

January 2024



Connecticut FREEMASONS



2023- 2024 Officers of the
Grand Lodge Af & AM
of Connecticut



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Assistant to the Grand Master



Table of Contents

Felix Sit Annus Novus MMXXIV 3

Grand Master's Appeal, Connecticut Freemasons Foundation 4

Grand Master's Message - Joseph J. Porco 5

Welcome to Our New Brothers! 6

Grand Chaplain's Corner 7

Called by The Grand Architect..... 7

We Are Your Masonicare 8

From the Desk of Jon-Paul Venoit..... 9

Submission Guidelines for Connecticut Freemasons and
How to Make a Great Article 10

Helping Our Furry Friends 10

Lafayette Consistory, AASR..... 11

Sphinx & Pyramid Shriners..... 12

Being A Lodge Officeris More Than Just a Title 13

How Dare We Be Masons in the 21st Century?..... 14

Districts 1-5 15-22

The Masonic Family Does Not Shy Away from Helping Kids 23

Brian Keith Receives Pierpont Edwards Medal in Bronze 24

Robert Eubanks Receives Pierpont Medal in Bronze 25

COCA Partners with House of Heroes CT 27

Turkey Trotting for Children with Dyslexia 28

Pyramid Shriners Fund Raise for Needy Children 28

Districts 6 & 8 29-32

Booster Lists 33

Masonicare is Here for You..... 34

Craft At Labor 35

We're Still Going to the Dogs..... 35

Masonicare..... 36

Letters, articles, and advertisements may
be sent to the Editor Frank Way
at **submissions@ctfreemasons.net**
and are due on the 10th of the month prior
to the next issue.

Not just a man. A Mason.



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Felix Sit Annus Novus MMXXIV

by Francis G. Way

Marking the passage of time is as old as mankind itself. In our society, our calendar, the Gregorian calendar, is a refinement of the Julian calendar that dates to 45 AD and which, in turn, was a refinement of an even earlier Roman calendar. The Gregorian calendar is a solar calendar, and most solar calendars begin their year near the winter solstice. Thus, at the stroke of midnight on January 1, our new year begins.

Traditionally, the new year is a time for resolutions, for many people to resolve to change or add some behavior that will improve their life. Folks who regularly workout throughout the year in a gym are all too familiar with the influx of what we like to call “the January people.” They come, and grunt, and try to lift too much weight, and show off their new workout outfits, and are usually gone after about three weeks when they lose steam. Regulars breathe a sigh of relief and no longer have to wait for machines or benches. But some do stick with it and have success and are assimilated.

Our Most Worshipful Grand Master’s message this month highlights a new way to think of January and is worth contemplating. In fact, we might just do better implementing his idea than making resolutions.

The new year is an exciting time in Freemasonry as well. The symbolism of an old man and new baby representing the changing year is apt for our fraternity. A Worshipful Master, his year completed, his plan worked and executed, will join the ranks of the Past Masters (and perhaps begin prefacing

his remarks with the age-old introit of “In my year...”). A new Worshipful Master is installed in the Oriental Chair and begins his year of work. Any brother who has presided over a lodge knows that exhilarating and fearful moment, when, for the first time after rapping the gavel, all eyes turn to him to open or close. That, as they say, is when the rubber meets the road.

Officers advance chairs and assume new responsibilities that will help them grow toward the Oriental Chair. The design of the progressive officer line is a well-engineered structure and in combination with other training and good mentorship it contributes to forming good Worshipful Masters. Care should be taken in choosing new officers, but once chosen, they should be helped whenever and however it is needed in their growth.

New programs, the ideas of the new Master, commence, while commitment to other continuing programs is renewed.

To the new Worshipful Masters, we say good luck and remember to take a moment to stop and enjoy the ride. Your year goes exceedingly quickly, even if it doesn’t seem like it right now. To new and advancing officers we say savor the journey. Each chair has a particular character and feel and that in itself is an enjoyable thing.

To everyone, wheresoever dispersed, we say

Happy New Year. May the Grand Architect bless you and yours with health, and happiness. And above all, enjoy each day for the divine gift that it is.





CONNECTICUT FREEMASONS FOUNDATION, INC.

A 501(c) (3) Tax Exempt Organization

of the GRAND LODGE of ANCIENT FREE & ACCEPTED MASONS
of the STATE of CONNECTICUT



Joseph J. Porco.
Grand Master



PO Box 69
Wallingford, CT 06492

My Brothers, Family, and Friends,

We are taught that Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth are the foundational principles that unite us in this great fraternity. These principles are the basis for the formation of the Connecticut Freemasons Foundation, Inc., our 501(c)3 charitable arm. It is my honor this year to appeal to you to support the vital charitable activities of our Foundation, by making a tax-deductible contribution to the Connecticut Freemasons Foundation, Inc.

I have singled out three options for your special consideration. You may split your gift, if desired. Please check choices in the return section and indicate the amount of your gift that you desire to restrict to that category. A gift of any size is meaningful, so please consider contributing whatever is within your means. Thank you for your consideration of this appeal.

- First is our Grand Almoner's Fund. We are reminded continually of the importance of providing for "the relief of poor distressed Master Masons, their widows, and orphans." Our Almoners provide a focus for ensuring this duty is carried out and the fund is an important element of that relief.
- Second is our Matching Grant Program. It is designed to encourage Lodges to actively support charitable causes in their local communities by having the Foundation match the cash gifts made by the Lodges to those 501(c)3 charities. The size and scope of this activity will depend on the support you give to it in this Appeal. The goal is to raise enough to match up to the first \$1,000, on the dollar that Lodges gift to qualifying entities.
- Third is our General Endowment Unrestricted Funds Option which enables the Board of Directors to utilize the funds for any pressing circumstance which arises. In the past we have provided help to relieve human suffering caused by devastating hurricanes, tornadoes, and fires. We are one fraternal body, wherever so dispersed.

Fraternally,

Brother Joseph J. Porco
M.W. Grand Master 2023

The CT Freemasons Foundation is a 501(c)(3) corporation organized to accept tax deductible contributions. Your gift may be restricted by designating your specific charitable choice from the above list in the memo section of your check.

Your support for 2022 totaling \$152,416 includes donations to:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Grand Almoner's Fund | • George Washington National Masonic Memorial |
| • Grand Lodge Matching Grant Program | • Masonic Medical Research Institute |
| • CT DeMolay | • Masonic Model Student Assist Program |
| • International Order of Rainbow for Girls | • Masonic Service Association |
| • CIP (Child Identification Program) | • Masonic Organ Donor Program "Donate Life" |
| • The Masonic Charity Foundation/ Quality of Life | • Shriners Hospital: Boston Burns Unit/Hospital |
| • CT Freemasons Foundation General Endowment | for Children, Springfield |
| • 32nd Degree Children's Dyslexia Center of CT | |

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NOTE: Donations can be made via PayPal on the Grand Lodge website www.CTFreemasons.net
Located under "About Us" "The Connecticut Freemasons Foundation"

XXX-----XXX

Make check payable to: CT Freemasons Foundation – mail to PO Box 69, Wallingford, CT 06492-0069

To assist the Connecticut Freemasons Foundation in their ongoing work, I / we donate to the Grand Master's Appeal as follows:

_____ Grand Almoner's Fund
_____ Matching Grant Program
_____ General Endowment (unrestricted)
_____ Other-please note in the memo section of
your check

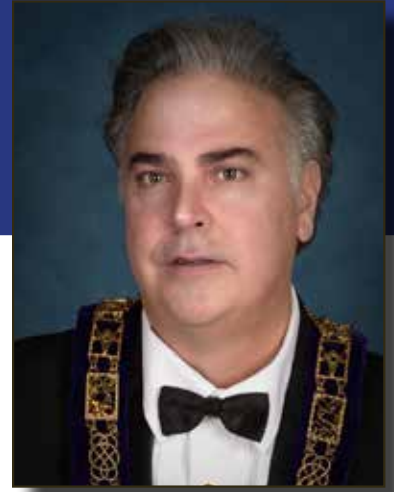
If your donation is "in honor of," or "in memory of," (circle one) a loved one, please include their name below:

Please send notice of my gift to: _____

Please have someone contact me about how to include the Connecticut Freemasons Foundation as a beneficiary in my will. _____

Grand Master's Message

by MWB Joseph J. Porco



A warm greeting to all.

Happy New Year! It is the presence of goodwill in all of our lodges that continues to make Connecticut Freemasonry the finest fraternal organization in the state. Brothers, thank you for the support you give to your lodge, the kindness you impart to distressed individuals, the charitable endeavors you engage in, and for the time you devote to welcoming in and mentoring new members. To all the family members reading this article, the Grand Lodge officers recognize that our men would not be able to accomplish half of what they do if it were not for your support, patience, and gracious nature. For all these things, we thank all of you.

It has been a blessing to witness the many acts of kindness across the state, especially during this holiday season. By the time you read this article, Hanukkah and Christmas will have passed, but the residual joy of the season hopefully remains. The celebrations and gatherings hosted by the lodges this year were terrific. Many gatherings were coupled with the gift-giving of toys for children outside of our own families and other undertakings for those in need of charitable support. The abundance of goodwill and fraternal care is enough to make any heart smile, maybe even that of T. Seuss Geisel's character, the Grinch. I recently read a long-forgotten article that outlined an interview with Geisel which stated that *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* was one of the easiest of his books to write because the theme was about himself. The story came to him in the morning, the day after Christmas when he noticed his own countenance in the mirror. He stated that he reflected upon his own frustrations and became moved to channel those energies into something positive. He came to understand his part in why something had gone terribly wrong with Christmas that year. To summarize, his demeanor was such that he pushed back upon the joy of the holiday season. He had drifted into a state of mind which resisted embracing hope and faith and the opportunities that awaited him in the New Year. It was as if he didn't want Christmas to come at all because he was not open to receiving the joy of it, due to laments resonating within himself. Perhaps we all temporarily feel that way at times. Life can be hard.

We each have unique circumstances and our personal plate can become full of challenging and stressful situations. Growing up, my father occasionally reminded me that no one ever promised that life

would be easy. My dad was a potent moral force in my life. At the time, I thought he was just grumpy. But through the years, the memory of his voice chimes through, usually when I need to pick myself up or persevere to tackle a circumstance.

Enthusiasm paralysis can happen to any of us, and we require a lift to reset. Sometimes we are simply tired or filled with grief for good reason. When these times come our way, we are so blessed to have friends who truly know us, care about us, and do not minimize our challenges as trivial. It is during these times that we as Masons are so fortunate. I am reminded of the words written by MWB Gail Smith in 2016, when he said, "*We are the recipients of an immeasurable treasure.*" The camaraderie we enjoy, along with the inspiration we receive, enables us to press onward, push through our troubles and continue on toward achievements that might otherwise never be accomplished.

In his article, The Unmistaken Handshake of a Friend, Bro. Gail stated, "*As Masons, we should occasionally remind ourselves of how fortunate we are to have brothers to celebrate our life with and take solace in times of difficulty, knowing that we are not on this pilgrimage of life all alone. In lodge and beyond, wherever we travel, we are extraordinarily privileged to find an open door, an extended hand, and a brother eager to help. Those that are not Masons may have never experienced this type of lasting fellowship or sense of welcome and perhaps never will.*"

Our ongoing engagement in Freemasonry provides an environment which encourages us to grow and become better men. Becoming a better man should make us better husbands, better fathers, or simply a better friend. A nice thought to reflect upon for the New Year.

As a theme, I think the month of January is less about resolutions and more about self-introspection and taking inventory. Such introspection should be balanced. I find it's more constructive to reflect upon the good in my life than to constantly identify areas that need improvement. Though I do admit there are areas I need to work on and none of us should complain about results that we don't get

Continued on page 6

The Grand Master's Message continued from page 5

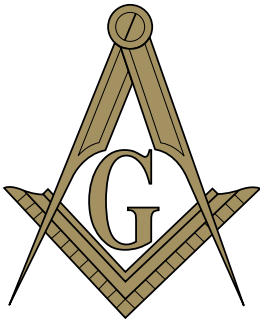
from work we have not done. We must continue to value ourselves and the good in our life if we are to remain of value to others.

Over the holiday, I had the opportunity to watch Frank Capra's 1946 American Christmas classic, It's a Wonderful Life. I love that movie. I think there is a little George Bailey in each of us, insofar as we can lose sight of the fact as to how important we are to those around us. Being present and genuine with others can be as important as sharing our talent and treasure. Occasionally we find ourselves tapped out and we need the help of a guardian angel like Clarence to remind us that our efforts are not in vain. **Please remember that you matter tremendously!** There are so many positive outcomes that would never come about if you were never born. Our presence and actions can help others recognize that the life they have been given is indeed a wonderful life.

In closing, I leave you with this additional quote from MWB Gail Smith... *"I often think about what this really means, how truly*

amazing it is and how fortunate I am to be a part of this organization. What an incredible gift we have to share with those who convey interest in the Craft."

I wish to thank Bro. Gail for that reminder and to thank all of you for your efforts in 2023. I look forward to what we can accomplish in 2024. God's blessings to all.



WELCOME TO OUR NEW BROTHERS!

Hiram Lodge No. 1
Christopher Sean Cunningham
Michael David Rudi Duncan
Samuel Earl Rollins

Fidelity St. John's Lodge No. 3
Christian Giovanni Alvarez
Gino Gatto
Harrison Hinkley

King Hiram Lodge No. 12
Branden Burke
Joseph Gaetano Milici

Moriah Lodge No. 15
Christopher Paul Bernier
Gahrett Tyler Bond

Putnam Lodge No. 46
Robert Stanley Dean, III
Justin Andrew Kupiec

Shepherd Salem Lodge No. 78
Thomas Patrick O'Brien

Anchor Lodge No. 112
Rock Destine
Justin Orcutt Kozikowski

Annawon Lodge No. 115
Richard Max Cordero
Joshua Charles Dwyer
Christian Barry Helwig
Peter Jeffrey King
Scott M. Shappy
Steven P. Shappy
John Terebessy
Joseph Viola, Jr.
Raymond Calvin Wrightington, Jr.

Cosmopolitan Lodge No. 125
Lucas C.H. Lee

Grand Chaplain's Corner

by Christopher J. Earle, Grand Chaplain



The Fruit of the Spirit

As has happened previously with my authoring these articles, I again drew my inspiration this month from remarks made by our MWGM Joseph J. Porco. He and I were blessed at the end of November to share the podium at the Masonicare Leadership Forum at Ashlar Village, which consists of all the management employees at Masonicare. I was being introduced to the staff as the new Chairman of the Board of Trustees and our Grand Master was asked to bring some words of encouragement on behalf of our fraternity. The Grand Master hit the ball out of the park!

He spoke about how, in their work with Masonicare, the staff represented what he called the "secret sauce." He has witnessed countless instances of kindness, faithfulness, patience, peace, joy, and love in the day-to-day work of these caregivers. He identified "The Fruit of the Spirit" referenced in the 5th Chapter of the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians: "The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no Law."

He continued that "caregiving" is mentioned often in scripture as it was deemed so important. In the Book of Genesis Chapters 48

and 49, Joseph arranged to move his father, Jacob, nearer to him in his old age that Joseph may care for him. The bulk of the Book of Ruth is devoted to Ruth migrating from Moab to Bethlehem-Judah to care for Naomi, her mother-in-law, after all of Naomi's relatives had passed away. And in the Books of Exodus and Deuteronomy, the care for people who were helpless and would have depended on the caregivers of their day are to be provided for and protected.

The professional staff at our Masonicare facilities (and I include food service, housekeeping, finance, Outreach, fund raising, grounds keeping et cetera in addition to nursing, nursing assistants, home care, hospice and palliative care in our "professional staff" as well as our volunteers) do this workday in and day out. They are all Angels among us. They are doing God's work and deserve the blessing in the 58th Chapter of Isaiah Verse 10: "And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day!"

Amen

We offer our condolences to the families and friends those brothers who have been called by The Grand Architect of the Universe.

Kalyan Kumar Chakravarti
Columbia Lodge No. 25

Lee Mather Harris
Anchor Lodge No. 112

Ernest H. Hintz
Hartford Evergreen Lodge No. 88

Peter Roy Huckle
Ansantawae Lodge No. 89

Richard G. Johnson
Harmony Lodge No. 42

Harold C. Mason
Hospitality Lodge No. 128

Paul Griffith McCoy, III
Putnam Lodge No. 46

Peter C. Nanos
Ivanhoe Lodge No. 107

Robert James Nearine
Friendship Tuscan Lodge No. 145

Donald H. Pitcher
Corinthian Lodge No. 63

Paul M. Proto
Madison Lodge No. 87

Walton Baldwin Schlechtweg
Fayette Lodge No. 69

George S. Shaw, Jr.
Putnam Lodge No. 46

A Q&A with Masonicare's New Board Chair

A lengthy career in banking and a deep connection to the Masonic fraternity positioned Bro. **Christopher J. Earle**, RW Grand Chaplain, for success in his new role as Chairman of the Masonicare Board of Trustees. This month, Bro. Chris reflects on the circumstances that led him to this opportunity and his vision for the future of Connecticut's largest nonprofit healthcare provider for seniors.

Q: What inspired you to become a Mason?

A: When I was 14 years old, I joined William P. Leete Chapter of the Order of DeMolay in North Haven. I had a successful DeMolay career, becoming State Master Councilor in 1975-76. The men that served as advisors in DeMolay were such impressive role models and mentors to me that I wanted to continue my association with them. I joined Trumbull Lodge No. 22 in New Haven as soon as I was of legal age.

Q: How did you get involved with Masonicare? How long have you been involved with Masonicare and in what capacity?

A: Members of Connecticut DeMolay have always held devotional services at Masonicare and have participated in major events, just as they do now. So, when I was 16 years old, I was the flagbearer at the

dedication of Masonicare Health Center's Ramage Building. As State Chaplain, I led the Mother's Day and Christmas devotional services in the Masonicare Chapel.

This service continued with giving tours of the Health Center as a District Deputy. In 2000, Bro.

Carleton Erickson, who has always been one of those mentors who made me want to be a Mason, asked me to serve on the board of Masonicare Home Health & Hospice, which I did for 10 years. I've also served nine years on the board of The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut. In 2019, I was elected to the Board of Trustees and served as Vice Chair until being elected Chairman in November.

Q: What do you hope to accomplish as Chairman?

A: I hope that we can continue the work of expanding our circle of care through additional facilities while maintaining the financial strength that the company has established over the last several years. On the board, we say "Without margin, there is no mission." That means that without positive cash flow, we can't afford to provide the services that we do. Masonicare is recognized nationally for doing just that. Our goal now is to maintain that.



We are *your* Masonicare.

Call us today at 1-800-982-3919 or visit masonicare.org

Masonicare 
An Ageless Commitment to Caring

From the Desk of Bro. Jon-Paul Venoit

President & CEO of Masonicare

Happy New Year! I hope you enjoyed a festive holiday season and that 2024 brings you good health and prosperity.

Exactly a year ago, I mentioned that Masonicare was working on an app that will give residents in our residential communities the ability to view the dining room menu, reserve space for private functions, request housekeeping services, view community calendars, stay up to date with upcoming events like social gatherings, support groups, and more, all from their mobile devices. I'm excited to share that the app, called MasoniCARECONNECT, is now in use at Masonicare at Ashlar Village in Wallingford and will eventually be in use at all of our communities. We're going to continue to invest in new technologies to meet the changing needs of everyone in our care.

From time to time, a Masonicare employee will provide care to someone who has worked in healthcare. The positive feedback we receive from these individuals is extra special because they tend to have high standards and know quality, compassionate care when they see it.

Such was the case recently when a wound care patient called in to compliment Desirae, a licensed practical nurse (LPN) at our Greater Hartford branch of Masonicare Home Health & Hospice.

The patient, a former nurse, told one of our Clinical Managers, Kayla, about how Desirae happened to be in the home for a scheduled visit when the patient's mother-in-law suffered an unexpected health crisis. Desirae stepped right in and was able to keep the family member safe until an ambulance arrived. The patient spoke about Desirae's kindness and professionalism and noted that she even learned a few things about wound care from Desirae.

I stopped by the branch offices with other members of Masonicare's leadership team to surprise Desirae with our ICARE

recognition award and learned that she is popular with clients and coworkers alike. Now in her fifth year with Masonicare, Desirae is currently studying to become a registered nurse and is set to begin her clinicals this month. I'm wishing her all the best as she takes this next important step in her career ... and hoping she'll apply for an RN position with us as soon as she earns her degree!



On the subject of homecare, I recently announced the hiring of Cherie Macri to become Director of Masonicare's LiveHome Care Navigation Program. I first became acquainted with Cherie when she was an undergraduate at Quinnipiac University working toward her bachelor's degree in occupational therapy. She came to work at Masonicare as a recreation therapist at Pond Ridge Assisted Living and as an occupational therapist at Masonicare Health Center and Masonicare Home Health & Hospice. In her new role, Cherie oversees all aspects of the LiveHome Care Navigation Program, working closely with the leadership of other Masonicare service lines to help clients attain and maintain their maximum potential to live safely and age in place at home. We'll have more to share about this program in a future issue of *Connecticut Freemasons*.

Sincerely and fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon-Paul Venoit".



Submission Guidelines for "Connecticut Freemasons" And How to Make a Great Article **by Frank Way**

As it is a new year, it's time once again to send a gentle reminder about the submission guidelines for the newspaper. Following these guidelines makes our job creating each issue much easier, especially given the volume of submissions we receive each month. Also included are a few tips for creating a good article. If you have questions about any of this, don't hesitate to ask.

1. Email submissions to submissions@ctfreemasons.net. (Please don't send to my personal email as I can guarantee you it will get lost in the volume of email I receive.)
2. Text content should be **in a docx, or txt format file attached** to the email. (Do not write the article in the email itself.)
3. Photos should be in **jpg, png, or gif format files attached** to the email. (Do not embed photos in the word doc.)
4. Photos should be of the highest resolution possible.
5. Photo captions should be included the word or txt file, not in the body of the email or filename of the photo. If they're not included in the word or text file, they will not be used.
6. Use original photos. Photos should not be downloaded from Facebook or other websites. They are downsized to allow web posting and are not of suitable size for printing.
7. Submit original material only. If your material has run in any other publication, at any other time, we need to know that and are required to request permission to reprint it.

Confirmation of your submission is by auto-response, triggered on the presence of an email attachment, so if you submit the right way you should see a confirmation it was received.

Ideas for making a good newspaper article:

- First, keep in mind that our humble publication actually has a far-flung audience, not limited to Connecticut brothers, and it is not out of the question that your article might be seen by a brother reading it in Grand Lodge of Montana's office. We've received reprint requests from far off jurisdictions, so consider this:
 - Include date and place the event happened.
 - Include full names of people involved. While we here in Connecticut might know them, others won't.
- Degree articles should, above all else, include the names of the candidates. Anything interesting about the degree should be highlighted. Who did the lectures and what food was served at dinner are not all that interesting, unless there's green beans. Always mention green beans LOL. (No, not really, food is boring, so don't.)
- If your brothers/lodge do something unusual, or have an interesting tradition, write an article. Brothers love getting new ideas from other lodges!

Helping Our Furry Friends **by Richard F. Denno**

Has your pet crossed over "the rainbow bridge?" Are you not going to get another one? Do you have equipment/supplies that could benefit other animals through the Connecticut Humane Society?

The Grand Lodge will be conducting a collection drive at the Grand Lodge Annual Communication on Saturday, April 6. Between now and then your lodge can put out a collection box and encourage brothers to donate their items. Have a brother who is attending the session bring those items and drop them off. The Connecticut Humane Society will send a truck to pick up the donations.

Please see the accompanying wish list for donation ideas.

General Supplies Needed:

- Collars and leashes
- Cat carriers and cat litter
- Dog and cat toys (in good condition)
- Laser pointers
- Treats such as Beggin' Strips, Benebones, Nyla Bones
- Bedding and blankets (must be clean)

A complete list may be found at:

<https://cthumane.org/ways-to-give/wish-list/> (short URL: <https://bit.ly/46YGERn>)



OF PHILOSOPHER'S STONES AND PERFECT ASHLARS

by John A. Amarilios, membership@lafayetteconsistory.com

The Valley of Bridgeport wrapped up a stupendous degree season with the 32nd Degree attended by over 27 candidates on Dec 4. The near overflow crowd at the theater was treated to the new encampment lecture that was recently reintroduced into the opening part of the degree. While the Valley takes its New Year's rest in January, the degree season for 2024 starts on Monday, February 5, with a live rendition of both the 4th and 5th Degrees. On Monday, February 26, the 12th Degree will be presented live with the 23rd Degree on video. Looking still further ahead, on Monday, March 25, the 15th Degree will be presented live, and the 9th Degree will follow on video.

The Lafayette Consistory News will issue in late January and will contain a full calendar of degrees for 2024. The LCN is distributed to members and affiliate members of the Lafayette Consistory by mail or can be picked up at the lobby of the theater in Stratford.

Family life activities include a Scotch and Cigar Night on January 12, at the Stamford Cigar Lounge and a brewery tasting at Two Roads in Stratford on February 3.



The Great Pillars that adorn the exterior of our lodge preparation rooms are often referred to as the Pillars of The Temple. They abstractly represent the importance of staying within due bounds in our thoughts and actions and in our reactions to persons and circumstances.

The pillars also allude to the two outer columns of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life representing the positive and negative extremes in life. In Kabbalah they are known as the Pillars of Mercy (alluding to the heart) and Severity (alluding to the mind). Every candidate must pass through between the pillars.

The point between the pillars represents safe haven for the developing candidate. You cannot successfully complete your work in the lodge if you do not slowly develop a healthy blending of the heart and mind. Failing to develop this balance is dangerous and leads to poor results in life.

In like manner, the work is alchemical in nature and hearkens back to the infamous Philosopher's Stone. The alchemists of antiquity employed three substances in order to attain the Philosopher's Stone. Salt, sulfur, and mercury are the substances required to attain the sought after stone. The chemicals of life allude to life experiences in alchemy. With salt, sulfur, and mercury, blended into the Philosopher's Stone along with the chemicals of life, the alchemist slowly develops the ability to transmute base metals into gold.

While the alchemist may be transmuting base metals into gold, the Mason is likewise transforming his rough ashlar into a perfect ashlar. The process is more or less identical. The alchemist eventually realizes that his body is the actual Philosopher's Stone, just as the Mason realizes the same about the ashlar.

In alchemy, the Philosopher's Stone is made hard and diamond-like when salt (spirit) and sulfur (body) are united though the use of mercury (the mind). The undeveloped man is tied to matter and of all his concerns are related to the material. As he begins to awaken and employs salt (spirit) he begins to leave one foot on Earth and begins to place the other in the heavens. His momentum towards the heavenly is stymied as his lower mind continues to tie him to matter.

The alchemist perseveres in his work of harmonizing salt and sulfur. Eventually though all the tragedies, hardships and hard knocks, the alchemist achieves his Philosopher's Stone, and the stone is as hard as anything found in this world, with facets that reflect the light in infinite directions.

You can thus see that the Masonic process of self-development is based on the method of the alchemist. The pillars are part of the process of reconciliation between the salt and the sulfur. Learning to steer between the two pillars is essential if we are to successfully negotiate and employ the chemicals of life, in order for us to attain our own individual Philosopher's Stone/Perfect Ashlar!



FIAT LUX!

As always, the Valley of Bridgeport, stands ready to help further your understanding of the Three degrees of Freemasonry. Should you have questions about the Scottish Rite, please feel free to contact me at the email address above or call the Consistory office at (203) 375-0064.

LAFAYETTE CONSISTORY



Attention All Master Masons!

SCOTTISH RITE DEGREES

Mon. Feb. 5, 2024, 7:30 p.m.

4th and 5th Degrees (Both Live)

Mon. Feb. 26, 7:30 p.m.

12th Degree (Live), 23rd Degree (Video)

Mon. March 25, 7:30 p.m.

15th Degree (Live), 29th Degree (Video)

Dinners are at 6 p.m. in the Shrine building
unless otherwise stated.

Reservations required. Call the
Consistory Office at 203-375-0064.

Contact the Consistory Office to arrange for seating and meals for any of the degree events.

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For more information, contact the Valley near you or email Membership@LafayetteConsistory.com.



Sphinx & Pyramid Shrines

by Eric Pogg



History has always been something that all Masons cherish; the Shrine is no different. Four years ago, Sphinx Shrine sold the building it occupied for the past half century. The preservation of historic documents and items has been a long process. Scanning of documents that have been piling up in storage rooms for decades is tedious at best. Some can be thrown out, some scanned and saved, scanned and shredded, and scanned and kept. Documents often found were in triplicate, stapled, and clipped. Each piece of paper had to be looked at for its value. Hundreds of hours have been dedicated to this process with more to come. Being part of the process, the knowledge of what past Potentates were thinking, what the units and clubs were doing, and the finances has been spectacular.

Some of the items that have been found are from other Masonic bodies, including Scottish Rite, York Rite, Grotto, Blue Lodges, and Tall Cedars. Sometimes when a member passes the family will return items to the Shrine. Most such items have been returned to the respective bodies. If the body no longer exists there are lodges in the state that have been displaying items in library's and museum rooms.

Along with the documents are the historic pictures. Past leaders of the Shrine, units in parades all around North America, circus pictures from 1907 at the Hartford Armory, group photos with over 100 members that are three feet in length, slides, and programs from the early 1900s have been found and are now presently stored. Cataloging and preserving these items even further is the next step. Naturally this comes with a cost. Replacing broken glass, frames, copying, and cleaning can be expensive. Old fezzes and uniforms are included in this preservation. Sphinx Shine will accept donations to help preserve these historic documents, pictures, and items. If you wish to do so, please send a check to Sphinx Shriners, P.O. Box 310157, Newington, CT 06111-0157 with historic preservation in the memo.

The newly formed Pyramid Drifters is under way. New vehicles are being made by its members in anticipation of the upcoming parade and competition season later in the year. This is a separate unit from the Pyramid Motor Patrol and Cycle Unit. All of the Sphinx and Pyramid motorized units are now working together to share parade information, knowledge, and most importantly, fun and fellowship.

Members of the Naugatuck and Kaabans Shrine Clubs have started to visit each other's dinner meetings. Both are in the same

geographic area and meet on different nights of the month which offers members a choice of restaurants as well as meeting nights. It is just another example of the Pyramid and Sphinx Nobles working together.

A joint installation of officers will be held at the New Haven Masonic Temple on January 13. As elections will be held after the deadline for this article, election results are presently unavailable. Another endeavor the two Shrines will be working on is the various car shows across Connecticut that benefit Shriner Children's. Working together should ensure that the Shrine is represented at every car show that we are asked to attend.

A thank you to Composite Lodge No. 28 in Suffield for hosting the Sphinx Ceremonial, and to Hartford Evergreen Lodge No. 88 for hosting the Sphinx Kids Holiday party (with Santa) in December. Many children were filled with plenty of sugar and a present before we handed them back to the parents. It's always a great feeling to see a smile on a child's face.

Mid-winter meeting will be upon us. The Mid Atlantic Shrine Association meeting will be held at the Tropicana Hotel in Atlantic City from April 11–14. The Northeast Shrine Association meeting will be held in Kingston, Ontario in April 18–21. Another date to mark on your calendars is April 25–28. This is the Membership and Marketing Summit to be held in Orlando, Florida. This summit is open to all Masonic bodies. Hosted by Shriners International, the summit has had presentations and speakers from various Masonic organizations and from successful businesses across the country. Go to the Shriners International web site to register for your lodge, chapter, council, assembly, or group.

Shriners Children's New England in Springfield is busier than ever. Since the transition from a hospital to a clinic the number of patients has increased, now averaging 100 patients per day. The clinic is now working with Shriners Boston on opening a burn clinic in Springfield. This will help families in Connecticut, New York and western Massachusetts with children that can be helped with minor burns or routine follow up. Shriners Children's...Helping More Kids in More Locations regardless of the ability to pay.

Being a Lodge Officer is More Than Just a Title

by **Todd E. Creason**

This is the time of the year when lodge officers are elected and installed. It's a privilege to be asked to take a chair in the lodge, and not a responsibility that should be taken lightly. It's a Leadership position and with it comes responsibility. It's not just a title.

First of all, if you're going to take the role, then learn the chair, don't just warm it. In fact, if you take the chair, you should already know it. I had a Mason tell me a few years ago after moving up into the next chair he "had a year to learn it." No, that is incorrect. You've got a year to learn the next chair. You should already know the chair you're in if you're in line. Officers shouldn't be learning chairs "on the job" while the lodge is trying to open and close. I've seen that too many times where Past Masters are feeding ritual and giving instruction to an officer that has no idea what he's doing during a regular stated meeting.

It's the responsibility of the officer to learn his chair. Most jurisdictions have regular officer training meetings – take advantage of them. If you want the job, you have to do the work. If you need help, then ask for it. I've spent a lot of time over the years in my garage practicing ritual. I've never been great at ritual but it's not for a lack of trying. In Freemasonry, when it comes to ritual, we seek perfection in our work, but at the very least if you prove competent, you'll get few complaints as long as you're making the effort.

Second, if you're going to take the chair, come to the meetings. You have accepted responsibilities when you take the chair. If you can't be there, then don't take the chair. Family and work responsibilities should always come before lodge. If your work life, or your family life makes it difficult to attend, then don't take on the additional responsibility of being an officer in your lodge.

When I was elected Master, I had to make a decision about one of our chairs in the lodge – our dais officers and Secretary and Treasurer are elected, and the other officers are appointed by the Master. As the newly elected Master, I took one of our members out of line. He'd only made a couple meetings in the last year, and we had several new Master Masons interested in being more involved in the lodge. It was the right decision to make, and I explained to him why it was the right decision. Fortunately, he wasn't too upset about it.

And how do I feel qualified to talk about this subject? It's because I've been there a few times over the years. I should have been pulled out of line on more than one occasion – I'm guilty of all the same things I've talked about here. I can't seem to say no, I wind up stretched far too thin, and wind up not knowing the work as well as I should and wind up doing a sloppy job at it.

And I'm not the only one that find himself in this situation. Many Masons find themselves in over their heads with their lodge, the York Rite, Shriners, Scottish Rite, Tall Cedars, Research Lodge, etc. I did an interview for a podcast a few weeks ago and joked I had a nice red Shriner's fez in my closet that I've worn exactly once – the day I received it. I have 15 membership cards in my wallet – I just counted them. I've taken chairs I shouldn't have because I should have known at the time by just looking at my calendar, I didn't have the time to dedicate to it. Over the last year, I've been learning to focus my energy a little more narrowly on just one or two things. As Abe Lincoln said, "Whatever you are, be a good one." That's my new rule.

As Masons, we have a tendency to get involved in a lot more than we should at times – always with the best possible intentions. It's a big fraternity, and for some of us it offers a lot of irresistible new experiences, and of course, we want to sample it all. But there's nothing wrong in being "just a Member."

If you're offered the chair, really think about it first:

1. Do you have the time to perform the duties right?
2. Are you able to attend regularly?

If you can't, then do everyone a favor and decline. They wouldn't have asked you if they didn't really need somebody to do all aspects of the station.

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How Dare We Be Masons in the 21st Century?

By Matthew F. Griffin

Masonic Education takes many forms, but seldom has such breadth and depth of knowledge been embodied in a single individual as with the featured guest of the November session of the Fifth District Blue Lodge Council, renowned author, and Brother Christopher L. Hodapp, of the Grand Lodge of Indiana.

Some 50 brothers assembled at the East St. Eatery in Wolcott for a marvelous meal and lots of cordial fellowship. Hosted by the brothers of Wolcott Lodge No. 146, the evening's talk, entitled "How Dare We Be Masons in the 21st Century?" stressed a Mason's greatest service to our fellow man lay in publicly demonstrating our landmarks of civility, respect, tolerance, and open discussion in these current days of cancel culture, litmus tests, doctrinal purity, and argument to any and all holding a differing opinion. The conduct taught within the lodge contains an answer to that element which is most lacking in present social interaction – respect for the worth and value of others. By keeping our tenants of respect without rancor, and a willingness to allow all of good will to differ without derision, we may lead others, by example, to return to toleration of our fellow citizen as an "equal who differs" instead of some "lesser folk," should they not agree (with me) in all things. Even Project Blue Wave was brought in to illustrate the desire of many individuals to fill a social void that the scorched earth approach to civil discourse cannot provide. We are being called upon to demonstrate outside the lodge once again what we have learned within it.

WB Chris has written for more than 20 years about Freemasonry, fraternalism, secret and secretive societies, the Knights Templar, and Masonic symbolism, and has been featured numerous times on NPR, History, Discovery, National Geographic, Smithsonian, and the American Heroes Channel. Most recently, he was featured on "The Curse of Oak Island – Drilling Down" and 'America's Book of Secrets' on History.

His website is the most widely read source of current national and international news about Freemasonry. His published works include *Freemasons for Dummies*, *Solomon's Builders*, *Deciphering the Lost Symbol*, *Templar Code for Dummies*, *Conspiracy Theories & Secret Societies for Dummies*, and *Heritage Endures*.



District 1

Lodges 3, 5, 6, 8, 19, 65, 67, 85, 104, 109, 107, 142, 144, 149



Universal Fraternity Lodge No. 149 Donates Turkeys

Before Thanksgiving, the brothers of Universal Fraternity Lodge No 149 donated turkeys to the needy in Bridgeport.



Union Lodge No.5 Celebrates 260th Anniversary by Patrice Murphy

On Saturday, November 18, brothers, and friends of Union Lodge No. 5 came together at a glittering cocktail party to celebrate, on the day of, the 260th anniversary of the lodge's original chartering in 1763. The anniversary was a powerful reminder of the staying power of Freemasonry in Connecticut.

WM David Cooper explained the brothers' purpose in hosting the formal event. "We wanted to introduce Union Lodge No. 5 to people who might not know us, and to highlight the lodge's long contribution to the development of the city of Stamford, the region, and the State of Connecticut. Union Lodge No. 5 was chartered before the Declaration of Independence, the fifth Masonic lodge in our state. We are proud of our history and our continued presence as Freemasons in the city of Stamford."

The celebration was enlivened by live jazz and American standards on piano and sax by Rob Silvan & Company. Delicious hors d'oeuvres and cocktails were provided by Marcia Selden Caterers.

The party was attended by 51 guests, which included Most Worshipful Grand Master Joseph Porco, Grand Junior Deacon Mark Hawkins, District Deputy James Peters and RWB David Menegon, past Senior Grand Deacon, Grand Lodge of New York. Past Master "Bill" Boon and his wife Laura flew in from Texas. The brothers also welcomed brothers and significant others from Westport's Temple Lodge No. 65 and other lodges from across the state. Two petitioners to Union Lodge also attended with their wives.

Brother Evan Delman led a successful effort to build awareness of Union Lodge's milestone among Stamford's government officials. In recognition of the lodge's significant role in the history of Stamford, Mayor Caroline Simmons officially declared November 18 to be "Union Lodge 5 Day". Also, State Senator and majority leader Bob Duff had the State of Connecticut General Assembly create an official citation to recognize and congratulate Union Lodge No. 5 AF&AM Stamford CT on its 260th anniversary. Both were read out at the celebration.

In a compelling speech, MWB Joseph Porco hailed the historic contribution of Freemasonry in Connecticut and the continued relevance of Masonic principles today. "The highly successful Blue Wave program initiated by the Grand Lodge of Connecticut is showing that modern men want what Freemasonry offers."

WM David Cooper went on to tell guests that a Masonic lodge is not the building per se – rather it is the brothers who come together in mutual brotherly commitment. "As Union 5 heads into its 261st year, we will be renewing our focus on masonic experience and fellowship and look forward to finding a new physical home – the supporting walls of our lodge – in the city of Stamford."

Washington Lodge No. 19 Annual Venison Table Lodge

by Roy Nealon

Washington Lodge No. 19 in Monroe held their annual venison table lodge in November. It was a full house, and everyone had a wonderful time!

WB Isack Wasserman and his assistant WB Anthony Agosto prepared an amazing meal. Dessert gets special mention with eight different types this year! Everyone had to have more than one slice.

Thank you to all the officers and brothers who make this event happen.



District 2

Lodges 13, 18, 21, 39, 40, 48, 49



A New Brother at Hiram Lodge No. 18

by Nathan Schoonover

On November 15, 2023, the brothers of Hiram Lodge No. 18 in Sandy Hook, performed an Entered Apprentice degree to initiate Brother Rohit Anand.

WM MWB George Greytak opened and closed the lodge while RWB Tony Neri, Past DD at Large, presided in the East for the degree. It was a wonderful evening enjoyed by brothers and guests alike.



Connecticut Masons in Florida Present 60-Year Pin

On November 13, 2023, RWB Dick Hubert and RWB Bill Hillman had the pleasure of presenting WB Peter Nordholm, of St. Peters Lodge No. 21 with his 60-year pin, at Villages Lodge No. 394 F&AM in Wildwood, Florida. All three brothers live at The Villages in Wildwood.

Through the efforts of MWB Joseph J. Porco, who coordinated with the Grand Lodge of Florida, Bros. Hillman and Hubert were able to help WB Nordholm celebrate this milestone.

WB Nordholm was raised in 1963 at Acacia Lodge No. 85 and served as Worshipful Master in 1973. He later affiliated with St. Peters Lodge and served as Worshipful Master there in 1989. In addition to the pin presentation, a letter was read from WB Mark Bagg, WM of St. Peters Lodge, and a WB Norhold also received a certificate.



(l-r) RWB Bill Hillman; WB David Windmiller, WM of Villages Lodge; WB Peter Nordholm, and RWB Dick Hubert

District 3

Lodges 7, 11, 12, 17, 42, 47, 55, 64, 78



Morning Star Lodge No. 47 Raffles Bikes at Santa Claus Meet 'n Greet

The town of Seymour has a yearly tradition that welcomes Santa Claus to town. More than 1,000 people gather to see Santa arrive by train at the train station and be chauffeured on a John Deere ATV to the American Legion Post to light the Christmas tree.

On December 2, 2023, Santa arrived. In conjunction with his visit, the brothers of Morning Star Lodge No. 47 held their 5th annual bike raffle. Lodge brothers passed the hat, donated their own funds (no lodge expenditure) and purchased six bicycles of varying sizes. Local children fill out a raffle ticket and have a chance to win the bike of their choosing.

This year was the biggest success yet. Many people filled out tickets and participated. The lodge banner was proudly displayed to let the people know of Masonry's good deeds and what the fraternity represents.

There is nothing better than seeing happy children receive new bicycles!



Harmony Lodge No. 42 Annual Awards and Necrology

by Shane Dufresne

On November 16, 2023, Harmony Lodge No. 42 held its annual Awards and Necrology Service. The necrology service is for members who have passed to that Celestial Lodge within the last year. WB Russ Griswold conducted the service.

The awards portion of the evening saw the presentation of pins for years of service and the also of the Robert S. Walker Award for Mason of the Year. MWB Robert Walker was a member of Harmony Lodge and served as Grand Master of Connecticut in 1928. Brothers Manny Tirado and Gary Byram received the award this year for excellence in Masonry and for going above and beyond.



RWB Griswold (left) conducts the necrology service.



Table set for those members who passed within the past year.



(l-r) Bros. Manny Tirado and Gary Byram receive the Robert S. Walker Award



(l-r) WB Matt Elwell, Bro. Manny Tirado and Bro. Frank Bombardier receive 10 year pins from WM Patrick Donnelly.



Martin J. Macary Mason of the Year Award Presented

by Shane Dufresne

On November 30, 2023, at the 3rd Masonic District Blue Lodge Council meeting, WB Robert Namias of Seneca Lodge No. 55 received the newly renamed Martin J. Macary Third District Mason of the Year Award from Terry Macary, widow of Marty, assisted by RWB Shane Dufresne.

(l-r) Terry Macary, WB Robert Namias, and RWB Shane Dufresne



3rd Masonic District Elects and Installs Officers 2024

by Shane Dufresne

At the 3rd Masonic District meeting in November, Steve Saxton, President; Douglas Barry, Jr., Vice President; John Stack, Secretary/Treasurer; and Mitch Goldburgh, Chaplain were elected and installed as officers for 2024.

(l-r) Douglas Barry Jr, Steve Saxton, Mitch Goldburgh, and John Stack.

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District 4

Lodges 1, 9, 16, 22, 30, 38, 63, 66, 77, 79, 87, 89, 97, 115, 125, 332, 401, 500



Temple Lodge No.16 Holiday Pancake Breakfast

by **Donald M. Casey, Jr.**

Brothers of Temple Lodge No. 16 in Cheshire celebrated the holidays with their annual Family Pancake Breakfast. They cooked scrumptious flapjacks with bacon, sausage, and scrambled eggs. Children enjoyed playing games, twisted balloons, and received goodie bags containing a coloring book, crayons, and stickers. Everyone enjoyed having their picture taken with Santa Claus.

Brothers also collected toys that will be donated to Toys for Tots. Proceeds from the pancake breakfast will be donated to the Town of Cheshire Human Services department.



Ansantawae Lodge No. 89 News

by **William Roots**

Master Mason Degree

On November 17, SW Dennis. S. McNamara, Jr, presided over a Master Mason degree at Ansantawae Lodge No. 89. Brothers Matthew Osborn (on left) and Keith Smith (on right) were raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.



l-r) Bros. Matthew Osborn, Dennis S. McNamara, Jr., and Keith Smith



(clockwise from left) Bros. Jeff Scepanski, Bill Roots, Steven Stalls, and Ryan Elblein.

Ansantawae at Orange Ale House

The December Mason Night drew a contingent from Ansantawae Lodge to the Orange Ale House and Grille.



Friendship Lodge No. 33 Children's Christmas Party

by Rudy Cabata

On Sunday, December 3, 2023, Friendship Lodge No. 33 of Southington, held its annual Children's Christmas Party. Twenty children and 30 adults attended and the brothers, children and guests had a wonderful time. Highlights of the afternoon included "The Amazing Paul", whose magic tricks delighted both the children and adults.

The gifts were wrapped and the hall was beautifully decorated by two of Santa's magical elves, Christine Arseneau and Alisha Biega. The children feasted on cookies, candy and assorted sweets provided by the Cabata elves, and they waited patiently for the arrival of "Old St. Nick." While waiting they were entertained by a Christmas Carol sing led by Bonnie Plourde and Debbie Boychuck and a Christmas story read by Rita Cabata.

Santa arrived to the sounds of jingle bells and all the children got to sit in Santa's lap and receive their presents for being such good boys and girls. Special thanks to the good elves of Marcus Holcomb and Nathan Hale chapters of De Molay for passing out presents and preparing Santa's sleigh for departure.

After Santa's departure, "The Amazing Paul" made balloon creatures, swords, and crowns to the delight of the children. It was a truly magical day for all!



Hospitality Lodge No. 128 Donates Toys

In mid-November, brothers and wives from Hospitality Lodge No. 128 in Wethersfield went on a shopping spree to purchase toys to support Wethersfield Social and Youth Services during the holiday season. A trunk load of toys was donated.

This annual event begins with dinner at an area restaurant followed by a trip to Target and/or Costco. Hospitality Lodge feels strongly about supporting the community and donating throughout the year to Wethersfield Social and Youth Services is a pillar of their philanthropic efforts.



Frederick Franklin Lodge No. 14 Silent Auction Update

by **Andy Bronson**

Last month Frederick Franklin announced a fundraising silent auction with further details forthcoming.

Since then, the Hartford Yard Goats, Mystic Aquarium, Lake Compounce, and several other businesses have donated items for the auction.

The auction will take place on Sunday, April 28 at 3 p.m.

The Grand Prize is a one-week vacation in a deluxe studio (sleeps 4) at Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. Check-in: Sunday, June 23, check-out Sunday, June 31. The winner also receives two free "Park Hopper" tickets and 10 free snack coupons, along with complimentary assistance in scheduling dining reservations. (Travel cost, dining expenses, alcoholic beverages NOT included).

For further details, contact RWB Chet Russell, Lodge Secretary, at secretary14@gmail.com

WB Alberto Diequez Receives Mason of the Year Award

by **Francis G. Way**

On Wednesday, December 13, at the annual meeting of Hospitality Lodge No. 128 in Wethersfield, WB Alberto Diequez received the RWB Eric W. Manner Mason of the Year Award.

WB Alberto is a two-time Past Master of the lodge (2020, 2021) who is currently Senior Warden and who has presided over the lodge since September when the installed master was unable to continue due to personal circumstances. He has been the driving force behind the lodge's philanthropic efforts, spearheading the annual toy shopping spree to benefit Wethersfield Social and Youth Services, and is responsible for the lodge's efforts to clean Wethersfield Cove Park in the spring before Memorial Day kicks off the summer season at the Cove.

The lodge is fortunate to have such a just and upright brother and wish to congratulate him on this singular honor.



(l-r) RWB Frank Dlugoleski, DD 5B; WB Alberto Diequez, and RWB Matthew F. Griffin, Secretary.

The Masonic Family Does Not Shy Away from Helping Kids

by Pat Kalinauskas

During this holiday season, lodges across the state collect toys where there is a need by donating to a town's social services, or the U.S. Marine's Toys for Tots. These donations are desperately needed and appreciated.

One such effort is a collaboration of National Camping Travelers, the Order of the Eastern Star, the Grand Lodge officers, and the Grand Lodge office, who donate toys for the annual toy drive for St. Mary's Hospital in Waterbury.

In Monroe on December 9 toys were loaded into an ambulance from St. Mary's. The ambulance and an SUV were both filled to the brim. The toys are used for children that come to the emergency department (ED) of St. Mary's or are admitted to the pediatric unit. One OES member crochets and donates colorful blankets for the toy drive. The pediatric unit uses them, along with a stuffed toy, to brighten the beds in the unit.

After a tasty brunch prepared by Lady Martha Chapter 103, OES, St. Mary's Lead Physician Assistant, Jason Prevelige, said that St. Mary's does not get any funding for toys for the little ones, so this drive is the major support for the program. He indicated that there were enough toys given at this drive to last for a year. There were six St. Mary's staff that attended the brunch.

National Camping Travelers Master of Travel, Dennis Morgan said he was pleased with the outpouring of support

from Eastern Star. Caroline Maselli, Worthy Grand Matron, and Wayne Rettburg, Worthy Grand Patron echoed their pleasure about the generosity of all who donated to what they deemed, a most worthy cause and that they hoped it would continue in future years.

In 2010 NCT toy donations from their annual holiday brunch at the Dakota Restaurant in Rocky Hill, went to the Connecticut State Police (CSP) Stuff-A-Cruiser program. Seeing the worth of the program, employees of the Dakota also donated. By 2013 word came to the State Police that St. Mary's Hospital in Waterbury was in dire need of toys in their Emergency Pediatric Unit, so the CSP delivered NCT's toys to St. Mary's.

By 2016 the State Police, under the guidance of Lt. Paul Vance, made an arrangement with St. Mary's Hospital where toys collected from the brunch were loaded into an ambulance and delivered to St. Mary's, rather than by a cruiser and several SUV's. The toys would come directly from NCT, no longer through the State Police program.

The Grand Chapter Order of the Eastern Star and the NCT collaboration benefitting St. Mary's hospital also began in 2016. To the delight of the organizations

involved, the number of toys far exceeded the ambulance, so a couple SUV's handled the overflow. One of the milestones was in 2017 when two ambulances were needed to transport the volume of toys donated. In 2019, the Grand Lodge officers and office began a history of donating to St. Mary's, thus increasing the generosity of the Masonic family.

There was no holiday brunch during COVID-19, but OES, NCT, and Grand Lodge continued to collect toys for St. Mary's. When the toys were delivered, St. Mary's ED staff were shocked, but pleased, with the efforts of the Masonic family. Sadly, the Dakota Restaurant had to close, never to reopen, because of the pandemic.

Thanks to Eastern Star's members, the Grand Lodge, and National Camping Travelers, the toy collection for St. Mary's kids is so successful that plans are already in the works for the 2024 St. Mary's toy collection and holiday brunch.





Brian Neil Keith Receives Pierpont Edwards Medal in Bronze

Brian Neil Keith was born at Day Kimball Hospital in Putnam on January 1, 1956 – the first baby born there in the new year. Brian grew up with his parents, James Keith, Sr., and Rita Keith, in the Cone Hill section of Moosup, and attended school in Plainfield. While in high school, Brian worked on the *Hermiad*, the Plainfield High School yearbook, and was president of the French Club.

Brian graduated from Plainfield High School in 1973 and attended the University of Connecticut until 1976, then found a position with Groton's Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics Corporation as a pipefitter. After completing a State of Connecticut apprentice program, Brian moved into quality assurance engineering and began attending night school at Thames Valley State Technical College, from which he ultimately graduated with High Honors in Mechanical Engineering Technology. Brian went on to work 42 years for Electric Boat, moving through various job functions including Radiological Control supervisor and Project Quality Engineer at the New London Submarine Base.

In 1973 Brian met his lovely wife, Penny. After dating for nearly eight years, they were married on June 27, 1981, and moved into an apartment in Colchester. When Penny's parents moved to Florida, it provided the young couple with an opportunity to enter the housing market by purchasing Penny's childhood home in Oneco. They moved in on Thanksgiving weekend of 1982, and over the next 40-plus years Brian and Penny worked hard to restore and redecorate their 150-year-old home to its current beautiful and charming condition.

On March 16, 1983, Brian and Penny welcomed their son Mason into this world. When Mason joined the Moosup Little League, Brian wanted to be involved but coaching did not seem like the right fit. Instead, he served on the Moosup Little League Board of Directors and as a volunteer umpire for over 20 years. Brian continued umpiring until after his son had completed his collegiate baseball career. Brian participated in some of premier crews in the state, officiating numerous district, area, and state championships. In 2005, the Moosup Little League honored Brian with a Lifetime Membership Award for his service. During the same time span, Brian also assisted his community by serving on the Sterling Board of Education for six years; three years of which he was the chairman.

On April 7, 1987, Brian was initiated as an Entered Apprentice, passed to a Fellowcraft on May 5, 1987, and raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on June 6, 1987, at Moosup Lodge No. 113 in Moosup. Brian jumped into the progressive line and was elected Worshipful Master of Moosup Lodge in 1993 and again in 2003. In his 35-plus year Masonic career he has been a pillar at Moosup Lodge. After serving 18 years doing a phenomenal job as the lodge's secretary, he retired at

the end of 2021. Brian still assists his successors with their duties.

Brother Brian was a member of the Grand Lodge E-Communication committee from 2005 through 2007, Publicity & Public Relations committee from 2001 through 2003, and Publications committee from 1996 through 2003, where he served as a contributing editor to the Square and Compasses magazine.

For the past thirty years he has been the primary script writer and lead server for the Moosup Lodge "Ye Olde Table Lodge", and also helped coordinated the restoration and beautification of

the Lodge Room. Brother Brian served as the Moosup Scholarship committee's chairperson for over 20 years, and acts as the Master of Ceremonies at the annual Shirley Martel Memorial Scholarship Banquet.

In 2003 Worshipful Brother Brian served as President of the CT District 9 Blue Lodge Council and has also presided as the Right Worshipful Master for the CT District 9 Lodge of Actual Past Masters. For his dedicated service to Moosup Lodge and District 9, in 2017 Brian was presented the CT District 9A Mason of the Year Award, then in 2021 was honored by being named an inaugural honoree of the Moosup Lodge Lifetime Achievement ments, and various animal shelters, to name but a few.

Brian, along with other brothers, team up every fall to collect and donate Thanksgiving and Christmas relief, anonymously providing meals and presents to local families in need. Any project the Master comes up with, it is assured that Brian will help see it accomplished. From lodge building repairs to volunteering for traffic direction at the "Haul of Fame Swap Meet," WB Brian is one of the most valuable lodge brothers and acts as the mortar holding Moosup Lodge together.



Continued on page 26



Robert Skeffington Eubanks Receives Pierpont Edwards Medal In Bronze

Robert Skeffington Eubanks was born at Mount Lebanon Hospital in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, to Robert W. And Donna L. Eubanks on May 22, 1967. His father, Robert was employed by Travelers Insurance Company and was relocated to Nashville, Tennessee, and upstate New York, before settling down in Manchester, in 1979, where Rob enjoyed the remainder of his childhood.

As a young boy, Rob enjoyed playing with Legos, Matchbox Cars, and puzzles, where it was soon noticed that he strove for perfectionism. His mother, or Mimi, as she is affectionately referred to, recalled instances where Rob would be coloring, and if he colored outside the lines, he would crumple up the paper and start over. Rob would display this trait later in his life in every endeavor in which he would engage. He also was a member of the Cub Scouts, where he enjoyed hanging out and learning skills with other boys in town.

Rob got involved in Little League baseball in elementary school, and played throughout his middle school years, where he attended Illing Middle School in Manchester. He played varsity baseball for Manchester High School, graduating in 1985. His baseball team won numerous trophies while he was a member of the team.

After graduation, Rob briefly attended the University of Connecticut. During this time, he worked selling furniture and waterbeds. In 1988, Rob gained employment with Connecticut Natural Gas, where he still works today. His first position was as a meter reader, and due to his hard work ethic and desire for perfection, he worked his way up through the ranks becoming a pipe fitter and was recently promoted to chief pipe fitter last year.

Shortly thereafter, he was elected a union representative, showing that he had the respect and trust of his peers. Not long after, he was unanimously elected as union president, where he has proudly served his fellow workers which speaks to the faith and trust that the workers at Connecticut Natural Gas place in him. Their trust has paid off many times as Rob has become a successful and fair negotiator, benefiting his union members and their families for three decades.

In 1989, Rob met Malin, his soon to be wife and love of his life. After a year of dating, Rob and Malin were married on July 27, 1990. They are blessed with two sons, Gunnar, and Erik, both Masons, and members of Putnam Lodge No. 46. Erik and his wife, Krysta recently blessed Rob and Malin with their first grandchild, a beautiful little girl named Maila.

Rob and Malin have always had a great love of family and friends. They enjoy relaxing on the weekends in their pool and sauna surrounded by all who want to visit. Malin, a proficient equestrian, enjoys her beautiful horses, Little Man and Odini. Rob has an affinity for Formula

1 racing and following his favorite soccer team, Manchester City. They both love spending time with their little dog, Kodi, who resembles a horse at over 130 pounds.

In 2008 Rob petitioned Putnam Lodge No. 46 for the degrees of Masonry. He was initiated as an Entered Apprentice on May 22, 2008, passed to the degree of Fellowcraft on July 5, 2008, and raised to the Sublime degree of Master Mason on September 13, 2008. After becoming a Master Mason, he wasted no time getting involved in the lodge, and was appointed Junior Steward on January 1, 2009, beginning his journey to the East where he served as Worshipful Master in 2014.

As Master, he presided over 27 events, which were evenly mixed to include fundraising and fellowship of the brothers. Most Thursday evenings the brothers could be found playing nine holes at Roseland Park Golf Course before heading to lodge to do maintenance or practice ritual. Rob followed a long line of Masters that emphasized the importance of perfectly delivered ritual, so the new candidates received the greatest meaning possible. His meetings were always very well organized, and business was conducted in a fair and efficient manner. Rob had really gained the respect of the brothers, which was evident by the lodge's participation level. Rob was also a believer in supporting the other lodges in the district and state and would regularly travel to show that support by attending their meetings and filling in for an absent officer if necessary.

While Rob was a very active Master who kept his lodge in order, maintained harmony and excelled as a good leader, his greatest pride came from having the opportunity to raise his son, Erik, creating a new kind of bond.

Rob descends from Masonic tradition, with his great grandfather, William E. Skeffington, Jr., being a 33rd Degree Mason, as well as his paternal grandfather being a Mason.

In 2020, Rob was asked to serve the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Connecticut as District Deputy, which he proudly accepted and served in 2020 and 2021.

Throughout his Masonic career, Rob has made many achievements and has earned the respect of all brothers who meet him. He received his 32nd Degree in the Scottish Rite, Valley of Norwich, in 2008, after



Continued on page 26

Robert Eubanks Receives Pierpont Edwards Medal in Bronze continued from page 25

which, he received a certificate that he witnessed all the degrees from the 4th to the 32nd by 2010, often traveling as far as western Pennsylvania to see the degrees. He received a Certificate of Competency from the Connecticut Freemasons Warden's Ritual Program in 2011. The Brothers of the 9th Masonic District A honored him with the Mason of the Year Award in 2012. He is a member of Trinity Chapter no. 9 RAM, Montgomery Council No. 2 RSM and he was knighted a member of St. John's Commandery No. 11 in 2009, and this past year, he was invited to join St. Andrews Conclave of the Red Cross of Constantine. Rob is also a member of the Connecticut York Rite College No. 17 and Mohawk Council No. 28 Knight Masons.

While Rob is extremely proud of his accomplishments in Masonry, and the honors that have been bestowed upon him, he has the greatest pride and takes the greatest honor in helping his fellow man, whether he be

a Mason or not. His calm demeanor has been shown to bring order to situations that could have been uncomfortable. He treats everyone he meets with dignity and respect and is considered a friend to all that have the honor of getting to know him. He is an outstanding example of the morals and tenants of Freemasonry, but more importantly, he has lived his whole life being an outstanding example of what it means to be a good, kind, and loyal man who can be counted on when it matters.

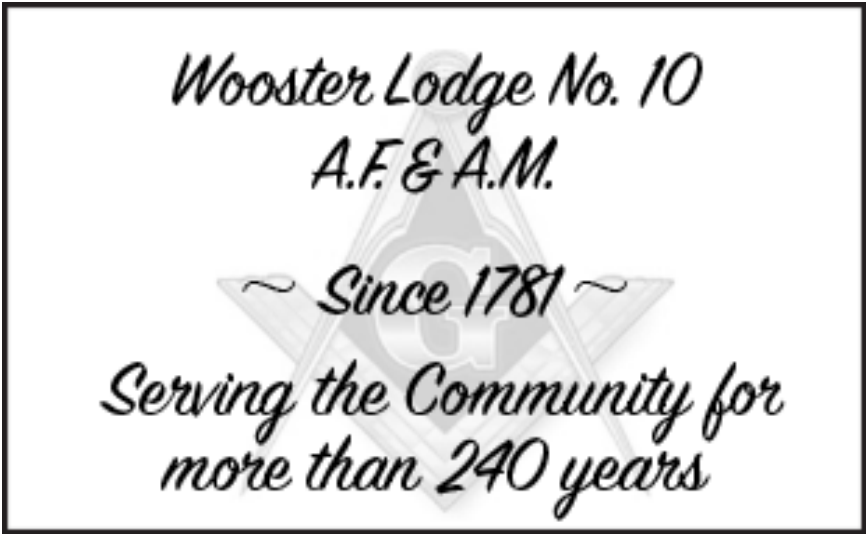
In recognition of his service to our fraternity, his lodge and community, the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the State of Connecticut is pleased to present Right Worshipful Brother Robert Skeffington Eubanks, the Pierpont Edwards Medal In Bronze for Distinguished Masonic Service.

Brian Neil Keith Receives Pierpont Edwards Medal in Bronze continued from page 24

Brian is an affiliate member at Moriah Lodge No. 15 in Brooklyn, as well as Ionic Lodge No. 28 in Greene, RI, and regularly assists other lodges performing degree work. Brian is well known for his dramatic delivery of the "Canadian Charge" as well as other unique ritual Brian has authored, including "The Quarry Rite," an outdoor Master Mason degree held in an operative stone quarry. Connecticut Freemasonry has benefitted greatly by having Brian in its ranks, and he has provided mentorship to innumerable Moosup Lodge brothers.

Brian often says he gets more out of Masonry than he gives and that is a lot! His calm personality and unselfishness have benefited many Moosup Lodge Worshipful Masters over his years as secretary and they all appreciate what he has done to help them during their time in the Oriental Chair.

In recognition of his service to our fraternity, his lodge and community, the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the State of Connecticut is pleased to present WB Brian Neil Keith, the Pierpont Edwards Medal in Bronze for distinguished Masonic service.



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COCA Partners with House of Heroes CT

This past August, the brothers of Annawon Lodge No. 115, through the Annawon Fellowcraft Club, held their annual William Soderman Golf Tournament at Wheeler Traditions Golf Course in Wallingford. The event was a terrific success, raising funds for House of Heroes CT, a Wallingford nonprofit organization that serves our nation's military and public safety veterans who are disabled, living on a fixed income, or facing other physical or financial challenges. Volunteers perform minor repairs and make improvements to the homes of veterans (and their spouses) at no cost to the veteran through the generosity of individuals, civic organizations, and corporations. COCA, by means of the Matching Funds Programs and the generosity of the Connecticut Freemasons Foundation, was able to match a portion of the funds raised for House of Heroes



CT. Furthermore, the Foundation made an additional gift in memory of RWB Les B. King, the late Program Coordinator of the COCA Veteran's Recognition and Support Program and 20-year naval veteran.

New program coordinator, Bro. Joshua Rodriquez, is pleased to announce that the Veteran's Recognition and Support Program

will be partnering with House of Heroes CT moving forward to match brothers and lodges looking to perform service projects or make charitable donations that will directly benefit Connecticut Veterans. The first stop for interested parties is the House of Heroes CT website <https://www.hohct.org/> to find out more about upcoming projects and events that are scheduled. If a lodge or brother knows of a Connecticut veteran with a need that House of Heroes CT might be able to help with, such as the addition of a wheelchair ramp or modification of a bathroom to make it more accessible, the Quick Start Guide for requesting a project can also be found on the website. House of Heroes CT teams with professionals and organizations like Carpenters Local 326 to perform projects, so lodges know the work they financially support will be completed in a safe, professional, and timely manner.

Thank you to the brothers of Annawon Lodge No. 115, including Bro. Jerry Nero for helping make this new partnership possible.

Laurel Forest # 130 Tall Cedars of
Lebanon, International
is proud to host Brother Anthony Leroux
presenting a program on the

George Washington Masonic Apron

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Masonicare at Ashlar Village
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All Brother Master Masons and their
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Turkey Trotting for Children with Dyslexia

by Donald M. Casey, Jr.

Scottish Rite brothers from Lafayette Consistory supported the 21st Annual Stratford Turkey Day Trot. The race was conceived by Illustrious Brother Dave Urban, 33°, who wanted to promote a healthy lifestyle through running. Portions of the proceeds from the event support the Children's Dyslexia Centers of Connecticut. Over 850 runners competed and nearly 1,000 spectators filled the center streets of Stratford early Thanksgiving morning.

Brothers from Daytime Lodge No. 144 were there to help, along with Connecticut DeMolay and Rainbow. RWB Edward Page, Deputy Grand Master, was the official starter of the race. In addition to the race, there was a best turkey costume contest.



Pyramid Shriners Fund Raise for Needy Children

by Donald M. Casey, Jr.

Pyramid Shriners conducted their 6th annual fall fundraising event at Rite Aid Pharmacy in Monroe. They distributed informational pamphlets and coloring books about Shriner's Hospital for Children. In addition, donations were collected, and those funds will be used to assist needy children receiving excellent medical care through The Red Sneaker Fund.

The Red Sneaker Fund, created in 1973 at the Pyramid Shrine Temple, provides financial support for research aimed at finding improved treatments and techniques for children with burn injuries at the Shriner's Hospital.

(l-r) Pyramid Shriners John O'Reilly and Donald M. Casey Jr.

District 6

Lodges 4, 25, 28, 70, 73, 88, 145, 400



Hartford Evergreen Lodge No. 88 Goes to School with Santa by Pat Jones

Santa Claus and the brothers of Hartford Evergreen Lodge No. 88 visited South Windsor's historic Pleasant Valley School on in December. Preserved in its original condition, this one-room schoolhouse is the only remaining example of its kind in town. An active school from 1862 to 1952, this Civil War era schoolhouse was the ideal place for an old-fashioned visit with Santa.

South Windsor residents appreciate the foresight and wisdom of the South Windsor Historical Society which is credited with saving and preserving the school. Notable leaders of the society, such as Joan Walsh, Lois Mosher, June Lanza, Nedra Gallo, and Ginny Schiller have been responsible for the Santa program for more years than even Santa can count. The program is free and open to the public. The lodge has participated in the Santa program for the past 10 years. Several brothers attend with their children or grandchildren. The lodge recognizes the importance of this program for the families and children in the area.

When Santa arrived, there was little doubt that the spirit of the holiday season was alive and well in South Windsor. Approximately 60 children lined the driveway that led to the schoolhouse door. Santa's elves were stationed at the door, greeting all who attended, helping to keep the long line of children moving in an orderly fashion, and make sure that Santa had everything needed. Santa was happy to meet each child and listened carefully to their dreams and wishes.

Lynda Jones, a local artist, paints the tiny blackboard each child receives on their visit with the child's name, holly leaves, and the date of the visit. Lynda has volunteered her time and expertise for more than fifteen years. Nedra Gallo faithfully handles refreshments, making sure there was plenty for everyone.

Numerous families brought donations for the South Windsor Food Bank, an organization that Hartford Evergreen Lodge has supported for many years. The bustle and laughter made it easy to imagine this event happening 100 years earlier. As the last of the children wandered off, it was unanimously agreed that Santa should visit the schoolhouse each year and that Hartford Evergreen Lodge will be to support him.



Entered Apprentice Degree at Washington Lodge No. 70 by Robert Dodge

On Monday November 13, 2023, WM Robert Dodge, and the officers and brothers of Washington Lodge No. 70, initiated Brother Brandon Pryce. Bro. Victor Barile stepped up to the East to preside and did an exceptional job.

Bro. Sam Caligiuri presented the apron, Bro. Patrick Chagnon explained the working tools, WB Jon White presented a word-perfect EA lecture and WB Charles Jackson III gave the charge.

Before the degree, JW Ken Roach III and his culinary team prepared a delicious meal. It was a pleasure to see the visiting brethren and dignitaries who came out for the degree.



Washington Lodge No. 70 News

Veterans Appreciation Luncheon

Veterans and their families of Washington Lodge No. 70 were treated to a Veterans Appreciation Luncheon on Sunday, December 3, 2023. WM Robert Dodge and his wife Stephanie put on a meal of roasted chicken, mashed potatoes with gravy, and carrots, followed by a presentation by veteran Bro. Carlton Stidsen on Pearl Harbor and the battleship U.S.S. Arizona.



Brothers Deliver Poinsettias To Widows.

A handful of brothers continued a long-standing tradition of delivering Christmas poinsettias to the widows of the lodge on Saturday December 2, 2023. WM Robert Dodge and Almoner Bro. Bob McKay stay in touch with the widows throughout the year, check in on them, and including them in lodge events. WM Dodge stated that he, “cannot begin to express the importance and the value we have placed on ourselves to take care of our widows.” This year, along with poinsettias, the brothers delivered puff-pastries. Deliveries were made by Bro. Ken Roach II, Patrick Chagnon, Steve Lake, James Durant, and Michael McClellan.



Martin & Max Play Presented

The Masonic play, Martin & Max was presented on Monday November 27, 2023. The play was written by Ill. Bro. Raymond G. Schuster, 33rd, a Connecticut Mason, and is for Master Masons only.

It is the story of one man’s journey through Masonry and touches upon many aspects of the fraternity: becoming a member, lodge issues and learning what Masonry is about.

The play was presented by MWB Gary Arseneau, WB Robert Buntin and WB Larry Baker.



Five Fellowcrafts passed at Columbia Lodge No. 25

by Arnie Grot

On November 15, 2023, Columbia Lodge No. 25 passed five Fellowcrafts. SW Juan Diaz presided in the East, WB Brian Berk gave the Approach lecture, RWB Earl Evans delivered the Coming to Light lecture, WB Jack Ranney presented the working tools, WB Walt Grube delivered the Staircase lecture, WM Dave LaFargue presented the Letter G, Bro. Mike Lombardi and WB Don Wills gave the First Section lecture, and RWB Earl Evans delivered the charge.

Historian Dave Lockard explained the passage from Amos that was recited by the Chaplain during the circumambulation.

(l-r) FC Exequiel Zamora, FC Jason Felber, WM David Lafargue, FC Brian Dikun, SW Juan Diaz, FC Zachary Burkett, RWB Thomas Dulcos, FC Phillip Crump, and Secretary Walt Grube.



District 8

Lodges 10, 31, 34, 57, 102, 116, 120, 150



8th Masonic District Supports Outer Light Brewing's Tommy's Toy Drive by Michael Bogdan

On Saturday, December 2, 2023, Outer Light Brewing Company in Groton held its third annual toy drive, which helps sponsor Tommy's Toy Fund with assistance from the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut. Tommy's Toy Fund provides toys for children in the holiday season in eastern Connecticut. Tommy's Toy Fund holds a special place in Outer Light Brewing Company's heart as the brewer's grandmother created this fantastic foundation.

The brothers of the 8th Masonic District stumbled on the toy drive in 2021. A few brothers met at Outer Light Brewery for some

fellowship when they stumbled upon the toy drive flier. They spoke with Kurt Delaney, bar manager, about how the district might be able to assist him. He asked for help in spreading the word. Since 2021 the district has been able to assist him.

In 2023, to help support this incredible event, the 8th District held its annual Thanksgiving Day breakfast at Bayview Temple in Niantic. All proceeds from the event would go to the toy drive, and with a turnout of over 70 people, the event raised over \$1,000.

Some brothers, still kids at heart, enjoyed shopping and purchased toys for Tommy's Toy Drive with the proceeds. Almost 200 toys were purchased, and brothers from across the district came to support the wonderful event, even serving as the Elf on a Shelf.

Next year, the district hopes to continue their support for this incredible event and hope that even more brothers within the state come to enjoy this great time!



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Entered Apprentice Level \$75 - \$149

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Coastal Lodge No. 57	Dana W. Ivey	Glenn K. Pennell	Edward Sullivan	In Memory of John Birdsall,
David Cole	Vin & Pat Kalinauskas	Martin Rudnick	James Talamini	Sachem Chapter No. 57 OES

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Craft At Labor

To have your lodge events appear in the newspaper, please update your lodge website Google calendars prior to the 10th of the previous month. The Grand View calendar will also be scanned for upcoming dates. If it doesn't specifically mention a degree or other labor, it will not appear.

All dates/times are supplied by the lodges. If there is a dinner, the time in the heading reflects that. The Connecticut Freemasons Newspaper is not responsible for errors. When traveling, please contact the Secretary of the lodge to verify all times and events and to inquire about dinner reservations.

Grand Lodge Annual Session

Saturday, April 6, 8 a.m., Marriott, Windsor

Entered Apprentice Degrees

Fellowcraft Degrees

Master Mason Degrees

Installation of Officers

Sat., Jan. 6, Frederick-Franklin Lodge No. 14,
Plainville

Sat., Jan. 6, 6:30 p.m., Harmony Lodge No. 42
Waterbury, semi-public

Sat., Jan. 6, Widow's Son Lodge No. 66,
Branford

Wed., Jan. 10, 7:30 p.m., Hospitality Lodge No. 128
Wethersfield, Masons only.

We're Still Going to the Dogs **by Pat Kalinauskas**

Temple Chapter No. 53, Order of the Eastern Star, South Windsor, hosted a hot-dog and chili dinner for the East Hartford K-9 Unit on December 6. It has been a tradition that the K-9s demonstrate different levels of their training, followed by a dinner for the officers, supplied by the chapter. Then the chapter makes their annual donation to the K-9 Unit before the chapter's meeting. The cold weather and Daylight Savings Time prohibited an outside demonstration. So, Officer Jason Hawley brought 2-year-old K-9 Lycan, a Belgian Malinois, and Sgt. Todd Mona brought 9-year-old K-9 Casus, a German Shepard Dog and 6-month-old Scorso, a K-9 in training, and also a Malinois, for a mini-demonstration.



Scorso at attention.




Scorso learning how to stop a bad guy.

In 2008, Temple Chapter began its journey raising funds for K-9s. The first was South Windsor's K-9 Bobby until he was retired in 2012. In 2013 the chapter began to donate to the East Hartford K-9 Unit.

The chapter has seen some very special dogs age out and retire. They have seen puppies beginning their training to become life-long partners of our police officers and guardians of our communities.



(l-r) Officer Jason Hawley and Sgt. Todd Mona, with Worthy Patron Vin Kalinauskas, Worthy Matron Kayla Rettburg of Temple Chapter, and K-9 Casus front and center.



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