023 through July 15	Proposed Budget 2024
860-00	Boards, Commissions, and Committees					
860-01	Board of General Purposes	5,000	1,850	7,500	1,269	7,500
860-02	Board of Custodians	2,500	2,301	2,500	1,058	2,500
860-04	Masonic Public Relations	3,500	1,725	500	-	250
860-05	Finance Committee	500	-	500	156	250
860-06	Code Commission	300	-	300	-	250
860-07	Lodge Service Commission	100	1,034	100	75	100
860-08	Masonic Education	9,490	3,500	-	3,000	
	Middle Chamber Book expense		-		7,834	
	Middle Chamber Book sales		(13,102)		(9,950)	
860-09	Membership Services	20,000	3,186	0	5,250	0
	Total	\$ 31,900	\$ 6,484	\$ 14,900	\$ 5,692	\$ 13,850
870-00	Out-of-State Visitation					
870-01	Visiting other Grand Lodges	3,000	3,000	4,000	836	4,000
870-02	Conference of Grand Masters	7,500	7,112	7,500	10,475	7,500
870-03	Conference of Grand Secretaries	2,000	2,115	2,000	910	2,000
870-05	Regional Conference (NE)	4,000	4,000	3,750	561	3,750
870-06	World Masonic Conference	4,000	4,000	4,250	13,195	4,250
	Total	\$ 20,500	\$ 20,227	\$ 21,500	\$ 25,977	\$ 21,500

Grand Lodge of North Carolina 2023 Proposed Budget

	Account Name	Budget 2022	Actual 2022	Budget 2023	Actual 2023 through July 15	Proposed Budget 2024
880-00	Annual Communication / GLO Installation					
	Grand Lodge Officers		3,087	3,250	-	3,250
	Past Grand Masters		3,560	3,500	-	3,500
	DDGM Travel		2,741	3,500	-	3,500
	DDGL Travel		1,328	3,250	-	3,250
	Boards, Committees, & Comm.		3,140	3,000	-	3,250
	Guests		5,920	6,000	-	6,000
	Auditorium, Banquet, Vendor Space, Set-up		32,496	35,000	5,413	36,000
	Printing		4,888	4,500	-	5,500
	Installation Expenses		21,531	18,000	-	18,000
	Total		\$ 78,691	\$ 80,000	\$ 5,413	\$ 82,250
890-00	Miscellaneous Expenses					
	Awards, Aprons, and Emblems	13,000	23,166	13,000	6,199	13,000
	Grand Master's Portrait	500	788	1,000	-	1,000
	Miscellaneous	1,000	1,422	1,000	396	1,000
	Grand Lodge Library & Archives	<u>6,000</u>	<u>8,999</u>	<u>5,500</u>	<u>1,988</u>	<u>5,500</u>
	Total	\$ 20,500	\$ 34,375	\$ 20,500	\$ 8,583	\$ 20,500
900-00	Communications					
	Communications Director (MASON)	<u>120,000</u>	<u>120,000</u>	<u>120,000</u>	<u>20,000</u>	<u>120,000</u>
	IT / Grandview / Lodge Consultant					30,000
	Foundation Reimbursement for NC Mason					(60,000)
	Total	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 90,000
910-00	Development Program					
	Program Reimbursement from NCMF		(82,656)	(73,500)	0	-
910-12	Total		\$ (82,656)	\$ (73,500)	\$ -	\$ -

Grand Lodge of North Carolina 2023 Proposed Budget

Acct. No.	Account Name	Budget 2022	Actual 2022	Budget 2023	Actual 2023 through July 15	Proposed Budget 2024
	EXPENSE SUMMARY					
800-00	Philanthropy	34,700	36,325	34,700	2,387	34,700
810-00	Salaries and Fees	295,255	317,810	351,685	184,484	361,465
820-00	Administration Costs	55,750	63,701	48,950	119,118	67,750
830-00	Building Expenses	68,000	85,877	71,500	54,144	70,000
840-00	Membership Fees and Dues	3,400	2,421	3,400	1,026	3,400
850-00	Travel and Officers Expense	37,250	45,576	41,750	39,068	54,500
860-00	Boards and Committees Office and Travel	31,900	6,484	14,900	5,692	13,850
870-00	Out-of-State Visitation	20,500	20,227	21,500	25,977	21,500
880-00	Annual Communication	-	78,691	80,000	5,413	82,250
890-00	Miscellaneous Expenses	20,500	34,375	20,500	8,583	20,500
900-00	Communications	120,000	120,000	120,000	20,000	90,000
910-00	Development Program	-	(52,656)	(73,500)	-	-
	Total Expenses (Series 800 - 910)	\$ 687,255	\$ 728,831	\$ 735,385	\$ 465,892	\$ 819,915
	Estimate Surplus/Deficit	\$ 33,045	\$ 10,253	\$ (11,085)	\$ 253,792	\$ (147,615)

Grand Secretary's Business Report

In last year's report, I presented five points of our fraternity's operations key to planning a course for success. They were Grand Lodge business: Grand Lodge communications, Lodge business, Lodge communications, and philanthropy. The report was essentially a starting point for what the Grand Lodge Office intends to transform into a strategic vision and 5, 10, and 25-year operational plan. This report further reviews the Grand Lodge and our Lodges' business and operational structure.

The Grand Lodge as a Business

Aside from the philosophical hub of our fraternity's mission, the Grand Lodge is a business. To illustrate this point, consider the Grand Lodge as a parent corporation and the subordinate lodges as franchises of that corporation. Similar to a franchise, certain aspects of our operation must be uniform and centralized, while other aspects require us to be mindful of demographics, location, clientele, and local operational success. And so, Freemasonry necessitates a balance between the philosophical tenets of our Order and the ability to function as a corporation under the laws of the United States and the State of North Carolina, which is, at times, delicate at best. The Grand Lodge Office serves as the corporate and operational headquarters, and it is the objective of this office to exemplify the principles of our fraternity as well as execute the best business practices by which we may operate.

Like many other facets of our nation's identity and culture, we're passing through a watershed moment of change, culturally and financially. While the Grand Lodge's relationship to changes in cultural norms may be a topic for future discussion, for now, I reiterate that, per The Code, the Grand Lodge of North Carolina admits worthy men with a belief in a Supreme Being of all colors, races, ethnicities, creeds, and sexual orientations. To say otherwise is a transgression upon the Ancient Landmarks of this fraternity. In my paper "The Toleration of Intolerance within Freemasonry," I reported last year that racism, bigotry, homophobia, and chauvinism are bad for business. This year, my report will focus on the **business** of our fraternity.

The Value of Masonic Membership

This operational review's first component assessed the Grand Lodge's financial well-being. Regrettably, our operating budget in 2023 is the same as it has been since 1975 (when adjusted for inflation), though the roots of its developmental hindrance may be traced back to the 1950s. While some members may perceive the budget's stasis to align with fair financial governance, it is, in truth, indicative of stagnation, if not outright poor corporate health. Aside from fundamental inflationary increases, there have been no substantive increases to the function and output of the fraternity in more than half a century. No new progressive structures or programs have been implemented to benefit the public and few internal improvements or facilities which demonstrate the value of Masonic membership.

The most substantial addition to improving the value of our membership was the creation of Wilkerson College (a leadership training retreat and seminar) in 2002 by several Grand Lodge officers, district officers, committee members, and my predecessor. The program is a professionally executed three-

day course in administration and leadership training. Yet, due to the cost of its operations, the College was forced to separate from the Grand Lodge and establish its own operational model linked with North Carolina's Scottish Rite Orient, which has primarily taken over its administrative function. The Grand Lodge offers a budget line item of \$1,200, which covers less than the cost of two students' attendance (\$800 each) for a program that requires more than \$40,000 to execute. Subsequent leadership and educational opportunities offered by the Grand Lodge include the Davie Academy (formerly the Warden's Bootcamp), which is free of charge and primarily online, and the Middle Chamber Program, which consists of five books, a journal, and four onsite classes and costs \$150 per attendee. Volunteers lead each of these programs, though program delivery is coordinated with and through the Grand Lodge Office.

What Does the Grand Lodge Office Do?

The statements in the preceding paragraph are a response to an oft-repeated question from the membership, "What does the Grand Lodge do for me?" or "What does Per Capita get me as a Mason?". The answer is that the current budget and Per Capita are just enough to pay for the basic central function of Masonic administration in North Carolina.

That means your Grand Lodge Office:

1. Compiles and files on behalf of every Lodge its taxes and non-profit tax exemptions with the State of North Carolina and the Federal Government
2. Serves as the central agency for all legal questions, concerns, and actions involving lodge property, real estate, and other matters before the local and state courts and administrative offices of government within all 100 counties
3. Acts as the central liaison between the Grand Lodge and its subsidiary philanthropic endeavors, including the North Carolina Masonic Foundation, the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford, WhiteStone: A Masonic and Eastern Star Community, and the Masonic Service Association of North America
4. Supports the Grand Master, his Grand Officers, and the District Officers of this jurisdiction in executing their duties and the mission of the fraternity
5. Supports and organize the members of all Boards, Committees, and Commissions of this jurisdiction in the execution of their duties
6. Directly coordinates the function of all lodges through the local secretary and a centralized membership database, financial database, and communication program
7. Processes all paperwork from lodges concerning membership petitions and affiliations
8. Processes all paperwork and communications with our sister Grand Lodges in the United States and Overseas (approximately 250 jurisdictions), as well as approximately 25 Appendant Masonic Bodies

9. Coordinates all membership functions (awards, membership concerns, fraternal introductions, educational opportunities, and visitation)
10. Oversees the implementation of ritualistic work
11. Serves as a central repository for membership questions and concerns having to do with Lodge procedures, disciplinary actions, corrective measures concerning the breach of Masonic law, or regulations about the regularity of *administrative* work
12. Serves as a central repository for membership questions and concerns having to do with Lodge procedures, disciplinary actions, corrective measures concerning the breach of Masonic law, or regulations about the regularity of *ritualistic* work

Past vs. Current Budgeting Practices

Upon review of the last century's worth of administrative practices of the Grand Lodge Office, the average annual expense of purely administrative function of Freemasonry in North Carolina averages approximately \$1 million when adjusted for inflation. The average total operational cost is more than \$1.6 million when adjusted for inflation. Interestingly, until the 1970s, the Grand Lodge budget was regularly adjusted for inflation, which permitted it to gift the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford an amount equivalent to approximately \$800,000 annually. Similarly, the Grand Lodge budgeted the equivalent of \$250,000 annually toward the aid of our elder members housed at WhiteStone. And in general, the Grand Lodge budgeted more than \$100,000 annually for other philanthropic purposes across North Carolina. **It should be clear from the current budget that these budgeted line items have dropped precipitously over the last half-century.** Annual charitable giving decreased from an average of \$1.2 million to just \$34,000 in our current budget. A 97% decrease in charitable funding. Similarly, the administrative budget for the Grand Lodge Office has decreased from an average of \$1 million to \$785,000. A 24% decrease.

The Grand Lodge Office oversees the subordinate lodges' budgets. Lodges, as a whole, have cumulative operating expenditures totaling \$7.2 million and income of \$9.6 million. The reported property assets of subordinate lodges total \$22.6 million. However, this figure is a dramatic under-evaluation of the actual property value of this jurisdiction's land and structures because Masonic property is currently exempt from property tax evaluations by state statute, and Masonic lodges are exempt from property tax in North Carolina. Considering the value of Masonic property has not been updated in more than 60 years, the cumulative value probably amounts to more than \$239 million. If Masonic properties were taxed, it would cost lodges approximately \$1.7 million across the state.

All in all, the subordinate lodges reported possessing \$43,906,158 in equity (real estate, property, and cash) as of December 31, 2022. These are the figures collated, reviewed, and manually audited by the Grand Lodge Office for the benefit of the lodges in compiling this Grand Jurisdiction's combined Internal Revenue Service Tax Return. Over the past few years, there has been a push for Lodges to file this information electronically using our

database's dedicated financial portal. However, the Grand Lodge Office must manually enter nearly a third of these reports from paper copies mailed into the office. **Operationally, the Grand Lodge's 2024 proposed budget of approximately \$820,000 is less than 2% of the value of its subordinate lodges' managed assets.**

Lodge Size and Service to Members

It is important to note that, historically, the operational function of the Grand Lodge is primarily based on the number of lodges served, NOT the number of members served. In the past, Lodges have been the central point of contact and function for members. However, the size of our lodges, requirements of communication, and technological advances have both overwhelmed Lodge secretaries and made it easier for members to contact the Grand Lodge directly. This has shifted the focus of function and service in greater proportion to the Grand Lodge. Lodges should provide a quality Masonic experience. The Grand Lodge should provide quality business management for the lodges so members can focus on the philosophical tenets of the fraternity. There is a direct correlation between the size of a lodge and the ability of that Lodge to provide adequate and perceived value and service to its membership. We again **strongly recommend** that lodges limit their size to between 50 and 75 members, keeping the Lodge atmosphere intimate and personable, as well as ensuring its business is manageable by the Secretary.

Census of the Grand Lodge by Decade, 1923-2022

	1923	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1983	1990	2000	2010	2020	2022
Number of Lodges	454	403	328	330	360	383	392	394	392	383	376	369	357
Number of Members	39,655	39,327	26,210	50,440	62,495	68,628	72,964	72,666	67,514	55,178	45,096	34,088	32,283
Average Per Lodge	87	98	80	153	174	179	186	184	141	144	120	92	90

Bigger Wasn't Better

An analysis of Board of General Purposes minutes, Proceedings entries, and miscellaneous board, committee, and commission minutes appear to indicate the origin of the mentality that "larger lodges are better lodges" dates to the mid-1950s when our membership census soared, and access to cash was readily available through the sheer volume of members. However, the administration of the fraternity's business was unmanageable by the resources granted to the Grand Secretary's Office, and traditional financial management practices were left to the local Lodges to manage in an era with no centralized reporting.

Sadly, as membership increased, the financial output of the Grand Lodge and its subordinate lodges decreased even when our membership numbers reached their zenith in the early 1980s. These trends have only been exacerbated by inadequate funding of the Grand Lodge and the local lodges over the last 50 years.

Operational Budget of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina, 1924-2024

(Figures are adjusted for inflation)

	MHCO Funding	WhiteStone Funding	Other Charity	Grand Lodge Operations	Total Operational Expense	Income	Census	Per Capita
1924	\$1,100,000	\$358,000	\$143,000	\$1,200,000	\$2,800,000	\$2,000,000	40,500	\$45.00
1930	\$915,000	\$275,000	\$128,000	\$879,000	\$2,200,000	\$2,100,000	39,300	\$46.00
1940	\$1,100,000	\$240,000	\$44,000	\$480,000	\$1,900,000	\$1,900,000	26,000	\$55.00
1950	\$634,200	\$203,000	\$114,000	\$761,000	\$1,700,000	\$1,900,000	50,000	\$32.00
1960	\$516,300	\$165,000	\$83,000	\$1,700,000	\$2,500,000	\$2,000,000	62,500	\$26.00
1970	\$158,000	\$158,000	\$71,000	\$1,700,000	\$2,100,000	\$2,100,000	68,500	\$28.00
1980	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$41,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,100,000	\$1,300,000	73,000	\$17.00
1990	\$29,200	\$29,200	\$28,000	\$992,000	\$1,100,000	\$1,000,000	67,500	\$14.00
2000	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$57,000	\$886,000	\$987,000	\$978,000	55,000	\$18.00
2010	\$17,500	\$17,500	\$24,500	\$958,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	45,000	\$24.00
2020	\$14,700	\$14,700	\$5,000	\$832,000	\$866,000	\$774,200	34,000	\$30.00
2024	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$5,700	\$785,215	\$755,000	\$645,000	30,000	\$25.00

In brief, the Grand Lodge and subordinate lodge business models, which date to the mid-20th Century, are now woefully inadequate in their ability to sustain the administration of the fraternity and the function of its lodges. By way of example, let us examine a comparison of financial values from 100 years ago — 1920 — and found in the Proceedings of our Grand Lodge as provided by our Past Grand Secretary William W. Willson. The century mark is prescient in this case in that the size of our fraternity at that time is nearly equal to our numbers today, approximately 33,000 members.

According to the Code of 1924, the minimum Initiation Fee in this state was \$35, which is approximately \$625 today. Several of our lodges required more than that to enter into the secrets of our Order, and the average initiation fee across the state was approximately \$1,000—a week's wages.

Of that \$35, \$24 of it was kept by the local lodge, or—at minimum—\$430 for the local lodge. Of that \$35, \$11 of it was sent to the Grand Lodge to facilitate the function of processing petitions for membership. That amounts to approximately \$200 today. Annual Per Capita totaled \$2.50, which today equates to \$45. Besides the costs required to administer the Grand Lodge, which amounted to about \$47,000 (\$850,000 in today's dollars), we also spent from the derivatives of Initiation Fees and Per Capita on philanthropic purposes, an amount which totals more than \$825,000 today. Nearly \$600,000 was annually granted to the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford, almost \$200,000 to WhiteStone, and a further \$50,000 on other philanthropic endeavors such as scholarships and fraternal relief.

By comparison, today, per The Code, the minimum Initiation Fee is this state is \$21, and we estimate that in total \$16,800 will be received in initiation fees by the Grand Lodge as follows:

\$4,000 to the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford
 \$4,000 to WhiteStone
 \$3,350 for the Grand Lodge Building Endowment
 \$3,350 for the George Washington Masonic National Memorial
 \$2,100 to the Grand Lodge Office for operations

Lodge Financial Stability and Operational Well-Being

It is apparent that the first half of the 20th Century the initiates of our Fraternity were a primary revenue source for administrative function and investment. **There is no such comparable financial benefit to either the Grand Lodge or our lodges today.** And, as reported last year, a majority of our lodges' dues do not meet the expenses of lodge operations. A chart of inflationary adjustments is below to illustrate the discrepancy between the ever-changing relationship between cost and value. Tabor Lodge 563 is to be commended for their regular review and adherence to the observance of operational costs and serves as a model for lodge financial stability. The lodges below were chosen in order to geographically and demographically represent this jurisdiction.

Inflationary Comparison of Lodge Fees, 1924-2020

(The Minimum Initiation Fee of \$35 was established in 1924)

Year	Lodge	County	Initiation Fee	2023 Value	Dues	2023 Value
1924	William T. Bain 231	Wake	\$35.00	\$625.00		
1950			\$35.00	\$444.00	\$4.00	\$51.00
2000			\$75.00	\$133.00	\$100.00	\$178.00
2020			\$110.00	\$130.00	\$100.00	\$118.00
1924	Cleveland 202	Cleveland	\$35.00	\$625.00		
1950			\$50.00	\$634.00	\$10.00	\$127.00
2000			\$75.00	\$133.00	\$50.00	\$89.00
2020			\$110.00	\$130.00	\$90.00	\$106.00
1924	Phalanx 31	Mecklenburg	\$35.00	\$625.00		
1950			No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data
2000			\$100.00	\$178.00	\$50.00	\$89.00
2020			\$150.00	\$177.00	\$80.00	\$94.00
1924	Stokesdale 428	Guilford	\$35.00	\$625.00		
1950			\$30.00	\$381.00	\$5.00	\$63.00
2000			\$100.00	\$178.00	\$45.00	\$80.00
2020			\$100.00	\$118.00	\$60.00	\$71.00

Year	Lodge	County	Initiation	2023	Dues	2023
			Fee	Value		Value
1924	Cherokee 146	Cherokee	\$35.00	\$625.00		
1950			\$40.00	\$507.00	\$6.00	\$76.00
2000			\$60.00	\$107.00	\$30.00	\$53.00
2020			\$150.00	\$177.00	\$80.00	\$94.00
1924	Manteo 521	Dare	\$35.00	\$625.00		
1950			\$50.00	\$634.00	\$6.00	\$76.00
2000			\$75.00	\$133.00	\$40.00	\$71.00
2020			\$150.00	\$177.00	\$76.00	\$90.00
1924	Lexington Memorial 473	Davidson	\$35.00	\$625.00		
1950			\$50.00	\$634.00	\$10.00	\$127.00
2000			\$100.00	\$178.00	\$50.00	\$89.00
2020			\$200.00	\$236.00	\$110.00	\$130.00
1924	Snow 363	Watauga	\$35.00	\$625.00	\$1.00	\$18.00
1950			\$35.00	\$444.00	\$6.00	\$76.00
2000			\$100.00	\$178.00	\$50.00	\$89.00
2020			\$200.00	\$236.00	\$80.00	\$94.00
1924	Hiram 98	Sampson	\$35.00	\$625.00		
1950			\$40.00	\$507.00	\$6.00	\$76.00
2000			\$50.00	\$89.00	\$35.00	\$62.00
2020			\$125.00	\$148.00	\$100.00	\$118.00
1924	Tabor 563	Columbus	\$35.00	\$625.00	\$4.00	\$72.00
1950			\$40.00	\$507.00	\$6.00	\$76.00
2000			\$100.00	\$178.00	\$30.00	\$53.00
2020			\$250.00	\$295.00	\$85.00	\$100.00
2023			\$500.00		\$224.00	

Unfortunately, our jurisdiction's lodges appear to be in similar and, more often than not, worse financial straights than last year. Nearly 40 of our lodges (11%) have continued to operate a deficit budget for the last 5 years, and appear to be in financial collapse. A further 56 (16%) are on the edge of financial distress. And, a further 53 (15%) only break even. These lodges do not collect enough dues to maintain their roofs, HVAC systems, and the basic upkeep of their lodges. And, upon further study there appears to be a dramatic and positive correlation between financial stability and ritual competence. Only about 50 of our lodges make enough income to truly be counted as financially sound and successful.

Conclusion — Observations

If there is any message to be gleaned from this report it is that the Grand Lodge and its subordinate lodges must carefully and closely review its financial structure and adjust its expectation of income per service—to

ourselves, to our lodges, and to the community. To be frank, I am troubled by the growing disparity in our membership's perception of the value of Freemasonry compared to its perceived operational costs. A key indicator within this trend is the failure of the Grand Lodge, its past leadership, and its membership to grasp the importance of inflationary fluctuations and the wherewithal to facilitate the proper explanation of the relationship between Masonic membership, fiscal responsibility, and Masonic service.

To be direct, this Grand Lodge does not derive enough income from its members nor any other funding source to produce any tangible benefits to its membership, let alone the public at large. Unfortunately, the duration of time since this Grand Lodge was able to produce a tangible benefit was so long ago that there is a prevailing thread of displeasure with the function of the Grand Lodge Office among the membership to indicate that its existence is superfluous. Indeed, generational biases lean toward a common threat from some of our members that the Office of Grand Secretary is unnecessary and the employees of the Grand Lodge “should be fired,” because “they are a waste of money.” The utterances of such phrases directed to the staff are unfortunately common. I emphatically contend the staff of the Grand Lodge readily succeed in sustaining the function of this Grand Jurisdiction on a shoestring budget in order to provide the Regularity required by the Ancient Laws, Customs, Usages, and Landmarks to prevent the Freemasons of North Carolina from becoming common “cowans.” The correlation of the value of our fraternity should likewise be placed on the experience of Freemasonry at the local level—not the Grand Lodge. It is and always has been the responsibility of the local lodge to shape, develop, and execute the mission of Freemasonry locally. Though, it is now the professed intent of this Office to provide every piece of guidance and rubric necessary to ensure lodge vitality and operational success.

In summary, outside the traditional modes of Masonic philosophy most often channeled to refine the internal qualities of our members and further elucidate the intangible and tangible benefits of our membership, this Grand Lodge cannot and will not succeed in creating or fostering a supreme and distinctive initiatic, spiritual, or even fraternal experience without proper funding, nor create any impressive or dramatic impact on the population or general public. The continued undervaluation of our signs, secrets, ceremonies, and philanthropic mission will only further deplete our ability to affect positive change in our communities. There is a dramatic reason why our fraternity fails in this era to attract statesmen, employers, and leaders; to wit—crumbling lodges, dingy meeting rooms, cheap entertainment, and no estimable economic impact on the improvement of society. If the members of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina expect to be respected and revered as benefactors of the public good then they must pay for the privilege.

Conclusion — Recommendations for Success and Forward Momentum

I will reiterate the Initiation Fee of our lodges is the point of entry to a lodge's positive financial health. The initiation fee in this jurisdiction should be uniform across the state and be equal to an average week's wages in North Carolina. This would ensure entry into Freemasonry is equitable to all men

whether they reside in rural regions or urban centers and align our processes with other appendant Masonic bodies (and the common practice among other membership-based organizations across the state, including hunting clubs, motorcycle clubs, social clubs, and civic organizations). The uniformity of the initiation fee would also help to break down the barriers between rural and urban lodges and further dislodge the “us” vs. “them” mentality between our brethren in relation to the amenities of the fraternity across the state.

Historically, until the late mid-20th Century, the initiation fee was equivalent to a week’s wages. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics this amounts to \$1,235. When compared to the cost of initiation, passing, and raising, coaching, Masonic accoutrements “gifted” to the candidate, and the provision for thoughtful financial investment in the lodge and for charity, this amount accurately covers the expenses incurred by a lodge to raise a man to the sublime degree of Master Mason. These funds also largely stay within the lodge for operational expenses and investment.

Our lodges must also adequately fund themselves and retain a 20% reserve for operational security. Lodges are businesses; they require regular use, provide quality service, and act as a refuge for our members. The Grand Lodge cannot emphasize enough the importance of sound financial management in our lodges.

Likewise, the Grand Lodge must be adequately funded by the lodges to perform its basic functions as a corporation, and provide centralized communications, operational directives, and a common message of outreach and tangible benefit to the membership. Inasmuch, the lodges must, through the North Carolina Masonic Foundation, fund the operational goals set forth by the Grand Lodge and the Ancient Landmarks to aid and assist children and the elderly.

In recognition of several potential modes of improvement to our business operations, this year the Grand Lodge staff implemented a new database system called Grand View. In its administrative function for lodges, Grand View operates much like other similar systems utilized by the Grand Lodge in the past, capturing and processing initiation, passing, and raising dates, affiliations, years of service, and lodge financial management. However, the new system also integrates a broad spectrum of communication components, including specified emailings at the lodge, district, and Grand Lodge level. The most important functions integrated into the new system are browser-based electronic petitions and applications for affiliations that remove a burden from the lodge secretaries in maintaining, standardizing, and managing paperwork, as well as a centralized dues process, whereby all members can pay their dues electronically and said payments can be disbursed to the various lodges. A further component of this process is the integration of the Master, Treasurer, and Secretary into a system whereby financial transactions are readily reviewed for accuracy and fulfillment—again, a relief for the lodge secretary who for literal centuries been the sole administrator of lodge business. The implementation of the new database is not without challenges, and the Grand Lodge Office is aware that the system will continue to be refined throughout the course of the next year or so. The ensuing months will include several long awaited training sessions whereby our Masters, Treasurers, Secretaries, District Deputy Grand Masters, District Deputy Grand Lectures, and brethren may learn to best utilize and streamline the business and communication of

our Fraternity. By year's end, we anticipate activating an integrated Annual Return and Financial Return in order to better facilitate the lodge's financial reporting to the Internal Revenue Service. We cannot encourage our lodges and members strongly enough to adopt and utilize this technology.

Inasmuch, plans are underway to better utilize the lodges' and Grand Lodge's coordinated banking efforts, whereby benefit may be applied to lodges participating within a banking, insurance, and investment system. We hope the outcomes of this centralization will reduce fees, promote a cleaner method of charitable giving, and positively affect investments.

Further plans are underway to collaborate with other jurisdictions across the United States to utilize a central marketing plan and agency, whereby the mission and voice of Freemasonry would be unified in its delivery to the public and our own members. Likewise, the Grand Lodge is performing a reevaluation of its printed materials, updating its guides, and creating new and consistent content for delivery to potential candidates and newly raised Master Masons. Further research is being conducted to better understand the expectations of members' Masonic experience—from initiatic and ritual excellence to the "perks" of Freemasonry.

Thank you again, brethren, for your trust. There are many challenges ahead of our fraternity, but none that are insurmountable. As your representative and administrator of the business of the fraternity I feel you must be well informed of our operations—good and bad—in order to make the best possible decisions for our fraternity going forward. The Grand Lodge door is always open, and I encourage each of you to visit the Grand Lodge in Raleigh, inquire of its operations, and learn as much as you can about the workings of the institution in which you have placed so much faith and so many exceptions.

Membership Statistics

Membership 12/31/2021	33,364
Initiated.....	655
Passed.....	508
Raised.....	513
Admitted.....	450
Restored.....	<u>264</u>
Total Gains.....	1,407
Expelled.....	12
Suspended UMC	1
Excluded NPD.....	1,039
Demitted.....	400
Died.....	<u>1,043</u>
Total Losses.....	2,495
 Total membership 12/31/2022.....	 32,283
Number of lodges as of 1/1/2023.....	361

Service Awards for 2023

Twenty-Five year Service Awards presented.....	415
Fifty Year Veteran Awards presented.....	419
Sixty Year Awards	185
Seventy Year Awards	41
Seventy-Five Year Awards.....	6

Fraternally submitted,
Jonathan A. Underwood, Grand Secretary

Report of the Committee on Charity

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

Your Committee on Charity wishes to report the following disbursements since our annual communication last year:

To WSB..... \$1500

Respectfully submitted,
Johnny Surles, Chairman

Report of the Grand Historian

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

North Carolina Freemasonry in an Era of Discontent

We historians record and report events, times, and people, which serves as a record of mankind. The foundation of Freemasonry – brotherly love, relief, and truth – serves as a template as to how people should conduct themselves. The reputation of Freemasonry in North Carolina throughout the nation is a positive one. This is not to say that we do not “have chinks in our armor.” And though our numbers of members are not as great as they once were, those who remain and those who “come on board” are proving ever stronger and vigilant to our tenets.

Throughout our nation’s history (247 years), we have experienced uncertain and turbulent times; yet overall reason has prevailed, and there can be little doubt that the United States remains a vibrant country on the world’s stage. Currently we are witnessing an era of discontent. “How so?”, you may ask? Civility, respect, kindness, and thoughtfulness have “taken a hit” per se. In the modern world of social media, greed, as well as self-serving officials and those spewing vile rhetoric, in many cases divide the people of the nation. Over the decades, open-mindedness, mediation and, yes, compromise without sacrificing what is best for the people, has served the United States well. As a people there are more qualities, traits, customs, language, and beliefs that bind us together than divide us – “out of many, one.”

The Masonic tradition of reason and logic has proven a time-tested formula toward stability and progress. Grand Master Kevan Frazier’s message

this year has been one of caring, compassion, community involvement, accountability, and moving the Craft forward into the future. What each of us do in life and within Freemasonry will be etched upon the annals of history – perhaps as a page, a chapter, or a footnote. Hence let us endeavor to fulfill our obligation as we continue to perpetuate all that is good in Freemasonry.

“Stay the course”

Respectfully submitted,
Steven A. Campbell, Grand Historian

Report of the Committee on Permanent Building

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

The Grand Lodge building and grounds continue to be a place where lodges visit, learn, and meet to learn about NC Masonry.

The irrigation system runs entirely off a deep well that was dug in the 1950s. After having this well inspected and flushed, we have been advised that its output is above average and completely sustainable in the long term; however, some of the irrigation system valves and heads needed to be overhauled due to irreversible buildup and mechanical fatigue, as it has been at least four decades since the system was originally installed. With new plantings going in last year, and continuing into this year, the committee felt it necessary to future proof the system to ensure this landscaping would endure through the hot summer and fall. Becky Smith, the widow of Past Grand Master Gerry Smith, has donated landscaping and plantings to the front lawn of the Grand Lodge in memory of her husband. We are thankful for this gift and look to the fall to plant such a beautiful gesture.

The Grand Lodge has solicited several quotes from security firms to update the security system and access control to the building to ensure the safety of its occupants. These quotes will be reviewed by the Board of General Purposes to ensure all conditions are met and precautions taken for such a system.

New exhibits were installed in the Main Hall this year during Wilkerson College's annual visit to Raleigh, including artifacts and photos of the previous Grand Lodge buildings, as well as a painting of the “Rendezvous at Quaker Meadows.” The painter, Richard Luce, depicts the meeting of the Overmountain Men and 360 militia from the Yadkin River Valley on the way to King's Mountain on 30 September 1790. Many of the men in the painting were prominent North Carolina Masons. Over a century ago, the Grand Lodge was presented a gavel made from the massive tree that shaded this meeting, known as the Council Oak Tree. It stood near Morganton, NC and was felled after a storm around 1910. The gavel is displayed along with the painting in the Grand Master's Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted,
Matthew C. Robbins, PM
Assistant Grand Secretary

Report of Lodge Service Commission

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

During the calendar year 2023, the following applications and inquiries were received and reviewed by Lodge Service Commission:

1. An application from Cherokee Lodge No. 146 and Marble Springs Lodge No. 439 to create or organize a civil corporation to provide a permanent meeting location. The creation of a temple corporation would need the consent of the Grand Master. No action has yet been taken.
2. An application from the Fayetteville Masonic Center seeking permission to borrow funds to make capital improvements to the property. The application was withdrawn prior to any action being taken.
3. An application from West Bend Lodge No. 434 seeking permission to sell 2 parcels of unimproved land. This sale was a part of a condemnation action by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The request was approved.
4. An application from the Raleigh Masonic Temple Corporation to purchase real property. After receipt and review of the supplemental information requested by members Lodge Service Commission, this request was denied.
5. An application from West Bend Lodge No. 434 seeking permission to purchase a .20-acre parcel of unimproved land. This parcel of land is contiguous to the Lodge property and is the unused remnant of the property taken by the North Carolina Department of Transportation in the condemnation action referenced above. The request was approved.

I would like to thank the members of Lodge Service Commission, Brothers Doug Calhoun, John Hudson, Jay Chaulklin, and Brandon Christian for their dedication and service to this committee.

Respectfully submitted:
R. David Wicker, Jr., PGM, Chairman

Report of the Committee on Fraternal Correspondence

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

During the past 2 years, formal requests for recognition have been received from five (5) Grand Lodges. This Grand Lodge subscribes to the services of the Commission on Information for Recognition of the Conference of Grand Masters in North America to gather information and investigate whether the grand lodge in question satisfies the conditions of regularity. The Commission's guidelines or Standards for Recognition are as follows:

1. Legitimacy of Origin
2. Exclusive Territorial Jurisdiction, except by mutual consent and/or treaty.
3. Adherence to the Ancient Landmarks – specifically, a belief in God, the Volume of Sacred Law as an indispensable part of the furniture of the lodge, and the prohibition of the discussion of politics and religion.

United Grand Lodge of Georgia

The Grand Lodge of the Republic of Georgia requested recognition on 20 November 2021. The Commission on Information for Recognition determined on 22 February 2022 that this Grand Lodge has not yet fully demonstrated that it meets the standards for recognition, citing a number of reasons. The Committee on Fraternal Correspondence recommends that this jurisdiction not be recognized until it has satisfied the Commission on Information for Recognition that it is regular.

Grande Loja Maçônica do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil

The Grande Loja Maçônica do Estado de São Paulo, requested recognition on 21 June 2022. The Commission on Information for Recognition lists this as a regular Grand Lodge in their 1987 proceedings. It is also recognized by the United Grand Lodge of England. The Committee on Fraternal Correspondence recommends approving recognition to the Grande Loja Maçônica do Estado de São Paulo.

Grande Lodge Benemerito Ejercito de Oriente F&AM of the State of Puebla

The Grande Lodge Benemerito Ejercito de Oriente F&AM of the State of Puebla (Mexico) requested recognition on 7 April 2022. They are recognized by 3 Grand Jurisdictions in the US, however it is unclear if the Commission on Information for recognizes them as regular. The United Grand Lodge of England does not recognize them at this time. The Commission on Information for Recognition reports that as many as 130 Grand Lodges may exist in the Confederation of Mexican Grand Lodges, making it difficult to determine who is and is not regular. Based on the lack of solid information as to the recognition or regularity of this Grand Lodge, the Committee on Fraternal Correspondence recommends this request not be approved.

Grande Loja Maçônica do Amapá / Masonic Grand Lodge of Amapá

The Grande Loja Maçônica do Amapá (Brazil) requested recognition on 24 August 2021. It is recognized by the United Grand Lodge of England, and also by the Inter-American Masonic Confederation (CMI). Based on these recognitions, the Committee on Fraternal Correspondence recommends approving this request.

Grande Oriente De Mato Grosso Do Sul

The Grand Orient of Mato Grosso Do Sul requested recognition on 27 October 2022. The report of the Commission on Information for Recognition noted in their report from 2019 that it and other state grand orients in Brazil were recognized by treaties and by the CMI (Confederación Masónica Interamericana) in 2018. Based on the fact they are recognized by several Grand Jurisdictions in Brazil, and several Grand Lodges in the US, as well as by the United Grand Lodge of England, the Committee on Fraternal Correspondence recommends approving this request.

Respectfully submitted,
Douglas L. Caudle, PGM, Chairman
Eric N. Grene, Deputy Chairman

Report of the Judge Advocate

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

This report is prepared this 15th day of July 2023 and most respectfully submitted for your information and disposition.

1. Docket No. 969: Brother TTB, a Master Mason and member of Liberty Lodge No. 45, was charged in a multiple count complaint of Un-Masonic Conduct. The charges resulted from an extensive investigation concerning allegations of threats of violence toward, and assault upon, the Secretary of the aforementioned lodge. Brother TTB was served with the complaint, and a response was filed denying the allegations. A final Trial Commission was organized and a trial date set. Brother TTB requested a postponement of the trial and a new trial date set. Notice of the new trial date was served delivered to the brother. The Trial Commission was empaneled, and the Judge Advocate presented the testimony of witnesses to the assault and other evidence available. Brother TTB failed to appear for the trial or to contact the Grand Lodge to explain his absence. The Trial Commission found Brother TTB guilty of Un-Masonic Conduct and expelled him from Masonry on September 15, 2022.
 2. Docket No. 972: Brother AVM, a Master Mason and member of Liberty Lodge No. 45, was charged with multiple counts of Un-Masonic Conduct relating to his participation in the clandestine meeting with other members of Liberty Lodge No. 45 without the knowledge of the Master, Secretary, or Treasurer of the Lodge. Brother AVM was served with the complaint and filed a response. A Trial Commission was empaneled and the Judge Advocate presented the evidence and
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the testimony of witnesses available. Upon hearing the evidence and statements from the parties, the Trial Commission determined that there was insufficient evidence and found Brother AVM not guilty of Un-Masonic Conduct on December 1, 2022.

3. Docket No. 973: Brother DTB, a Master Mason and member of Liberty Lodge No. 45, was charged with multiple counts of Un-Masonic Conduct relating to his participation in the clandestine meeting with other members of Liberty Lodge No. 45 without the knowledge of the Master, Secretary, or Treasurer of the Lodge. Brother DTB was served with the complaint and failed to answer or respond. In the Decision of the Judge Advocate, Brother DTB was found guilty of Un-Masonic Conduct and expelled from Masonry on September 1, 2022.
4. Docket No. 976: Dismissed by the Judge Advocate for lack of sufficiently clear, cogent, and convincing evidence.
5. Docket No. 977: Brother NSF, a Master Mason and member of Liberty Lodge No. 45, was charged with multiple counts of Un-Masonic Conduct relating to his participation in the clandestine meeting with other members of Liberty Lodge No. 45 without the knowledge of the Master, Secretary, or Treasurer of the Lodge. The Brother was served with the complaint, and he filed a response denying the allegations. A final Trial Commission was organized, a trial date set, and the Notice of Hearing was served. Brother NSF requested a postponement of the trial, and the trial was reset. Notice of the new trial date was served on the Brother. The Trial Commission was empaneled, and the Judge Advocate presented the evidence and witnesses available. Brother NSF failed to appear for the trial or to contact the Grand Lodge to explain his absence. The Trial Commission found Brother NSF guilty of Un-Masonic Conduct and expelled him from Masonry on October 28, 2022.
6. Docket No. 978: Brother JTE, a Master Mason and member of Liberty Lodge No. 45, was charged with multiple counts of Un-Masonic Conduct relating to his participation in the clandestine meeting with other members of Liberty Lodge No. 45 without the knowledge of the Master, Secretary, or Treasurer of the Lodge. Brother JTE was served and filed a response. A Trial Commission was empaneled, and the Judge Advocate presented the available evidence and the testimony of witnesses. Upon hearing the evidence and statement from the parties, the Trial Commission determined that there was insufficient evidence and found Brother JTE not guilty on September 9, 2022.
7. Docket No. 980: Brother JSC, a Master Mason and member of Andrew Jackson Lodge No. 576, plead guilty to one count of Indecent Liberties with a Minor, a Class F Felony in Rowan County Superior Court. The Judge Advocate charged him with multiple counts of Un-Masonic Conduct. He was served with the complaint and filed an answer admitting the charge. In the Decision of the Judge Advocate, Brother JSC was found guilty of Un-Masonic Conduct and expelled from Masonry on March 9, 2023.
8. Docket No. 981: Brother ADP, a Master Mason and member of Lawndale Lodge No. 486, entered a plea of guilty in U.S. District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina in Charlotte to one count of wire fraud in violation of 18-USC-1343, a Felony, in a multi-million

- dollar “Ponzi” scheme. The Brother was charged with multiple counts of Un-Masonic Conduct. After numerous good faith efforts to serve the Brother, it was determined that his whereabouts are currently unknown. By failing to provide his current address to Lawndale Lodge No. 486 and the Grand Lodge, Brother ADP committed an additional act of Un-Masonic Conduct. In the Decision of the Judge Advocate, Brother ADP was found guilty of Un-Masonic Conduct and expelled from Masonry on June 22, 2023.
9. Docket No. 982: In the matter of Brother CBW, the matter is still pending in the District Court of Edgecombe County
 10. Docket No. 983: Brother JCC, a Master Mason and member of Corinthian Lodge No. 542, was accused of Un-Masonic conduct by a Brother. It was alleged that Brother JCC had published a portion of the OSW related to the catechism of the First and Second Degrees online. Upon further investigation, it was discovered that the entire catechism of each of those degrees appeared in an open source web page. Upon demand by the Grand Lodge, the items were deleted by the web site publishers. Brother JCC was charged with multiple counts of Un-Masonic Conduct. The Brother was served, and he filed an answer alleging that he tried to delete the files from the website. A Trial Commission was convened and the evidence presented by the Judge Advocate. Brother JCC presented his defense. Upon hearing the evidence and final statements of the parties, the Trial Commission found Brother JCC guilty of Un-Masonic Conduct and expelled him from Masonry on December 9, 2022.
 11. Docket No. 984: Brother JRC, a Master Mason and member of Rockingham Lodge No. 495, was charged with homicide. The state of North Carolina gave Notice in the case of the State’s intention to seek the Death Penalty, pursuant to N.C.G.S. 15A-2004. Pursuant to Rule 24 of the General Rules of Practice, a hearing was held in the Superior Court of Richmond County. The Court found that there was sufficient evidence of “aggravating circumstances” to allow the State to proceed with the matter as a Capital case.

The Judge Advocate charged Brother JRC with multiple counts of Un-Masonic Conduct. Brother JRC was served and filed an answer. He was served with a Notice of Trial. [Brother JRC is in the custody of the Richmond County Sheriff and could not appear.] A Trial Commission was empaneled, and the Judge Advocate presented evidence of Un-Masonic Conduct. Brother JRC was found guilty of Un-Masonic Conduct on April 28, 2023, and suspended from Masonry pending his conviction or exoneration. [The Judge Advocate is currently following the prepress of the matter and will proceed accordingly as developments require.]

12. Docket No. 985: Brother SHS, a Master Mason and member of Revolution Lodge No. 552, entered a plea of guilty to one count of Second Degree Murder, a Class B2 Felony. The Judge Advocate charged the Brother with multiple counts of Un-Masonic Conduct, and he was served with the complaint. Brother SHS failed to file an answer in the matter. In the Decision of the Judge Advocate, Brother SHS was found guilty of Un-Masonic Conduct and expelled from Masonry on July 10, 2023.
13. Docket 986: Brother JME, a Master Mason and member of Siler City Lodge No. 403, entered a plea, pursuant to “Alford”*, to 5 counts of

Taking Indecent Liberties with a Minor, a Class F Felony. The offense dates in the matter ranged from 2016-2019, and multiple counts were dismissed pursuant to the plea arrangement with the State of North Carolina. The Judge Advocate charged the Brother with multiple counts of Un-Masonic Conduct and served him with a complaint. Brother JME failed to file an answer in the matter. In the Decision of the Judge Advocate, Brother JME was found guilty of Un-Masonic Conduct and expelled from Masonry on April 25, 2023.

*[State of North Carolina vs. Alford (1970) was a United States Supreme Court Decision and applies in cases where the Defendant does not admit culpability, but concedes and admits that the State of North Carolina could produce sufficient evidence that would result in a conviction. The Defendant is advised that he will be treated as guilty, even though he does not admit his guilt.]

14. Docket No. 987: Brother TMC, a Master Mason and member of Spencer Lodge No. 543, plead no contest to a charge of Breaking or Entering, a Class I Misdemeanor. The Brother was found guilty in Rowan District Court. This was a result of a plea arrangement with the State of North Carolina whereby, the charges of Felony Breaking or Entering, Felony Larceny, and Felony Burning of a Building were dismissed. The Judge Advocate charged Brother TMC with multiple counts of Un-Masonic Conduct and served him with the complaint. The Brother failed to file a responsive pleading denying the allegations. In the Decision of the Judge Advocate, Brother TMC was found guilty of Un-Masonic Conduct and expelled from Masonry on July 10, 2023.
15. Docket No. 988: Brother WEH, a Master Mason and member of Oak Island Lodge No. 758, plead guilty to one count of Burning Other Building, in violation of NCGS 14-67.1, a Class H Felony in Brunswick County. Brother WEH admitted that he set the Oak Island Lodge on fire, causing substantial damage.

Brother WEH entered a plea of guilty in New Hanover County to one count of Embezzlement, a Class H Felony in violation of NCGS 14-90.

The brother was charged with multiple counts of Un-Masonic Conduct. After numerous good faith attempts to obtain service, it was determined that his current address is unknown. By his failure to notify Oak Island Lodge No. 758 and the Grand Lodge of his current address, he has committed an additional act of Un-Masonic conduct. In the Decision of the Judge Advocate, Brother WEH was found guilty of Un-Masonic Conduct and expelled from Masonry on June 22, 2023. [Note: The Notice of Expulsion sent by the Grand Lodge by Certified Mail was received and signed for at the last known address of Brother WEH.]

Respectfully submitted,
T. Marcus Browne, III
Judge Advocate

Report of the Committee on Appeals

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

The Committee on Appeals met on July 24, 2023, at the Masonic Center of Winston-Salem to discuss the fourteen (14) dockets brought forth by the Judge Advocate since the 235th Annual Communication, and to hear the one (1) Petition for Restoration. The Committee's recommendations are listed below each matter.

Petitions for Restoration

DOCKET NO. 937:

JEB (Docket No. 937), formerly a member of Proctorville Lodge No. 643, Proctorville, was expelled on October 16, 2019. He previously filed for restoration with the lodge on May 28, 2023, and with the Grand Secretary on June 19, 2023.

COMPLAINT: JEB, a former member of Proctorville Lodge No. 643,

SPECIFICATION 1: Did contact Brother JDP, a certified lecturer, and requested permission to sign Brother JDP's name to an Official Form 38, indicating Brother JDP had completed a five hour-lecture service for Proctorville Lodge No. 643, with full knowledge that Brother JDP had not completed any such lecture service and said Brother JDP refused former brother JEB permission to sign his name.

SPECIFICATION 2: JEB, a former member of Proctorville Lodge No. 643, did knowingly sign another brother's name on Official Form 38, indicating that the brother (a certified lecturer) whose name was signed, had completed the lecture service, knowing full well that the brother had not, and that the brother whose name was signed had not given permission to sign his name.

These acts committed in Violation of:

Regulation 86-1.5. A Mason's conduct in general and at all times should be such as not to bring discredit upon the Order or to degrade it in the estimation of good people.

Regulation 86-2.11. To violate a Masonic obligation or an oath lawfully taken.

Regulation 86-2.13. To make declarations which, if put into effect, would unlawfully retard the work of a lodge, or disturb its harmony, and in violation of his duties a Master Mason and to the scandal and disgrace of the Masonic Fraternity.

ORIGINAL DECISION OF TRIAL COMMISSION: GUILTY

PENALTY: EXPELLED

COMMITTEE ON APPEALS RECOMMENDATION:

Having reviewed the Judge Advocate's report, the Trial Commission's decision, and all other reports and documentation, the Committee on Appeals recommends that former member JEB NOT be reinstated or restored.

Trial Dockets**RECOMMENDATIONS BY APPEALS COMMITTEE****DOCKET NO. 969 - TBB (Liberty Lodge No. 45)**

Having reviewed the Judge Advocate's report, the Trial Commission's decision, and all other reports and documentation, the Committee on Appeals recommends that the delegates uphold and approve the Trial Commission's decision to: **EXPEL**

DOCKET NO. 972 - AVM (Liberty Lodge No. 45)

Having reviewed the Judge Advocate's report, the Trial Commission's decision, and all other reports and documentation, the Committee on Appeals recommends that the delegates uphold and approve the Trial Commission's decision of: **NOT GUILTY**

DOCKET NO. 973 - DTB (Liberty Lodge No. 45)

Having reviewed the Judge Advocate's report and all other reports and documentation, the Committee on Appeals recommends that the delegates uphold and approve the Judge Advocate's decision to: **EXPEL**

DOCKET NO. 976 - DKT (Liberty Lodge No. 45)

Having reviewed the Judge Advocate's report and all other reports and documentation, the Committee on Appeals recommends that the delegates uphold and approve the Judge Advocate's decision to: **DISMISS**

DOCKET NO. 977 - NSF (Liberty Lodge No. 45)

Having reviewed the Judge Advocate's report, the Trial Commission's decision, and all other reports and documentation, the Committee on Appeals recommends that the delegates uphold and approve the Trial Commission's decision to: **EXPEL**

DOCKET NO. 978 - JTE (Liberty Lodge No. 45)

Having reviewed the Judge Advocate's report, the Trial Commission's decision, and all other reports and documentation, the Committee on Appeals recommends that the delegates uphold and approve the Trial Commission's decision of: **NOT GUILTY**

DOCKET NO. 980 - JSC (Fulton Lodge No. 99)

Having reviewed the Judge Advocate's report and all other reports and documentation, the Committee on Appeals recommends that the delegates uphold and approve the Judge Advocate's decision to: **EXPEL**

DOCKET NO. 981 - ADP (Lawndale Lodge No. 486)

Having reviewed the Judge Advocate's report and all other reports and documentation, the Committee on Appeals recommends that the delegates uphold and approve the Judge Advocate's decision to: **EXPEL**

DOCKET NO. 983 - JCC (Corinthian Lodge No. 542)

Having reviewed the Judge Advocate's report, the Trial Commission's decision, and all other reports and documentation, the Committee on Appeals recommends that the delegates uphold and approve the Trial Commission's decision to: **EXPEL**

DOCKET NO. 984 - JRC (Rockingham Lodge No. 495)

Having reviewed the Judge Advocate's report, the Trial Commission's decision, and all other reports and documentation, the Committee on Appeals:

Recommends approval of the order of the Trial Commission as to suspension and expulsion upon conviction, with *MODIFICATION, to further state that upon acquittal of ALL charges, the suspension be lifted and JRC be reinstated.

****Trial Code REG. 98-10 PROCEDURE ON APPEAL***

****REG. 98-12 MODIFICATION***

DOCKET NO. 985 - SHS (Revolution Lodge No. 552)

Having reviewed the Judge Advocate's report and all other reports and documentation, the Committee on Appeals recommends that the delegates uphold and approve the Judge Advocate's decision to: **EXPELL**

DOCKET NO. 986 - JME (Siler City Lodge No. 403)

Having reviewed the Judge Advocate's report and all other reports and documentation, the Committee on Appeals recommends that the delegates uphold and approve the Judge Advocate's decision to: **EXPEL**

DOCKET NO. 987 - TMC (Spencer Lodge No. 543)

Having reviewed the Judge Advocate's report and all other reports and documentation, the Committee on Appeals recommends that the delegates uphold and approve the Judge Advocate's decision to: **EXPEL**

DOCKET NO. 988 - WEH (Oak Island Lodge No. 758)

Having reviewed the Judge Advocate's report and all other reports and documentation, the Committee on Appeals recommends that the delegates uphold and approve the Judge Advocate's decision to: **EXPEL**

Respectfully submitted,
John M. Burchfield, Chairman
Committee on Appeals

Report of the Committee on Bylaws

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

Your committee on Bylaws of Subordinate Lodges reports that amendments to the bylaws of the following lodges were approved during the year 2022-2023. They are as approved.

Lodge Name	No.	Article	Remarks
Roman Eagle	550	10	Dues increased to \$174 plus per capita
Bakersville	357	8	Stated 2nd and 4th Thursday at 7:30p
	357	8	Dispense with meeting on holidays
	357	10	Dues increased to \$100 plus per capita in 2023
	357	10	Dues increased to \$115 plus per capita in 2024
	357	10	Dues increased to \$130 plus per capita in 2025
Oak Island	758	10	Dues increased to \$150
Liberty	45	10	Dues increased to \$124 plus per capita
Millbrook	97	9	Initiation fee increased to \$200
	97	10	Dues increased to \$190
	97	11	Affiliation fee increased to \$52
Jefferson Penn	384	16	Provision for Trustees
Stedman	730	10	Dues increased to \$100
Winston	167		Complete Revision
Garner	701	10	Dues increased to \$125 plus per capita
Cary	198	8	Option to dispense with meeting in summer and on holidays
	198	9	Initiation fee increased to \$250
	198	11	Affiliation fee increased to \$100
	198	22	Alcohol prohibition removed
	198	25	Bylaw adoption provision
Mount Holly	544	10	Dues increased to \$100 plus per capita
	544	8	Annual meeting in November
	544	22	Provision for Officers to coordinate business
St. Alban's	114	10	Dues increased to \$99 plus per cap
Raleigh	500	8	Meeting location changed
Bladen	646	8	Stated 2nd and 4th Monday @ 7p
Campbell	374	10	Dues increased to \$150 plus per capita
Orient	395	10	Dues increased to \$95 plus per capita
Creasy Proctor	679	9	Initiation fee increased to \$200

	679	10	Dues increased to \$150
Steele Creek	737	9	Initiation fee increased to \$175
	737	10	Dues increased to \$175 plus per capita
	737	11	Affiliation fee increased to \$25
Marietta	444	8	Annual meeting in November
Junaluskee	145	10	Dues increased to \$74 plus per capita
	145	19	Special voting procedure
Prometheus	775	3	Revision of name and seal
Oak Island	758	19	Revision of local law
Youngsville	377	9	Initiation fee increased to \$124
	377	10	Dues increased to \$124 plus per capita
	377	11	Affiliation fee increased to \$124
Ocean	405	8	Stated 2nd and 4th Tuesday at 7p
	405	10	Dues increased to \$114 plus per capita
Mooreville	496	10	Dues increased to \$124 plus per capita
	496	11	Affiliation fee increased to \$150
St. John's	3		Complete Revision
Newport	706	10	Dues increased to \$100 plus per capita
Steadman	730	9	Initiation fee increased to \$120
Jefferson Penn	384	10	Dues increased to \$116 plus per capita
Lincoln	137		Complete Revision
Liberty	145	10	Dues increased to \$90 plus per capita
Black Mountain	663	9	Initiation fee increased to \$150
Southern Pines	484		Complete Revision
Western Star	91	19	Lodge rental rules
Black Mountain	663	9	Initiation fee increased to \$150
Blackmer	127	10	Dues increased to \$102 plus per capita and to increase by \$12 annually though 2028
Richlands	564	10	Dues increased to \$150 plus per capita
Sparta	423	10	Dues increased to \$100
Tabor	563	9	Initiation fee increased to \$500
WG Arnold	683	8	Stated 1st Thursday at 7:30p
Charles M. Setzer	693	8	Stated 3rd Monday at 7p
Excelsior	261	19	Special Local Provisions
Lebanon	207	8	Stated 1st and 3rd Thursday at 7p
Copeland	390	9	Initiation fee increased to \$125
Denton	404	19	Special voting procedure
Henry F. Grainger	412	10	Dues increased to \$125 plus per capita
	412	11	Affiliation fee increased to \$25
William G. Hill	218	19	Special Local Provisions

Orr	104		Full Revision
Cherokee	146	1	Location moved to Marble, NC
Elberta	654	8	Stated 1st and 3rd Tuesday at 7p
Mooreville	496		Full Revision
Liberty	45	8	Stated 1st Thursday at 7p
Zion	81	10	Dues increased to \$104 plus per capita
	81	11	Affiliation fee increased to \$35
Junaluskee	145		General revisions and rewrites
	145	10	Dues increased to \$74 plus per capita
	145	14	Special voting procedure
Greenville	284	8	Stated 2nd Monday @ 7:30p
Atkinson	612		Full Revision
Manteo	521	8	Meeting time moved to 7p
	521	8	Addressed changed to 105 Old NC 345, Manteo, NC
James B. Green	735	10	Dues increased to \$144 plus per capita in 2024, and to increase to \$174 in 2025
Beaver Dam	276		Full Revision
Traphill	483		Full Revision
Old Town	751	8	Meeting time moved to 3rd Tuesday at 7p
	751	9	Initiation fee increased to \$150
	751	10	Dues increased to \$154 plus per capita
Elise	555	10	Dues increased to \$125
Apex	584	8	Meeting time moved to 2nd & 4th Monday at 7:30p
	584	8	Option to call off meeting in June, July, and August
Manteo	521	20	Surety Bond for Master and Treasurer, \$100k
Cherry Point	688	10	Dues increased to \$174 plus per capita
Fellowship	687	8	Meeting location changed
	687	8	Meeting time moved to 7p
Palmyra	147	19	Special voting procedure
Enterprise	752	9	Initiation fee increased to \$150
	752	10	Dues increased to \$150
Knights of Solomon	776		Revision of name and seal
Hanks	128	13	Charity amount increased to \$500
Robbinsville	672	9	Initiation fee increased to \$135
	672	10	Dues increased to \$100 plus per capita
Mount Hermon	118	10	Dues increased to \$155 plus per capita
Renfro	691	10	Dues increased to \$125 plus per capita

Waccamaw	596	8	Meeting time moved to 2nd Monday at 7:30p
Mount Vernon	359	8	Meeting time moved to 7p
	359	9	Initiation fee increased to \$75
	359	10	Dues increased to \$85 plus per capita
Federal Point	753	10	Dues increased to \$125 plus per capita
Orr	104	10	Stepped dues increase from \$99 to \$174
Monroe	244	9	Fees for degrees from \$125 up to \$200 + background check
	244	10	Dues from \$80 to \$144 + per capita
	244	11	Affiliation fee from \$25 to \$100
	244	13	Change limit on Charity relief from \$50 to \$200 per case
Tabor	563	8	Meeting time moved to 4th Thursday at 7:30p
Western Star	91	8	Change time of stated from 7:30p to 7p
Linville	489	8	Meeting time moved to 2nd & 4th Thursday at 7p
	489	9	Increase fees for the degrees from \$100 to \$175
	489	10	Increase dues from \$75 to \$150
Gatesville	126	10	Increase dues from \$60 to \$70 + per capita
Granite	322	10	Increase dues from \$100 to \$150 + per capita
Tabor	563	10	Increase dues from \$85 to \$224 + per capita

Respectfully submitted,
Jonathan Underwood, Chairman

Report on the Committee on WhiteStone

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

The Committee on WhiteStone: A Masonic and Eastern Star Community is pleased to report its findings and recommendations to the delegates and attendees of the 236th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. For 111 years, our home in Greensboro has provided care for our senior brothers, sisters, and family members in need. Some 300 residents call WhiteStone home. The community employs nearly 270 full- and part-time employees and operates on a \$19 million annual budget. This growth and excellence in care would not have been possible without the ongoing support of individual brothers, their lodges, and the Grand Lodge.

Our committee is charged with visiting our home in Greensboro and reporting on its conditions and management. Throughout the year, committee members attended board meetings and toured our home. We are grateful for the assistance of the Executive Director, Brother Mark Lewis, for his assistance with our work and for the Chairman of the Board, MW Brother Gene Jernigan's, consistently outstanding leadership throughout the year. We also extend our appreciation to the WhiteStone staff for their dedication and service to the residents and their support of our committee this year.

We are pleased to report to the Craft that WhiteStone is financially strong, the condition of the property is excellent, and operations continue to be both efficient and professional. The success at WhiteStone has resulted in a growing number of prospects waiting to become residents.

Background

The Masonic and Eastern Star Home of North Carolina, Incorporated owns and operates a continuing care retirement community known as "WhiteStone: A Masonic and Eastern Star Community" located in Greensboro, North Carolina. The Community began operation in 1913 and was the first Masonic Fraternal Home in the United States created solely for the caring of the elderly. In addition, the Community is the oldest retirement home in the State of North Carolina. The name "WhiteStone" is based on the Community's first Administrator, Mr. White, and its first residents, Mr. and Mrs. Stone. The Corporation is organized as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of North Carolina and has been determined to be an organization exempt from federal income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

History

The Community was inspired in the early 1900s by two Masonic individuals (Mr. Clymer and Mr. Monroe) who were visiting a fellow Mason at a county home for the aged and were dismayed by the living conditions of the elderly gentleman. From this visit, the Masonic individuals were determined that the Grand Lodge could do a better job of taking care of its older members. In 1903, a resolution was passed by the Grand Lodge to start a home for the aged, and in 1908 the Grand Chapter decided to join as well. In 1912, 26 acres of land were purchased in Greensboro, and construction began on the site of a former tree nursery. Over the next 111 years, the Community would continue to grow and fulfill its mission of serving thousands of its elderly Masonic and

Eastern Star members thanks to the continued generous support of both the Grand Lodge and the Grand Chapter members throughout North Carolina as well as their respective foundations.

Operating Highlights

- \$19 M annual operating budget
- Approximately 270 FT/PT employees
- 93% Overall Campus Occupancy in 2022
- \$1.1 M in Charitable Care for 2022

Campus Development

In the fall of 2020 WhiteStone broke ground on a project to transform our campus and support industry best care and housing for current and future residents. The repositioning and expansion project sought out to meet four goals - first, to provide a full continuum of care to its residents with the addition of assisted living apartments; second, to significantly renovate the beloved Care and Wellness Center originally built in 1999; third, to continue improving the independent living opportunities on campus to meet the expectations of today's residents; and fourth, to add commons and amenities for the enjoyment of its current residents and to meet the expectations of its prospective residents. Our vision for the expansion was to provide a full continuum of care, offering a seamless transition of care for residents moving between independent living, assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing care as needed.

Project Highlights:

- Assisted Living Residences
 - New Three-Story Building
 - 36 Total Apartments
 - 12 Dedicated to Memory Care
 - New State of the Art Therapy Gym
- Care and Wellness Center Renovation
 - Increase in Number of Private Rooms
 - Creation of a Homelike Environment
 - Updated Wellness Space/Equipment
 - Renovated Saltwater Pool and Locker Rooms
- Independent Living Residences
 - New Five-Story Building
 - 67 Total Apartments
 - Underground Parking

This project was designed to enhance an already-thriving senior community and advance the lives of current and future residents. This project will also ensure the long-term sustainability for our community, so that future generations of Masons and Stars can look forward to calling WhiteStone home.

Throughout the project, WhiteStone had the opportunity to celebrate with our members through a tradition in Freemasonry that dates back to the earliest days of the Craft. Masonic Cornerstone Ceremonies were held for the Care and Wellness Center, assisted living building, and independent living building.

Faith, hope, and charity built a loving community in Greensboro. Like the Masons and Stars who preceded us, when the time came to support the expansion of our home, our members stepped up. Through their support, and that of the North Carolina Masonic Foundation and Eastern Star Foundation, WhiteStone was able to surpass its Capital Campaign goals.

After nearly three years, the excitement is palpable as WhiteStone nears the end of construction. The committee encourages our members to visit the beauty that is WhiteStone, our Masonic and Eastern Star Community.

Charity Summary

WhiteStone is proud to carry on the tradition of providing aid to fraternally affiliated seniors both residing on the campus of WhiteStone and living independently throughout North Carolina. In 2022, charitable care and services worth approximately \$1 million was delivered to more than 70 fraternally affiliated seniors through the partnership of the MESH Foundation LLC and WhiteStone.

The Fraternal Friendship Program (formerly the Outreach Program) continues to see growth across the state, assisting members in their home during their time of need. Since its inception in 2016, the program has grown to the level of providing \$134K in charitable care in 2022. Assistance comes in many forms from that of emergency and long-term financial assistance as well as case management. Case management is the process of assessment, planning, facilitation, care coordination, and evaluation of options and services to meet an individual's comprehensive health needs and promote quality, cost-effective outcomes. This program has developed into an extremely effective tool to help our fraternally related members to remain at home, independently, as long as they can do so with a quality of life.

Assistance through the NC Masonic and Eastern Star Outreach Program is available by calling (336) 601-5593.

Conclusion

Our committee wishes to thank the Grand Lodge, along with WhiteStone's residents and staff for giving us the opportunity to learn more about *our* home and its charitable work. We hope you will take the opportunity to visit WhiteStone and see for yourself the impact of our fraternity's involvement in the lives of the residents there. You may even consider holding a lodge meeting there to enjoy fellowship with Masonic residents who are not able to travel to meetings or simply visit MESH Lodge #771, which meets at 2:00 pm on the second Saturday of each month. Or think about adopting a resident — this is a small investment of time and resources that yields tremendous personal rewards for the recipients, as well as those who give. Feel free to contact Brother Mark Lewis if you'd like to explore any of these ideas.

Finally, the committee encourages each and every brother, as well as every

lodge, to strongly consider regular contributions in support of WhiteStone and NC MESH LLC. Your dollars go directly to support aging Brothers and Sisters in need, both at the home in Greensboro as well as at their own homes. North Carolina Masons can be proud of the good work they are doing in support of their aging brethren.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Register, Chairman
David Daniels
Asa Buck, III
Todd Frye
Stephen Adams
Christopher Canipe
James Taylor
Jonathan Cranford

Report of the Committee on the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

Happy 150th Birthday MHCO! This year has been one of growth, development, celebration, and adjustment as MHCO has strived to rebound from the Covid Pandemic issues. In particular MHCO continues to market with good results on the census and in preparation for fundraising appeals. MHCO continues to implement the CARE Trauma Informed Model through Cornell University. MHCO has begun the Community Support Center. This new program supports children and families off campus, as well as those living on campus. MHCO has also been involved in providing celebrations to recognize the storied history, as well as celebrate the current programming and future plans.

The MHCO census continues to increase. The greatest census this year was an increase of 242% over the Covid low census. The Direct Care Cottages have remained close to full capacity for a year. ILP census has been lower and cottage repairs have cut availability by eight beds. The ongoing challenge of hiring and maintaining Child Care Worker Houseparents has inhibited the ability to bring more children into care. MHCO served a total of 94 residents in 2022, a 23% increase from the previous year. Based on 2022 numbers the average length of stay is roughly two and a quarter years for the children in Direct Care and two and a half years for those in the Independent Living Program. MHCO has seen a ten percent decrease of unplanned discharges since the implementation of the CARE Model.

MHCO is experiencing a shortage of Child Care Worker Houseparent Couples and is currently hiring. Currently the Direct Care Program is almost full and the Independent Living Program has openings. The ILP helps young adults 18-21 continue their education, become gainfully employed, obtain their own transportation, and learn important independent living skills. If you know of any couples who would be interested in working together in a live-in structure to make a positive impact with children or families in need of

services, please have them call 919-693-5111 or visit mhc-oxford.org.

The students are continuing to attend tutoring and participate in extracurricular activities. Thirteen finished the school year on honorable mention, eleven on honor roll, and six increased their GPA by at least five points from last quarter (one increasing by 14.25 points). The campus average GPA finished at 82.82. Youth are involved in Girl Scouts, DeMolay, tennis, baseball, and cheerleading. Several are attending Camp Gray Rock this summer. Two high school students graduated this year, and one has enlisted in the Army. One alumnus is in Airborne Training in Alaska.

Baccalaureate was a wonderful success this year. The inclusion of students rising to other levels was very refreshing and brought several children's families to the event. Special recognitions were announced for academic achievement and includes, two National Junior Honor Society Inductees, one High School Honor Society Inductee, two Granville County Schools Night of Excellence Award Winners, one Granville County Schools Night of Kindness Award Winner for Credle Elementary, one high school graduate awarded a \$140,000 GI Bill, one Principal's Award for outstanding character, and one Student of Merit with graduate GPA higher than 3.4.

For the first half of 2023, income is 26% above projections and operating expenses are 2.9% below budget. MHCO continues to rely on Planned Gifts and Investment Earnings to operate. This has been a long-standing practice, and MHCO is taking steps to increase recurring and annual gifts to cover operations. This concept is extremely important as covering expenses with regular revenues will allow for Wills and Estates and Investment Earnings to go into the Endowment toward more financial security. MHCO receives 377 anticipated Recurring gifts which is a 33% increase since the beginning of 2023.

Another important financial concept is the Print Shop. Please consider utilizing the Print Shop for your Masonic, Business, or Personal printing needs.

If you or others are interested in providing a recurring or annual gift, visit the website at mhc-oxford.org and hit donate now. You can also call 919-693-5111 and work with the staff to set up a recurring or annual gift. Remember a Calendar donation in the return envelope as an efficient way to make your annual gift.

MHCO did receive the third and final installment toward the CARE Trauma Informed Model through Cornell University. This gracious gift was provided by the Triangle North Healthcare Foundation. MHCO also received grants from the John William Pope Foundation and the Granville County United Way.

Please share possible Foundation and Grant resources with MHCO as we continue to solicit grants for important initiatives.

MHCO has begun the Community Support Center CSC with the first hire in May 2023. While MHCO has not done all the work, the umbrella of programming existing and operating from the MHCO campus served 21,694 persons in 2022. Again, MHCO only served 94 directly. However, this demonstrates how the utilization of resources can make a significant impact for children and families. This is a good beginning and a good story to share. MHCO expects the number of families and youth directly served through MHCO resources and coordinated services to increase in number and expand

in proximity.

Jeff Cohen, the new administrator for the Masonic Home for Children in Georgia, visited your campus. Mr. Cohen stated he has heard rave reviews and wanted to spend time with the staff to learn. Emphasis was on programming enhancements, financial development, the Independent Living Program, and marketing. It is an honor for other professionals and homes to be impressed with our work and want to learn from our experience, initiatives, and positive outcomes.

Mark your calendars for October 13th and 14th as we celebrate Homecoming. Who Shot John will perform on Friday night. The Shrine parade steps off at 11am on Saturday. Immediately after, 20Ride and Nationwide Coverage will both play on Saturday. The annual celebration will officially conclude on December 10, 2023, with the York Rite Christmas Observance Ceremony in the York Rite Chapel. Please consider attending these events and look for other ways to be involved in this historic milestone for North Carolina's first Children's Home – YOUR Children's Home.

Please refer to the Monthly Lodge Email, Children's Chatter, that is sent to your Lodge Secretary and the Master for current information. Please help invite MHCO to talk to groups in your area who are working with families in need. Please consider making a monthly recurring gift. Please continue to pray for your Children's Home. We feel your prayers and believe we are Blessed. Thank you Brethren for being the Cornerstone of the Home's strong 150 year Foundation. Your support helps children become confident and self-assured. They are Masonic Foundations you build who go on to support others.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gilbert Bailey, Chairman
Kevin Otis, Administrator

Report of the Committee on Committee on Youth Organizations

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

Rainbow Girls

NC Rainbows had its 87th Grand Assembly in Greensboro in June. Madi White was installed as the Grand Worthy Advisor. New Grand Officers and Grand Representatives were announced and installed. Preparations are well underway for North Carolina to host Supreme Assembly in 2024. Young ladies and adults from around the world will gather as North Carolina's own Kay Letterman will preside over this biannual gathering.

The service project for 2022-2023 was geared towards animal protection. The young ladies went to the NC Zoo, built bird houses, and volunteered at animal shelters.

The service project for 2023-2024 focuses on special needs individuals and their families. Activities such as volunteering with Special Olympics

are planned on a statewide level while coordinating local participation with Miracle Leagues and Adaptive Sports projects.

Rainbows will once again participate in campus beautification at the Masonic Home for Children-Oxford in March 2024.

Just as the DeMolay, the Rainbow Girls are always looking for members and Masonic guidance. They too compete with other youth groups for membership and participation.

DeMolay

The H. Lloyd Wilkerson DeMolay Chapter has experienced a change in Advisors and continues to climb the learning curve. The numbers for DeMolay have been decreasing due to fewer initiations and youth aging out. DeMolay is experiencing some individual bodies growing.

As with the past several years, other youth groups compete for membership and participation. We implore Masonic leadership at the local level to help assist these bodies. Both groups have open installations and all are invited and encouraged to attend.

The NC Orient of the Scottish Rite has stepped up and pledged to increase funding to both bodies and challenged other appendant bodies to do the same. Additionally, the Scottish Rite is hosting their Golf Tournament at South Granville Country Club on Sunday September 17th. A special presentation will begin the tournament at the Chapel of the Masonic Home for Children starting at 11am. Guest speakers will feature Deputy of the Supreme Council Orient in North Carolina, Gene Cobb, and UNC legend Phil Ford. Immediately afterward lunch will be held on the MHCO campus. The tournament will begin at 2:30pm. The H. Lloyd Wilkerson DeMolay Chapter will offer a putting contest as a fundraiser.

MHCO

The students are busy attending tutoring, participating in extracurricular activities, and enjoying summer trips including Carowinds, Wake the World, Wet 'n Wild, Camp Gray Rock, and cottage trips. Thirteen finished on honorable mention, eleven on honor roll, and six increased their GPA by at least five points from last quarter (one increasing by 14.25 points). The campus average GPA is 82.82. Two HS students Graduated this year and one has enlisted in the Army.

Special recognitions were announced for academic achievement and includes: two National Junior Honor Society Inductees, one High School Honor Society Inductee, two Granville County Schools Night of Excellence Award Winners, one Granville County Schools Night of Kindness Award Winner for Credle Elementary, one HS Graduates awarded \$140,000 GI Bill, one Principal's Award for outstanding character, and one Student of Merit with graduate GPA higher than 3.4.

Employment levels for July were Direct Care no youth eligible; TLC 90%, ILP 80%, Combined 86.7%. Eighteen residents are doing Kid\$Earn jobs on campus. One TLC youth is currently doing behind the wheel in Driver's Ed on campus. Mr. Gene held Summer Academy in July and included the Public Service Appreciation Day car wash and luncheon.

Summary

Youth programming is challenged by competition for youth's time and commitment. We are all aware of the important impact Rainbow, DeMolay, and other youth programs can have for youth. Please join the Scottish Rite in helping financially support the DeMolay and Rainbow Girls. Please consider being an advisor, encourage youth to join, and be active in your local Masonic Youth Programs. Again, we implore the local Masonic Leadership to take an active role in helping develop youth programming. If you have any questions, please reach out to DeMolay and Rainbows to see how you can help our children learn, grow, and develop. Special Thanks to Russell and Stephanie Bridges, Bill and Mandy McMillan, John Walston, and Robert Mullis for their support in this report. Thanks to all.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Otis, MHCO Administrator

Resolution for Allen-Graham/Cabarrus Lodge 695 to Receive a Duplicate Charter

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

WHEREAS, Allen-Graham Lodge No. 695, located at Kannapolis, NC, and Cabarrus Lodge No. 720, located at Midland, NC, agreed to merge on June 1, 2023, as Allen-Graham/Cabarrus Lodge No. 695,

WHEREAS, Allen-Graham Lodge No. 695 and Cabarrus Lodge No. 720 agreed to a name change on their respective resolutions to merge lodges, agreeing to a duplicate charter issued as Allen-Graham/Cabarrus Lodge No. 695 to be located in Kannapolis, NC, and

WHEREAS, the chartered history of Allen-Graham Lodge No. 695, and Cabarrus Lodge No. 720, AF & AM remains unbroken, and

WHEREAS, the required fee of \$150 has been submitted.

NOW THEREFOR BE IT RESOLVED: Allen-Graham/Cabarrus Lodge No. 695, AF & AM, Kannapolis, NC, hereby petitions the Grand Lodge of North Carolina for a duplicate charter with in the name of Allen-Graham/Cabarrus Lodge No. 695 located at Kannapolis, NC.

Respectfully submitted,
Aaron B. Farmer, Master
Allen-Graham/Cabarrus Lodge No. 695

Report of the Committee on Unfinished Business

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

The following various orders and opinions issued during the terms of Grand Master Larry B. Thompson, Jr., PGM, and Grand Master Kevan D. Frazier, are to be considered during this Annual Communication.

Thompson Order No. 7

The undersigned Most Worshipful Grand Master of Masons of North Carolina, having reviewed the Motion of the Judge Advocate and allegations contained in the Complaint in this matter, makes the following findings:

FINDINGS OF THE GRAND MASTER

1. Brother JCC is charged with Un-Masonic Conduct as alleged in the complaint attached to the Motion of the Judge Advocate as Exhibit A. WB JCC is a Master Mason and a member of CORINTHIAN Lodge No. 542, located at 426 West Market St., Greensboro, North Carolina 27406 (Mailing: P.O. Box 542, Greensboro, NC 27402), and his present address is [REDACTED]. WB JCC is the current Master of Corinthian Lodge No. 542.
2. WB JCC is charged in a multiple count complaint for Un-Masonic conduct; and, the Judge Advocate seeks the penalty of Expulsion from Masonry in this matter; and,
3. WB JCC is the current Master of Corinthian Lodge No. 542 in Greensboro, North Carolina, and as such is specifically charged with violations of his duties and obligations under Regulation 59-2 (27) of The Code; and,
4. The material made available to the Judge Advocate appears to indicate that clear, cogent, and convincing evidence exists, making it more likely than not, that WB JCC has violated his Masonic Obligations, as well as his duties and obligation as Master of Corinthian Lodge No. 542.

ORDER OF THE GRAND MASTER

NOW THEREFORE, based upon the allegations and materials produced by the Judge Advocate, the multiple count complaint, and pursuant to my authority as Grand Master under Regulation 13-3 (5), I hereby ORDER WB JCC suspended as Master of Corinthian Lodge No. 542 and as Tyler of Knights of Solomon Lodge No. 768, pending the decision of the Trial Commission in this matter and the pendency of any appeal therefrom.

Given under my hand and seal in the City of Salisbury, North Carolina, this 8th day of September 2022.

Frazier Order No. 1

To the Master, Wardens, and Secretary of Red Springs Lodge No. 501:

It has been brought to my attention by the Grand Secretary's office that Red Springs Lodge No. 501 held their election of officers on a date other than the one prescribed in Article 8 of the lodge's bylaws, without dispensation from the Grand Master to hold the election on another date.

The election of officers held on October 13, 2022, is clearly illegal under the language of Regulation 54-1.3 of The Code, and is, therefore, NULL and VOID.

Since the Grand Master is empowered to order another election in cases of

this kind, I hereby Order Red Springs Lodge No. 501 to hold another election of officers for the 2023 year at the stated communication to be held on January 12, 2023. If this cannot be accomplished by January 12, 2023, the lodge shall then hold the election at the stated communication to be held on February 9, 2023.

This Order shall be read to the lodge at the next stated communication, entered on the minutes of that communication and a proper notation made on the margin of the minutes for October 13, 2022, referring to this Order and the date it was recorded in the minutes.

Given under my hand and seal at Asheville, North Carolina, this 12th day of December, 2022.

Frazier Order No. 2

To the Master, Wardens, and Secretary of Holly Springs Lodge No. 115:

It has been brought to my attention by the Grand Secretary's office that Holly Springs Lodge No. 115 balloted on the petition of Mr. CJB on June 13, 2023, and elected him to membership, without the petition having been first submitted to and certified by the Grand Secretary's office, nor the petition having undergone the proper background check as required by The Code.

The ballot taken on June 13, 2023, to elect Mr. CJB is clearly illegal under the positive language of Regulation 68-1.2 of The Code, and is, therefore, NULL and VOID.

Since the Grand Master is empowered to order another ballot in cases of this kind, I hereby order a rebalot to Holly Springs Lodge No. 115 at the stated communication to be held on August 8, 2023. If this cannot be accomplished by August 8, 2023, the lodge shall then ballot on this application at the stated communication to be held on August 22, 2023.

This Order shall be read to the lodge at the next stated communication, entered on the minutes of that communication and a proper notation made on the margin of the minutes for June 13, 2023, referring to this Order and the date it was recorded in the minutes.

Given under my hand and seal at Asheville, North Carolina, this 20th day of July, 2022.

Frazier Order No. 3

To the Master, Wardens, and Secretary of Stokesdale Lodge No. 428:

It has been brought to my attention by the Grand Secretary's office that Stokesdale Lodge No. 428 balloted on the affiliation of Brother WTT, Jr, on August 1, 2023, and elected him to membership, without the application having been first submitted to and certified by the Grand Secretary's office, and then proceeded to elect and install him as Secretary of the Lodge.

The ballot taken on August 1, 2023, to elect Brother WTT, Jr, is clearly illegal under the positive language of Regulation 68-1.2 of The Code, and is, therefore, NULL and VOID, as is the subsequent election and installation of him as Secretary of the aforementioned lodge.

Since the Grand Master is empowered to order another ballot in cases of

this kind, I hereby order a reballot to Stokesdale Lodge No. 428 at the stated communication to be held on August 15, 2023. If this cannot be accomplished by August 15, 2023, the lodge shall then ballot on this application at the stated communication to be held on September 5, 2023.

This Order shall be read to the lodge at the next stated communication, entered on the minutes of that communication and a proper notation made on the margin of the minutes for August 1, 2023, referring to this Order and the date it was recorded in the minutes.

Given under my hand and seal at Asheville, North Carolina, this 4th day of August, 2023.

Amendment Group 1

The following amendment has been submitted by the Grand Secretary.

This amendment modernizes the publication and distribution of the Annual Proceedings resulting in significant financial savings while making them more easily available.

REG. 23-3 DISTRIBUTION. The ~~printed published~~ Annual Proceedings shall ~~may~~ be bound in paper and ~~or~~ in cloth in such quantity of each as the Grand Secretary may deem necessary, ~~or as the Grand Lodge directs. The Annual Proceedings shall be made available electronically to the officers, members, and lodges of this jurisdiction, or any other repository deemed appropriate, and distributed as follows:~~

One paper bound copy to each subordinate lodge, (43-4).

One cloth bound copy to each Grand Lodge Officer and each Past Grand Master;

One paper bound copy to each member of mandatory boards, commissions, and committees;

One paper bound copy to each District Deputy Grand Master, One paper bound copy to each District Deputy Grand Lecturer;

One paper bound copy to each Grand Lodge of the United States of America, of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and

One paper bound copy to each of such other Grand Lodges of foreign countries as may be in fraternal correspondence with this Grand Lodge;

The Grand Secretary may in his discretion vary the foregoing assignments to the several Grand Lodges mentioned herein.

Amendment Group 2

The following amendment has been submitted by the Grand Secretary.

This amendment clarifies the modern duties of the lodge secretary by making full use of widely- used electronic tools and codifying common practice.

REG. 47-2 GRAND SECRETARY PROVIDES FORMS NOTIFICATION.

On or before the fifteenth day of December in each year, the Grand Secretary shall notify each Secretary that the annual return period will open on January 1, forward to the Secretary of each lodge sufficient copies of blank forms for its annual return to the Grand Lodge. Returns are required from lodges under dispensation as well as from chartered lodges. [16-1.30].

REG. 47-3 WHO PREPARES. Immediately after the first day of January each year the brothers who were Master and Secretary, or acting as such, at the close of the preceding fiscal year shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, ~~two copies of the form for the annual return of the lodge for the preceding fiscal year.~~

REG. 47-4 INFORMATION ENTERED. The information to be entered on the annual return of a lodge shall be initiations, passings, raisings, endowed memberships, admissions, restorations, demissions, deaths, exclusions for nonpayment of dues, expulsions, and suspensions giving names in full with the respective dates. Additional information may be called for by the Grand Secretary on forms. The annual return shall be prepared and submitted electronically, or as otherwise directed by the Grand Secretary. on a typewriter or computer printer in the manner called for on the form. (88-2).

REG. 47-5 SIGNATURE AND FILING. ~~Both copies of the~~ The annual return shall be electronically signed by the then Master and Secretary, respectively, and under seal of the lodge. The ~~original or electronic facsimile~~ annual return shall be electronically filed with the Grand Secretary, and ~~the~~ a copy shall be filed in the permanent records of the lodge.

REG. 47-6 TIME OF FILING. It shall be the special duty of the Master and the Secretary of each lodge to see that the annual return of their lodge for each fiscal year is filed with the Grand Secretary ~~in time to be received by him, in the ordinary course of United States mail by the succeeding fifteenth day of February.~~ (20-1.4).

REG. 59-12 SECRETARY. The duties of the Secretary shall be as follows. (44-7 (Art. 6)). ...

1. ...

2. ...

...

19. He shall report to the Grand Secretary within five days after each stated communication transactions if any, at such stated communication under each of the following subjects, giving the full name of each: (75-10; ~~Official Form 49~~).

A. ...

B. ...

Amendment Group 3

The following amendments have been submitted by the Grand Master and Board of General Purposes.

This amendment modernizes the work of the Board of Publications and the Committee on Masonic Public Relations to reflect current and best practices.

REG. 34-20 BOARD OF PUBLICATIONS BOARD OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS. The Board of Publications Marketing and Communications shall consist of five members. One member of this committee shall be nominated each year by the Grand Master for confirmation by the Board of General Purposes to serve a five-year term. A vacancy shall be filled by nomination of the Grand Master and confirmation by the Board of General Purposes for the unexpired term. It shall be the duty of this Board to establish the policies for the publication of Masonic news and information through various media, including print and electronic, and to encourage and promote the use of technology for communicating the message of Masonry amongst the lodges, ~~and by the Grand Lodge, and for the general public, to increase awareness of Freemasonry in this Grand Jurisdiction.~~ The Board shall select the editor and have editorial supervision of the North Carolina Mason and all similar news and informational publications, in all forms and formats. (27-1.1.C).

REG. 34-22 MASONIC PUBLIC RELATIONS. The Committee on Masonic Public Relations shall consist of five members. One member of this committee shall be appointed each year by the Grand Master to serve for five years. A vacancy shall be filled by appointment of the Grand Master for the unexpired term. This committee shall develop and implement programs designed to increase public awareness of Freemasonry in this Grand Jurisdiction and through appropriate methods to make the public aware of the good effects and purposes of the Masonic Fraternity. (27-1.3.P).

Amendment Group 4

Submitted by Stokesdale Lodge 428, Salem Lodge 289, and Oak Grove Lodge 750

This amendment clarifies that Freemasonry brings together men of different races, colors, creeds, and opinions to unite in the objectives of our Craft as defined in our Preamble.

Preamble

III 9. It believes that the attainment of these objectives is best accomplished by laying a broad basis of principle upon which men of various races, colors, creeds, and opinions may unite.

(This regulation amended, effective upon adoption)

Amendment Group 5

The following amendment has been submitted by the Committee on Finance.

This amendment reapportions the amount of the initiation fee to be applied to the General Fund to better account for the true costs of processing a petition for membership, and in light of the previous adoption of a budgeted per capita donation given to the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. The total amount of the fee remains unchanged.

REG. 20-1 ESTABLISHED. Each lodge, including lodges under dispensation, shall pay annually to the Grand Secretary, for the use of the Grand Lodge, the sums hereinafter specified.

...

2. The sum of twenty-one dollars (\$21.00) for each Entered Apprentice initiated by or for the lodge, whether initiated therein or by another lodge for it as a courtesy, ten dollars (~~\$10.00~~) of which is for charity, ~~five dollars (\$5.00)~~ of which shall represent a contribution to The George Washington Masonic National Memorial; one dollar (\$1.00) to the Grand Lodge Building Endowment and ~~one ten dollars~~ (\$10.00) is an initiation fee to be applied to the general fund. [5- 1.4; 5-1.7; 5-5; 20-1].

...

Amendment Group 6

The following amendment has been submitted by the Committee on Finance.

This amendment raises the per capita from \$25 to \$35 to manage the significant rise in inflation since 2019 (approx. 20.2 percent), the reduction in total membership, and growth in the number of 50-year members not paying per capita.

REG. 20-1 ESTABLISHED. Each lodge, including lodges under dispensation, shall pay annually to the Grand Secretary, for the use of the Grand Lodge, the sums hereinafter specified.

1. The sum of ~~twenty-five~~ thirty-five dollars and for each member of the lodge at low twelve on December thirty-first. A lodge shall be exempt from the payment of the annual assessment to the Grand Lodge for any member who has received ~~either the Fifty-Year or Sixty-Year~~ Service Award and any member of a lodge whose dues have been remitted under Reg. 77- 14.2. (5-1.1; 20-1; 81-1; 81-7). (This regulation amended effective January 1, 2020.)

(This regulation amended, effective upon adoption)

Respectfully submitted,
Matthew C. Robbins, Chairman

Report of the Representative to the Masonic Service Association

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

The Masonic Service Association of North America (MSA) was formed in 1919 with the initial purpose of providing aid and assistance to American servicemen returning from duty during World War I. Initially the War Department refused work with multiple grand lodges but did agree to work with a single agency, which resulted in the formation of the MSA.

Today the MSA performs three major functions at a national level:

1. Education and Information
2. Disaster Relief
3. Hospital Visitation

Education and Information

Perhaps the MSA is best known for publishing the *Short Talk Bulletin*, the most widely distributed Masonic publication in the world. The *Short Talk Bulletin* has been in print since 1923. The MSA and its Masonic Information Center also publish a variety of other pamphlets, digests, and brochures that provide information to the general public about our great fraternity. These publications have reached over 3 million individuals over the past 20 years.

The Masonic Home for Children School of Graphic Arts now prints and distributes the MSA's *Short Talk Bulletin* and *Emessay Notes*.

Disaster Relief

Since 1923, the MSA has collected and distributed over \$10.5 million in assistance to multiple Grand Jurisdictions following natural catastrophes.

Immediately following a natural catastrophe, an appeal for assistance from a Grand Jurisdiction to the MSA triggers their disaster relief protocol. The MSA coordinates communication of the appeal to all U.S. and Canadian Grand Lodges who then collect funds from individuals, subordinate lodges, and appendant Masonic bodies. The MSA then distributes 100% of the monies collected to the affected Grand Jurisdiction. No charges are made for administrative costs that are incurred by the MSA for coordinating these relief efforts.

In the last 24 years, North Carolina has been the recipient of over \$340,000 in assistance from MSA disaster relief efforts.

Hospital Visitation

The Masonic Hospital Visitation Program has been the foundation service of the MSA from its very beginning, and it continues to be a primary focus. With approximately 180 Hospital Representatives and State Coordinators, as well as hundreds of other volunteers at nearly every Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center and many state veterans' hospitals, this is without a doubt the

finest public relations program ever undertaken by the Masonic Fraternity.

The MSA's network of volunteers contribute untold hours of volunteer assistance to our veterans across the nation every year. Assistance extends beyond mere "visitations" and includes reading to them, writing letters for them, personal errands, taking them to Chapel Services, or to other parts of the hospital where testing or treatment is to be provided. In short, the role of MSA volunteers is humanitarian in nature. Many veterans have no family or friends and are all alone. The Masonic Hospital Visitation program provides a personal touch to help spark a smile or a ray of hope in a segment of the population that is, all too often, forgotten.

If you find yourself interested in volunteering or working as an MSA Representative, we would love to hear from you. If you are unable to contribute your time, then please consider contributing financially to the MSA's Green Envelope Appeal (<http://www.msana.com/hvpgreenenv.asp>).

Respectfully Submitted,
Steve M. Norris, JGW
MSANA Representative

Report of the Representative to the George Washington Masonic National Memorial Association

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

I am pleased to serve this year as your Representative to the George Washington Masonic National Memorial Association. This is a wonderful time to plan your visit to the Memorial. The Memorial celebrated its cornerstone centennial in 2023. One-hour tours are being conducted on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Additionally, if you visit the GWMemorial.org website, you can take a virtual tour of this historic edifice and explore the other educational offerings of this significant site.

The George Washington Masonic National Memorial is located in Alexandria, Virginia, outside of Washington, DC. It is dedicated to the memory of George Washington, the first President of the United States, and a Mason.

At the urging of the lodge, Joseph W. Eggleston, the Grand Master of Virginia, invited every Grand Master in the United States to assemble in Alexandria-Washington Lodge on February 22, 1910. Their purpose was to form an Association that would plan and build a suitable Memorial Temple to George Washington, the Mason.

Representatives from twenty-six Grand Lodges gathered on that day to endorse the erection of the Memorial, and the George Washington Masonic National Memorial Association was formed. Ten years after the first official meeting of the Association, the concept of a colossal building as a Memorial lighthouse to Washington was approved by the Grand Lodges of the United States. The Memorial Association was determined not to borrow money for this undertaking. Construction only proceeded as money was collected for each stage of the project.

The groundbreaking ceremony took place on June 5, 1922. On November 1, 1923, the Memorial's cornerstone was dedicated, with President Calvin Coolidge and Chief Justice William H. Taft, among others, performing the Masonic ceremony before a crowd of thousands of Freemasons from around the nation. On May 12, 1932, the bicentennial year of George Washington's birth, the dedication of the Memorial took place with President

Herbert Hoover participating.

After World War II, work on the Memorial's interior began in earnest. By 1970, the George Washington Masonic National Memorial was complete. In 1999, the large Square and Compasses emblem was added to the front lawn; a visible sign to the Masonic nature of the Memorial.

In 2015, this Memorial was added to the United States government's official list of National Historic Landmarks and National Register of Historic Places. This is an exclusive status, reserved only for buildings and sites that possess extraordinary significance to our nation's history.

A repository of many artifacts and the history of American Freemasons, the Memorial remains a lasting monument to George Washington, the Man, the Mason, and Father of our Country.

At its 233rd Annual Communication, the Grand Lodge of North Carolina voted to join the George Washington Masonic National Memorial Association's \$1 per member program to support the upkeep and preservation of this important historic structure. The George Washington Masonic National Memorial Association, Inc. is a non-profit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and all contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent permitted by law.

I urge each Mason to travel and visit this lasting monument to Masonry in general and George Washington in particular.

Cordially and fraternally,
Robert "Bobby" Rideout, SGW, Representative

Report of the Board of Publications

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

The Board of Publications members are Brothers Alvin Billings, Chairman; Michael Register; Tony Rathbone; Thomas Pope, Jr.; and Matthew Robbins. Brother Robbins was appointed to the Board by Grand Master Frazier and elected per the Code by the BGP. Brother Robbins accepted the position of interim editor, until the position can be filled permanently.

Brother Robbins will coordinate the story lines, layout, production, and mailing in coordination with the School of Graphic Arts (Print Shop) in Oxford. Features are to include stories of importance to the Craft and Grand Lodge news and schedules, as well as stories from MHCO, Whitestone/MESH, and the NC Masonic Foundation. The Board created realistic deadlines and will build story banks. The Board will review and approve the content of the NC Mason per the Code Reg.34-20.

Our Board meetings in 2023 consisted in reviewing the 2023 budget and actual cost of printing and mailing the Mason. Several expenses were reviewed. In meeting with the Print Shop, we were able to achieve an 8% reduction in production and handling costs. USPS Postage cost were increased in July 2023. The circulation of the NC Mason was reviewed, and we found that more copies have been being printed than needed. The Print Shop will print only from the GL mailing list from now on. The printer produces several copies at no cost in order to set up the machine for each printing. Going forward, we will utilize those copies to fill any omissions on the mailing list, as well as for

complimentary copies. Any returns mailings will be reviewed with the Grand Lodge.

Brother George Marut, Chief Development Officer of the NC Masonic Foundation, will pursue selling ad space for appropriate ads that conform to the tenets of our Craft. We are consulting on the legal aspect of this venture and will act accordingly. The Board has the right of refusal for any advertisement. This magazine will not be a vehicle for self-promotion, discounts, or favors. The goal is to offset the costs associated with the production of the magazine. Going forward into 2024, the Grand Lodge will make available to the Brethren on Grand View, the option to receive the NC Mason either mailed or electronically. Our expectation is that 20% of the Brethren will opt for the digital copy. The NC Mason will be managed to stay at or below the approved budget and will be analyzed on a regular basis. It's a business.

Thank you to our Grand Secretary, Jonathan Underwood, as well as John Burns and George Marut of the NCMF for their support and expertise. Your Board of Publications is dedicated to serving the Brethren of North Carolina with an exceptional magazine that highlights stories of NC Masonry for Masons and Non-Masons alike. We hope you will find the magazine informative, entertaining, and a resource for our Craft. We have a lot of pride in our product.

Respectfully submitted,
Alvin Billings, Chairman
Michael Register
Anthony Rathbone
Thomas Pope Jr.
Matthew Robbins

Report of the North Carolina Masonic Foundation, Inc

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

It is a pleasure to report to you that 2022 was a successful, rewarding year for the charities served by the North Carolina Masonic Foundation. The North Carolina Masonic Foundation distributed over \$654,861 to WhiteStone and MHCO in 2022, and in 2023 the Foundation will be distributing a total of \$665,307, which is a total of \$332,653 to each charity.

The Foundation successfully exceeded the capital campaign goal to enlarge WhiteStone's campus and has also successfully surpassed the Masonic Home for Children 150th goal set forth earlier this year. The Foundation, in working with key donors, showcased the Masonic Home for Children on the Xfinity NASCAR series at a race in Charlotte, both raising major gifts for the Home and raising awareness state and nationwide. The Foundation established strong new financial partnerships with our lodges, piloting the Lodge Charity Account program helping lodges in their fundraising efforts and creating new and innovative ways to secure funding both internally and externally.

The rising interest rate environment in 2023 has proven difficult so far, but once again the fund has performed well on a relative basis. As of June

30th, our Equity Fund had risen 11.1 percent, while the Income Fund was up by 2.6 percent.

In 2022 the North Carolina Masonic Foundation expanded its board from 5 members to 7. In 2023 the Foundation welcomed Grand Line Officer Gilbert Bailey to the Board and welcomed back Past Grand Master Dan Rice back to another term on the board.

The NCMF staff logged a lot of miles on the road this year and last, making 430 in-person donor visits, 256 visits to lodges and appendant bodies, and attending 37 special Masonic events.

In the spirit of Brotherly Love that unites us as members of the Masonic fraternity, let us come together once more to embrace the noble virtue of charity. Today, we stand at the threshold of an opportunity to make a profound difference in the lives of those in need within our beloved communities. The North Carolina Masonic Foundation beckons us to join hands and hearts in support of its noble mission.

Brotherly Love is the cornerstone upon which our fraternity is built, reminding us that our shared bond extends beyond the walls of our lodges and into the hearts of all mankind. As Masons, we are called to act upon this sacred principle, to lend a helping hand to those who seek solace, compassion, and hope. Our obligation as Freemasons is not just a pledge within our ceremonies but a commitment to embody the teachings of our craft through our actions.

When we give to the North Carolina Masonic Foundation, we honor the legacy of those who came before us, the venerable brothers who paved the path of benevolence and philanthropy. We continue their noble work, carrying forward the torch of compassion and service. Together, we stand as a force for good, striving to alleviate suffering, spread joy, and bring light to those traversing dark paths.

As Masons, we understand that our duty extends beyond the realms of self-interest. We are called to be agents of positive change, champions of hope, and builders of a better world. Through the North Carolina Masonic Foundation, we have a platform to sow the seeds of transformation, creating a profound impact on countless lives.

Let us remember that our giving is not just a material exchange but a profound act of solidarity and love. It is an expression of our belief in the power of unity and collective action. The North Carolina Masonic Foundation allows us to pool our resources, magnifying the impact of our generosity manifold.

Today, I urge each of you to embrace the spirit of giving and let it ignite the flame of compassion within your hearts. Whether it is a humble contribution or a grand gesture, every act of giving, when driven by Brotherly Love, becomes a testament to the profound principles that define our brotherhood.

Together, we have the power to weave a tapestry of hope, love, and kindness across the landscape of our great state. Let us, as Masons, embrace this opportunity to be catalysts for change, envoys of compassion, and messengers of hope.

As we walk hand in hand on this journey of charity, let us remember the words of our ancient ritual: "By these, and all the Masonic virtues, we are distinguished from the rest of the world."

May our giving be a testament to our distinguished Masonic virtues and may the North Carolina Masonic Foundation be the conduit through which our love and care reach far and wide.

www.mfnc.org

Respectfully submitted,
North Carolina Masonic Foundation

Report of the Committee on Masonic Education

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

This year has been an exciting one for the Committee on Masonic Education. Many lodges around the state have had a large influx of members in the post-quarantine world, and it is clear that our new brothers are hungry for Masonic Education. We have seen a substantial number of newly raised brothers attend the Middle Chamber, Davie Academy, and even Wilkerson College. I believe that these programs are serving to engage new members while also helping them to grow as men and Masons.

To that point, we are looking at different ways to help educate these brothers while also serving our more seasoned members. A new Davie Academy class is in the building stage, tentatively titled *Mastering a Lodge: The Fundamentals of Effective, Efficient and Engaging Lodge Leadership*. This course will be aimed at incoming Masters who may not have had the opportunity to spend years in other officer positions in the lodge, and we hope to offer it toward the end of this year.

Additionally, we are partnering with the Board of Custodians to create some helpful tips for coaches who might be looking for ways to better engage the candidates that they work with. This is not intended to be a set of guidelines or rules for coaches, but rather we hope to provide prompts and questions that coaches can use to discuss the degrees as they coach their candidates through them. More will be revealed soon about this guide as we move past the planning stages, so stay tuned.

While I believe that our Grand Lodge programs have been effective in educating brothers who have been able to attend them, the width of our state means that many brothers are unable to travel to the locations where they are offered. However, we are seeing lodges and districts around the state have great success with local reading and discussion groups. These groups are informal in nature and are completely self-guided, which has allowed them to better serve the locales in which they have been created. As a Grand Lodge committee, we want to support any brothers who have a desire to create one of these groups, and so we have developed a concise guide on how to start a reading or discussion group in your lodge or district which we hope to deploy over the coming months.

I would like to share my appreciation for the members of our Grand Jurisdiction who give their time, effort, and interest to creating, maintaining, and attending the excellent educational programs we offer. Participation in these programs has made North Carolina one of the leaders of Masonic Education in the United States, and I believe that we are seeing firsthand the effects that education can have on brothers who embrace it.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have served as Chairman this year, and I'm excited to see what comes next for Masonic Education in North Carolina.

Respectfully submitted,
Noah Goode, Chairman

Report of the Board of Custodians

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

The members who served on the Board of Custodians during the year 2023 were: Kevan D. Frazier, Grand Master; Thomas P. Dolinger, II, Grand Lecturer; Earl Wells, Chairman; Stephen McCraw, Secretary; Matthew Cockman; Christopher L. Wright; Ludwik J. Wodka; and Philip C. Lee. MW Dwight M. Sigmon, Past Grand Master, served as liaison with the Board of General Purposes.

The Board of Custodians met regularly during the year, with meetings held on January 13th, April 14th, July 14th, and September 28th, 2023.

Certified brethren qualifying for the Laudamus Certificate in 2023 are: Thomas Gary Brooks, Jr., Cleveland 202; Roland Harper Grant, Jr., Richard Caswell 705; Dale Allen Krueger, Cherry Point 688; William Royce Peeler, State Line 375; William Kim Styers, Roman Eagle 550; Ludwik Jan Wodka, Cary 198; and Gilbert DeVerne Bailey, Charles M. Setzer 693.

District Deputy Grand Lecturers qualifying for the Past District Deputy Grand Lecturer Certificate in 2023 are: Douglas Heath Brickhouse, Sr., District 1; Kenneth R. Forbis, Jr., District 4; Roy Carlton West, District 27; Robert Alexander Burgess, Jr., District 28; Parker Colson Dunlap, District 29; Edward Joseph Steel, District 32; and Patrick Gerard Howard, District 41.

District Deputy Grand Lecturers qualifying for the Past District Deputy Grand Lecturer Certificate in 2022 after the final 2022 Annual Report was submitted and having served extended years or less than three consecutive years were: Homer Thomas Dearmin, District 25

Certified Lecturer, Lane Alan Love of Stokes Lodge No. 32 received his 50th year Certified Lecturer award in 2023. Brother Love became the 30th certified brother to achieve this milestone since the certification program began in 1941. He shares this milestone with his Father, Billy Fetzner Love.

The 2023 Certified Lecturer examinations were held according to the following schedule: August 12th: Greenville and Greensboro; August 19th: Wilmington and Charlotte; August 26th: Fayetteville and Asheville. The examinations continue to be offered on Saturday to be more accommodating to our certified brethren who have work conflicts. The Board expresses its sincere appreciation to the brethren at the six locations who donated the use of their facilities for the examinations.

At the end of the 2022 examinations the number of certified brethren was 306. This consisted of 277 Class "A" Certified Lecturers and 29 Class "B" Certified Instructors. Since annual exams we have lost 6 brothers to death bringing our total number down to 300. Fifty-six brethren were required for re-examination in 2023 not including the four brethren that received one-

year extensions in 2022. We've also received five applications for new certified brothers and two applications for upgrading a B certificate to an A certificate. The final 2023 results will be available after the last exams are held on August 26th.

It is my sad duty to announce the passing of the following certified brethren since our last annual report: Kyle Lee Allen, Cherry Point 688, 47 years; Warren Earl Dover, Waxhaw 562, 19 years; Jimmy Martin Hunt, Jr., Ashlar 765, 6 years; MWB Dalton Wayne Mayo, Hiram 98, 52 years; Michael Charles Meadows, Hominy 491, 33 years; Philip Ray Mercer, Richlands 564, 24 years; Kenneth Mirron Mullis, Charles M. Setzer 693, 45 years; Stewart Wayne Pittman, Charles B. Newcomb 740, 30 years; Michael Furry Powell, LaFayette 83, 29 years; Charles Thomas Wheeler, III, Elkin 454, 30 years.

The booklet "Important Information Concerning the Certified Lecturers" is posted on the Grand Lodge website and is available to anyone with access to the Internet.

A webpage sponsored by the Board of Custodians is also now being maintained on a regular basis. This page includes information of interest concerning their history, latest corrections to the OSW and Bahnson Manual, rules governing the Lecture Service and OSW/Vocabulary, various application forms, and a current roster of those certified.

In 2023 the (5) five-hour mandatory Lecture Service or Modified Ritual Instruction Program (MRIP) was continued for all lodges throughout the state. As a reminder, the Lecture Service rules were updated in 2022 to formally indicate the continuation of this mandatory five-hour service until otherwise notified.

To continue a practice reestablished in 2011, the Board again unanimously recommended that the Lodge System of Masonic Education program be recommended for use by all lodges and that they fully participate in this program to properly instruct their candidates as they begin and journey through their Masonic degrees.

The fraternity has had 141 Coaches apply for and complete The Coaches Proficiency Exam. Once passed, the Coach receives a certificate and card. This being a one-time exam there is no expiration date on the card. To pass the exam, the coach must recite both the questions and answers to the catechisms of the three degrees and have a general knowledge of certain Masonic terms and symbols.

The Board of Custodians expresses its appreciation to Grand Master Kevan D. Frazier for his support of the Board of Custodians and the Certified Lecturer program, and to Grand Secretary, Jonathan A. Underwood; Assistant Grand Secretary, Matthew Robbins; and the Grand Lodge staff: Hayley, Vicki, and Eric, for their valuable assistance during the year.

The Board also expresses its appreciation to Grand Lecturer Thomas P. Dolinger, II, for his efforts as the new Grand Lecturer for 2023, and his dedication to this Board for the last 10 years. You have been a brother, friend, mentor, and fervent leader of our Craft.

The Board continues to look at how to best preserve our time-honored traditions, while also looking forward for ways to inspire and serve our brethren and fraternity today. This task would not be possible without the vigorous support of the certified brethren throughout the state. We extend a sincere

“thank you” for your continued and faithful service to our beloved fraternity, and to the Certified Lecturer Program. Lastly, to our District Deputy Grand Lecturers, thank you for all the hours of instruction given, all the miles driven, and your tireless contributions to your lodges, your districts, and this Grand Jurisdiction.

Respectfully Submitted,

Earl Wells, Chairman
Stephen McCraw, Secretary

Report of the Committee on Subordinate Lodge Special Activities

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

The Commission on Subordinate Lodge Special Activities presents this report in supporting lodge fundraising efforts. The following report reflects fundraising numbers for events held in 2023, with past due final reports in 2023, including events from 2021 & 2022:

Vital Statistics for 2023

Number of Active Lodges in NC	373		
Lodges Participating in Fundraisers	135	36%	
Applications Received:	163		
Final Reports Received:	62	38%	
Total Applications & Final Reports Processed:	225		
Final Reports Past Due:	26		<u>Avg / Fundraiser</u>
Total Gross Receipts:	\$ 368,356.28		\$ 5,941.23
Total Expenses:	\$ 101,705.34	28%	\$ 1,640.41
Net Proceeds:	\$ 266,650.94		\$ 4,300.82

Net Proceeds by Fundraiser Category

<u>Category</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>ROI</u>	<u>Avg / Category</u>
Gun Raffles	8	\$ 29,695.03	71%	\$ 3,711.88
General Raffles	7	\$ 16,340.95	93%	\$ 2,334.42
Golf Tournaments	7	\$ 60,366.77	74%	\$ 8,623.82
BBQ	12	\$ 24,131.53	64%	\$ 2,010.96
Breakfasts	3	\$ 9,835.15	54%	\$ 3,278.38
Dinners	8	\$ 43,994.20	61%	\$ 5,499.28
Food Sales - Other	5	\$ 10,312.44	65%	\$ 2,062.49
Merchandise Sales	2	\$ 1,603.00	100%	\$ 801.50
<u>Other</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>\$ 70,371.87</u>	<u>87%</u>	<u>\$ 4,398.24</u>
Total	68	\$ 266,650.94	38%	

Net Proceeds by Charity Category

<u>Charity</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Avg / Category</u>
MHCO	43	\$ 124,741.42	\$ 2,900.93
MESH, LLC	19	\$ 33,840.22	\$ 1,781.06
WhiteStone	9	\$ 11,626.35	\$ 1,291.82
NCMF	20	\$ 43,191.73	\$ 2,159.59
Other Charities			
Chosen by Lodges	13	\$ 51,583.57	\$ 3,967.97
Lodge Building Funds	0	\$ --	\$ --
<u>10% Retained Raffle Proceeds</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>\$ 1,267.65</u>	<u>\$ 633.83</u>
Total	104	\$ 266,650.94	

Summary for 2023

Total Gross Receipts:	\$ 368,356.28
Total Expenses:	\$ 101,705.34
Net Proceeds:	\$ 266,650.94

Total Funds to Charity for 2023: \$ 264,983.29

Total Funds to Lodge Building Funds for 2023: \$ --

All lodges are reminded that final reports of fundraising activities are due to the Commission on or before 45 days after the fundraising event; all 2023 final reports must be submitted to the Commission by December 31, 2023.

The twenty-six (26) lodges with past-due final reports thus far for 2023 follow:

District	Lodge	Description	Event Date	Final Report
				Due Date
4	733	Chicken BBQ	5/27/2023	7/11/2023
7	3	BBQ	5/20/2023	7/4/2023
7	359	Merchandise Sale	5/7/2023	6/21/2023
12	1	Charity Breakfast	5/13/2023	6/27/2023
12	319	Barbeque	2/18/2023	4/4/2023
13	412	BBQ	5/19/2023	7/3/2023
14	500	PigJig	5/19/2023	7/3/2023
14	565	BBQ	4/29/2023	6/13/2023
15	231	BBQ	3/31/2023	5/15/2023
15	258	Golf Tournament	5/1/2023	6/15/2023
19	772	Merchandise Sale	4/15/2023	5/30/2023
21	550	General Raffle	4/21/2023	6/5/2023
21	654	BBQ	3/31/2023	5/15/2023
22	11	Gun Raffle	2/9/2023	3/26/2023

26	289	BBQ	4/14/2023	5/29/2023
26	722	All you can eat pancake & sausage dinner	3/18/2023	5/2/2023
31	205	Fish Fry	4/2/2023	5/17/2023
32	737	Charity Breakfast	2/25/2023	4/11/2023
32	764	Raffle	5/27/2023	7/11/2023
33	483	Golf Tournament	5/6/2023	6/20/2023
38	381	Food Sales	5/13/2023	6/27/2023
38	387	Food Sales	5/13/2023	6/27/2023
38	460	Food Sales	5/13/2023	6/27/2023
38	482	Masonic Bluegrass Met & Jam	5/13/2023	6/27/2023
38	535	Masonic Bluegrass Met & Jam	5/13/2023	6/27/2023
39	561	General Raffle	5/4/2023	6/18/2023

The seven (7) lodges with still past-due final reports for 2021 & 2022 follow:

District	Lodge	Description	Event Date	Final Report
				Due Date
21	532	Chicken stew	11/13/2022	12/28/2022
23	271	Pork butt sale	11/13/2022	12/28/2022
29	749	Gift Card Raffle	11/14/2022	12/29/2022
34	401	Gun Raffle	11/14/2022	12/29/2022
36	713	Chili cookoff	11/13/2022	12/28/2022
41	439	Poor Man's dinner	10/15/2022	11/29/2022
41	439	Fish dinner	3/20/2021	5/4/2021

Respectfully submitted,
Carl Smith, Chairman

Report of the Library Committee

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

In 2023, the Grand Lodge Library continued its journey towards growth, innovation and accessibility. The library continues to embrace digitization to streamline access to the collection.

The Grand Lodge has a complete set of Transactions of the Quatur Coronati Lodge the AQC), the premier English Lodge of Research, including the very first issue. They go back to 1886. These have been scanned online by the lodge and can all be accessed by following this link: <<https://www.quatuorcoronati.com/research/research-resources/>>. Much like the North Carolina Lodge of Research, the AQC contains research papers, extracts and reprints of manuscripts, photos, and deeper dives into every aspect of Masonry

from the historical to the esoteric.

In the coming months, the 4,000 volume collection of the Grand Lodge Library will be cross referenced to known online databases of historic books to create a portal of books in the library accessible online and accessible outside of the library. Then, books not digitized will be scanned over time in order to complete the collection. This long-term goal is ambitious, but the committee believes making these volumes accessible to the Craft will allow those who seek further light — particularly regarding North Carolina Masonry — access to that information.

The Library continues to partner with DigitalNC, the state library's online armature, for some of our digitization needs. Many of our historic minutes, photographs, and booklets have found a place online through this partnership. Access to these collections can be found in your Grand View Portal under Resources > Master Mason > Masonic History and Research. This section in your portal will continue to grow as more items are brought online. Stay tuned!

Respectfully Submitted,
Matthew C. Robbins, Chairman

Report of the Grand Lodge Committee on Personnel

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

The Grand Lodge Committee on Personnel continued to work under Reg. 34-23 of the Code, as it was approved by this Grand Lodge in 2017. The Committee was established to ensure compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, to implement and conduct annual employee performance reviews, and to make annual salary and benefit recommendations to the Grand Lodge Committee on Finance.

In 2023, the Personnel Committee met on six occasions following the established protocols with regard to its duties and obligations. This meeting frequency represents 100% increase from the committee's activities in 2022. Specifically, the Committee sought to address the need to develop a work analysis for the Grand Lodge office support staff, in order to provide the Grand Secretary and the Grand Master the proper framework to create metrics and measures of performance. We anticipate that this work will be completed in 2024 and will be useful in advising the Grand Master, Grand Secretary, and Finance Committee.

The Committee additionally held discussions with the Grand Secretary and other support staff to assess their employment needs, current workload, anticipated future workload, and to understand each employee's working relationship with other employees and with the Grand Secretary.

The Committee met with the Grand Secretary to share the Committee's evaluation of him and of the office staff, as well as to discuss his goals and objectives for the coming year. The Committee's recommendations for compensation adjustments were provided to the Grand Lodge Committee on Finance and are included as part of the 2024 budget.

The Grand Lodge is currently in a transition period, with the onboarding of Grand View, as well as developing roles for our current staff. It is more critical than ever that we recruit, manage, and maintain the best and the brightest

employees. The Grand Lodge continues to align its personnel consistent with the Grand Master's desire to develop a meaningful outward presence, while providing superior service to the subordinate lodges.

The Committee thanks Grand Secretary Jonathan Underwood, and the Grand Lodge staff for their outstanding work and dedication to our Fraternity.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Rideout, SGW, Chairman
Steve Norris, JGW
Shaun Bradshaw, PGM
Gene Cobb, PGM
Tim Merritt, PM

Report of the Scholarship Committee

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

The Grand Lodge Scholarship Committee went to work to review this year's Charles Edward Cathey Masonic Scholarship applications. The committee divided up the applications and carefully reviewed each one. Well over one hundred applications were received. The scholarship winners all demonstrated strong academic performance balanced with extensive volunteer service and extracurricular activities within their communities. We are most excited to have been able to award 15 scholarships valued at \$1,000 each. We hope that, through the generosity of the brethren, additional scholarships can be awarded each year.

Respectfully submitted,
Grand Lodge Scholarship Committee
Joseph B. Walls, Chairman

Report of the Committee on Necrology

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina:

While we pause to reflect upon the number of reported deaths each year, we recognize that many of our brothers did not receive Masonic Rites for one reason or another. The Grand Lodge of North Carolina takes the time each year to remember them all. Since our last Annual Communication, 787 brothers have traveled to that undiscovered country from whose borne no traveler returns.

We celebrate their lives and contributions to the Craft through faithful years of service and continue encouraging Masonic Rites' observance when families across the state request. While we encourage these services to be done from memory, we discourage denying a brother these rites if the only solution is that they are read. If they are read, make sure it is done with the dignity and honor it deserves.

Since our last Annual Communication, there has been an increase in combined Blue Lodge, Scottish Rite, and Military Memorial Services. We always encourage it to be done with full agreement and support of religious, fraternal, military, and family involvement. For more information, please

contact the Committee on Necrology for further information.

We cannot emphasize strongly enough the importance of every brother who desires Masonic Rites to inform their family and their lodge of their desires before it is too late.

We light candles, place roses, give eulogies, and remember the lives of friends, brothers, coaches, leaders, and men who have made our lives better. We continue to remember their families, especially their widows and children.

As the working tools of life have fallen from their hands, eternal peace for them and comfort for their families is our constant prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
A. Gene Cobb, Jr., PGM
Committee Chairman

Final Report
of
Grand Master
Larry B. Thompson, Jr.
to
the
Grand Lodge
of
Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons
of
North Carolina
at
Winston-Salem, North Carolina
September 29, 2023

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina, Grand Lodge Officers, Past Grand Masters, Past Grand Officers, Officers of Constituent Lodges, Voting Delegates to the Annual Communication and Brethren all:

Regulation 13-2.5 requires a Grand Master “present a written report on the first day of the annual communication of the Grand Lodge setting forth all of his acts of Grand Master and the general condition of Masonry within this jurisdiction and recommending such legislation and such action as he may deem necessary.” In compliance with the CODE, I present this Final Report setting forth my actions as your Grand Master during 2022, as well as my assessment of the Craft, and the general condition of Freemasonry in North Carolina.

2022 Initiatives

During his tenure, M.W. Grand Master David R. Wicker, Jr, focused on rekindling an interest in Freemasonry through marketing our Fraternity. He reminded us that we must understand that everything we do and say, even what we fail to do or say, is marketing. Grand Master Wicker concentrated on three (3) areas: community involvement, lodge stability, and reestablishing fraternalism.

I felt compelled to continue on this path, with a twist, as we reemerged from a global pandemic and encountered members who had become indifferent and had gotten out of the habit of attending lodge meetings. We still had members who were truly concerned about potential exposure and who, for this reason, chose to limit their activities.

I was truly amazed at the number of brothers who worked tirelessly to ensure that our communities, and our lodges, maintained some semblance of order in the face of ongoing challenges. To those men, we shall be forever grateful for their service.

When I took office, we were beginning to see a new horizon in a world that was not quite post-Covid but one that was getting ever closer. I challenged our membership to decide what this world would look like — it was up to us to decide what Freemasonry would be.

Knowing that this would not happen without focused efforts, I challenged our membership to help revitalize our lodges and gain a renewed sense of purpose and relevancy in 2022. A list of action items was generated that have been proven in the past to generate positive results, and it was my desire to see our lodges implement a planned approach to reengaging the Craft, creating a quality lodge experience, and enjoying the growth that they deserve. A Masonic “Revival” if you will.

Personal Contact

Our lodges were challenged to reach out to every member and perform a wellness check. They were also challenged to ask each brother to attend at least four (4) lodge meetings in the coming year with the hope that our attendance rates would increase and that those who attended would remain

engaged.

This challenge extended further with a request that all of our Masonic widows be contacted and continue to be contacted on at least a quarterly basis. We missed opportunities during the pandemic, and this was unacceptable.

Creating a Quality Experience

We should give our members a sense of purpose and a reason to be excited about our lodge activities. To that end, every meeting should have a short program of interest for the brethren. We have a lot of resources available on the NC Grand Lodge website (including the Speakers Bureau). Another great resource is the “Short Talk Bulletin” published by the MSNA (<https://shorttalkbulletin.com/>).

When it comes to our degree work, we must remember that our focus should always be on the candidate. The work that we deliver makes a lasting impression upon the candidate – good or bad. Consider altering the lighting (candlelight degrees are impressive), adding appropriate music, taking our time, and being very deliberate in our work.

Our lodge buildings make an impression as well. The first impression of our fraternity for many is the appearance of a lodge building. I encouraged every lodge to consider implementing a lodge improvement project in 2022 that focuses on the outer appearance of their building (painting, landscaping, shutters, front portico, front doors, etc.). This is a requirement for the new Grand Master Lodge of Excellence level of the Lion & Pillar award, and an interior lodge improvement project qualified as well. From experience, a lodge improvement project has the potential to create excitement among the brothers, and when they get excited, they tell others about the new activity which can create interest in potential members.

Quality should be our focus whether it be in Masonic education, degree work, our buildings, or the meals that we serve. Our brethren desire a quality experience, and we should be delivering on every level to maintain interest and a sense of value.

Membership Selection

Creating a quality lodge experience and enthusiasm amongst the brothers generates interest and, ultimately, petitions for the degrees. It goes without saying that these men need to be thoroughly vetted. Approximately 5% of our background investigations come back with “red flags.” These are individuals that we did not take the time to get to know before handing them a petition.

You have heard it said many times before: we should not be concerned about membership numbers. Be more concerned about the quality of men that we are allowing through the West Gate, and we will have the brothers needed to support our mission. We have endured the test of time and will continue to do so!

Mentoring our New Members

Early in the year, I was contacted by a new member who was raised a Master Mason in 2020. The questions that he asked made it very apparent that

he did not have a solid mentor through his degrees. He learned the catechisms, but nobody took the time to explain the deeper meanings of the work to him or simple things such as the sequence of knocks at the door during a tyled meeting, why the Master of the lodge is always “covered” during a meeting, what is a “blue lodge,” etc. We need to mentor and engage our new members, or we will lose them. Consider assigning a mentor to a candidate in addition to his coach. A candidate’s coach may not be the best mentor in his Masonic journey. Use the Lodge System of Masonic Education. This program will help with the mentoring process, is extremely easy to implement, and it is available on the Grand Lodge website as a PDF or as a Podcast (17 individual tracts).

Once you have a new member, put him to work! Take the time to find where his interests lie and find a job in the lodge for him. This could be building and grounds, the kitchen crew if you have one, lodge webmaster, newsletter, or learning a part in the degrees. Whatever we do, we must keep our new members engaged.

Community Involvement

Another opportunity to engage our brothers and remain relevant is through community involvement. I continue to encourage our lodges to participate in community events that occur throughout the year. Consider sponsoring a youth sports team, a boy scout troop, a school band, a Red Cross blood drive, a Habitat for Humanity project, Meals on Wheels, etc. These are not only worthwhile endeavors, but it is also key in helping good men find the path to our doors.

Again, these five action items have stood the test of time, and while simple to implement, they have yielded consistent results. I have received positive feedback from quite a few lodge Masters who have benefitted from this five step initiative in 2022.

New Member Packages

At the 2021 Grand Lodge Annual Communication, voting delegates approved a \$20,000.00 line item for new member packages. I am pleased to report that our new member package has been created and is in the production stage. The new member packages will be distributed to all new Master Masons and will contain the following content within presentation folder adorned with a square and compass and Grand Master’s lapel pin:

- Foreword
 - History of Freemasonry in North Carolina
 - The Grand Lodge of North Carolina
 - Masonic Charities
 - The Code
 - Grand Lodge Officers
 - District Officers
 - Subordinate Lodges and Masonic Law
 - Communications of a Lodge
-

- Rights and Privileges of Master Masons
- Masonic Etiquette
- Education for Master Masons
- Appendant Bodies

The North Carolina Mason

For years there have been discussions taking place regarding The North Carolina Mason and the possibility of transitioning to a periodical. The idea did not take flight due to concerns related to publication costs, layout, and perhaps fear of the unknown. I felt strongly about converting to a magazine format. It was a logical step towards reviving our fraternity, and I wanted to deliver a high-quality publication that our brothers would be proud to leave on their coffee tables and in their places of work.

We set to work by assembling a Board of Publications team led by W. Brother Michael Register, Grand Marshal, and assisted by W. Brother C. Alvin Billings, JGS, W. Brother Thomas A. Pope, Jr., W. Brother Anthony J. Rathbone, W. Brother Philip P. Miller, and, of course, Beth Grace. Brother George Marut, Chief Development Officer with the NCMF, also played an integral part in the magazine development, and our team at The Masonic Home for Children are to be commended for their envelope inserting skills and ability to get the publication out the door as quick as possible. Thank you all! We have had so much positive feedback from our membership that it is all a little overwhelming!

Resolution of Unified Public Service

Shortly after taking office, it was brought to my attention that a subordinate lodge had planned a public ceremony in their community where the Grand Master, and other Grand Lodge Officers, of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons North Carolina had not been invited to participate. Since 2008 we have enjoyed mutual recognition and visitation with the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, but we did not have a resolution to jointly participate in public parades, community celebrations, public devotions to deity, and the laying of cornerstones for public buildings. To rectify this situation, the following resolution was created and adopted:

“Since its founding, Freemasonry and Freemasons have striven to promote a never-ending argument for nobler deeds, for higher thoughts, and for greater achievements. As Masons we serve the people and make our world a better place through charitable acts and public service. Freemasons often perform these acts quietly.

Yet, Freemasons strive to inspire and act in unison. Since our earliest days we communally celebrate the betterment of man and honor good works, especially when together we may inspire, and build edifices for the public’s benefit. Since time immemorial we have conducted certain forms and ceremonies to celebrate these constructs and offer thanks to God for his blessings upon us.

In the continuation of brotherly love and friendship we hold so dear between the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina and the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons North Carolina, hereby reaffirm our drive to work together for the public good and improvement of the lives of our citizens, communities, our state, and nation.

Together we reaffirm the great principles of our Masonic fraternity — of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. Our strength and ability to foster progress and improvement in society is based upon our ability to work together.

Therefore, be it Resolved, that the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina and the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons North Carolina agree and look forward to faithfully performing and carrying out all such public ceremonies and functions anciently associated with our institution — including public parades, community celebrations, public devotions to deity, and the laying of cornerstones for public buildings.

Together, we are a great mosaic and beautiful to behold. We are united. We are stronger together.”

Grand Master's Fundraisers

In 2022, we initiated three charity fundraisers that generated a lot of interest, which I am very pleased with. Our first fundraiser evolved from the idea of creating a North Carolina-made dress sock that was designed by one of our children from The Masonic Home for Children at Oxford. Not only were we able to do this, but we were also fortunate enough to find a company (Wrightsock) that was owned by a member of the Craft. The result was a high-quality eco-friendly product made by Masons, for Masons right here in our great state! W. Brother Alvin Billings visited many lodges who placed substantial orders for the socks and presented a program on our children's home while making a sock delivery – thank you W. Brother Alvin!

The second fundraiser was the creation of the “Revival” cigar, a premium cigar crafted exclusively in the Dominican Republic at the PDR factories by Abe Flores, a member of the Elite Pro Cigar (Association of Dominican Cigar Manufacturers). This effort would not have been possible without the help of Brother Larry Payne of the Gold Leaf Cigar Lounge and Brother Fouad Kashouty and his lovely wife, Romy, of Hiram and Solomon Cigars. A release party was held at the Gold Leaf Cigar Lounge on March 12th. Brother Fouad and Romy made the trip to North Carolina and joined 127 brothers and friends for the cigar launch. Holly Hopkins entertained the packed house with jazz and blues selections in between speeches and drawings for free gifts. The sales for this cigar continue to be strong, and we have really enjoyed the excitement that the product has generated. Soon after the release, a 5-person blind tasting of the cigar generated an overall 92 point rating, which was incredible! This was followed by “Cigar Lovers Magazine” awarding the “Revival” cigar its coveted “Boutique Cigar of the Year” award. This award was presented in August 2023, ensuring that the Grand Lodge of North Carolina will be remembered by cigar aficionados for quite some time to come!

On July 22nd we kicked off the “Grand Master's Charity Ride from Murphy to Manteo,” a 2-day motorcycle ride that visited several Shrine clubs

across the state. We had the opportunity to make stops at Junaluskee Lodge No. 145, Land of the Sky Shrine Club, Catawba Shrine Club, Burlington Shrine Club, Rocky Mount Shrine Club, and ending at Manteo Shrine Club where we were treated to a delicious seafood dinner donated by Law Tigers Motorcycle Lawyers. As many as 60 riders, at any given time, were well treated at each stop and we received many requests to consider making this an annual event.

State of the Craft

During the 2022 year, I was able to visit forty-five (45) lodges, installed the officers of ten (10) lodges and presented forty-three (43) service awards (4 – 70yr, 10 – 60yr, 17 – 50yr, and 14 – 25yr). I have had the opportunity to attend the Conference of Grand Masters of North America, held in Milwaukee, WI; the Grand York Rite assembly held in Clemmons, NC; Imperial Shrine which was held in Minneapolis, MN; and traveled to Waco, TX, with our instructors from the Middle Chamber to share that program with our brethren in Texas (thank you to M.W. Brother Shaun Bradshaw, and W. Brothers Ben Wallace and Randy Browning for their continued efforts with this excellent program). On September 10, 2022, we celebrated the close ties between Phoenix Lodge No. 8 and the Fayetteville Independent Light Infantry Company (FILI) with a meeting at Phoenix Lodge No. 8 followed by a Harmony at the FILI armory.

I was also privileged to have had the opportunity attend the World Conference of Grand Masters which was held in Jerusalem, Israel, in May 2023, along with Grand Master Kevan Frazier, and R.W. Brother Jonathan Underwood. Brethren from around the world attended this wonderful meeting and, though we may not have all spoken the same language or shared the same religious beliefs, we all shared the common bond of brotherhood that transcends those cultural differences.

During 2022, we held six (6) traditional District Meetings (Unanimity Lodge No. 7, Wayne Lodge No. 112, Lebanon Lodge No. 391, Waynesville Lodge No. 259, Hibriten Lodge No. 262, and Ocean Lodge No. 405) as well as reintroducing the Table Lodge or “Harmony” to our brethren. We have held five (5) of these special events at this time (Greensboro Masonic Temple, the Speedway Club at the Charlotte Motor Speedway, Wilmington at the Beau Rivage Golf & Resort, Asheville Masonic Temple, and Raleigh at the City of Raleigh Museum.

All meetings were well attended, but I need to share a few observations related to the Table Lodges. The Table Lodges, or “Masonic Harmony,” were open events, and our brethren were able to bring their spouses. Dress for the evenings consisted of black tie or dark suit, the meals were catered, and traditional Masonic toasts were observed. Ticket prices ranged from \$60.00 to \$100.00, based on their respective venue and catering costs, and we were at capacity for every event. This, in my opinion, is significant. Those that attended the Table Lodges were willing to pay for a quality event and really enjoyed the formal setting and structure. Many of those in attendance asked if this is something that they could implement in their home lodge. Given the overwhelming positive responses that have been received, the Grand Lodge will be developing guidelines for similar events that will be distributed to our lodges.

I was received on every occasion with nothing but kindness and respect by our Lodges, Shrine Temples, and Appendant Bodies, and it has been a pleasure meeting so many wonderful brethren during my travels.

Perhaps the single most take-home point from my report on the state of the craft should be Freemasonry is alive and well in the state of North Carolina... but there are challenges ahead. Some of these challenges are being addressed through lodge mergers as we “right size” again.

What do I mean by right sizing? Freemasonry experienced an abnormal growth spurt that began in the 1940s and continued into the 1950s. We were making Masons at almost every meeting. Based on membership trends in Freemasonry and other fraternal organizations, we know that this was not normal growth, and it was not sustainable. As we lose members, we are getting back to more realistic membership numbers — and less income with our current dues structure. We are faced with the challenge to “do more with less.”

As I traveled the state, I looked at the dues that lodges are paying, and it is concerning. To be blunt, a growing number of lodges do not have dues that are high enough to sustain operations. We have some lodges that have operated on a deficit. As a whole, we are not factoring in the cost of future roof replacement, HVAC replacement, or other normal building maintenance costs, which can be the death knell of a lodge. The majority of our lodges are not paying what equates to \$.50 per day in dues; why? Worse yet, as a non-profit organization that does not pay taxes, some lodges are of the opinion that it is perfectly okay to ask the public to support fundraisers intended to benefit our lodge building funds (even though the IRS takes exception to this) ... why? The general public does not owe us a dime. We are the world’s oldest and largest fraternal organization that was built by Freemasons for Freemasons, and we should be paying our own way. We should be raising the bar and setting the example for all other fraternal organizations, but we are not. If you have been to one of my district meetings, you have heard me question whether Freemasonry is not worth at least \$1.00 per day? We offer a transformative experience for the initiate that no other civic or fraternal organization offers, and we are the cheapest game in town. Simply put, we spend money on the things that are important to us, and our actions state that Freemasonry is not important or not worth the amount it takes to keep a roof over our heads — why?

In 2022 the voting delegates declined to approve proposed amendments to raise our minimum initiation fee, which is currently \$21.00. It warrants stating again that the minimum initiation fee was originally set in 1919 when the dollar value of \$21.00 equated to \$310.34! I make this point because our brethren in 1919 knew the value of the fraternity, and they were willing to pay for it. We should take note of the fact that the brethren before us left many way-marks to help guide us on our path; one was adding value to the fraternity and being willing to pay for it. Our initiation fees (cost of admission) is low and our lodge dues remain low as well. Years of delayed maintenance needs and reluctance to raise lodge dues have many of our lodges in a precarious situation.

To that end, the grand lodge staff, along with the help of several brethren, developed the web based Lodge Dues Calculator to help your lodge with budgeting and financial processes. The calculator takes into consideration:

1. Your lodge facility’s health—the age of your roof and HVAC system and other systems based on age and square footage,
-

2. Your lodge's savings and expenditures,
3. Your lodge's dues structure based on the number of dues paying members

With this information, the calculator generates the optimal amount per member that should be saved for capital improvements, renovations, and basic administrative functions. Here's the link to the calculator: <https://bit.ly/3KfQNib>

I would encourage your lodge to take advantage of this tool and be honest with yourselves when it comes to finances and budgeting for the future. As M.W. Benjamin Franklin stated, "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail."

Regardless of our efforts, we will continue to see lodge mergers due to apathy, individualism, weak leadership, bigotry, and late stage planning efforts. In 2022, we saw six lodge mergers, and there have been several more since. As we continue to right size, it is paramount that our lodge culture changes and the right leaders are selected and kept in positions for longer terms. The "progressive line" that we have grown accustomed to oftentimes does more to hurt our lodges than help. There is nothing wrong with keeping a good lodge Master for more than one year. This creates continuity and helps with strategic planning.

Here are some additional Masonic truths that I have learned over the years that could help any lodge succeed. We should not be concerned about our membership numbers. In fact, smaller lodges of 50-75 members is probably the ideal size. We should be creating meaningful relationships in lodge, and we should know all of our members. We need to be honest with ourselves when it comes to the real cost of operating our lodges, and we need to be willing to pay that price. We need to exude quality in everything that we do, whether it be our ritual, our meals, or the appearance of our buildings. We should provide thought-provoking educational programs at every meeting and challenge our members to engage the initiates, mentor them, and put them to work. We need to be involved in our communities. These are our action items — it is up to each lodge to take the initiative and execute.

You might think that this report is overly negative. I disagree; it is just the facts. I would also state that the majority of our lodges are doing well and continue to deliver on all of the topics that I have covered. Our affinity lodges are not only succeeding, but they are also growing in numbers. Our observant lodges continue to garner a great deal of interest and the number of observant lodges continues to tend up across the country. Our educational opportunities across the state with the Speakers' Bureau, Wilkerson College, Davie Academy, and Middle Chamber continue to be sought out and are drawing interest from other states. And we are experiencing great interest in old traditions that we knock the dust off of and bring to light once again.

Brethren, we are at a turning point, and it is up to each of us to decide the future of Freemasonry in North Carolina. Will we allow apathy, individualism, weak leadership, bigotry, and the cheapening of the Craft to continue? Or do we encourage, mentor, build, and educate? Brother Henry Ford provided us many inspirational quotes. Two of my favorites that I find apropos when pondering a path forward are:

“Whether you think you can, or you think you can’t, you’re right.”

“Obstacles are those frightful things that you see when you take your eyes off your goal.”

Commit to making positive changes in your lodge. Assess your needs, set goals, and work to accomplish them. Doing this, you will get your lodge closer and closer to its full potential. You will enrich your community and the lives of your members. You will experience the success that has carried us forward for centuries!

Lodge Losses and Gains

During my time as Grand Master, I oversaw six completed lodge consolidations. These mergers took place across the state, in communities both large and small. Hopefully these consolidations and those that have happened since will result in stronger lodges.

In November 2021, M.W. Brother R. David, Wicker, Jr, PGM, with my full support, found it in the best interest of Freemasonry to arrest the Charter of French Broad Lodge 292. In our discussions, Grand Master Wicker and I were of the opinion that the arrest of the Charter would allow the members of French Broad Lodge to reflect upon their Masonic obligations and assess whether the Lodge was living up to those obligations. After allowing sufficient time to contemplate the Masonic principles that every Mason should be demonstrating toward all mankind, it may then be possible to save the lodge. After taking office, Grand Master Wicker and I continued to discuss this matter. We discussed the remedial actions that we believed the lodge needed to take before I would restore the Charter. I am pleased to report that the Charter of French Broad Lodge 292 was restored on March 1, 2022.

On April 28, 2022, I found it in the best interest of Freemasonry to arrest the Charter of Dunn’s Rock Lodge No. 267. The basis for the arrest of the charter is based on several events illustrating an irregularity of work within the lodge, to wit: in 2019 a Mason applied for affiliation to Dunn’s Rock Lodge 267 but was rejected. The intent of the blackballing, due to the color of the man’s skin, became known to some officers and district officers and was reported to the Grand Secretary’s Office. In 2021 the Master of the Lodge verbally abused the Grand Lodge, insulted the Grand Master, ignored his summons, and further ignored a summons from the Judge Advocate to explain his actions. He was subsequently expelled. And earlier this year a young man petitioned for the degrees at Dunn’s Rock Lodge 267. According to reports, he dined with the brethren, volunteered his time to participate in lodge events, and received a favorable report when the ballot for his petition was read. He was blackballed, and allegations of racism again emanated from the lodge, at which time the Master, Secretary, and Tyler resigned from the lodge and demitted from Masonry. It was then reported that the blackballs were thrown to spite the Master, which is also un-Masonic.

The lodge officers reached out to me on May 16th and presented a formal apology and a plan to reconcile and move forward. On May 25th I received a Statement of Principles from the lodge that addressed previous concerns

related to racism and path forward to success. This information was shared with the Board of General Purposes on June 24th and the Charter of Dunn's Rock Lodge 267 was restored on July 20th.

Although there were losses of individual lodges in 2022, we hope that the consolidations will create stronger, more vibrant lodges. Unfortunately, some lodges do not take the opportunity to merge or surrender their Charter before expending lodge resources which would have benefitted the lodge that they consolidate with, or our fraternity as a whole. We have to be honest with ourselves and make the decision to consolidate or surrender a Charter sooner rather than later if failure is inevitable. One common thread that I have observed in failing lodges through my years as a Grand Lodge Officer is something that you read in the State of the Craft portion of this report, and that is apathy, individualism, weak leadership, bigotry, and late stage planning efforts.

On a more positive note, we did have the opportunity to consecrate a new lodge in 2022, The Knights of Solomon Lodge No. 768. We certainly wish this lodge much success and prosperity.

Necrology

During 2022, the Grand Lodge of North Carolina lost to death one (1) Past Grand Master, Lee Roy "Pete" Thomas, Jr. Unfortunately, each year it is our sad duty to report the number of deceased brethren that have been called into that Celestial Lodge Above. From December 2021 through December 2022, we lost 1,070 brethren to death. We grieve the loss of our brothers and know that they are now in a better place. We offer our continued thoughts and prayers to their families and thank them for sharing their loved ones with our fraternity during each of their Masonic journeys.

District Deputy Officer Conferences

There were five (5) regional planning meetings held with the District Deputy Grand Masters and the District Deputy Grand Lecturers taking place in November and December 2021. These meetings were spread across the state due to COVID-19 concerns and the desire to limit our group sizes. We held our District Deputy Officer Conferences following dates and at the following locations:

Date	Host	Location
November 3	Waynesville Lodge No. 259	Waynesville
November 4	Statesville Lodge No. 27	Statesville
November 11	Columbus Lodge No. 102	Pittsboro
November 15	St. John's Lodge No. 13	Kenansville
December 20	Concord Lodge No. 58	Tarboro

Our District Deputy Grand Masters and District Deputy Grand Lecturers provide an invaluable service to the Craft, and these meetings give the Grand Master-elect, the Grand Lecturer, and Grand Secretary the opportunity to get

to know each of these officers and deliver talking points, goals, and objectives for the ensuing year. These meetings also provide the opportunity for the District Officers to ask questions and discuss best practices between the districts.

Honorary Title of Past District Deputy Grand Master

It was my privilege to recommend that this Grand Lodge grant the honorary title of Past District Deputy Grand Master to the following brethren who have completed their respective terms of service and who are now eligible to receive this honorary title in accordance with The Code:

Name	Lodge	District
Scot Robert Hardwick	Eureka Lodge No. 317	1
Wesley Lee Sales	Seaside Lodge No. 429	4
Warren George Taylor	Doric Lodge No. 568	7
Lester Howard Knight	Johnston Caswell Lodge No. 10	8
Christopher Ronald Raines	St. John's Lodge No. 4	10
John Arthur Shawver	St. John's Lodge No. 1	12
Jerry Eugene Brown, Jr.	Oxford Lodge No. 122	13
Jeffrey Arthur Sank	Wake Forest Lodge No. 282	14
Michael Joseph Crocker	Vandora Lodge No. 745	15
James Leonard Pugsley	Lebanon Lodge No. 391	17
James Edward Paschal	Corinthian Lodge No. 542	23
William Michael Payne	Granite Lodge No. 322	25
Gary Wayne Leonard	Thomasville Lodge No. 214	27
Eddie Nelson Rimmer	Statesville Lodge No. 27	30
John Patrick White	Gaston Lodge No. 263	36
Robert Michael Swann	Bald Creek Lodge No. 397	37

Honorary Title of Past District Deputy Grand Lecturer

Likewise, I was privileged to recommend that this Grand Lodge grant the honorary title of Past District Deputy Grand Lecturer to the following Brethren who are now eligible in accordance with The Code:

Name	Lodge	District
Charles Maris Chapman	Jerusalem Lodge No. 95	6
Dale Allen Krueger	Cherry Point Lodge No. 688	7
Phillip Christopher Lee	Wendell Lodge No. 565	14
Christopher Michael Ryan	Green Level Lodge No. 277	15
Matthew Britt Moore	Relief Lodge No. 431	16
Justin Dolphus Parker	Fairmont Lodge No. 528	18

Frank David Wanko	Southern Pines Lodge No. 584	21
Jeffrey David Martin	Tabasco Lodge No. 271	23
Joseph Sterling Henry	Long Creek Lodge No. 205	31
Brett Albert Huffman	Lovelady Lodge No. 670	34
Michael Lee McGinnis	Gaston Lodge No. 263	36
Claude Ray Harrill	Kedron Lodge No. 387	38

Lion and Pillar Lodges for 2022

Since its inception in 2017, this program has been utilized by many lodges for their continued growth and pursuit of excellence. Below is a list of lodges that have achieved excellence this year.

Grand Master's Lodge of Excellence

Lodge	District	Location
Holly Springs Lodge No. 115	15	Holly Springs

Platinum Level Lion and Pillar

Lodge	District	Location
Eagle Lodge No. 19	19	Hillsborough
Greensboro Lodge No. 76	23	Greensboro
Zion Lodge No. 81	7	Trenton
Western Star Lodge No. 91	38	Rutherfordton
Cleveland Lodge No. 202	35	Shelby
William G. Hill Lodge No. 218	14	Raleigh
Mystic Tie Lodge No. 237	34	Marion
Kenly Lodge No. 257	16	Kenly
Fuquay Lodge No. 258	15	Fuquay-Varina
Hibriten Lodge No. 262	34	Lenoir
Wilmington Lodge No. 319	12	Wilmington
Campbell Lodge No. 374	30	Troutman
Bula Lodge No. 409	22	Burlington
Pilot Lodge No. 493	25	Pilot Mountain
Cannon Memorial Lodge No. 626	28	Kannapolis
Semper Fidelis Lodge No. 680	4	Jacksonville
Shallotte Lodge No. 727	12	Shallotte
Vandora Lodge No. 745	15	Garner
Ashlar Lodge No. 765	12	Hampstead
Lux Libertas Lodge No. 772	19	Hillsborough

Standard Level Lion and Pillar

Lodge	District	Location
St. John's Lodge No. 1	12	Wilmington
Statesville Lodge No. 27	30	Statesville
Oxford Lodge No. 122	13	Oxford
Palmyra Lodge No. 147	20	Dunn
Mingo Lodge No. 206	11	Dunn
Corinthian Lodge No. 230	9	Rocky Mount
Wallace Lodge No. 279	11	Wallace
Ashler Lodge No. 373	33	Deep Gap
Jefferson Penn Lodge No. 384	22	Reidsville
Bald Creek Lodge No. 397	37	Burnsville
Thomas M. Holt Lodge No. 492	22	Graham

We have this program today thanks to M.W. Brother A. Gene Cobb, Jr., PGM. M.W. Brother Cobb turned over the day-to-day operations of the program to W. Brother Chris Canipe, Chairman, W. Brother Jason Caldwell, W. Brother Michael Wright, W. Brother Marty Hunt, W. Brother Albert Hopping, and W. Brother Aaron Jackson, all of whom are doing a wonderful job and deserved to be mentioned for their work.

The Lion and Pillar program has been a great asset to those lodges who have chosen to participate, and we look forward to seeing even more lodges take advantage of this opportunity next year!

Joseph Montfort Medals

Pursuant to Regulation 80-1, each Grand Master has been given the privilege to present not more than three (3) Joseph Montfort Medals during his term in office. The Montfort Medal can be presented by the Grand Master to "any Master Mason in good standing...who in the opinion of the Grand Master is deserving thereof because of distinguished Masonic service or achievement." It has been my honor to present three (3) Montfort Medals.

On December 4, 2022, I presented the first Joseph Montfort Medal to W. Brother William Baldwin Bruton. W. Brother Bruton was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason on August 3, 1993, in Blackmer Lodge No. 127, Mount Gilead, North Carolina, and served as its Master in 1997. W. Brother Bruton has served as District Deputy Grand Master of the 24th Masonic District (2004-2006) and Past Grand Tyler (2017). He has served the Grand Lodge as a member of the Board of Masonic Jurisprudence (2017-2019) and is currently serving a second term on the Board of General Purposes (2012-2014, 2022-2024). Perhaps more importantly, W. Brother Bruton is a perpetual Masonic mentor and much of the current success experienced by Blackmer Lodge No. 127 is due to his leadership and desire to see young Masons develop to their fullest potential. This Grand Master would not be serving in my current capacity had it not been for W. Brother "Bill" Bruton pushing and prodding me along my Masonic path! Much love.

On September 10, 2022, at the Phoenix Lodge No. 8 and Fayetteville Independent Light Infantry Company Harmony, I presented the second Joseph Montfort Medal to Brother Bruce Joseph Daws. Brother Daws, a United States Army veteran, was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason on September 24, 1985, in Phoenix Lodge No. 8, Fayetteville, North Carolina. Brother Daws is a recipient of The Order of the Long Leaf Pine (2015), an award that is among the most prestigious of awards presented by the Governor of North Carolina. He served as Director of Historic and Natural Resources for the City of Fayetteville (which includes The Fayetteville History Museum, NC Veterans Park, City Park Rangers, Historic Properties Manager, and City Historian) and as Commander of the Fayetteville Independent Light Infantry, North Carolina's Official Historic Military Command, a position he had held since August 23rd, 1984. Major Daws has been the longest-serving commander of the Fayetteville Independent Light Infantry since 1793. He currently has 38 years of service as an Infantry Officer.

Since receiving the Joseph Montfort Medal, Brother Daws was awarded the Order of Saint Maurice® in the Rank of Centurion at the FILI 230th Annual Muster held on August 23, 2023, an event I was privileged to attend. The Order of Saint Maurice and the Shield of Sparta are awarded by the National Infantry Association and the Chief of Infantry. This is to recognize the significant contributions made by Infantrymen, Infantry supporters, and spouses. A nominee for the Order of Saint Maurice® must have served the Infantry community with distinction; must have demonstrated a significant contribution in support of the Infantry; and must represent the highest standards of integrity, moral character, professional competence, and dedication to duty.

On March 11, 2022, it was my honor to present W. Brother James (Jimmy) Robert Stevens, Jr. the third Joseph Montfort Medal at the Joseph Montfort Award Recipient Celebration held at the Winston-Salem Masonic Center.

As a young man, he served our country in the United States Army. After six years of military service, our esteemed brother utilized his training and desire to continue in the service of others by accepting a position with the Garner Police Department and volunteering as a local firefighter. Shortly thereafter, he accepted a position with the North Carolina Highway Patrol, where he advanced through the ranks and was regularly commended for his wisdom, cool deportment, and compassion. It was during his time with the Patrol, that he was initiated, passed, and raised a Master Mason in Columbus Lodge in Pittsboro.

As a Patrolman, our brother traversed the state and eventually came to be a leader in the Highway Patrol's Office of Internal Affairs. Following his 30 years of service within state law enforcement, he joined the Wake County Sheriff's Office, and, after 14 years rose to the honorable and rare rank of Major. And, upon retirement—with 44 years of service—he was initiated into the Order of the Long Leaf Pine and was presented the award personally by the Governor of our state—a strong testament to our Brother's good work and service to the people of North Carolina.

Once back home in Wake County, he affiliated with Garner Lodge where he proceeded through the chairs, ably overseeing the ritual and fraternal health of the lodge. His insight and knowledge caught the attention of his peers, and he became a regular trial commissioner adjudicating Masonic

disputes. In 2008, Grand Master David Cash appointed our Brother District Deputy Grand Master of the 15th Masonic District. Following that tenure, he accepted the Grand Lodge's nomination to be our fraternity's Judge Advocate. Not one to rest on his laurels, he again served as Master of Garner Lodge and was elected into Vandora Lodge where he also served as Master.

Outside our fraternity—and all the more reason to honor his service—Worshipful Brother Jimmy Stevens is a devoted husband to Jeanette, father to Carla, and grandfather to the famous Tyler. He is a leader and teacher among the members of Aversboro Road Baptist Church, an Eagle Scout, and a devotee to the improvement of his hometown, Garner.

Physical Disabilities

In the case of petitioners having physical disabilities, The Code requires the District Deputy Grand Master to investigate and advise the Grand Master as to whether the petition should proceed through its normal process. The Code provisions are in place to assist in determining whether an applicant is physically able to go through the initiation process and whether he would become an immediate financial burden to the Lodge.

Nine (9) such requests were submitted to me. In each case an investigation was conducted by the District Deputy Grand Master, with such assistance as he deemed necessary. Based on the information provided to me by the DDGMs, I approved the request of eight (8) petitioners to proceed with the Degrees in Masonry with their physical disabilities, and unfortunately had to reject one (1) petitioner's request.

I would like to thank each of the District Deputy Grand Masters who met with these petitioners, thoroughly interviewed them, and presented me with their findings. Their assistance and the reports that were provided were invaluable and helped me to make my final decisions.

Dispensations

During the period from December 4, 2021, through December 3, 2022, I issued eighty-seven (87) Dispensations for various Lodge needs and situations. Listed below are the Dispensations issued:

1. Emergent communication - Sophia 767
 2. Elect Junior Warden - Granville 380
 3. Stated communications - Knights of Solomon UD
 4. Install Master - Mt. Moriah 690
 5. Elect Master - Lawndale 486
 6. Master of two lodges - Millbrook 97
 7. Hybrid stated communication - J. J. Crowder 743
 8. Elect Master - Southern Pines 484
 9. Operate without charter - Millbrook 97
 10. Elect Junior Warden - James K. Polk 759
 11. Elect officers - Perseverance 59
-

12. Other place - Knights of Solomon 764
13. Virtual stated - Mosaic 762
14. Virtual stated - University 408
15. Move stated - Pythagoras 249
16. Elect Master - Southern Pines 484
17. Cancel stated - Cannon Memorial 626
18. Other place - Knights of Solomon 774
19. Elect Senior Warden - Yadkin 637
20. Hybrid stated communication - J. J. Crowder 743
21. Move stated - Prometheus 775
22. Elect Junior Warden - Waccamaw 596
23. Emergent communication - Raleigh 500
24. Other place - Knights of Solomon 768
25. Virtual stated - Mystic Tie 237
26. Emergent communication - Orr 104
27. Emergent communication - Sophia 767
28. Elect SW - Oconee 427
29. Virtual stated - State College 770
30. Hybrid stated communication - J. J. Crowder 743
31. Elect Master - Charity 5
32. Other place - Knights of Solomon 764
33. Brunswick Town Degree - Lux Libertas 772
34. Other place - Raleigh 500
35. Outdoor degree - Jerusalem 95
36. Other place - Wilkerson College 760
37. Elect Junior Warden - Hanks 128
38. Elect Junior Warden - Wayne 112
39. Emergent communication - Lebanon 391
40. Other place - Knights of Solomon 768
41. Emergent communication - Pilot 493
42. Emergent communication - Orr 104
43. Other place - Cary 198
44. Cancel stated - Mill Creek 125
45. Outdoor degree - Cranberry 598
46. Other place - Knights of Solomon 764
47. Move stated - Friendship 388
48. Other place - Henderson 229
49. Move stated - St. John's 13
50. Other place - Tabasco 271

51. Elect Senior Warden - Ashler 373
 52. Move stated - Stedman 730
 53. Virtual stated communication - Wilkerson College 760
 54. Virtual emergent communication - Nine Sisters 773
 55. Other place - Creasy Proctor 679
 56. Other place - Clifford Duell 756
 57. Emergent communication - Royal White Hart 2
 58. Emergent Communication - Denton 404
 59. Other place - Knights of Solomon 768
 60. Cancel stated - Mingo 206
 61. Other place - Knights of Solomon 766
 62. Other place - Raleigh 500
 63. Virtual stated communication - Wilkerson College 760
 64. Harvest Moon degree - Union 618
 65. Other place - Nine Sisters 773
 66. Cancel stated - Richard Caswell 705
 67. Other place - Oconee 427
 68. Other place - Knights of Solomon 766
 69. Cancel stated - MESH 771
 70. Other place - Lux Libertas 772
 71. Cancel stated - Zion 81
 72. Degree modifications - Excelsior 261
 73. Emergent communication - Excelsior 261
 74. Other place - Knights of Solomon 768
 75. Cancel stated- Charity 5
 76. Civil War Degree - Clay 301
 77. Other place - Wilkerson College 760
 78. Outdoor degree - Wayne 112
 79. Outdoor degree - Bula 409
 80. Conduct business on First Degree - Blackmer 127
 81. Other place - Oak Island 758
 82. Other place - Ashlar 765
 83. Election of officers - Carthage 181
 84. Election of officers - Joseph Warren 92
 85. Elect Master - Newport 706
 86. Election of officers - Ashler 373
 87. Other place - Knights of Solomon 776
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Orders

During the period from December 4, 2021, through December 3, 2022, I issued seven (7) Orders. Listed below are the Orders issued:

1. **To Brother CAS** for the purpose of ordering the aforementioned brother, as the former Treasurer of Liberty Lodge 45, to deliver the keys and combination of the lodge's safe to the District Deputy Grand Master of the 33rd Masonic District. Further ordered that the aforementioned brother return all keys, files, and other lodge property retained by him since leaving office. Issued February 28, 2022.
2. **To all subordinate Lodges and Appendant Masonic Bodies under the Jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina** for the purpose of lifting all COVID-19 precautions still in effect and empowering the Masters of Lodges to issue whatever pandemic precautions they deemed necessary for their individual Lodge. Issued February 28, 2022.
3. **To Dunn's Rock Lodge 267** for the purpose of declaring the ballot null & void and ordering a re-ballot on a petition by Dunn's Rock Lodge 267 due to the failure of the Lodge to comply with the proper balloting procedure at the time of the original ballot. Issued March 15, 2022.
4. **To Millbrook Lodge 97** for the purpose of declaring the ballot null & void and ordering a re-ballot on a petition by Millbrook Lodge 97 due to the failure of the Lodge to comply with the proper balloting procedure at the time of the original ballot. Issued April 8, 2022.
5. **To Rockingham Lodge 495** for the purpose of declaring the ballot null & void and ordering a re-ballot on an application for affiliation for Brother CHG by Rockingham Lodge 495 due to the failure of the Lodge to follow proper affiliation certification procedure prior to balloting on the application. Issued June 1, 2022.
6. **To Rockingham Lodge 495** for the purpose of declaring the ballot null & void and ordering a re-ballot on an application for affiliation for Brother CJT by Rockingham Lodge 495 due to the failure of the Lodge to follow proper affiliation certification procedure prior to balloting on the application. Issued June 1, 2022.
7. **To Corinthian Lodge 542 and Knights of Solomon Lodge 768** for the purpose of removing Brother JCC as Master & Tyler of each lodge, respectively, due to his being charged with Un-Masonic Conduct by the Judge Advocate. Issued 8 September 2022.

Approvals

During the period of December 4, 2021, through December 3, 2022, I issued eight (8) Approvals for various Lodge needs and situations. Listed below are the Approvals issued:

1. Dunn's Rock Lodge No. 267 for my approval of the resignation of the Master, Secretary, and Tyler. Issued 2/1/2022.

2. Ashler Lodge No. 373 for my approval of the resignation of the Junior Warden. Issued 5/23/2022.
3. Campbell Lodge No. 374 for my approval of the resignation of the Junior Warden. Issued 6/6/2022.
4. Phalanx Lodge No. 31 for my approval of the resignation of the Senior Warden. Issued 6/6/2022.
5. Southern Pines Lodge No. 484 for my approval of the resignation of the Senior Warden. Issued 6/6/2022.
6. University Lodge No. 408 for my approval of the resignation of the Junior Warden. Issued 6/6/2022.
7. Archer Lodge No. 165 for my approval of the resignation of the Secretary. Issued 6/22/2022.
8. Semper Fidelis Lodge No. 680 for my approval of the resignation of the Master. Issued 8/12/2022.

Emergent Communications

I had the opportunity to call an emergent communication of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina on four (4) occasions. The date of each emergent communication and the purposes for which each was called is listed below.

With the permission and authorization of Past Grand Master R. David Wicker, Jr, the Grand Lodge was opened on December 3, 2021, at the Meroney Theater in Salisbury, North Carolina, for the purpose of installing the 2022 Grand Lodge Officers on December 4, 2021. The Grand Lodge was opened in Ample Form with the officers of Blackmer Lodge No. 127 acting as Grand Lodge Officers pro tempore.

Grand Lodge was opened on December 18, 2021, at Lincoln Lodge No. 137 in Lincolnton, North Carolina for the purpose of dedicating a Masonic cornerstone for the new Lincoln County Courthouse. The Grand Lodge was opened in Ample Form with District Deputy Grand Master of the 34th Masonic District and the officers of Lincoln Lodge No. 137 acting as Grand Lodge Officers pro tempore.

Grand Lodge was opened on August 20, 2022, at Carthage Lodge No. 181 in Carthage, North Carolina, for the purpose of rededicating the Masonic cornerstone of the Moore County Courthouse 100 years after the original Masonic cornerstone dedication. The Grand Lodge was opened in Ample Form with the Grand Lodge Officers filling their respective places and stations.

Grand Lodge was opened on October 29, 2022, at Eureka Lodge No. 317 in Elizabeth City, North Carolina for the purpose of dedicating a Masonic cornerstone to celebrate their 150th anniversary as a lodge. The Grand Lodge was opened by R.W. Brother Kevan Frazier in Ample Form with the Grand Lodge Officers filling their respective places and stations.

**Wilkerson College, the William R. Davie Leadership Academy,
and the Middle Chamber Program**

Wilkerson College is sponsored jointly by the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, Orient of North Carolina, and the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina. It consists of three (3) different sessions, which take place at WhiteStone, the MHCO, and in Raleigh which includes a tour of the Grand Lodge Office. For many attending the College, this is the first time they have had the opportunity to visit our homes or the Grand Lodge Office, which leaves a lasting impression.

I was fortunate enough to be a student in the first class of Wilkerson College in 2002, and I have assisted with the college since that time. I am honored to follow in the footsteps of the late W. Brother Dan Weatherington, Dean Emeritus, and M.W. Brother Billy Dill, PGM, Dean Emeritus, as the college's third Dean. Obviously, the college is very special to me, and I love it when other Grand Masters ask about our school and express an interest in doing something similar in their grand jurisdictions. Wilkerson College is the premier school of Masonic leadership in this country, and we are very fortunate to have such talented staff and instructors who give freely of their time each year!

The William R. Davie Academy was developed to deliver a practical education on lodge management and leadership, with classes on Masonic history, traditions, and structure. Unlike Wilkerson College, the Academy is open to both appointed and elected lodge officers and is an invaluable tool for those in a lodge leadership position who did not have the opportunity to attend Wilkerson College. Its objectives include:

- Making Masonic education inclusive, accessible, and affordable
- Providing high quality and relevant education in Masonic leadership, management, and traditions; and
- Preparing you for leadership at the lodge, district, and state levels

Another unique learning opportunity that we have in North Carolina is the Middle Chamber Program. The Middle Chamber Program provides North Carolina Masons an opportunity to explore the rituals and symbols of the Craft and improve themselves as men and Masons. Instructors are experienced Masons specially trained to assist each brother as he examines the Masonic rituals, himself, and his relationship with Deity. Current plans for this year are to hold another Inner Chamber retreat as the capstone to the Middle Chamber

To date, our Middle Chamber team have been invited to Illinois and Texas to share this program. If you would like a “deeper dive” into our allegory, symbolism, and your inner self, this is the program for you!

I would like to thank W. Brother Noah Goode, Chairman of the Masonic Education Committee, as well as the members of this committee, for their continued efforts to deliver educational opportunities for the members of our state that remains unparalleled by any other grand jurisdiction! You brothers are rock stars!

The North Carolina Masonic Foundation, Inc.

For an overview of the activities of the North Carolina Masonic Foundation, Inc. during my tenure as Grand Master, I refer you to their reports found in the 2021 and 2022 book of Reports submitted by the Board of Directors and Staff and led by Brother Michael Faulkenbury, Chairman.

I participated in one (1) joint fundraiser with the Foundation and the North Carolina Grand Lodge referred to as the “Resist and Restore Campaign” for our Ukrainian brothers. This campaign was extremely successful, and I would like to thank Brother George Marut, Chief Development Officer for the Foundation, and R.W. Brother Jonathan Underwood for their efforts to organize and host this live event.

The Foundation voted to expand their sitting members from five (5) to seven (7) at their April 19, 2022, meeting. I appointed R.W. Brother Don Kehler, SGW, of Bula Lodge No. 409 and W. Brother Benjamin Crissman of Gate City Lodge No. 694 to the new positions, which were approved by the Foundation.

I want to offer a special thanks to the North Carolina Masonic Foundation for their support of our lodges and Masonic charities. The financial support they provide to the Masonic Home for Children in Oxford and WhiteStone is invaluable. The investment tool that they offer our subordinate lodges is a unique opportunity for long-term growth that most of our lodges would normally not have access to. The expansion and internal changes made by the Foundation has not gone unnoticed, and its members are to be commended for their efforts to improve and refine their operation.

Whitestone: A Masonic and Eastern Star Community

WhiteStone, our Masonic and Eastern Star Community in Greensboro turned 110 years old in 2022 and currently operates as a full retirement community providing Independent Living units, skilled nursing care, and memory care.

We continue to improve our campus to meet needs and market demands. The new Independent Living (IL) tower is currently under construction, a renovation of our Care and Wellness Center (CWC) is underway, and we are adding an assisted living component to our level of care, which has been missing from our continuum of care in the past. The Long-Range Committee/Development Team chaired by W. Brother Joey Transou continues to oversee the new expansion and are doing an excellent job! The cornerstone dedications for both the Assisted Living and Memory Care Building and Independent Living Building were both well attended and I was pleased to take part in these historic occasions.

I would like to thank M.W. Brother Gene T. Jernigan, PGM, Chairman of the Board of Directors, for his wisdom, passion, and tireless efforts. We also have a wonderful Board of Directors who are always ready to give. None of this would be possible without our Board of Directors and their vision and love for our home! Thank you!

I first toured WhiteStone in 2022 with my fellow Wilkerson College classmates. I was thoroughly impressed with our home at that time, even more so today. If you have never visited WhiteStone, please take the time to do so. It

will touch your heart and you will be proud of “our” home!

Your gifts and support continue to make a difference in the quality of life for those in the golden years of their life. We established a foundation called the Masonic and Eastern Star Home, LLC. Donations to the MESH Foundation, LLC, qualifies as a 501(c)3 tax deductible donation and guarantees that your contributions will go to support only Masonic and Eastern Star connected residents, both internally and through the Fraternal Friendship outreach program (<https://mfnc.org/storage/wysiwyg/fraternalfriendshipbrochure2021front.pdf>).

M.W. Brother R. David Wicker, Jr., PGM, stated in his 2021 report: “Although many of our lodges provide financial support the MESH Foundation, LLC, I am disappointed to say that many do nothing for the care of our widows and our elderly. I do not understand the lack of support. As Masons we are obligated individually to support our elderly brothers and their widows. In 1913 it was reported that half of the Lodges had not made any contribution to our Home in Greensboro. Today, that has not changed. I ask of you what was asked in 1913, ‘what, my brethren, can be the reason for this indifference and apathy? ... An opportunity of doing great good is at hand. How much better it is to provide a Home where your aged and indigent brothers can spend their last few remaining years in peace and comfort, and in the congenial society of brothers and friends, then it is to have small charity doled out to them by their home lodge and individual friends.’” My brothers, we must do a better job supporting WhiteStone, and I agree wholeheartedly with Most Worshipful Brother Wicker’s comments. We must financially support our Masonic and Eastern Star brother and sisters. Please consider a monthly recurring gift to MESH Foundation, LLC through the following link: <https://www.liveatwhitestone.org/donate/>.

For more detailed report of WhiteStone, I refer you to the reports submitted by W. Brother Gilbert D. Bailey, Junior Grand Deacon, and Chairman of the Committee on WhiteStone for 2022 in previous proceedings.

Masonic Home for Children at Oxford

Our Masonic Home for Children at Oxford turned 149 years old in 2022. If you have never visited our home in Oxford, I encourage you to do so. Like WhiteStone, I had the first opportunity to visit The Masonic Home for Children at Oxford with my Wilkerson College classmates in 2002. I was floored by the beauty of the campus, and I thoroughly enjoyed the tours that I was offered by the residents who proudly showed off “their home.” Brethren you are changing the lives of children in Oxford, and I pray that you will consider making a recurring gift to our Children’s Home. Gifts can be made out to MHCO, which qualifies as a 501(c)3 tax deductible charity, and recurring gifts can be made online through the following link: <https://my.simplegive.com/App/Giving/mhco>.

I would like to thank M.W. Brother C. Speed Hallman, PGM and Chairman of the Board of Directors, for his guidance and vision. I would also like to thank our wonderful Board of Directors, staff, and Ambassadors for their indefatigable commitment to our children and the mission of the Home.

The 10th Annual Masonic Homecoming Festival was held on the campus grounds of MHCO October 7-9, 2022. The highlight of the homecoming was our parade which is rooted in our St. John’s Day celebrations. Parade units from

our three Shrine Temples (Oasis, Amran, and Sudan) participated. We enjoyed perfect weather and an amazing turnout.

At the time of my interim report, the MHCO was caring for 65 children which is the highest census that we have had in years and we had openings in the Transitional Living Cottages as well as the Independent Living apartment. Our continued success is partially due to the great marketing efforts which started in mid-2021 and which included television and radio commercials, Facebook live feeds, and the efforts of our MHCO Ambassadors. We hope this leads to us not being the best kept secret in North Carolina!

On February 13th, 2023, the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford (MHCO) celebrated 150 years of continuous service. Well over 10,000 youth have enjoyed better lives thanks to professional services supported by friends of the Home. The Home has been visionary, resilient, and devoted to the care of children in very difficult situations. This work simply cannot be done without our gracious and generous donors who do an outstanding job making sure that the children in our care can overcome their individual challenges, begin preparing for their own positive futures, and simply be kids who grow, learn, and develop in a safe and loving environment.

One of the highlights of 2022 for me was having the opportunity to be with the graduates of the Masonic Home for Children in Oxford at their annual Baccalaureate service on May 22, 2022. Five students graduated high school, with three of the graduates heading off to the Vance-Granville Community College to study automotive or HVAC, cosmetology, and child development. One graduate is attending Western Carolina University. One has enlisted in the U.S. Army and completed basic training. We also had one resident in our Independent Living Program who has graduated with an associate degree in Biotech and since transitioned out of the program. We are truly proud of all their accomplishments and wish them a bright and successful future. I remain very grateful to the Masons for their love and continued support of our Home.

For more detailed report of the activities concerning the Masonic Home for Children in Oxford I refer you to the report found in the proceedings submitted by W. Brother Steven M. Norris, Senior Grand Deacon, and Chairman of the Committee on the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford for 2022.

Board of Custodians and Certified Lecturer Examinations

The first Board of Custodians meeting was held on January 14, 2022. As Grand Master, I had the privilege to open the meeting and presided as Chairman ex-officio as required by our Code. After the meeting was opened, the Board elected W. Brother Earl Wells as Chairman and W. Brother Tom Dolinger as Secretary. Both of these brothers continue to do an outstanding job for our Board of Custodians.

Two initiatives that were implemented in 2022, which I am extremely pleased with: the Lodge Ritual Restoration Program developed by our Grand Lecturer, W. Brother Jerry R. “Randy” Browning, Jr., and the Modified Ritual Instruction Program.

The Lodge Ritual Restoration Program uses our ritual to help lodges who are struggling with their work, not as a punishment. Historically, a struggling lodge would be issued a 15-hour lecture service as a corrective measure. The Lodge Ritual Restoration Program takes a different approach by assisting the

lodge in identifying weaknesses and establishing a plan to overcome the issues through a team effort, with the goal of gaining a new understanding of the power of our ritual is when performed properly. To date, we have had one lodge successfully complete the program and be declared proficient on all three degrees of Masonry.

The Modified Ritual Instruction Program was developed in response to concerns with holding larger schools of instruction and the threat of COVID-19 outbreaks. The program allows up to three lodges to work together to complete the instructional requirements. The District Deputy Grand Lecturers are responsible for assigning Instructors and Certified Lecturers to conduct the programs that are similar to the requirements of a five-hour lecture service. The program can be tailored to meet the needs of the respective lodges. What we discovered is that the modified program is better received than our schools of instructions. I continue to receive positive feedback from the program. Our brothers seem to prefer the smaller gatherings and cite more open dialogue and increased interaction as a result.

Three Certification Exams were held at various locations across the state last year: August 13th in Greenville and Greensboro, August 20th in Wilmington and Charlotte, and August 27th in Fayetteville and Asheville. I would like to extend a personal thank you to the brethren who take time out of their busy schedules to conduct these certification exams!

In 2022 we had 277 Class A Lecturers and 36 Class B Instructors for a total of 313 Certified brothers. We certainly need additional lecturers and instructors to assist with our ritualistic work. If you know of a brother who would like to become a lecturer or an instructor, please have him contact the Board of Custodians. The Board will assist him with the examination process so that he can successfully complete the requirements of certification.

Conference of Grand Masters of North America

The Grand Lodge of North Carolina is a member of the Conference of Grand Masters of North America. This conference consists of recognized Grand Jurisdictions in all fifty (50) U.S. states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the states of Mexico, and the American Canadian Grand Lodge of Germany. The Conference is the largest gathering of Grand Masters in the world and assembles Grand Masters to learn items currently affecting the Craft, discuss best practices, and learn of new programs that can assist grand jurisdictions in operating more efficiently.

The annual meeting for 2022 was held February 19-23, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I had the opportunity to attend along with our Deputy Grand Master, R.W. Brother Kevan Frazier; our Grand Secretary, R.W. Brother Jonathan Underwood; M.W. Brother David Wicker, PGM; and M.W. Brother P. Shaun Bradshaw, PGM. M.W. Brother Wicker attended the conference as a member and officer of the Time and Place Committee for the Conference, while M.W. Brother Bradshaw attended the conference to address the Grand Secretaries Conference.

I found the conference in Wisconsin to be very interesting. One item that I found of extreme interest is the fact that the Grand Lodge of Wisconsin hired a marketing firm to control their narrative after realizing that a simple internet search for Freemasonry in Wisconsin revealed results that were not

very flattering of Freemasonry in general. The marketing firm reworked the Grand Lodge website, crafting it more towards the non-Mason, and developed an online form where interested individuals could request more information after reading through pre-screening information. What they discovered was that two-thirds of the men that were coming to them did not have a relative or friend who was a member of the fraternity and they did not know anything about Freemasonry — yet the men expressed an interest after learning about our traditions and core values.

Brethren, if nothing else, Wisconsin's investment has reaffirmed what we already knew, and that is the fact that Freemasonry is still as relevant today as it has always been. All we need to do is let the men of this state know who we are and what we are about, and they will come.

Out of State Visitations

I had the opportunity to visit the Grand Lodge of Tennessee at their annual communication, which was held March 22-24, 2022, in Nashville. I was warmly received by M.W. Brother Charlie Mixon, Grand Master. The hospitality extended to me was wonderful, and I appreciated the opportunity to observe the business conducted in their grand jurisdiction.

During July 2-6, Amran, Oasis, and Sudan Shrine Temples invited Angela and me to attend the 148th Imperial Shrine Session in Minneapolis, Minnesota hosted by Imperial Sir William S. Bailey. Angela and I enjoyed the hospitality of our Shrine Temples as well as the opportunity to spend time with the Shrine Potentates, Ill. Sir Tim Daniels, Ill. Sir David Oates, and Ill. Sir Cleve Woolard along with their respective Divans. During the Imperial Session, I was proud of the work done by Oasis Shriners as they gave over \$1.4 Million to the Shriners Hospitals and First Lady's charity.

There were approximately forty (40) Grand Masters in attendance for Imperial Shrine. At the Imperial Session, Imperial Sir Kenny Craven was elected and installed as the new Imperial Potentate. Of note, Imperial Sir Kenny Craven is from Summerville, SC, but is also a member of Shallotte Lodge No. 727. Imperial Sir Craven will be bringing the Imperial Shrine Session to Charlotte in 2023.

The message regarding the work done at our Children's Hospitals was amazing and I was thrilled when the 2022 Patient Ambassadors were announced and Parker, a young man from Oxford, North Carolina, who I had previously met, was named. Parker has an amazing story and one that our very own W. Brother Alvin Billings is a part of! Parker will be a great ambassador for our Children's Hospitals! You can read Parker's story through the following webpage: <<https://www.shrinerschildrens.org/en/news-and-media/videos/2022/07/back-in-the-game-parkers-story>>

I also had the opportunity to visit with the Grand Lodge of Missouri at their annual session held in St. Charles, MO, on October 3-4, 2022. I was warmly received by M.W. Brother Ty Treutelaar, Grand Master of Freemasons in Missouri, as we celebrated their 200th anniversary as a Grand Lodge. This was a special event that was made even more special knowing that their lineage goes back to the Grand Lodge of North Carolina!

Honorary Memberships

It was my distinct pleasure to have received honorary memberships from Kilwinning Lodge No. 64, Monroe Lodge No. 244, Hibriten Lodge No. 262, Knights of Solomon Lodge No. 766, Knights of Solomon Lodge No. 776, Waxhaw Lodge No. 562, and the National Sojourners. These honorary memberships were unexpected, and words fail me in trying to express the gratitude shown.

The National Sojourners is an order of Freemasons who have served in the United States Armed Forces. There is nothing nobler than the service provided by the member of our Armed Forces. They selflessly answer our country's call and put themselves in harm's way to preserve our freedoms. I am honored to be associated with such a wonderful group of men — my heroes.

Acknowledgements and Special Appreciations

I am extremely honored and humbled to be elected to serve as the 169th Grand Master of Masons in North Carolina. The Grand Lodge Officer's installation took place at the Meroney Theater in Salisbury on December 4th, and I would like to thank W. Brother Johnny Surles and W. Brother Bobby Meadows for helping make the installation a special event for myself and the Grand Lodge Officers.

A special word of thanks goes out to the members of my home lodge, Blackmer Lodge No. 127, for their help in opening the Grand Lodge of North Carolina for the emergent communication, the loan of the lodge furniture for the installation, and especially the lodge Bible that was used during each of my degrees. W. Brother Ben Wallace, Past Grand Orator; W. Brother Randy Browning, Grand Lecturer; and W. Brother Dale Goforth deserve even more accolades for their efforts in transporting our lodge furniture from Mount Gilead to Salisbury and then setting everything up. I also want to thank the officers and members of Sophia Lodge No. 767 who served as pro-tempore Grand Lodge Officers at the installation — you brothers are the best and I love you all!

We are very fortunate to have such great Grand Lodge Officers, and I consider myself to be the least of these great brothers. Each of us has a different skillset or talent and when we are all together, there is magic in the room. Having traveled to national conferences and visited many other grand jurisdictions, I can state, unequivocally, that we have one of the greatest teams in this country! Each member of our Grand Line is special to me, and I appreciate the support, advice, and love you have shown me in 2022. We are in great hands, and I look forward to enjoying your many successes!

I would also like to thank our Past Grand Masters, and their families, for their unflinching support. I knew that there would be big shoes to fill, but I did not have a firm grasp on just how large those shoes were until the second week in December! Our Past Grand Masters have given so much of their "time, talent, and treasure" and I thank you for all that you continue to do for the Masons in North Carolina!

We could not do what we do without our District Deputy Grand Masters, District Deputy Grand Lecturers, and Board/Committee members who give freely of their time with little to no compensation. Some of you have been tasked with some unpleasant duties or seemingly impossible tasks, but you have not let me down. Thank you so much for all of your support and assistance. This

Grand Lodge could not survive without your valuable service.

Thank you to all of the Masters, Wardens, Secretaries, officers, and members of the lodges across North Carolina. We are nothing without you. You ARE the Grand Lodge. Your lodge improvement projects, charity fundraisers, the care you show for your brothers, widows, and orphans is to be applauded. We would not exist today if it were not for the hard work our lodges put forth. I remain awestruck at the brothers I meet who do this day in and day out without more than the occasional “thank you.” You deserve so much more recognition, but I am often told that “I do not do this for recognition.” You have my interminable respect and admiration!

I “grew up” with R.W. Brother Walt Clapp serving as Grand Secretary. It was R.W. Brother Walt who persuaded me to refocus my energy after becoming frustrated with a particular amendment vote at the 2006 Annual Communication. It was also R.W. Brother Walt who persuaded me to assist our late Brother Ron Page in coordinating the Grand Lodge Annual Communication each year, one of the most fun jobs that I have done in this Grand Lodge. I love and respect R.W. Brother Walt and I can tell you that he has left us in great hands. Thanks to his foresight and leadership we continue to enjoy a great Grand Lodge Staff!

Right Worshipful Brother Jonathan Underwood is starting to shine as our new Grand Secretary, and it has been a true pleasure working with him. I know he thinks I need to pick up my copy of The Code and read it before I call him, but he never complains. I appreciate his open mindedness with my particular approach to new ideas and experiments; some were successes, and some need a little more polishing. More than that, I appreciate our friendship and the philosophical discussions that inevitably take place when we are together. Much love and respect.

While I dearly miss Cornelia Doherty, who retired in 2020, Vicki Lam, Hayley Moll, and W. Brother Matthew Robbins have stepped up and continue to deliver excellence in everything they do. They are always there to assist our lodges and are simply a delight to work with. This year I have been promoting W. Brother Matthew's lodge outreach program and the work that he has been doing for our lodges as they look for ways to take their meeting space from average to stunning. I cannot say enough about W. Brother Matthew's work in this area and what it is doing for lodge morale across this state! Thank you!

My Masonic journey started after conversations with Brother Thomas Allen Bruce of Georgia, W. Brother Terry Harris, Brother/Uncle Mickey Blake, Brother/Cousin Doc Byrd, most especially my late Brother/Uncle Lt. Col. Frank Cannon, USAF (Retired), whose Masonic ring I will be wearing at this Annual Communication. After much discussion, I petitioned Blackmer Lodge 127 with signatures from Brother/Cousin Doc Byrd and the late W. Brother Kenneth R. Fritts, PDDGM — the brother who always affectionately referred to me as “Rookie”. Once initiated, W. Brother Johnny Almond, my old neighbor, coached me through the catechisms. I could always count on W. Brother Johnny pulling up in his pickup truck (our coaching parlor) every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings. I owe all of these brothers a great deal for their patience and fortitude!

As you have already read in my writeup for the Montfort recipients, it was W. Brother William “Bill” Bruton, PDDGM, who made sure I was “plugged in” at all of the various appendant bodies and was instrumental in getting me

shipped off to Wilkerson College the first year the school was offered. A great mentor and friend!

M.W. Brother Lew Ledford, PGM, for some odd reason, appointed me Grand Tyler in 2011. I have no idea why, but I was happy to serve, and it was even more special serving with a fellow Appalachian State University graduate! Thank you for the opportunity!

I also want to thank my friend and mentor, M.W. Brother William “Billy” Dill, PGM, for having enough faith in me to suggest that I might be an “okay” replacement as Dean of Wilkerson College. It took quite a few years of hearing your sessions on planning, but a few things you taught registered with me. You are the only brother that I would allow to touch my beard as you placed the jewel of the office around my neck! I love and appreciate you!

None of this would be possible if were not for M.W. Brother Doug Caudle, PGM, who appointed me as Junior Grand Steward. After several unsuccessful attempts to get me and Ms. Angie to commit to dinner with him and his wife Angela, we finally relented and agreed to dinner at the Twisted Oak in Statesville. Little did I know! M.W. Brother Doug has to be the biggest daredevil of a Grand Master that we have had in recent history. Just blame M.W. Brother Doug if you don’t like something I have said or done my year as Grand Master! In all seriousness, I have thoroughly enjoyed working with M.W. Brother Doug as we Chartered Sophia Lodge No. 767, served in its ranks, and simultaneously served the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. Your confidence in me, your solicited wise counsel and, most importantly, your friendship places me forever in your debt. Thank you so much, it has been an honor that I will never forget!

Last, but certainly not least, I owe my family and my lovely wife Angie a great deal of gratitude. They have been my biggest supporters (Hey, when you get your to-go food order and your name on the order is “Most Worshipful,” you know they support you, right?) and they have sacrificed while I have been on the road or busy at home with Zoom meetings over these past eight years. My youngest daughter was present in Winston-Salem for the 2014 Annual Communication when she was just two weeks old! I have been busy with Masonic activities since she has been in this world and she often asks me, “Daddy, where are you going tonight?” I love you all and thank you from the bottom of my heart for your love and support! I absolutely could not have done this without you!

All of the material in this section was written as part of my Interim Report prior to the 2022 Annual Communication. On October 15, 2022, I was leading a group of brothers riding motorcycles on our way back to North Carolina from Ft. Worth, Texas when I had an accident in a road construction zone near Marshall, Texas. The motorcycle I was riding was destroyed and I suffered a severe break in the right femur that required surgery in Longview, Texas. While in the hospital in Longview, I was visited by M.W. Brother Brad Billings, Grand Master of Masons in Texas, W. Brother Jack Weldge, DDGM, and W. Brother Claude Hammond who brought gifts and well wishes from the Freemasons of Texas. During my stay at the hospital, I discovered that the Chaplain as well as the head of Food Service were both Freemasons who made sure the staff all knew that they had a very special guest on the 3rd floor. I wanted for nothing.

Among the brothers that remained with me in Texas, one deserves special

attention. Brother Larry Payne made sure that my family received constant updates, served as my valet, and worked hard to make sure that I was able to get transported as comfortably as possible back home. Thank you, Brother Larry!

Once back home I was inundated with well wishes through phone calls, text messages, emails, and cards. I received so many cards from individuals and lodges that it would have taken me weeks to respond to them all. One especially touching package was delivered to me from our children at the MHCO. Their handwritten notes truly brightened my day!

This unfortunate accident curtailed my remaining plans for the years and I, unfortunately, had to cancel many visits the last few weeks of my term to focus on getting well. One thing that is for sure: your prayers, support, and outpouring of love were profoundly impactful – thank you! I am a lucky man, and I am a better man for having this opportunity. I am forever grateful for your trust.

Humbly yours,
Larry B. Thompson, Jr.
Grand Master, 2022

Interim Report
of
Grand Master
Kevan D. Frazier
to
the
Grand Lodge
of
Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons
of
North Carolina
at
Winston-Salem, North Carolina
September 29, 2023

To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina, Grand Lodge Officers, Past Grand Masters, Past Grand Officers, Officers of Constituent Lodges, Voting Delegates to the Annual Communication and Brethren all:

Love Your Neighbor and Lead a Reformation

Last year, Grand Master Thompson called for a Masonic Revival, a time to return our focus to Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, and a time to prepare ourselves to do the work necessary to revitalize our institution. Revivals are about remembering and reconnecting with our values and grounding ourselves as we reinvigorate ourselves and our institutions. From this work we discovered that while our core values remain a strong and vital as ever, some of our operational systems have become outdated and outmoded. The pandemic both exposed and accelerated the need to reform some of our practices so that we might better live our values.

Even though we are emerging out of Covid, we still face a pandemic, a pandemic of selfishness and self-centeredness in our culture. Whether from greed, fear, or simple ignorance, we have become way too much about ME and not about WE. You see it in our politics, our social media, and in our institutions, including, at times, our own. The rhetoric has become vitriolic. We seem unable to disagree with each other without hatred in our hearts, or invectives on our lips. We get caught in the trap of otherness, turning our backs on those who don't look, act, or believe as we do. I truly fear that this self-centeredness will unravel our great Republic, a Republic built on communitarian values of neighbor helping neighbor and love for our fellow man. Our communities, our country, and our world, are calling out to us as Masons, to step up yet again, to spread our tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, to transform our society, to move from a culture of ME to one of WE. We are being called upon not to just AID, but to LEAD a Reformation. Let Brotherly Love, Truth, and Relief be our charge and let us start this reformation at home.

First and foremost, let me be clear:

THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH MASONRY.

MASONRY IS NOT BROKEN.

MASONRY IS NOT OBSOLETE.

MASONRY IS NOT DYING.

It is as relevant today as it has been for centuries. The tenants of our fraternity are still the foundation of a great society, our landmarks are still the guideposts of a transformative organization, and our leadership still an essential working tool for our communities.

Masonry will outlast us all. The only question is are we willing to do the

work right now that is needed to ensure that our beloved fraternity remains a useful working tool in our communities today, that men might learn how to be better men so that they can provide much needed leadership in our society, now and centuries into the future.

To Lead this Reformation, we have got to sharpen our working tools. And while the pandemic has worn down many of our tools, if we are honest with ourselves, we will acknowledge that many of them were already dull. Brothers, there is no need to debate what dulled them. We've learned our lessons from the past and know what to do moving forward. Let's just pull out our whetstones and our flints so that our tools are sharp as we hew our Ashlars toward perfection.

Can a group of 30,000 men in North Carolina change the world? Absolutely! It was a handful a Masons in a tavern in Boston who cooked up a wild scheme to throw tea off a ship in the harbor that ushered in a revolution, a new nation, and the transformed of the world.

The very tenants of our order, Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, are our starting points. They reflect that simple put important call from the Great Architect of the Universe, to love our neighbors and that Masonic foundation of meeting on the level.

The level is a tool made use of by stone masons for laying horizontals so that a building doesn't lean to one side or the other, lest over time it collapse. As Freemasons we use the symbol of the level to illustrate the fundamental equality of humans. Masons meet on the level by stripping off all of the distinctions that the outside world, such as religion, politics and race, which are used to separate us. By stepping away from the distinctions that separate us, we can work together to improve ourselves, helping each other to learn how to be better men so that when we leave our sacred retreat and mix again with the world, we can do good unto others.

The Grand Master's pin this year is a visual representation of the fundamental quality of all human beings. It is an antique level, to remind us that Mason meet on the level and that the Great Architect of the Universe gave us one great commandment, TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS. And that he does so with no qualifiers as to gender, race, sex, sexuality, religion, social class, wealth, or any other characteristic. It is not "love this neighbor but not that one", it is simply, "love your neighbor."

In the days before modern bubble levels, antique levels had a string and pendulum suspended in the middle, which had to be adjusted periodically. On my pin you will notice that the pendulum is hanging a little low, indicating that its needs to be recalibrated, as a reminder that as humans we must continually recalibrate our efforts to meet people on the level.

Meeting on the level is how we in Masonry approach that one great commandment from our Creator, and that work begins, first and foremost at home. Harmony being the strength and support of all institutions, but more especially our own.

Harmony within leads to harmony without. Working together as Masons within our own fraternity will strengthen our work as leaders in our communities. Let us find common ground with each other in the lodge as practice for doing the same when we leave our sacred retreats. From 2023 and beyond, let us Lead a Reformation.

Communication, transparency and proper instruction are keys to leading a reformation and the foundation of much of my work this year as Grand Master.

Grand Master's Videos

This year I have been sending regular video message to the Craft to talk about key issues facing the jurisdiction. Comments from brothers indicate the video have been well received and that brethren appreciate the transparency.

Regional Meetings

I took a different approach to district meeting this year and piloted 5 regional meeting along the I-40 corridor and in metro Charlotte. These were as day-long workshops designed to given brethren the training and tools they need to strengthen their lodges. It is unreasonable to expect Masons to do good work without the tools to do so. Additionally, several traditional district meetings were held in smaller cities and more rural parts of the state.

NC Mason

In 2023 the *NC Mason* was retooled from a newspaper to a magazine. That has proven to be a heavy lift, made all the heavier with the retirement of Beth Grace, who served for several years as editor of the publication. Three issues of the *NC Mason* will be published in 2023 and a new long-term plan has been crafted for 2024 and beyond. The *NC Mason* is one of the largest single expenses of the Grand Lodge and its financial viability one of the elements of the proposed per capita increase by the Committee on Finance.

NC Masonic Foundation

I have spent a good amount of time with the brethren of the North Carolina Masonic Foundation to strengthen the ties that bind. The Foundation is an extraordinary tool that our brethren had the foresight to create nearly a century ago, long before such entities were the operational norm. Today NCMF manages a large portfolio of Grand Lodge, local lodge, appendant body, and Masonic charity funds. With its professional development staff, opportunities abound for growing the corpus to serve not only our traditional charities at the Masonic Home for Children and WhiteStone, but to grow our ability to support children and the aged, both in the fraternity and throughout North Carolina.

150th Anniversary of MHCO

This year marked the 150th Anniversary of the founding of the Masonic Home for Children in Oxford (MHCO). Over the past century and a half our home has helped more than 11,000 children grow up in a safe and loving community to go on to have prosperous and fulfilling lives. The 150th year kicked off on February 11, 2023, with a magnificent black-tie fundraising gala hosted by the Scottish Rite. Some 350 people attended the celebration. In June, following a Grand Lodge table lodge, the Eastern Star hosted a day-long ice cream social at the Home, which was attend by several hundred people. We look forward to the Homecoming celebration, sponsored by the Shrine, in

October and the traditional York Rite Christmas Observance in December. As part of this year's MHCO fundraising goal to increase the number of annual givers to the home, I issues the Grand Master's Challenge for every lodge to have at least 5 monthly givers and look forward to sharing the results in my final report.

Fraternal Friendship Fund

Several years ago as part of the reorganization of the Masonic and Eastern Star Home in Greensboro into WhiteStone, the MESH LLC was created to continue to support brothers and Eastern Star members who needed financial assistance to live at WhiteStone. A few years ago, the MESH LLC was rebranded into the Fraternal Friendship Fund and expanded its service to brothers and stars to not only include those living at WhiteStone, but also to provide assistance needed wherever they may reside throughout the state. As the 150th Anniversary of MHCO begins to wrap up we are kicking off a new campaign to increase the funding and expand the reach of the Fraternal Friendship fund with the goal of not only supporting Masons and Stars but eventually again people throughout North Carolina.

Lodge Anniversaries

Thus far, I have had the privilege to preside over the 250th Anniversary of the founding of St. John's Lodge #3 and the 200th Anniversary of Eagle Lodge #19's building in Hillsborough. More 100 plus-year anniversary celebrations are planned for the last quarter of 2023. It is exciting that we are moving to a time to be able to celebrate the lengthy presence of Freemasonry in North Carolina.

75-Year Award

I had the rare and extraordinary honor (along with Past Grand Master Mack Sigmon) of presenting Brother Edwin R. Church of Mt. Pleasant Lodge #573 his 75-year award. Brother Church become a Mason on November 27, 1948, and at age 98 remains an active member of his lodge and community. Only a handful of us will ever receive a 75-year award, and it was a true honor to be able to present Brother Church his certificate and pin.

Though I was not able to personally present every award, the following brethren also achieved this significant milestone in 2023 and are to be commended for their continued dedication and service to the fraternity:

Name	Lodge	Date Raised
Thomas J. Mann	Phalanx Lodge 31	June 29, 1948
Daniel A. Jones	Sanford Lodge 151	December 7, 1948
Richard C. Morgan	Vance Lodge 293	August 28, 1948
Warren B. Mathis, Jr	Snow Lodge 363	June 25, 1948
Meredith L. Craig	Newell Lodge 739	November 23, 1948

Mergers

This year I have so far approved the merger of Ocracoke Lodge #747, Hatteras Lodge #698, and Manteo #521, under the name Manteo #521. I have also approved the merger of Ashlar Lodge #765 and Atkinson Lodge #612 under the name Atkinson Lodge #612. Lastly, I recently approved the merger of Cabarrus #720 and Allen-Graham Lodge #695 to become Allen-Graham/Cabarrus #695.

Appendant Bodies

The Grand Lodge of North Carolina continues to have model relations with its appendant and related bodies which include: the Scottish Rite, the York Rite Bodies, the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, the Eastern Star, the Order of the Amaranth, the National Sojourners, DeMolay, Rainbow Girls, and a recently added Chapter of the Grotto. I had the honor of attending the installation of officers at two of North Carolina's three shrine temples, the statewide meeting of the York Rite Bodies, and to serve as the host Grand Master for Imperial Shrine, the international annual gathering of Shriners this year in Charlotte.

International Visits

In 2023, I had the pleasure to represent the Grand Lodge of North Carolina at the Tercentenary Celebration of Anderson's Constitutions of 1723, the document that frames modern Masonry. It was an honor to represent one of world's oldest Masonic jurisdictions at this important celebration of our Craft.

I was also honored to represent North Carolina at the World Conference of Grand Masters which was held this year in Jerusalem. This gathering of the global leadership of Freemasonry is not only a time of international brotherhood but an occasion to align our global fraternity. When we welcome a man to enter the West Gate we are not only welcoming him to our lodge but into a global brotherhood. It is why the ballot box is so important. Our vote for a man to receive the degrees of Freemasonry not only welcomes him into our lodge but into the jurisdiction and the entire global fraternity.

Montfort Event

I was pleased in March to convene the first ever gathering of living Montfort Award recipients. The Joseph Montfort Medal is the highest award that can be bestowed upon a Freemason by the Grand Master of North Carolina. Joseph Montfort was Treasurer of the Province of North Carolina, Colonel of Colonial troops, a patriot, and ardent Freemason. Montfort was most likely born in the colony of Virginia some time around 1724 and died in North Carolina on March 25, 1776. He was a member of Royal White Hart Lodge at Halifax.

Montfort's exuberance for the fraternity led to his commission as Provincial Grand Master on January 14, 1771. Montfort's commission, which hangs in the Grand Lodge Office in Raleigh, was granted by Henry Somerset, the fifth Duke of Beaufort and Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of England. Montfort's short tenure as Provincial Grand Master proved to be a watershed for the development of Freemasonry in North Carolina. Montfort tirelessly promoted and organized the fraternity into an

efficient and productive organization. He chartered at least ten lodges and helped reorganize a half dozen more and laid the foundation for the creation of the Grand Lodge in 1787. It was my honor that night to celebrate the previous recipients and present the Montfort Award to Past Grand Master Dwight “Mack” Sigmon, one of the finest men I know. It was one of the great highlights of my Masonic career to recognize so fine a Mason as Past Grand Master Sigmon.

Table Lodge

While a number of lodges in North Carolina hold annual table lodges — lodge gatherings that intertwine dining and an emergent communication — it was my honor to call the first table lodge of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina in over 200 years. The gathering was also intended to reignite St. John’s Day, one of Freemasonry’s most important holidays, and one that has fallen out of use in recent decades in our jurisdiction. The Grand Lodge Table Lodge was also part of the celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the founding of our children’s home in Oxford.

The Ties That Bind Vermont and North Carolina

In 2018, Zion Lodge #81 was nearly destroyed as a result of Hurricane Florence. The lodge building was not only damaged, but Zion lost most of its lodge furnishing as well. It so happened that Brother Paul Mosher’s lodge in Vermont was merging with another lodge and had a lodge full of furnishings it no longer needed. With the help of Grand Secretary Walt Clapp and Worshipful Brother Johnny Surlis of Zion Lodge, the furnishings from the Vermont lodge were gifted to Zion. Jump ahead to 2023, and Brother Mosher is now the sitting Grand Master of Vermont, and he and I had the privilege of presiding over an extraordinary night recognizing brothers helping brothers. It was a bit of a teary-eyed night as the depths of our fraternal brotherhood were shared.

Honorary Title of Past District Deputy Grand Master

It is my privilege to recommend that this Grand Lodge grant the honorary title of Past District Deputy Grand Master to the following brethren who have completed their respective terms of service and who are now eligible to receive this honorary title in accordance with The Code:

Name	Lodge	District
Jerry O’Neal Combs	Manteo Lodge No. 521	2
Brian Keith Phelps	Charity Loge No. 5	5
Warren George Taylor	Doric Lodge No. 568	7
Warren George Taylor	Doric Lodge No. 568	7
Matthew Trey Korff	Queen City Lodge No. 602	9
Aaron Bruce Jackson	Mingo Lodge No. 206	11
Thomas Roland Jackson, III	Kenly Ldodge No. 257	16
James Leonard Pugsley	Lebanon Lodge No. 391	17

Herman Lester Reeves, Jr.	Carthage Lodge No. 181	21
Andrew Ray Hartman	Allen-Graham Lodge No. 695	28
Gary Lee Cooke	West Gate Lodge No. 738	31
Brian McKennley Turner	Matthews Lodge No. 461	32
Randall Jerry Collins	Waynesville Lodge No. 259	40

Honorary Title of Past District Deputy Grand Lecturer

Likewise, I am privileged to recommend that this Grand Lodge grant the honorary title of Past District Deputy Grand Lecturer to the following Brethren who are now eligible in accordance with The Code:

Name	Lodge	District
Douglas Heath Brickhouse, Sr	Eureka Lodge No. 317	1
James Warren Cook, Jr	Widow's Son Lodge No. 519	8
Daniel Lee Short	St. Paul's Lodge No. 474	17
Jerry Randolph Browning, III	Blackmer Lodge No. 127	24
Roy Carlton West	Lexington-Memorial Lodge No. 473	27
Robert Alexander Burgess, Jr	Union Lodge No. 618	28
Parker Colson Dunlap	Kilwinning Lodge No. 64	23
Edward Joseph Steel	Matthews Lodge No. 461	32
Patrick Gerard Howard	Junaluskee Lodge No. 145	41

Necrology

Since our last Annual Communication, we have lost 787 brethren to death. We grieve the loss of our brothers and know that they are now in a better place. We offer our continued thoughts and prayers to their families and thank them for sharing their loved ones with our fraternity during each of their Masonic journeys.

Lion and Pillar Lodges for 2022

The following lodges received recognition for their participation in the Lion and Pillar Lodge of Excellence Program and for their continued growth and active participation in their communities.

Platinum Level Lion and Pillar

Lodge	District	Location
St. John's Lodge No. 3	7	New Bern
Caswell Brotherhood Lodge No. 11	22	Yanceyville
Eagle Lodge No. 19	19	Hillsborough
Greensboro Lodge No. 76	23	Greensboro
Zion Lodge No. 81	7	Trenton

St. Alban's Lodge No. 114	18	Lumberton
Cleveland Lodge No. 202	35	Shelby
Mingo Lodge No. 206	11	Dunn
William G. Hill Lodge No. 218	14	Raleigh
Kenly Lodge No. 257	16	Kenly
Fuquay Lodge No. 258	15	Fuquay-Varina
Hibriten Lodge No. 262	34	Lenoir
Wilmington Lodge No. 319	12	Wilmington
Campbell Lodge No. 374	30	Troutman
Jefferson Penn Lodge No. 384	22	Reidsville
Lebanon Lodge No. 391	17	Hope Mills
Bald Creek Lodge No. 397	37	Burnsville
Bula Lodge No. 409	22	Burlington
Relief Lodge No. 431	16	Benson
Thomas M. Holt Lodge No. 492	22	Graham
Pilot Lodge No. 493	25	Pilot Mountain
Raleigh Lodge No. 500	14	Raleigh
Cannon Memorial Lodge No. 626	28	Kannapolis
Semper Fidelis Lodge No. 680	4	Jacksonville
Steele Creek Lodge No. 737	32	Charlotte
Old Town Lodge No. 751	26	Winston-Salem
Lux Libertas Lodge No. 772	19	Hillsborough

Standard Level Lion and Pillar

Lodge	District	Location
Oxford Lodge No. 122	13	Oxford
Dan River Lodge No. 129	22	Madison
Leaksville Lodge No. 136	22	Eden
Carthage Lodge No. 181	21	Carthage
Bingham Lodge No. 272	22	Mebane
Wallace Lodge No. 279	11	Wallace
Durham Lodge No. 352	19	Durham
Shallotte Lodge No. 727	12	Shallotte

Physical Disabilities

The Code requires District Deputy Grand Masters to individually meet with any petitioners who state they have a physical disability in order to be able to advise the Grand Master as to whether the petition should proceed through its normal process. This process is in place to help determine whether any physical concessions might be needed during degree work, as well as if the

applicant would be able to proceed through the degrees and if he would become an immediate financial burden to the lodge.

As of the date of this report, the Grand Lodge has forwarded sixteen (16) such petitions during my tenure. Based on the information provided by the District Deputy Grand Masters as gleaned from their personal interviews with the petitioners, I was able to approve all sixteen (16) petitioners to proceed through the degrees.

Dispensations

During the period from December 3, 2022, through August 25, 2023, I issued sixty (60) Dispensations for various lodge needs and situations. Listed below are the Dispensations issued:

1. Master two lodges - Widow's Son 519
 2. Master two lodges - Millbrook 97
 3. Move stated - Southern Pines 484
 4. Election of officers - Yadkin 637
 5. Other place - Knights of Solomon 764
 6. Elect Senior Warden - Mooresville 496
 7. Other place - Cherokee 146
 8. Elect Master - Angier 686
 9. Conduct business at emergent - Excelsior 261
 10. Elect Master - Chadbourn 190
 11. Elect Master - Unanimity 7
 12. Other place - Knights of Solomon 766
 13. Move stated - Orphans 761
 14. Brunswick Town Degree- Lux Libertas 772
 15. Elect Senior Warden - Palmyra 147
 16. Move stated - South Fork 462
 17. Move stated - Phoenix 8
 18. Other place - Knights of Solomon 774
 19. Elect Master - Proctorville 643
 20. Elect Junior Warden - Greenville 284
 21. Move stated - Neill S. Stewart 556
 22. Other place - Knights of Solomon 768
 23. Other place - Manteo 521
 24. Other place - Knights of Solomon 776
 25. Other place - Veritas 769
 26. Other place - Berne 724
 27. Virtual stated - Wilkerson College 760
 28. Other time - Southern Pines 484
 29. Other time - Royal White Hart 2
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30. Degree at other place - Lux Libertas 772
31. Elect Senior Warden & Junior Warden - Greenville 284
32. Elect Junior Warden - Pigeon River 386
33. Elect Master - Revolution 552
34. Other place - Knights of Solomon 766
35. Outdoor Degree - Greenville 284
36. Outdoor Degree - Orphans 761
37. Other place - Fellowship 687
38. Move stated - William G. Hill 218
39. Elect Junior Warden - Friendship 763
40. Elect Senior Warden & Junior Warden - Albemarle 703
41. Move stated - Thomasville 214
42. Other place - Knights of Solomon 766
43. Outdoor degree - Carthage 181
44. Move stated - Mingo 206
45. Elect Junior Warden - Kedron 387
46. Other Place - Wilkerson College 760
47. Emergent Communication - Denton 404
48. Move stated - Palmyra 147
49. Cancel stated - Cannon Memorial 626
50. Cancel stated - Perquimans 106
51. Other place - William G. Hill 218
52. Cancel stated - Orr 104
53. Harvest moon degree - Union 618
54. Other place - Widows Son 519
55. Cancel stated - Gate City 694
56. Other place - Gate City 694
57. Cancel stated - Zion 81
58. Other place - Phalanx 31
59. Other time - Greensboro 76
60. Move stated - Liberty 45

Orders

During the period from December 3, 2022, through August 25, 2023, I issued three (3) Orders. Listed below are the Orders issued:

1. **To Red Springs Lodge 501:** for the purpose of declaring the election of the lodge's officers null and void and ordering a new election, due to the original election taking place on a date other than that prescribed in the lodge's bylaws without prior dispensation from the Grand Master. Issued December 12, 2023.

2. **To Holly Springs Lodge 115:** for the purpose of declaring the ballot null & void and ordering a re-ballot on a petition for Brother CJB by Holly Springs Lodge 115 due to the failure of the Lodge to follow proper affiliation certification procedure prior to balloting on the application. Issued July 20, 2023.
3. **To Stokesdale Lodge 428:** for the purpose of declaring the ballot and subsequent election & installation as lodge Secretary null & void and ordering a re-ballot on an application for affiliation for Brother WTT, Jr., by Stokesdale Lodge 428 due to the failure of the Lodge to follow proper affiliation certification procedure prior to balloting on the application. Issued August 4, 2023.

Acknowledgements

It is a great honor to serve as the 170th Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina. I am thankful to W Brother J.R. Yarnall for introducing me to Freemasonry. At the time he was the husband of a work colleague who hosted me and my friend Steve Green for dinner at the Asheville Masonic Temple one night before a stated communication. The camaraderie and warm reception we received, coupled with the history and intrigue of Masonry got us hooked. I am thankful that my entire Masonic journey has been with one of my oldest and dearest friends and business partner, W Brother Steve, as well as with my other business partner and buddy, Brother Jason Riggs. There are not words to express my appreciation for their friendship and brotherhood.

To the brothers of my home lodge, Mt. Hermon Lodge 118, thank you for your years of support. Serving on the Grand Line has often meant not being present at my home lodge. I am especially grateful to W Brother Yarnall and W Brother Lonnie Darr for being my coaches and for W Brother Gus Sims for teaching me all the degrees as I moved through the chairs at Mt. Hermon.

When Past Grand Master, Most Worshipful Brother Bryant Webster asked me to join the Grand Line in 2015, I was beyond surprised and said bluntly “Well, no one will win the bet this year on your appointment to the line.” At that point, I had not been involved with NC Masonry at a statewide level. State office was not something I was seeking. He said he knew, and that was why he was asking me to serve, to help stir things up a bit, modernize, and bring NC Masonry into the twenty-first century. I’ve worked to do that since the day I was appointed.

I am proud to be a Mason and especially to be a Mason in North Carolina. While we still have much work to do, our hearts and minds are in the right place as we continue to serve our communities. As one of the older Grand Jurisdictions in the world, it is imperative that we continue our leadership role within the greater fraternity. We are fortunate in North Carolina to have a great team of professionals managing the daily affairs of Freemasonry to help us achieve our goals. The administrative team at the Grand Lodge Office is one of the very best in the country. Vicki Lam, Hayley Moll, and W Brother Eric Green go above and beyond every day in service to our Craft. With some 30,000 members and 350+ lodges, ours is not a small operation. I am also thankful for the able leadership of Right Worshipful Brother Jonathan Underwood, our Grand Secretary, and Worshipful Brother Matthew Robbins, our Assistant

Grand Secretary. Simply put these men are brilliant, they serve the fraternity well beyond their compensation, and their talents not only serve our Craft but propel it forward. I am honored to be both their brother and their friend.

Our Grand Lodge in North Carolina is not just surviving but thriving thanks to an extraordinary group of leaders who serve in our Grand Line. It is an absolute pleasure to serve with them. Each lead our Craft well. I want to especially recognize Deputy Grand Master Don Kehler who has worked arm in arm with me this year. Thank you, too, to our great group of Past Grand Masters. What a blessing it is to have the Wisdom of Solomon only a phone call away.

I want to offer my heartfelt thanks to our District Deputy Grand Masters and our District Deputy Grand Lecturers. Brothers would likely be surprised at how often these important leaders are called into action. Let me also acknowledge the leaders of each of our lodges including brothers that wear the jewels and those that wear white aprons. It is at the lodge that Masonry is practiced and cultivated. Thank you for your dedication to our Craft. I also want to offer a special note of thanks to Veritas #769 and to Nichols-West Asheville #650 for the kind gift of honorary membership. Likewise, being a civilian, I am humbled to have been given honorary membership in the National Sojourners. What an honor to be part of this body which brings together Masons who have served in the Armed Forces.

My mom did not live to see me serve as “grand poohbah,” as she called it. My dad is no longer mobile but has gotten to see this journey in photographs. I am so thankful to them for their unconditional love and support, and for bringing me up in a household where everyone had worth and no one was ever disparaged because of race, gender, religion, or anything else. Likewise, my friends outside of the fraternity, especially Griffin, Bradley, Chris, and Greg, who have been so supportive of this journey that they know so little about. I am truly blessed to be surrounded by a family of blood relatives and dear friends, who offer their love so freely.

There is nothing wrong with Masonry. Masonry is not broken. Masonry is not obsolete. Masonry is not dying. It is as relevant today as it has been for centuries, but it does face several important challenges as we continue to transform into a twenty-first century organization. What I do know for sure and what I do know for certain is that we are up to the challenge and that we will thrive and not just survive. May the Great Architect of the Universe continue to bless our work.

Respectfully and Fraternally,
Kevan D. Frazier
Grand Master, 2023

Necrology Service

Opening of the Grand Lodge of Sorrow

OPENING PRAYER

Grand Chaplain

GRAND MASTER: What man is he who lives, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? (Psalm 89:48)

RESPONSE: Man walks in a vain shadow; he heaps up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them.

GRAND MASTER: When he dies, he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him.

RESPONSE: Naked he came into the world, and naked he must return.

GRAND MASTER: I now declare the Grand Lodge of Sorrow for the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina open. Let all who are present join with us in remembering our deceased brethren. The chairman of Necrology will lead our devotion. *

ORATION

Most Worshipful A. Gene Cobb, PGM

EULOGIES FOR PAST GRAND MASTERS

***REMEMBRANCE OF ENTERED APPRENTICE, FELLOW CRAFT, MASTER MASONS

A white rose is placed for each, a candle is lit, a silence is held.

MASTER: The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

“Let us live and die like the righteous, that our last end may be like His!”

RESPONSE: God is our God forever and ever; He will guide even unto death!

MASTER: Almighty God, into your hands we leave with humble submission the souls of our deceased brethren.

FUNERAL GRAND HONORS

MUSIC

Amazing Grace

Amazing grace how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.

**When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun.**

GRAND MASTER: The purposes of the Committee on Necrology having been accomplished; we will now close this Grand Lodge of Sorrow. Before I declare this Grand Lodge of Sorrow closed, Brother Grand Chaplain, lead our devotion.

CLOSING PRAYER

GRAND MASTER: I now declare the Grand Lodge of Sorrow for the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of North Carolina opened and closed for 2023. Let us not forget those we have remembered today. *