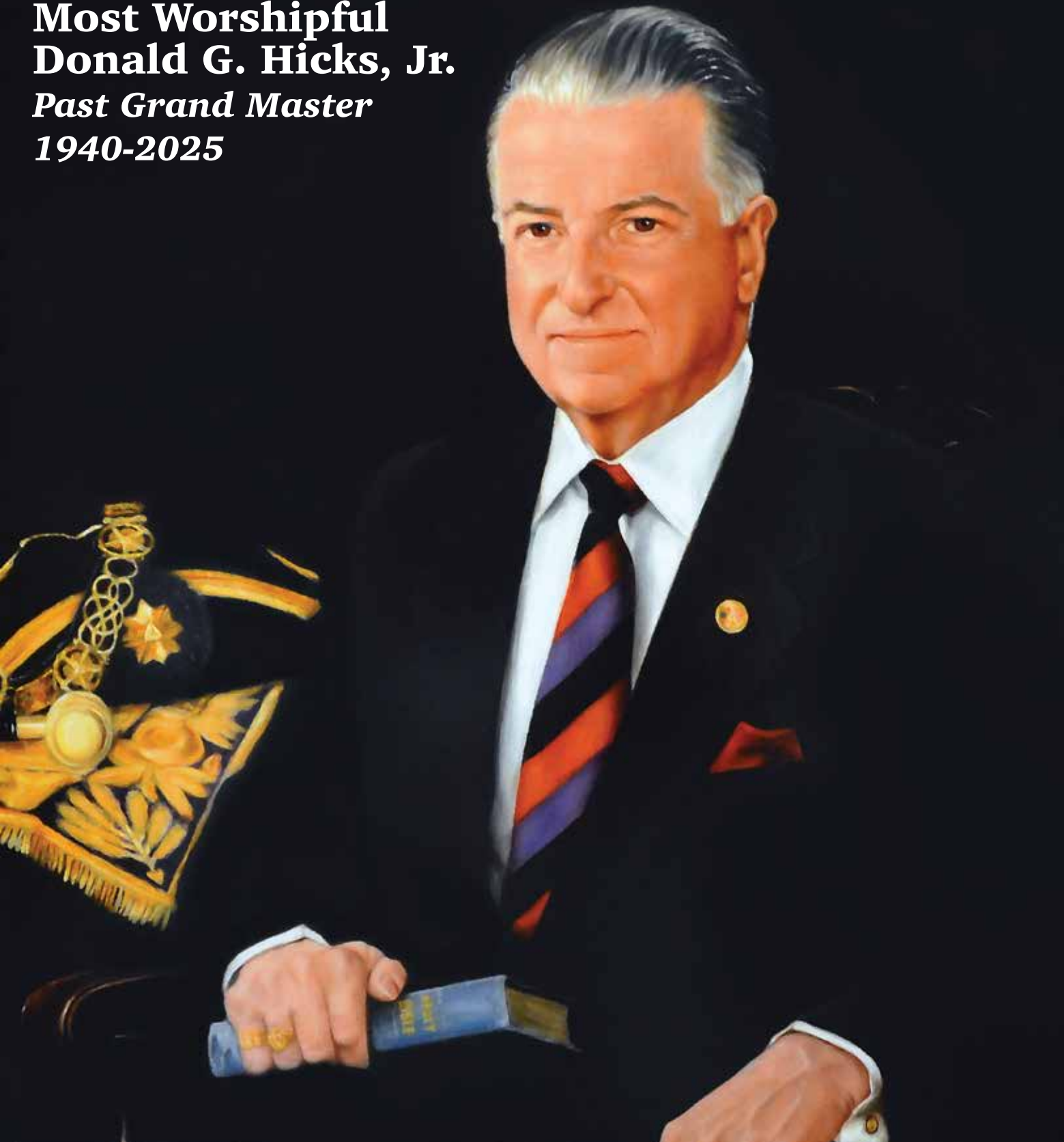


TROWEL

GRAND LODGE OF MASONS IN MASSACHUSETTS SPRING 2025

**Most Worshipful
Donald G. Hicks, Jr.**
Past Grand Master
1940-2025





From the East of Grand Lodge

MOST WORSHIPFUL GEORGE HAMILTON

Brethren,

By now, word has spread of the passing of M. Wor. Donald Gardner Hicks, Jr., last week. It is understandable that there is a palpable feeling of sadness and loss across our jurisdiction. Letters of condolence from other Grand Masters and lodges have been coming in from all who knew him. He was such an active Freemason across Massachusetts, and beyond. It is not possible for the bonds of our friendship to be broken without the pang of pain. Our grief will surely pass with time, and what will remain is a legacy of wonderful memories and an inspiring example that he left for us.

What I will always remember about M. Wor. Bro. Hicks' many virtues was how he had such high standards for himself and for his fellow Masons, and yet he always mentored all of us in the most kind and humble way. His love of Masons and our Fraternity showed in everything he did. I have no doubt that the Grand Architect of the Universe has spoken those words, "Well done, good and faithful Servant!"

We must soldier on, now without a friend and Brother.

We celebrated the 250th anniversary of the "shot heard round the world" in Lexington and Concord with many distinguished guests. Our partnership with Old North Illuminated gave us a chance to witness, up close, the reenactment of the hanging of the lanterns, and the start of Paul Revere's ride. The 45-minute play, *Revolution's Edge*, written by Patrick Gabridge, provided a historical drama about the evening of April 18th, and the effect of the revolution on the patriots, loyalists, as well as those in bondage in New England at the time.

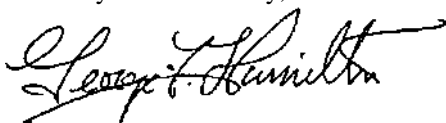
The Old North Church was the stage for an act of defiance and bravery. Captain John Pulling, with the assistance of the Church Sexton, Robert Newman—both Freemasons—scaled this tower to hang two lanterns, knowing the risks they faced. Their actions were not merely a signal, they were a declaration of resolve, and a testament to the shared principles of liberty and brotherhood that underpin our Masonic values.

Freemasonry has always been dedicated to Integrity, Service to Humanity, Justice, Tolerance, Reverence for God, and Devotion to Country. It is no coincidence that Paul Revere and William Dawes, who carried the alarm that night, were also Freemasons. Our Craft teaches us to act with courage, to uphold justice, and to work for the common good. These men exemplified those principles, not only in their daring rides, but in their steadfast commitment to the cause of independence.

As we reflect on the sacrifices that our patriot forefathers made, remember one more thing, they fought to create a representative government where common people could rule themselves. Because of their sacrifice, we have the tools of civil debate, the ballot box, and the rule of law. Our decisions may not always be perfect, but as we continue to practice democracy, we keep moving toward a more perfect union.

May God continue to bless our beloved Fraternity, the Commonwealth, and these United States.

Sincerely and fraternally,



Most Worshipful George Forest Hamilton
Grand Master





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Most Worshipful George Hamilton



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We Are Our History



Just before going to press, the sad news of the passing of Most Worshipful Donald Gardner Hicks, Jr., was announced. He was a fine man, and an excellent Mason. In all my dealings with him, he was kind, helpful, and joyous. His passing, for me at least, was a profound shock. He always had a smile, and took great joy in Freemasonry.

While I don't know all the parts of Masonry he impacted, I know for me he was a font of light that is the spirit of Freemasonry.

The residual dividends of M. Wor. Bro. Hicks' devotion to the Craft are constant. And how is his impact felt? All who knew him will be affected differently. The ripples from his life stretch, however, to all Masons, here and wheresoever dispersed.

In Panama, at Ancon Lodge, they cast new working tools. The article is on page three. The process looks complicated to me, not being a skilled worker in metals. It is an amazing task to undertake, resulting in a new look to the working tools for the Ancon Lodge.

But the tools are not made of nothing. The combination of tin with copper, lead, and other metals, must be heated so that the various parts will combine into pewter. Even each element did not come from nothing. They all came from our Mother Earth. The combination of these elements with the labors of the Brothers of Ancon Lodge, created the new working tools.

Our illustrious past, including the Brother Founding Fathers, the Presidents, the members of our Lodges, and the members and leaders of Grand Lodge, are our elements. The past is what makes us the Brothers we are today.

When an element, be it copper or gold, like M. Wor. Bro. Hicks or our Brothers of the Revolution disappears, it becomes part of the greater work of Freemasonry, the pewter of the new working tools. As a part of all of us, we are made stronger, and more lustrous due to his inclusion in our lives.

Fraternally, Lee H. Fenn

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: JULY 9, 2025



*Do you have an experience
from seeing or having a
Masonic plate? Send it to
the Editor of TROWEL at
editortrowel@gmail.com.*

<https://tinyurl.com/MasonPlate>

FRATERNITY *News & Events*

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Presiding Master, Wor. Osvaldo Valenzuela, Bro. Plinio Maure, PDGM Rt. Wor. Gerry Dowden, PDGM Rt. Wor. Albert Hopper, Bro. Ariel Weinmann-Rubino, Bro. Gabriel Ramirez, Wor. Gregory Sun, DDGM Rt. Wor. Kyriakos Bakomichalis.



Casting New Tools In Panama

On February 22nd, 2025, Ancon Lodge in the Panama Canal District, met to cast new working tools. The members, none of them possessing previous metalworking experience, channeled their inner artificers to pour molten pewter into molds, which were later filed and engraved.

-Bro. Ariel Weinmann-Rubino





So What?

by Rt. Wor. & Rev. Paul Starratt

For the last 25 years, I have enjoyed an annual hunting trip to Maine with some friends. Our host is a bonafide rusty Mason and Shriner, who, for all the distractions, would otherwise make a fine officer, and a great ritualist. But, all is forgiven when you own a camp in Maine, and you invite your friends to go hunting. When I say camp, I hope it conjures rustic images of a log cabin set deep in the mountains, with crudely fashioned timber furniture and an outhouse at the end of a long path. This camp is a finely appointed home, with all the conveniences you would expect from a five-star hotel, including quick access to shopping, restaurants, and a well-stocked lake. We still call it camp to maintain the illusion that our hunting trips bring us closer to our primitive roots.

Like any well-run camp, duties are assigned, and chores are meticulously carried out so everything functions like a well-oiled machine. As the youngest entered apprentice in this crowd, I got duty that no one else wanted - standing at the grill when steaks were on the menu. Like any self-respecting guy, I consider my skills at the grill to be better than most. I can put a steak on the table that is cooked to perfection ten out of ten times, guaranteed. It caught me off guard one evening, when my good friend and host schooled me on the art of grilling. He opined on the thickness of the cut, the temperature of the grill, and the timing of the turn. I assured him that I knew what I was doing, but the lecture continued as I made my way to the grill. The last comment was something about how long I was supposed to preheat before cooking. I left the kitchen, hoping the screen door would speak on my behalf when it slammed shut behind me.

Perhaps it was the long day of humping through the alder brush in the rain, or the fact that we had been hunting for two days with nary a bird in sight, but my ego was sorely bruised. I began to cook up some irrational anger and rage while standing at the grill, and my thoughts spiraled out of control. "Who does he think he is, telling me how to cook on a grill?" I muttered to myself, making sure to give his steak a few lively jabs with a fork. "I know what I'm doing, and I don't need any advice from him or anyone else." My thoughts grew darker, and my words were getting hotter than the flames.

The tension in camp was obvious, so another dear

friend and regular fixture at all our hunting trips joined me outside to see how I was doing. He is not a Mason, but his credentials as a combat veteran who commanded a mortar battery on the front lines in Vietnam got all my respect. "You need any help with the steaks? How's the temperature? Did you preheat the grill enough?" He decided to take the wise guy approach to see if he could get me to calm down, but it was too late. I ceremoniously slapped the meat on the platter and replied to the teasing with harsh words and a glaring look of disapproval. I turned my back on the grill and my veteran friend. I continued to rant, stomping back to camp. I was on fire at this point. I was just a few steps away from torching a decades long friendship with someone that I loved and respected as a friend and a Mason. "Who does he think he is, telling me how to cook a steak?" I blared out as I reached for the screen door.

I heard the next words spoken by my veteran friend as I entered the camp. "So what?" He asked. "So what?" He asked a simple question, and I had no answer. Was I so possessed by my hurt feelings that I was willing to sacrifice one of the more meaningful friendships in my life just to satisfy my ego? Did it really matter? Or was my friend just helping me tone down my attitude and my "ten out of ten perfect steak guarantee?" There are plenty of things to be angry about in this life, and while there are some fleeting moments of pleasure to be found in venting our rage, it is a certain folly.

The Supreme Architect of the Universe has given us the opportunity to grow our character when our anger is aroused. How we manage our emotions in the heat of conflict is a true measure of our personal integrity. We would do well to ask, "So what?" when our emotions are about to spill over. Remember that some things cannot be unsaid. Harsh words can echo forever in our hearts and minds. As Freemasons, we have the blueprint for maintaining unity in a world that is increasingly divisive. We are the oldest fraternity in the world because we focus on issues that unite us, and we leave everything else to the people who don't know how to cook steak on a grill. The next time your anger wants to be in control, ask the simple question, "So what?" ■



Grand Chaplain Rt. Wor. & Rev. Paul Starratt is retired from the ministry.

THE MARCH 2025 QUARTERLY COMMUNICATION

OF THE GRAND LODGE OF MASSACHUSETTS



by Wor. Lee H. Fenn

At precisely 1:30, on March 12, 2025, Rt. Wor. Joseph Camara, the Grand Organist, stopped playing “Iron Man” before the Grand Master of Masons in Massachusetts, Most Worshipful George Forest Hamilton, entered the lodge room with a huge suite of dignitaries to open the Quarterly Communication of Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts.

Before 1:30, in the lobby, The Brothers of the White Ash introduced “The Patriot,” a new charity cigar by Hiram & Solomon Cigar Company, to honor our Grand Master. They are raising money for Masonic Charities. If they don’t sell out, they will be at the BWA April meeting in Attleboro, the next Grand Lodge Quarterly Communication, Masonic Family Fun Day in August, the Scottish Rite Valley of Boston Fall Reunion in November, and wherever else Masons meet to smoke cigars! This cigar is a mild-medium 6X52 Toro. Contact the BWA, browhtash@gmail.com, or Bro. Mike Douglas (774-955-2344) for info about events, or to put a box under your arm, and a smile on your face.



The video streaming was in place on massmasons.org, and the Grand Master called upon the Colonial Craftsmen, Rt. Wors. Walter Hunt (President), David Newcomb (Past President), Dennis Reeble, and Bro. Scott Tourtellot, to present the colors, the flags of the United States and Massachusetts. After the Pledge of Allegiance, and singing “The Star Spangled Banner,” Rt. Wor. Bro. Hunt told the Brethren that the group was formed to celebrate the Bicentennial of the United States, and demonstrates how lodges were in 1775, in their reenactment On The Square 1775. They are available for special events, installations, or any degree work. Behind the Grand Secretary, a large, unknown object was draped by a dark cover.

The Grand Master joined them on the Level to receive a donation for the Cannoneers Fund. After retiring the color guard, singing the hymn “From East to West, o’er Land and Sea,” and a prayer from Grand Chaplain Rt. Wor. Matthew Wissell, the Grand Master opened the Quarterly Communication in ample form. He introduced the guests, reminding the Brethren of the

The Grand Master enters the Lodge room.



The Colonial Craftsmen introduced to the Brethren after presenting the colors.



The Grand Master introduced the following guests:

Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts (1775)

M. Wor. Justin A. Petty, Grand Master
M. Wor. Timothy R. Downes, Past Grand Master
Rt. Wor. Marcus L. Young, Junior Grand Warden
Rt. Wor. Grover T. Owens, Grand Treasurer
Rt. Wor. Everton Tull, Assistant Grand Treasurer
Rt. Wor. Ramon L. Casado, Sr., Grand Secretary

Grand Masters of Other Lodges

M. Wor. Kenneth A. Clay, Past Grand Master,
Grand Lodge of New Hampshire (1789)
M. Wor. Thomas E. Pulkkinen, Past Grand Master,
Grand Lodge of Maine (1820)

Grand Representatives of other Grand Lodges

Rt. Wor. Samir C. Bichara, Grand Representative of the
Grand Lodge Rio De Janeiro (1927)
Rt. Wor. Oscar M. Zepeda, Grand Representative,
Grand Lodge of Baja California, Mexico (1933)

Massachusetts York Rite Bodies

M. Excel. George Leonard Herbolzheimer IV, Grand High Priest,
Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Massachusetts
M. Ill. Manual Ferreira, III, Most Illustrious Grand Master, Grand
Council of Royal and Select Master Masons of Massachusetts
Sir Knight Stephen D. Whitmore, Rt. Eminent Grand Commander
of the Grand Commandery, Knights Templar, and the
Appendant Orders, of Massachusetts and Rhode Island

Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry for the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the United States of America

Ill. Scott D. Inglis, 33°, Deputy for Massachusetts
Ill. Donald M. Moran, 33°, Active for Massachusetts
Ill. Robert C. Schremser, 33°, Active Emeritus for Massachusetts
Ill. Peter R. Smith, 33°, Active Emeritus for Massachusetts
Ill. Robert E. Godbout, Jr., 33°, Active Emeritus for Massachusetts

Shrine International

Noble Bro. Roger Gardiner, Chief Rabban, Aleppo Shrine
Ill. Christopher W. Parker, Potentate, Melha Shrine

Other Masonic Bodies

M. Wor. Carl F. Kersting, Worthy Grand Patron, Grand Chapter of
Massachusetts, Order of the Eastern Star
Sir Knight William F. Chapman, Grand Royal Patron, Grand Court
of Massachusetts, Order of the Amaranth

Other Affiliated Introductions

Rt. Wor. Kenneth R. Blake, Chairman of the Board,
Masonic Health System of Massachusetts

Streaming

Rt. Wor. Eduardo Crocamo, District Grand Master,
District of Panama

Past Grand Masters

M. Wor. Albert Timothy Ames (streaming)
M. Wor. Arthur Eugene Johnson (streaming)
M. Wor. Donald Gardner Hicks, Jr. (streaming)
M. Wor. Jeffrey Black Hodgdon (streaming)
M. Wor. Richard James Stewart
M. Wor. Harvey John Waugh
M. Wor. Paul Fulton Gleason
M. Wor. Richard Maggio

First Responders

Rt. Wor. Jerry Bergeron (Capt., First Responders)

Audio and Sound

Wor. Charles Caroselli

Information Services (providing the live stream)

Wor. Derrell MacTague



The Grand Master with representatives of Mount Zion Lodge commemorate their 225th anniversary.

Delaware Clap, one unified clap per guest.

The Grand Secretary, M. Wor. Bro. Maggio, explained the voting powers of lodges, and his report on the recognition of proxies was accepted.

Rt. Wor. W. Warren Richardson's report on the Records Committee was accepted. The committee presently has three members plus the chairman. It is the committee's charge to examine the proceedings of the Quarterly and Special Communications provided by the Grand Secretary. The Communications are sent to the chairman and committee members for their review and recommended revisions. The recommendations are reviewed by the chairman and incorporated in the chairman's copy. The chairman then returns the corrected proceedings to the Grand Secretary for his update and report at a Quarterly Communication.

Rt. Wor. Steven C. Cohn reported from the Committee on Charters and By-Laws that changes from seven lodges were accepted and one lodge was partially accepted. Both

The Paraguay Question

The Report of the Foreign Relations Committee delivered by Rt. Wor. Basilio E. (Bill) Tsingos dealt with a request for recognition from Paraguay, and touched upon the relationship between grand lodges and appendant bodies that he noted was last addressed at length by our Grand Lodge in 1883. The petitioning grand lodge submitted "voluminous materials" in support of arguments regarding why it should be recognized, despite our Grand Lodge's recognition of another grand lodge in Paraguay. The situation arose from a schism in Paraguay caused by the expulsion in 2005 of the presiding grand master by the 'Scottish Rite' Supreme Council of Paraguay. This triggered a provision which said that expulsion from one Masonic body meant expulsion from all Masonic bodies.

"The surprising nature of the course of events thus revealed" that the grand lodge of Paraguay (which our Grand Lodge and other grand lodges had previously recognized) was "an irregular grand lodge because one of the



M. Wor. Justin Petty, Grand Master of Prince Hall Massachusetts, re-receives a gift originally given in 1855.



M. Wor. Justin Petty with the newest inductees to African Lodge #459, the Mother Lodge to all of Prince Hall Freemasonry.

reports were accepted.

The Deputy Grand Master, Rt. Wor. John MacLeod, delivered the necrology. The Brethren heard the Masonic preparation for the Celestial Lodge of four Brothers, with nearly 175 years of Masonic expertise. Heads of all were bowed in reverence as Grand Chaplain Rt. Wor. Paul Starrett offered a prayer. The Grand Master turned to the Brethren who had fallen from our ideals, who had trodden on the darkened square. One man stumbled on his way to achieving our high ideals. He was suspended. Another, failed in such a deep moral way, was expelled from all the rights and benefits of Freemasonry. The Grand Master's decision was affirmed by all the Brethren present.

Turning toward happier events, the Grand Master welcomed representatives of Mount Zion Lodge to the East to commemorate their 225th anniversary. They were chartered on March 10, 1800.

At the behest of the Grand Master, the members of the

following lodges stood by the Altar: Mt. Vernon-Galilean Lodge, District 4; Norfolk Lodge, District 5; Orient Lodge, District 6; Union Lodge (Norwood), District 6; Saggaheew Lodge, District 11; Lynnfield-Zetland Lodge, District 13; and William Parkman Lodge, District 13. One lodge at a time, they came to the East. Each lodge had achieved the Grand Master's Award, and his congratulations. (See photos on page 10)

The Grand Master called his Grand Marshal to escort Rt. Wor. William Amaru and M. Wor. Justin Petty, Grand Master of Prince Hall Massachusetts, to the East. The Grand Master discussed the new wood plaque, carved by Rt. Wor. Bro. Amaru, above the portrait of M. Wor. Bro. Petty, and all future Grand Masters of Prince Hall Massachusetts, on the 2nd floor of Grand Lodge. Rt. Wor. Bro. Amaru presented M. Wor. Bro. Petty with his Honorary Grand Lodge Membership certificate. The Grand Master presented M. Wor. Bro. Petty with the book, *The Masonic*

requirements for a grand lodge to be recognized as regular is that it is sovereign and not beholden to, or subject to the authority of, another grand lodge or appendant body," reported Rt. Wor. Bro. Tsingos. Since then, there have been two rival grand lodges in Paraguay: one with, and one without, the problematic relationship with an appendant body. Our Grand Lodge ascribed its prior recognition in Paraguay to the 'regular' grand lodge. The petitioning grand lodge argues that a new treaty it has entered with the 'Scottish Rite' Supreme Council of Paraguay fixes the problem. Rt. Wor. Bro. Tsingos noted that the Committee has "grave concerns" about several aspects of the new treaty. But, even if

the treaty fixed the problem and the petitioning grand lodge were now "regular," our Grand Lodge could not now recognize it unless it entered a treaty with the grand lodge we now recognize. Per Section 712 of our Grand Constitutions, he explained, when a grand lodge has been recognized in any territory, so long as it remains regular, no other grand lodge will be recognized there in the absence of mutual consent or treaty. And so, it was "with much fraternal regret that the Committee has determined that the petitioning Grand Lodge does not at this time comply with the requirements" for recognition by our Grand Lodge.

This report was approved, and the unknown, large, draped object behind

the Grand Secretary remained untouched.

-Rt. Wor. Basilios E. (Bill) Tsingos



Rt. Wor. Basilios E. (Bill) Tsingos delivers the report for the Foreign Relations Committee to the Grand Marshal.

Constitutions of Grand Lodge, from 1798. It was presented by the Grand Master at the time, M. Wor. Winslow Lewis, in 1855, to M. Wor. Lewis Hayden, Esq., the Grand Master of Prince Hall. Inscribed in the book, it says “To Lewis Hayden from his friend Winslow Lewis.”

M. Wor. Bro. Petty, by leave of the Grand Master, directed the Grand Marshal to present M. Wor. Bros. Stewart and Maggio to the Level. He there presented medallions denoting their number and membership to the Symbolic African Lodge #459, the first Lodge of Prince Hall Freemasonry.

The Grand Master spoke with Rt. Wor. Bogos Pelagian and Wor. Armen Zildjian in the East. The Grand Master presented Rt. Wor. Bro. Pelagian with an honorary Senior Grand Warden certificate, awarded by the Grand Lodge of Armenia. This is to honor him on his retirement as its Grand Representative to their Grand Lodge. The Grand Master announced Rt. Wor. Bro. Zildjian as the new Grand Representative to the Grand Lodge of Armenia.

The Grand Marshal conducted Rt. Wors. Ryan Flynn and Bryan Simmons to the East. Finally, the Grand Master unveiled the large black draped object. It was the work of Rt. Wor. Bro. Flynn, The Putnam – Knox portrait (See page 11).

Wor. Jeff Briggs, Master of Columbian Lodge, presented a donation to the Brotherhood Fund to the Grand Master. The hope is to make this an annual donation. Rt. Wors.

Timothy McGavin and Basilios Tsingos presented a donation on behalf of St. Bernard Commandery #12 to the Grand Master for the Grand Assembly of Rainbow, the DeMolay Foundation of Massachusetts, the 250th Anniversary Committee, the 300th Anniversary Committee, and the Brotherhood Fund.

“It is my privilege to address you today, one quarter into my third year as your Grand

Master,” said the Grand Master to open his address. He recounted, with pleasure, traveling to the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia, with the Grand Secretary and Grand Marshal, on December 13th. “I was honored to bring remarks from the visiting delegations, and to thank our hosts for a wonderful session and installation of officers. The Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia announced that they will be holding a five-day Universal Brotherhood Celebration, October 14th to the 19th, which will include a

multilingual Universal Brotherhood Lodge, several breakout sessions on ‘Masonic support for democracy,’ and a Masonic Day of Thanksgiving Gala.”

The Grand Master was inspired at the Grand Lodge Installation of Officers and the Feast of St John the Evangelist on Dec 27th, by the Deputy Grand Master and Brig Gen. John Driscoll. (See page 18 and 20) Weymouth United Masonic Lodge held a meeting on January 18, 2025, at Grand Lodge where they received our Deputy Grand Master. “The reception was well attended and full



Wor. Armen Zildjian, the new Grand Lodge representative to Armenia with Rt. Wor. Bogos Pelagian, the retiring representative with the Grand Master.

The mystery is over: the new portrait of Knox and Putnam is revealed.



The artist, Rt. Wor. Ryan Flynn, describes meaning of the painting to the Grand Master with Rt. Wor. Bryan Simmons.



of fun.” The Senior Grand Warden’s reception was hosted by Joseph Warren Soley Lodge, and held at Grand lodge on February 1, 2024. The Junior Grand Warden’s reception was hosted by Berkshire Lodge at a special communication on March 15th at the Pittsfield Masonic Building. The reception will be followed by the annual District 31 Gala. (See pages 15)

“It was my pleasure to attend, with the Deputy Grand Master and Grand Marshal, a celebration of the 250th Anniversary of Most Worshipful Prince Hall, and 14 other Brethren who were raised to the sublime degree on March 6, 1775. These Brethren were raised in Lodge #441, of the Irish Registry attached to the 38th British Foot Infantry, at Castle William [Castle] Island, Boston. This lodge left with the evacuation of the British from Boston. African Lodge was organized on July 3, 1776.”

“Several years would go by before M. Wor. Bro. Hall would be appointed as Provincial Grand Master. He would go on to charter lodges in Philadelphia and Providence. From these modest beginnings, more than 5,000 lodges and 47 Grand Lodges trace their lineage to the MW Prince Hall Grand Lodge, jurisdiction of Massachusetts,” recounted the Grand Master. This event marked the beginning of a year-long celebration, where many jurisdictions will travel to celebrate and pay their respects to our brethren of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, jurisdiction of Massachusetts.

The Grand Master attended the merger ceremony for Moses Michael Hayes and Garden City Lodges on January 25, 2025, at the Newtonville Masonic Building. “We wish the best for Moses Michael Hayes as they start a new chapter in Freemasonry in Newtonville. (See page 24)

“District Deputy Grand Masters, District Youth Officers, and Youth Committee members gathered in each of the three zones on Jan 29th (Wakefield), Feb 7th (Westwood), and Feb 11th (East Long Meadow), to discuss program

goals for Rainbow, DeMolay, and Scouting America. I am asking every district to collaborate with the Youth Committee in doing all we can for our youth programs,” noted the Grand Master.

With three Past Grand Masters, the Grand Master attended the Conference of Grand Masters of North America in Myrtle Beach, SC, on February 15-18. “We gave presentations on our 250th Anniversary marketing campaign, our 250th celebration events in Massachusetts, and the George Washington Military Service Medal program. It is clear that the other jurisdictions are dealing with the same challenges as Massachusetts and, in many cases, they are implementing similar programs to solve issues allowing us to collaborate and share winning strategies.”

The Deacons Academy had a kickoff event and The Master’s Path held two classes, with one left on Saturday, August 23, 2025, in Wakefield. A reception was held for our Grand Lodge Scholarship recipients and their parents. The recipients were awarded scholarships for the 2024-2025 academic year.

“It was my pleasure to attend a communication of Pythagorean Lodge in Marion. I was honored to have M. Wor. Andre Faria, Grand Master of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, in my suite. M. Wor. Bro. Faria is a member of Pythagorean Lodge, and it was wonderful for him to attend his lodge during his term as Grand Master. “It was my pleasure to attend a Grand Royal Arch Chapter One-day class given in my name on February 8, 2025, at the Worcester Masonic Building. The ritual was outstanding, and it was great to see the Companions get a great start to their Capitular Masonic Journey. I was honored to receive the Paul Revere Distinguished Service Medal from the Most Excellent Grand High Priest,” said the Grand Master.

During the quarter was the Shrine Smoker, Brothers of the Single Malt, the sad event of a funeral for Wor. Michael Ouellette, and the Grand Lodge Organizational Meeting.

Wor. Jeff Briggs donated to the Brotherhood Fund on behalf of Columbian Lodge.



Rt. Wors. Basilios E. (Bill) Tsingo and Timothy McGavin made five donations on behalf of St. Bernard Commandery #12.



“We completed a ten week media campaign to test our messaging during this 250th anniversary window. We worked with Boston Light to develop several 30 second media spots, which ran during the election season. Over 4,500 views of our website landing page occurred, which resulted in 1,200 leads, with captured contact information. Roughly one-third of those leads are considered quality leads to pursue. This test campaign indicates that our message is being well received, and we can reasonably be able to receive over 1,500 quality leads annually with this program. We plan to run a social media-only campaign in the spring to see if we can obtain similar results with more cost-effective media. We also hope to be able to better target our geographic opportunity areas west of Worcester using social media.

“We are preparing for a busy June with the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill. This will include a reenactment of the Joseph Warren Funeral, in Kings Chapel Boston, by our Grand Lodge Chaplains. There will be a graveside memorial service at Forest Hills, and an evening

concert at the Hatch Memorial Shell performance center at the Esplanade.

“On June 20th, we will be departing on the Norwegian Jewel for a seven-day cruise to Bermuda. There will be four days at sea, and three days in Bermuda, where there will be an opportunity to see the three Grand Lodges on the island, the United Grand Lodge of England, the Grand Lodge of Ireland, and the Grand Lodge of Scotland. We hope this will be a very relaxing trip for our Massachusetts Masonic family. Please contact Rt. Wor. Brother Mason Russell (mrussell@massfreemasonry.org or mason.russell@cruise-planners.com) if you are interested in attending and have not yet made reservations.”

“I cannot overstate the support and encouragement that I continue to receive from the Past Grand Masters, the business office, the Grand Lodge Officers, committees, and countless brethren I have met in my travels. Thank you so much for your efforts on behalf of our Fraternity. God bless the United States of America, and God Bless our beloved Fraternity,” concluded the Grand Master, closing the Quarterly Communication in ample form. ■

RECIPIENTS OF THE GRAND MASTER'S AWARD



William Parkman Lodge



Norfolk Lodge



Orient Lodge



Union Lodge



Mount Vernon-Galilean Lodge



Sagahew Lodge



Lynnfield-Zetland Lodge

RUFUS PUTNAM'S INGENUOUS ENGINEERING AT DORCHESTER HEIGHTS

by Rt. Wor. Bryan Simmons

At the March Quarterly, a painting by Rt. Wor. Ryan Flynn depicting Bros. Henry Knox and Rufus Putnam was unveiled. While Knox is well-known for his role in transporting artillery to Boston, fewer people recognize the critical contributions of Bro. Putnam. His expertise in military engineering played a decisive role in forcing the British to evacuate the city. In March, 1776, Boston remained under British occupation, and General George Washington faced a pressing challenge. He needed a strategic advantage to drive the enemy out. That advantage came from Bro. Putnam, a self-taught military engineer, whose ingenuity led to one of the most daring and effective fortifications of the war.

Dorchester Heights, a commanding hill overlooking Boston Harbor, held the key to controlling the city. If the Continental Army could fortify it, they could threaten British ships, and make the occupation untenable. But, time was short. Any visible attempt to build defenses would invite immediate British retaliation. Bro. Putnam devised a brilliant plan that relied on speed, secrecy, and pre-fabricated defenses. His men constructed fascines, bundles of sticks bound together, and gabions, large woven baskets designed to be quickly filled with earth to form instant defensive walls. These materials were prepared in advance, and stored nearby for rapid deployment.

On the night of March 4, 1776, Washington's forces,

including 3,000 troops and Putnam's engineers, moved under the cover of darkness. Every precaution was taken to avoid detection. Wagon wheels were lined with straw to muffle noise, as they hauled supplies and artillery up the steep, icy slopes. Putnam's team worked tirelessly through the night, digging trenches, erecting barriers, and positioning artillery, all in near silence. By dawn on March 5, the Continental Army had transformed the Heights into an imposing fortress, armed with cannons transported by Henry Knox from Fort Ticonderoga. When British General William Howe awoke to see Washington's forces in a dominant position, he immediately grasped the danger.

Attacking uphill against well-entrenched troops, and heavy artillery was a losing battle. Rather than risk devastating losses, Howe ordered the evacuation of Boston on March 17, 1776. Astonished by the feat, Howe reportedly remarked, "My God, these fellows have done more work in one night than I could make my army do in three months." Putnam's rapid construction techniques, and strategic foresight, proved the immense value of military engineering. His success at Dorchester Heights not only secured Boston for the Patriots, but also influenced future fortifications throughout the war. Today, Dorchester Heights stands as a testament to how ingenuity, determination, and the brilliance of Rufus Putnam helped turn the tide of the American Revolution, forever shaping the course of history. ■



Grand Masters of Massachusetts

by Rt. Wor. Walter Hunt

At the Grand Lodge building in Boston, the most beautiful and impressive room is Corinthian Hall on the third floor. It holds the portraits of the first fifteen Grand Masters of Massachusetts: five from St. John's Grand Lodge, four from the Massachusetts Grand Lodge, and six from the post-1792 united Grand Lodge. In the southwest corner, between the solemn John Warren and the unusual John Cutler, is the austere portrait of Moses Michael Hays, Grand Master of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge in the 1780s. It's a copy of the Gilbert Stuart original, painted from life. He ranks ninth in seniority, and was the last man to serve as Grand Master of the Massachusetts Independent Grand Lodge, before the merger of 1792. After the death of his predecessor, Joseph Webb, and the St. John's Grand Master John Rowe, we undertook the long negotiation to bring the two Grand Lodges together.

Although early biographies suggest that Brother Hays was born in Lisbon, it is now believed that he was born in New York City, in May of 1739. His date of birth – May 9 – was, curiously, also his date of death in 1805. He was an active member of a Jewish congregation in New York, and became a freeman of the city in 1769, and a highly respected man of business. Some time in the 1770s, he relocated to Rhode Island, where his Touro relatives were located. He was also related to Moses Seixas, who presided at the formation of the Grand Lodge of Rhode Island, and served as its Grand Master from 1802 until 1808. Brother Hays was active in King David's Lodge in Providence, where he served as Master. Under the more relaxed rules of the day, he was able to change its venue from New York to Rhode Island, under the same charter.

During the American Revolution, some members of the Jewish community in Rhode Island moved to Massachusetts, including the Hays family: Moses, his wife Rebecca, their five children, as well as his sister and her two children.

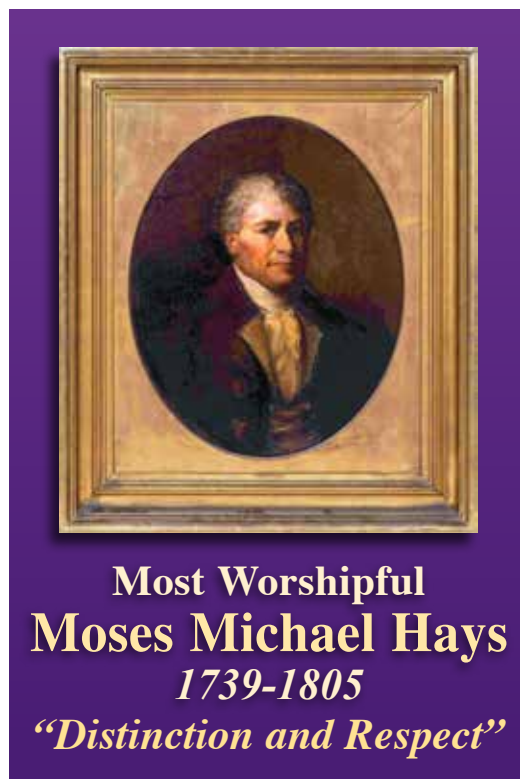
Their sixth child was born after they settled in Boston. In the Boston of the 1780s, Brother Hays was one of the few Jewish businessmen. He established an insurance office, and prospered in business, despite being an outsider, both religiously and culturally. Perhaps, in part due to his Masonic connections, he was able to find his footing in a closed and monolithically Protestant Christian community. But, it is clear that his character helped establish him in society and in business, and he was universally trusted and respected. He was extraordinarily philanthropic and supportive. In the winter of 1783, he helped establish the first

bank in Boston, and made frequent use of it. He also contributed to Harvard College, and to the Boston Marine Society. A contemporary account related that he was very hospitable to the poor of the town, to the point of feeding them directly from his table.

Moses Michael Hays received his degrees in some unknown lodge, likely in New York, where he became active in Craft Masonry. He was made the first Master of King David's Lodge. At his initiative, the lodge was relocated from New York to Newport, Rhode Island. Within a few years, he was in Massachusetts, and he affiliated with The Massachusetts Lodge, ascending rapidly within the Massachusetts Independent Grand Lodge. He served on the committee that established formal regulations for the government of

the Grand Lodge, and in 1788, he succeeded Joseph Webb as the fourth and last Grand Master of that body.

He was clearly a person of some distinction in the Masonic world, to have been invested with such authority so quickly. He was part of the Rite of Perfection, a predecessor to our own Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. In 1768, Henry Francken appointed him as a Deputy Inspector General, a distinction which actually appeared in the charter for King David's Lodge. As such, he was an excellent choice to lead his Grand Lodge at a time *continued on page 32*





Adventures *with the* Grand Librarian

by Bro. Gary Shapiro

In his first weeks as librarian, Wor. Matthew Ahern discovered a Mezzotint engraving of Benjamin Franklin in basement storage. The Founding Father had sent it to his niece in Newburyport. Bro. Ahern held an item Franklin had touched. “It’s a treasure trove,” he said of the Samuel Crocker Lawrence Library, located on the second floor of Grand Lodge. “I really want both Masons and the general public to take advantage of what’s here.” Another item of note was a document that the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts sent to the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1777, declaring their independence, and electing their first independent Grand Master, Joseph Webb. There are tens of thousands of items in the library collection. “What you see here is just a fraction,” he said.

His current projects include the building of a database for all that Grand Lodge has digitized. He invites lodges to come in and use the book scanner to digitize their own documents. “Any lodge can take me up on that offer,” he said. For example, King Solomon’s Lodge has been digitizing its minute books. He is setting up an exhibit of the 250th Anniversary of the Revolutionary War, covering partly how Masons have remembered General Joseph Warren, who died at Bunker Hill. On display presently is the prayer book of Henry Price, the first Grand Master of Massachusetts in 1733, as well as the apron of the Marquis de Lafayette, that he wore at the Bunker Hill commemoration. Also, a bible from 1546, which belonged to Samuel Crocker Lawrence, a bibliophile wounded at the Battle of Bull Run. “Lawrence lived his Masonic values,” said Bro. Ahern. “He was a great man.”

Bro. Ahern wears a number of hats. He is Master of Thomas Talbot Lodge, in Tewksbury. The lodge has undergone a revival, including its focus on Masonic education. They try to have a presentation at each meeting. For example, there was a talk on temperance, one of the four cardinal virtues, and one on the working tools of an Entered Apprentice. There have been pasta dinners, and a chili cook

off, a tradition established before COVID.

In January, 2017, he enlisted in the National Guard, serving in the military police for seven years, and became a sergeant, studying public affairs in Maryland. He fittingly joined the Military History Detachment, and worked at the National Guard Museum in Concord, MA, where he prepared exhibits for the 250th Anniversary of the Revolutionary War. He worked at two historical properties in Concord: the Old Manse (1770), and Robbins House (c.1800s). In 2020-21, Ahern worked at the Massachusetts Historical Society as a reference library assistant. In 2022, he worked as part of the Massachusetts Historic Preservation Corps. He earned a BA from UMass Lowell in English and history, and wrote on the Peloponnesian War. He earned his MS in criminal justice, with a concentration in homeland security, studying crisis and emergency management. In work is a degree in public history from Salem State University, with a focus on the anti-Masonic period in the 1800s north of Boston.

He joined the Samuel Crocker Lawrence Library in July, 2024. Asked about his experience so far, Bro. Ahern said, “I learned just how extensive our collection is here.” He appreciates how many Masons have written books, has given talks on figures such as Benjamin Butler, who was pivotal in saving Maryland from joining the Confederacy.

He enjoys speaking with visitors from around the globe, including a Mason from Turkey, and a resident of Dubai. He learns from his conversations with visitors to the library. “Each research inquiry can bring me down a different rabbit hole,” he said. Bro. Ahern assumes the role of librarian from Rt. Wor. Walter Hunt, who remains Grand Historian of Grand Lodge. Bro. Ahern considers Bro. Hunt a great resource for helping with any questions. He said he also uses Masonic Genealogy, a useful website that Bro. Hunt established. Some of the Grand Lodge tours end on the second floor in the library, with Bro. Ahern giving a tour of it. Help yourself to the free M&M candy. Sweet! ■

The Prodigal Mason

by Wor. Richard Thompson



When does your Masonic journey begin? For some, it begins the day you were raised as a Master Mason. In that case, for me it started on October 18, 1971. Maybe it's the date of your Entered Apprentice Degree? For me, that was June 26, 1971. Could it possibly be the date of your pre application meeting? That moves mine to March of 1971. For some, it is the day you join the Order of DeMolay.

That makes the start of my journey March 26, 1965. Or is this the moment you start identifying with the fraternity? That is when I think I started my Masonic journey. That puts the date at a few years after I was born.

I'm from one of those multi-generational Masonic families. In some families, the men bond through watching and talking sports. For some, it is a sporting activity, such as hunting, fishing, golf, or bowling. In my family, the men are all drawn to Masonry. My cousin, Wor. David Hicks, and I once figured there were 23 Masons in our family. We quipped that if we ever had a family reunion, we could get a charter. I think I was about five years old when I realized not everyone's father put on a tuxedo to go to a meeting. In my case, my grandfather was a member of Pentucket Lodge in Lowell. My father was a member of St. Paul Lodge, at the time in Ayer, but is now in Gardner. I, of course, am a Mason, and my son is also a Mason. There you have four generations.

When my son was at his pre application committee meeting at Wamesit Lodge, then Master Wor. Archie Campbell (now RW), asked him why he wanted to be a Mason. Jarrod asked, "You mean I have a choice?" He was joking, but it also demonstrated just how strong and deep Freemasonry runs in my family. If I can backtrack a bit, however, my time in DeMolay really had a great deal to do with my decision to join a lodge, and it had an equal impact on my son's decision. Before I joined Lowell Chapter, my experience with Masons was limited to my family, and a

few others I met through them. Joining DeMolay put me in contact with more Masons. I probably would have joined a lodge without a direct DeMolay experience, but I am sure the Masons I met through DeMolay led to my active membership in my lodge.

Thinking back to that time, 60 years ago, when I joined Lowell Chapter, I think of the advisors I knew, the Masons who taught me so much. How did they teach me so much? Just by being themselves. All we had to do was be like them. It must have worked, because many of my DeMolay brothers became my Masonic brothers. It didn't matter which lodge I visited, there were DeMolay brothers there to greet me. When I became a Senior DeMolay, I signed on as an advisor in Wamesit Chapter, in Tewksbury. I was an advisor there for some 15 years. When my son joined Lowell Chapter, I signed on to the Advisory Council, and spent a few more years helping DeMolay members.

We ask the question, "What can I do to help our lodges attract new members?" In my opinion, the biggest thing we can do is serve as an example to others. Let's show everyone, young and old alike, the contributions we make every day to this world of ours. If you have the time to help youth groups, do it! Any youth group can benefit from an adult's time and dedication to the next generation. I know DeMolay and Rainbow will benefit from our attention, but other groups, such as church youth groups, can benefit as well. You never know the impact you may have. The young men who I knew in DeMolay are getting ready to retire from their careers. They still call me "Dad."

There was one man, the father of two of my DeMolay members. He couldn't attend the meetings because he wasn't a Mason. He spoke to some of us about Masonry and decided to join our lodge. He attended DeMolay meetings, but also got interested in the lodge. He joined the officer's line and served as Master. In fact, he was the Master right after me. He stayed active, and was installed as the District Deputy Grand Master for our district. He joined Scottish Rite, and was elevated to the 33rd Degree. He started his Masonic journey to be with his sons. His journey took him well beyond that. You may never know the impact you can have on others, but it doesn't take anything special. All it takes is the desire to help others and the ability to be yourself. ■

Richard Thompson is the Secretary of Merrimack Valley Daylight Lodge, and a former DeMolay Advisor.



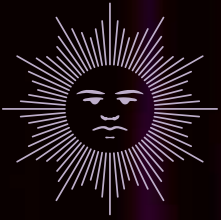
**RECEPTION FOR
Rt. Wor. John MacLeod
Deputy Grand Master**



**RECEPTION FOR
Rt. Wor. John C. Toto
Senior Grand Warden**



**RECEPTION FOR
Rt. Wor. Travis B. Sawyer
Junior Grand Warden**



Most Worshipful



DONALD G. HICKS, JR. 1940-2025

We mark the passing of great men in words that are never truly sufficient, because they are unable to encompass their deeds or the many lives they have touched. Thus, in the moment, we can only try our best to preserve for posterity what made them great, so that those who never met them can appreciate their character and contributions.

So it is that we address the loss of M. W. Donald Gardner Hicks, Jr., a Past Grand Master of Masons in Massachusetts. Born in December, 1940, Brother Don – as he always introduced himself – was the son of a Mason and a local boy, a native of the city of Lowell. He graduated from Lowell High School in 1958, and furthered his education, ultimately finding himself a career in banking. It was while he was beginning his career that he first encountered the Craft.

A story he told was that as a Master Councilor for Lowell Chapter of the Order of DeMolay, he invited the principal officers of his bank to attend his installation. One of them was M. W. Andrew Gray Jenkins, at that time a Past Grand Master from his own city, his bank's Chairman of the Board. He thought enough of his young employee to suggest that, when of age, he should petition William North Lodge in Lowell. Our Brother politely

Donald G. Hicks, Jr.

declined, indicating that should he choose to become a Mason, it would be in his father's lodge, Wamesit in Tewksbury. And so he did, in 1962. He served as Worshipful Master from 1969-71, and twice more, in 2011-12 and 2021-22. He became active not only in his lodge, and in the building associations in Tewksbury and Lowell, but also in the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, where he served as Sovereign Prince in the Lowell Council, Princes of Jerusalem. He served as an Active Member of the Supreme Council from 2004-2015, and as Deputy for Massachusetts from 2005 - 12. He was active in the various bodies of the York Rite, the Shrine, and numerous other Masonic, and affiliate bodies.

Grand Master Albert T. Ames appointed our Brother as Deputy Grand Master for the year 1987. In his speech before the audience at the Feast of St. John, Bro. Hicks spoke strongly of his relationship with his father, and generally in the way in which men come to the Fraternity, "An interpersonal relationship that one man has had with another...a man, who is a Mason,...exemplifying our principles in his daily life that attracted another man to the Fraternity."

Fifteen years later, Brother Hicks was elected the 75th Grand Master of Masons in Massachusetts, and set about working to fulfill that vision. "What is Freemasonry?" He asked this question in a St. John the Baptist speech in June, 2004, at his own home church. "Freemasonry," he answered, "is dedicated to the Brotherhood of Man, and our singular purpose is to make good men better, not better than someone else, but better within themselves.... Masonry teaches that each person has an obligation to make a difference for good. It teaches kindness in the home, honesty in business, courtesy in society, fairness in work, concern for the unfortunate, and respect for one another."

During his term as Grand Master, he undertook the Campaign For Masonry, to strengthen and expand the endowments of Grand Lodge, and he directed the task of revising the Masonic Districts of Massachusetts for the first time since 1927. He presided over a number of mergers and consolidations, and issued rulings on the conduct of Lodge business, the re-establishment of Lodges of Instruction, the exact age of membership, and on the nature of electronic communications in the new world of the 21st century. During, and after his time as Grand Master, he offered leadership and wise counsel to many brothers, both within Grand Lodge, and in the many bodies in which he was a member.

'Brother Don' was the very person he delineated in his 2004 speech: kind, honest, courteous, fair, concerned, and respectful. He exemplified our virtues, and upheld our principles for more than sixty years. Without question, his absence will be keenly felt, as we carry on without him. -Rt. Wor. Walter Hunt, Grand Historian





RT. WOR. JOHN MACLEOD

DEPUTY GRAND MASTER

Grand Master, Most Worshipfuls, Right Worshipfuls, Distinguished Guests, Brethren All, Good evening,

I stand before you today with deep humility and gratitude as the Deputy Grand Master of Massachusetts Freemasonry. This role is not only a great privilege, but also a significant responsibility, which I embrace with commitment and dedication. Grand Master, thank you for your trust. I look forward to working closely with you and the brethren of our esteemed fraternity. Together, we will continue to uphold our cherished traditions, promote brotherly love, and make a positive impact in our communities. I am truly grateful for this opportunity and eager to serve you all.

Throughout my life, I have been truly blessed. Raised by two wonderful parents, I didn't realize how deeply Freemasonry was woven into my upbringing until later. My father was raised in John Cutler Lodge, now Wampatuck Lodge, in 1965. He took great pride in his Masonic affiliations, embodying our fraternity's teachings through his actions more than words, as he was a quiet man. Family, church, community, and friends, many of whom were brothers, were his priorities. He was busy, but always made time for those in need, teaching valuable lessons through his example.

In my early twenties, I met my wife, Paula, the love of my life for over 37 years. Her unwavering support has been a cornerstone of my journey. Together, we have three wonderful children, Ryan, Sarah, and Evan, and two beautiful grandsons, Angus and Colm. I was raised in Weymouth United Masonic Lodge, and, not unlike many of you, I had

some great Masonic mentors and role models, a few of whom are with us this evening. I am eternally grateful to have them in my life, and I am also very proud that both my sons are active, respected members of our fraternity.

Serving as Worshipful Master in 2017, I experienced the unique joy of having my sons as my Senior and Junior Wardens. It was a profound privilege to share the lodge with them as brothers and pillar officers. I was honored to be appointed and serve as District Deputy Grand Master of the Eighth Masonic District in 2022-2023, with my son Ryan as my District Deputy Grand Marshal. It goes without saying that I'm extremely proud that he succeeded me this past year as District Deputy Grand Master, with his brother Evan serving as his District Deputy Grand Marshal. Truly, this has become a family affair.

Today, however, I wish to discuss something I believe is crucial for the continued success of our beloved fraternity, how we can cultivate a vibrant lodge culture, while embracing new ideas and honoring the traditions that have guided us for centuries. I hope this conversation sparks further dialogue long after we leave here today. Freemasonry is not merely a collection of rituals. It is a dynamic community that thrives on the engagement and commitment of its members. Let's focus on developing a positive lodge culture, the foundation upon which our fraternity stands. It shapes each member's experience and influences our interactions within the community and beyond.

To foster this culture, we must create an environment of inclusivity, respect, and brotherly love. Every brother who enters our doors should feel welcomed and valued. Open communication and active participation in lodge activities are key to achieving this. By encouraging engagement, we strengthen our bonds, and enhance our experiences.

THE GRAND LODGE INSTALLATION & FEAST OF SAINT JOHN



Moreover, we should celebrate the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of our members. Freemasonry encompasses a wide range of unique individuals, and it is within this diversity that we find strength. Let's embrace this diversity to create a culture of learning and growth.

Every lodge possesses its own unique personality, shaped by the values we prioritize, the activities we engage in, and the relationships we cultivate. To nurture this personality, we must ask ourselves some essential questions. What do we want our lodge to be known for? Is it charity work, educational initiatives, social connections, or a strong sense of camaraderie? Whatever it is, let's actively cultivate that identity to reflect our values as Masons. Consider hosting regular social events, educational seminars, and community service projects that align with our lodge's identity. By consistently engaging in activities that embody our values, we create a sense of purpose and pride, enhancing the experience for current members and attracting new ones.

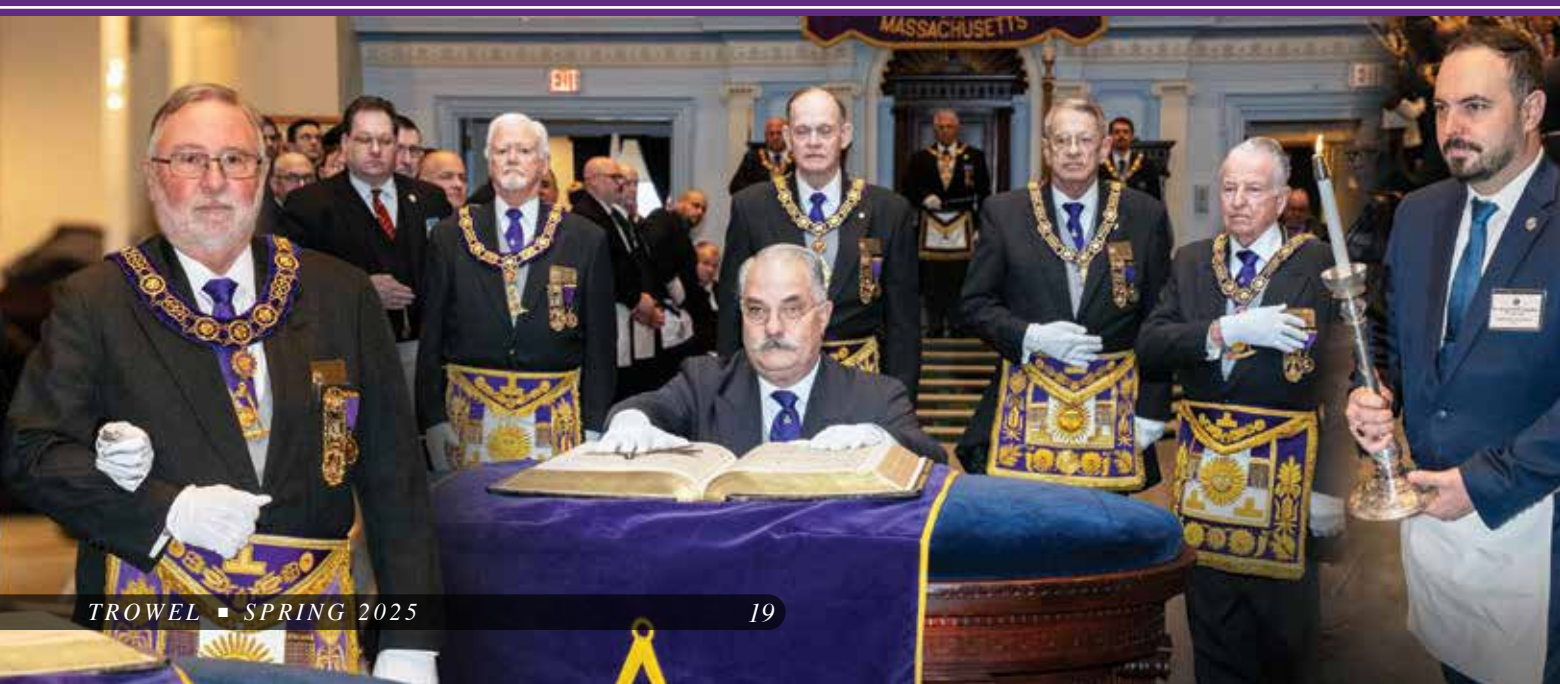
We must also embrace new ideas. While traditions are the foundation of Freemasonry, adaptation is essential for growth. As the world changes rapidly, we cannot afford to stand still. Encouraging creativity and openness to new concepts is vital. This could mean reevaluating our lodge meeting format, incorporating technology, or finding innovative ways to engage with our communities. Embracing new ideas does not mean discarding our traditions. Rather, it's about integrating the old with the new to ensure our fraternity remains relevant and appealing to future generations. As we navigate this journey of growth, maintaining a consistent tone in our communications and activities is vital. Our messaging should reflect our core values, Brotherhood, Integrity, and Service. How we present ourselves, both internally and externally, impacts trust and credibility. Whether through social media, newsletters, or community outreach, let's align our messaging with the positive culture we strive to create.

The strength of our fraternity rests within our local lodges, each playing a pivotal role in shaping the future of

Freemasonry. I firmly believe in the concept that Freemasonry is local, as many of our leaders have expressed. By focusing on the growth and development of our local lodges, we contribute to the overall advancement of the fraternity. This requires us to take ownership of our lodge's activities and initiatives. To attract new members, we must clearly articulate our value proposition. What makes Freemasonry unique? Why should someone choose to join our fraternity? We need to highlight the benefits of membership, whether personal growth, community service, or the bonds of brotherhood. This value proposition should be effectively communicated through our outreach efforts, personal conversations, social media, and informational events showcasing the transformative experiences that come with being a Mason and the positive impact we have on individuals and communities.

As we strive for growth, let's not overlook the importance of quality. It can be tempting to focus solely on numbers, but true success lies in the quality of our members and the experiences we provide. We must protect the West Gate, ensuring our lodges remain places of meaningful engagement and personal development. By prioritizing quality over quantity, we create an environment where Masons can thrive and embody our values. Finally, as we embrace new ideas and foster growth, let's stay committed to preserving Freemasonry's honored traditions. Our rituals, symbols, and teachings connect us to our past and remind us of our responsibilities to one another and the world. It is crucial that we honor these traditions while remaining open-minded. This doesn't mean changing who we are, it's about making our traditions relevant and accessible to new generations.

Brethren, the journey of growing our membership while stewarding our traditions is filled with opportunities and challenges. By developing a positive lodge culture, nurturing our lodge personality, embracing new ideas, maintaining consistency, and focusing on quality, we can create an environment that attracts and retains members *continued on page 30*





BRO. AND GENERAL JOHN DRISCOLL KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Thank you all in advance for giving me your attention and sharing with me your most precious resource, your time. My congratulations to the Grandmaster, and our new Senior and Junior Wardens, and greetings to all distinguished guests here this evening. I will start as I always do, thanking my fellow Veterans, our first responders, and all who have, and continue to put their lives on the line for our great republic. Brethren, once again I am humbled to stand before you here. I had the pleasure to speak to you previously in December, 2021, under then Grandmaster Richard Maggio, and again I am honored to be here at the invitation of our Grandmaster George Forrest Hamilton. Thank you, Grandmaster. When I was asked to speak, I inquired if there was a topic to speak on. He told me membership, and gave me a wide berth to expound on it in 15 minutes or less. Which I personally obliged myself to do, as the first rule to retain membership is keeping the members' attention. So I will be a good speaker, be seen, be brief, and be gone.

As I crafted my talk on membership for this evening, I was well aware of my audience and pondered on what words I could say to bring value to the pillars and leaders of our fraternity, especially from a brother who has not gone through the line. We all know the term, "Not just a man, but a Mason." And each of us has our own story to tell [about] why we joined Masonry, and what makes us stay in this great fraternity. This to me is critical to grow our fraternity. My talk is on my own Masonic journey, how I came into the fraternity, and list out the reasons that motivate me to stay in Masonry, with the desire that you will be motivat-

ed to tell your own story to grow our fraternity.

I use the word motivate in the sense of self-discipline. Masonry, like the military, is a volunteer organization. We take an oath that places us under an obligation to fulfill our moral responsibilities, and take action on our ethical principles. In a sense, it is to do your duty. Duty is commonly defined by doing what is right when no one is looking. In life, this gets challenging. As Masons, sometimes we feel we are at the end of our cable tow, barely holding on to fulfill our duties with the pressures of work, family, and other requirements of life. Leaders in that moment, and each of you here tonight is a leader, need to pause and reflect on what is important in life, and if in Masonry, think on what motivated us to begin and continue this journey. It is all about people. In the military, I learned a valuable lesson on retaining people that is applicable to Masonry and other organizations. I counseled my officers to never make a soldier choose between the National Guard and anything else, especially family, as the NG will always lose. This does not mean the National Guard was not important to them, but at that moment, when forced to choose, the soldier will let go of their cable tow and leave. Whether they come back or not depends on how the situation was handled. It comes down to leadership, and more importantly, leaders who can listen and understand what made that soldier join, and what has changed to make them leave.

No one cares how much you know 'til they know how much you care. I learned through the years, the decision to join any organization, such as Masonry, is based on the value proposition of time. Does the time invested satisfy the needs, wants, and desires of the brother or candidate. This is not transactional, it is a mutual understanding that what we do as Masons matters, to ourselves, our families, and our

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fellow citizens. The challenge we have for Freemasonry is to adapt to changing cultural and societal expectations while staying true to our core principles and tenets. By emphasizing our relevance, our purpose, and accessibility, I am confident each of us here today, and our fellow brethren in lodges across the Commonwealth, can inspire interest and engagement to develop the next generation of Freemasons.

So, I ask each of you, why did you join Masonry? You may have joined to develop personal character, build meaningful friendships with diverse individuals, contribute to your community through charitable work, engage in intellectual pursuits through symbolic rituals, or be part of our rich historical tradition focused on our tenets of brotherly love, relief, and truth. And to do all this within a supportive network that fosters personal growth and leadership skills. But who knew all this when you joined? I did not. For me, it was a simple question in 1996, from Brother Leon Valloni, who took the time to ask me what I knew about Masonry, which was little, save I knew the symbol on his ring, and in Melrose, where I grew up, there was Wyoming Masonic Lodge. That initial conversation was an inflection point in my life that brought me to learn Freemasonry's values and universal appeal.

Leon's question may run counter to our traditional emphasis on self-selection, "To be one, ask one," but if not for him taking the time to engage and talk with me, thereby raising my interest, my personal commitment may not have happened. Nothing beats a personal conversation with someone you respect. Whether a fellow brother, to encourage him to get in line, or a worthy individual to be a potential candidate, taking that time may lead them to ask, "What's next, or how do I join?" This is basic leadership development. Like Masons, it happens in the military, first responders, and public service. In Masonry, members do not just join, they commit to the organization, to actively live up to the values and principles they align with, and put them into action. This is what Freemasonry does for me. We talk the talk, and walk the walk.

Because of this, Freemasonry has a timeless appeal to others from our history, that no doubt drew many a brother towards the Craft. We hold a prominent place with prestige among the world's great societies of fellowship. There are so many other noteworthy significances of Masonry, but if I ask you how you took your first step into Freemasonry, I would dare to say it began with a friend or fellow brother, who personally took the time to speak with you to find out your needs, wants, and desires. So when asked, how do you describe Freemasonry to others? We usually say to make good men better, but how do you describe that to the uninitiated? I use the old WIFM phrase of the person asking what's in it for me? This, for me, took me some reflection and research to rediscover the many benefits we have in Freemasonry, and I list them here for all to take and personalize to make it your own for when you meet or think of someone who shares the same value system as yourself, and who can become an engaged and active member of our fraternity. So, how do we make good men better? Freemasonry offers opportunities for personal growth and development. We emphasize self-improvement, ethical behavior, and integrity to our membership, and encourage each to strive to learn the lessons from the ritual and symbolism that provides deeper insights into life, morality, and spirituality.

Being a Mason, as seen here today, you are a member of a brotherhood, and are part of a community across the world. Tonight, we have eleven states, Washington, D.C., and three countries here - England, Panama, and two provinces of Canada. Freemasonry stands above reproach on focusing on what binds us in a unique bond with like-minded individuals who share common values, and avoids that which could separate us from our fellow brethren, which is religion and politics. The support network Freemasonry provides to our fellow travelers distinguishes us from other fraternities, as acknowledged at the quarterly. Many a brother and his family have benefited from friendship, brotherly love, and support during the challenges life brings. Jim Prentice, a tour guide here, put this in action when a cou- *continued on page 30*





From The West...of Boston

by *Bro. Brian McHale, MSET*

The Enduring Bond: Brotherhood in Freemasonry

In an increasingly fragmented world, the concept of genuine brotherhood can often feel like a relic of a bygone era. Yet, within the walls of Masonic lodges around the globe, a unique and enduring bond thrives: the brotherhood of Freemasonry. It's a connection that transcends social strata, political affiliations, and religious differences, uniting men from all walks of life under a shared set of principles and ideals.

But what exactly is this brotherhood? It's more than just camaraderie or the pleasant fellowship found in a club. Masonic brotherhood is forged in the crucible of shared ritual, and commitment to a common moral code. From the moment a candidate enters the lodge, he embarks on a journey of self-discovery alongside his brethren. The symbolic ceremonies, steeped in history and allegory, serve as powerful reminders of the values that bind them together: brotherly love, relief, and truth.

Brotherly love, the cornerstone of Masonic philosophy, encourages members to regard each other with kindness, compassion, and understanding. It calls for mutual respect, and a willingness to support one another through life's trials and triumphs. This isn't merely a passive sentiment. It actively manifests itself in the lodge through acts of charity, both within the fraternity, and in the wider community. Masons are taught to extend a helping hand to a distressed brother, to offer comfort in times of sorrow, and to celebrate moments of joy.

Relief, the second great tenet, underscores the practical application of brotherly love. It compels Masons to be charitable and benevolent, to alleviate suffering, and to contribute to the well-being of their fellow human beings. This commitment often translates into significant philanthropic endeavors, with Masonic lodges and Grand Lodges supporting a wide array of charitable causes, from children's hospitals to disaster relief efforts. I remember when the Scottish Rite Almoner's Fund assisted numerous brothers affected by Hurricane (or SuperStorm) Sandy in 2012, on Long Island. H.E.L.P., in Woburn, is another example of a Masonic charity, loaning medical equipment to those in need.

Truth, the final pillar, guides Masons in their pursuit of knowledge and moral integrity. Our Fraternity encourages its members to seek wisdom. We are to act with honesty and sincerity. We uphold the highest ethical standards in our personal and professional lives. This shared pursuit of truth

fosters an environment of trust and open communication within the brotherhood. I am fortunate enough to work with a fellow Mason, which makes each day better.

The bonds formed within a Masonic lodge often extend far beyond the tiled floor. Brethren find in each other a network of support, mentorship, and lifelong friendship. They share experiences, offer counsel, and provide a sense of belonging that can be particularly meaningful in today's fast-paced, and often isolating world. This sense of community provides a valuable anchor, a place where men can connect with others who share similar values and aspirations.

The way I have explained it to others is inside a lodge room, you are safe. Inside the lodge room, the outside world goes away. You may take risks, as no one inside the room will allow you to fail or fall. You yourself will not allow others to fail or fall. You are among like-minded men, each seeking to become a better version of himself. The power of our Fraternity is palpable when you meet someone out in the world who is a fellow Freemason. I was in Lancaster, PA, yesterday, visiting its Central Market. I noticed that one of the vendors, an older gentleman, was selling fridge magnets that were a red fez with a black tassel. "Are you a Shriner?" "Twenty-five years," he replied. "Cool. Me too. Great to meet you, Brother." We suddenly had a bond that did not exist a minute earlier. We met as strangers, but parted not only as friends, but as friends who share a storied history of ritual, and of self-improvement.

Of course, like any human endeavor, Freemasonry is not without its challenges. The fraternity is constantly evolving. It is adapting to the changing needs of society, while striving to maintain its core principles. Yet, the enduring strength of its brotherhood remains a powerful draw for men seeking connection, purpose, and a path toward personal growth. Freemasonry is about making good men better.

In a world that often emphasizes division, the brotherhood of Freemasonry stands as a testament to the power of unity, understanding, and shared values. It is a reminder that despite our differences, we are all part of the same human family, bound together by the principles of brotherly love, relief, and truth. In that enduring bond, Freemasons find a source of strength, support, and a profound sense of belonging that enriches their lives, and strengthens the fabric of their communities. ■

THE ROOKIE AWARD LEADS TO BUCHAREST AND BEYOND

by Bro. Sabin Itu

Two years ago, I was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in Ascendus Lodge. Upon my initiation, Worshipful Brother French assured me that this journey would be among the most rewarding experiences of my life, and he was right. Shortly after, our Secretary informed me about the Rookie Award, presented to new Master Masons who demonstrate exceptional dedication during their first year. Inspired by the stories of Past Masters who proudly recounted their efforts to earn this award, I embraced the challenge wholeheartedly.

Thus began my Masonic travels. Within Massachusetts, I visited various lodges while completing the requirements for the Rookie Award. Each lodge held unique beauty and history, like the architectural marvel of Aurora Lodge in Fitchburg, and the fascinating museum at Philanthropic Lodge in Marblehead. Despite being new to Freemasonry, I was warmly welcomed everywhere, learning about different customs, rituals, and traditions. A private tour of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts deepened my appreciation for the fraternity and its heritage. This warmth fueled my curiosity and deepened my desire to explore Freemasonry further.

One of my most memorable trips was to London, the home of the United Grand Lodge of England. Visiting the Masonic Museum there was a bucket-list experience. The grand architecture, symbolic details, vast museum,

and amazing murals were truly inspiring, marking the beginning of my global Masonic journey. When life took me to Barcelona for a year, I remained connected to my home lodge by staying in touch with the Secretary, and attending meetings in local lodges. I was honored to be invited by the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Catalunya to a private Masonic event. During my visit, I was touched to hear the Spanish brethren express admiration for Massachusetts Masons, appreciating how the MA Masons are highly appreciated by all citizens, a goal they aspired deeply to achieve. In Bucharest, I continued my Masonic journey, attending meetings of the Romanian Grand Lodge. While their hospitality was heartwarming, it also made me miss the familiarity of my blue lodge back in Lynn even more.

The Rookie Award was more than a series of tasks. It was an eye-opening mission that made me realize that brotherly love can be felt beyond buildings, districts, or national borders. It taught me that Freemasonry is not bound by geography or language, it is a universal brotherhood connected by shared values, principles, and goodwill. To my fellow young Master Masons - pursue the path laid before you with an open heart. To all the brethren who have guided me along the way - thank you for showing me the power of brotherly love, and for inspiring me to strive to be a better man. ■

Attending a 3rd degree at Aurora



A framed picture with three of my lights in Freemasonry. Wor. Robinson (PM, Ascendus), Rt. Wor. Gilligan (DDGM, 9th District), myself, and Wor. Turner (Past Grand Lecturer, PM, Ascendus)



Lodge room inside the United Grand Lodge of England



My raising as a MM. Rt. Wor. Gilligan and PM Appleton



Visiting the Danish Order of Freemasons' building, Denmark

FRATERNITY News & Events



*M. Wor. George F. Hamilton, with Wor. Malvin Lemeshow,
Master of MMH Lodge.*

Merger of Garden City and Moses Michael Hays Lodges

On January 25, 2025, Garden City Lodge of Newtonville, and Moses Michael Hays Lodge of Needham, were merged together by Grand Master M. Wor. George F. Hamilton, who also installed the officers of the newly merged lodge. This was the culmination of four years of soul-searching,

merger committee meetings, and the effects of the Covid-19 shutdown.

Moses Michael Hays Lodge was meeting in Needham, with plenty of parking, in a nice residential area on Highland Avenue. The early months of 2019 brought in many affiliates and new candidates, and once raised, they showed eagerness to assist. The lodge was able to fill most of the line positions with enthusiastic participants. In the year leading up to the Covid-19 pandemic, Worshipful Master Joseph Spinale had offered some grandiose plans for revitalizing the lodge, making a visible presence locally, sponsoring youth sports teams, and attending the sponsored teams' games. The lodge bought into the plan with vigor. Custom tents were ordered. Lodge members reached out to baseball and soccer league leaders as they were preparing for the 2020 spring season. Plans were underway, close to being implemented, when everything shut down in March, 2020. To add insult to injury, three key players in the revitalization effort relocated out of state due to their jobs.

Garden City Lodge was located in Newtonville, in a large 125-year old building in a business area with enough limited parking for most organizations that met there. Prior to Covid, it too had a fairly solid line of officers, all wanting to assist in its survival. However, the engagement of the membership had been deteriorating long before Covid. The Master at the time was Wor. Joseph A. Manzo, Jr., and while the effort was there, the results were not what was hoped to be achieved.

Once Covid-19 was waning, and the Grand Master permitted lodges to start meeting in person with certain precautions in place, both lodges found themselves with holes

Brotherhood and Legacy Celebration in Lowell

On the evening of Thursday, January 16, 2025, the second-floor hallway of the Lowell Masonic Building was filled with more than 50 Masons, from the Deputy Grand Master of Masons in Massachusetts to Master Masons, marking a momentous occasion. At 8pm, Wor. Gregory Valari, DDGM, introduced Wor. Wayne Stanley, the Chairman of the Committee. The Brethren, with military precision, came together as one, and began to proceed into the Grecian Room. Footsteps echoed through the hall as the Masons entered, forming a dignified procession that spoke to the strength and unity of the fraternity. A thunderous round of applause and cheers reverberated

throughout the hall as Rt. Wor. Shawn Bernard Smith, District Deputy for the 12th Masonic District, entered the room. His presence was felt immediately, and the energy in the room shifted for the Brethren gathered to honor the special occasion.

Wor. Wayne Stanley had the privilege of presenting Rt. Wor. Bro. Smith to the assembly, and from there, the evening took on a warm and fraternal tone. Wor. Timothy McLaughlin, Master of Pentucket Lodge in Lowell, warmly welcomed Rt. Wor. Bro. Smith, and introduced his suite. Among them were highly respected figures, including Rt. Wor. John A. MacLeod, Deputy Grand Master of Masons in Massachusetts, Rt. Wor. John C. Toto, Senior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge, and other prominent Masons

from around the state. After the introductions, the suite took their seats along the sidelines. Wor. Bro. McLaughlin presented the gavel and ornamental chair to Rt. Wor. Smith, officially passing the mantle of authority. Rt. Wor. Bro. Smith, with grace and humility, asked the members of Grand Lodge to rise and be recognized. Half of the Brethren in attendance stood, acknowledging the significance of the occasion.

Rt. Wor. Bro. Smith extended the opportunity for a few words to Rt. Wor. Bro. MacLeod, who graciously accepted and offered heartfelt congratulations and wisdom. Rt. Wor. Smith called upon Rt. Wor. Bro. Toto, who echoed Rt. Wor. Bro. MacLeod's sentiments with equal warmth and sincerity. The next segment of the evening saw Rt. Wor. John Van

in the lines of officers. Both lodges assisted each other by filling in the holes in the officer lines, and combining candidates into courtesy degree sessions. This created small classes, and started the effort of sharing the workload among all the officers of the two lodges. It was a good, symbiotic relationship.

Since both lodges were of similar backgrounds and makeup, casual talks started between the two Masters, while enjoying a few good cigars in the lodge parking lots, to come up with ways to make their lodges better. More people were included, and the conversations moved things along. Discussions were held by each lodge, and exploratory committees were formed to consider all options of a merger, and make their recommendations.

It took time for the two lodges' memberships to process the situation and consider the inevitable, both with and without merging. Wor. Benjamin E. Bloomenthal and Wor. Christopher N. Kelley both had difficulties staffing their officer lines, assisting each other to fill the gaps, especially when conferring degrees. Recognizing that continuing in this manner was futile, Wor. Bro. Kelley, at the urging of the renewed merger committee, approached Wor. Bro. Bloomenthal, with a proposal to merge the two lodges. Each lodge held meetings, and authorized the committee to enter into talks for merging.

Formal talks were held, with the name of the new lodge to remain Moses Michael Hays Lodge, named after the first (and to date only) Jewish Grand Master of Massachusetts. (RW Walter Hunt wrote an article in this issue on Moses Michael Hays.) It was also discussed, and agreed, that the lodge would relocate from Needham to Newtonville, on the same night currently used by Garden City Lodge. Once it

became clear that the only path to survival was a merger, and with Garden City Lodge not having a viable path forward, it became essential for past masters to step forward and serve until the merger could be completed. Wor. Mal Lemeshow agreed to serve as Master, Wor. Robert Goldstein as Senior Warden, and Bro. Herbert Philpott as Junior Warden. With Moses Michael Hays Lodge experiencing a similar situation, Wor. Ari Marcus stepped forward to serve as Senior Warden, and Bro. Felix I. Zemel continued as Junior Warden.

The lodges first met as one in Newtonville in October, 2024, with a dispensation from the Grand Master. Each lodge met in separate lodge rooms to conduct their stated business. Following the business portions, they met together to discuss the points of the merger, and have their questions answered. The merger committee had strived to propose a slate of officers equally representative of members of both lodges, to ensure a solid line of succession for at least the next five years. This slate was ultimately approved by the members of both lodges. Wor. Mal Lemeshow (GCL) was elected Worshipful Master of the new lodge, Wor. Ari Marcus (MMHL), and Wor. Christopher Kelley (GCL), were elected Senior and Junior Wardens, respectively.

With the membership satisfied, they voted to merge. The Secretary, who served as such in both lodges, arranged with the Grand Master's Office to discuss with the committee the invitation list, per the event sheet. Petitions were created, signed, and transmitted to the Grand Lodge, making the merger request official. January 25 was the earliest date available for the Grand Master. It was agreed upon by the committee, and discussions began *continued on page 29*

Kuilenburg approach the East, where he requested the use of the District Marshal to escort the past District Deputy Grand Masters to the East. In a moment of deep respect and tradition, Rt. Wor. Bro. Van Kuilenburg presented Rt. Wor. Bro. Smith with a very special District Deputy jewel. This jewel, worn by Rt. Wor. H. Mark Leonard, held particular significance for Rt. Wor. Bro. Smith, as it represented a pivotal moment in his Masonic journey.

Rt. Wor. Bro. Leonard, who served as Master of Pentucket Lodge when Rt. Wor. Bro. Smith was raised, quickly recognized Rt. Wor. Bro. Smith's potential, and elevated him to the Senior Deacon's chair just a month after his raising. Their close bond was further underscored by the fact that Rt. Wor.

Bro. Leonard personally presented Rt. Wor. Bro. Smith with his Past Master's jewel, a gesture that marked the continuation of their shared Masonic legacy. Tragically, Rt. Wor. Bro. Leonard joined the Celestial Lodge in July 2024, making this presentation more meaningful. The evening culminated with a heartfelt speech from Rt. Wor. Bro. Smith, followed by a delicious collation in the dining hall of the Lowell Masonic Building. The event was a true celebration of Masonic brotherhood, tradition, and the enduring connections that make the fraternity so special. As the Brethren departed, they did so with a renewed sense of camaraderie and pride, knowing they had been part of an evening that honored both the past and the future of their shared journey.

-Bro. Daryl Deshler





Quinebaug Lodge's 3rd Degree in Old Sturbridge Village

On Wednesday, September 25, the parking area near the Security and First Aid building at Old Sturbridge Village (OSV) was full of cars. Master Masons were instructed to walk towards the main OSV common area. The chance of scattered showers did not deter the Masons attending and participating in this 3rd Degree. Masons from throughout Massachusetts, and representatives from the Grand Lodge in Boston, were there to witness this special ceremony. This degree was performed by Quinebaug Masonic Lodge members and volunteers, in front of the Salem Towne House building, where Masons met 228 years ago.

Salem Towne House was built in 1796, in Charlton, MA, for the Towne family, who were very prominent in the community at the time, and it was moved to OSV in 1952. General Salem Towne was active in the community. Both father General Salem Towne, and his son, Salem Towne, Jr., were Masons. General Towne was an active and zealous Mason who reflected honor upon his native town with his ability and learning. He held Masonic meetings in his home from about 1796 through 1804, according to research information obtained from Masonic genealogy. Masons from the surrounding community would travel to the General Salem Towne house for these meetings.

The Quinebaug Lodge members and volunteers set up a portion of the OSV common area with tiki torches to light it up, reenacting what Masons did during that time frame. A couple of pop-up tents were provided, along with benches for the Brethren if they chose to stay dry if it rained. Prior to the degree work, dinner was served in the Bullard Tavern, right next to the common. The food served was enjoyed by all who had dinner. Unusual elements were employed during the degree, including a wagon and a cemetery.

The Brethren were asked to stay behind the cemetery wall, as the gravestones were very small, fragile and hard to see, even with the torches lit up in the cemetery. The

degree work was completed next door inside the Meeting House. A beautiful building like this, and its huge steeple pointing skyward, along with huge pillars in front, was a dominant symbol of every New England town. The ambience, the type of pews you sat in, and the echo when the speaker spoke, brought you back in time to how life was lived back then. As one of our Masons stated, "This was one of the most memorable ceremonies I have ever witnessed." The execution was great, and the ambience couldn't have been better, from the chiming steeple bell, to the candles and torches. Every detail created a perfect atmosphere of the era. The meeting house, with its creaky floorboards, and a packed crowd, added to the unique energy of the night. Even the lit-up cemetery contributed to the hauntingly beautiful setting. A special thank you goes to all the Masons who volunteered and participated in this special degree event. Thank you to Sandra Polanik, Assistant Director of Events and Public Programs at the OSV, for her assistance in making this a memorable event.

-Bro. Jimmy Falzone

Some of the Masons that attended this special event, from throughout Massachusetts, on the steps in front of the Meeting House at Old Sturbridge Village.



Rainbow University Focuses on Youth Safety

On Saturday, March 8, Massachusetts Rainbow hosted its annual Rainbow University at Weymouth United Masonic Lodge, bringing together members, advisors, and dedicated professionals for their Youth Protection Day. This event, planned by the Grand Worthy Advisor, Ashlei R.W., and hosted by the Grand Assembly, focused on equipping our jurisdiction with essential safety knowledge and life skills. Each year, this program covers different aspects of youth protection, providing resources and training to ensure the well-being of our members and adult volunteers. This year's program emphasized personal safety, emergency preparedness, and self-defense strategies, featuring expert presentations from the Weymouth Fire, Weymouth Police, and Weymouth Emergency Management Departments.

Weymouth Police hosted a safety awareness session aimed at equipping attendees with practical knowledge to navigate daily life safely. The training covered a wide range of topics, including Personal Safety at Home, Shopping and Dating Safety, Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) Training, Understanding Self-Defense Rights, The OODA Loop (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act), and Road and Environmental Safety. Attendees had the opportunity to meet Weymouth School Resource Officer Ryan Hamacher, and his community resource dog, Charlee. Officer Ryan provided insight into the role of law enforcement in community safety.

Lt. Jeff Wall, from the Fire Department, led a session about fire safety, CPR, and fire suppression techniques. Firefighters emphasized the importance of maintaining working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, practicing fire escape plans, and ensuring homes are free of preventable hazards. Attendees were given the chance to explore one of the fire trucks, and meet the brave individuals who protect



Members of the Weymouth Fire Department, Weymouth School Resource Officer Ryan Hamacher and Charlee, his community resource dog, Weymouth Fire Department LT. Jeff Wall, and GWA Ashlei R.W.

the community. Frank Younie, Deputy Director of Operations for Weymouth Emergency Management, spoke about the risks of natural disasters, and how to stay safe during storms, flooding, and search-and-rescue situations. He highlighted the dangers of floodwaters, downed power lines, and how to recognize signs of severe weather before it strikes.

Massachusetts Rainbow extends its sincere gratitude to the Weymouth Police, Fire, and Emergency Management Departments, and all of the volunteers who contributed to this year's Rainbow University. Their dedication and expertise made this event an invaluable experience for all participants. We look forward to continuing this tradition, and invite all Masons to support and strengthen youth organizations like Massachusetts Rainbow as we shape the leaders of tomorrow.

-Tanya M. Saggese

Tanya M. Saggese is the Supreme Deputy, Grand Assembly of Massachusetts.



How Traditions Get Started

"We do that all the time." "That's how we always do it." Did you ever wonder how those traditions get started? Here's one real-life example. In the Fifth District, two lodges meet on the second Monday, Norfolk Lodge in Needham, and Norumbega Fraternity Lodge in Newton. This limited their ability to see each other. Inevitably, someone said, "Let's do something together." So, they did. The two lodges began joint events on other nights to provide opportunities for the members to see each other. Every year as spring tries to break through, Norfolk Lodge and Norumbega Fraternity Lodge get together to celebrate with a Table Lodge, more formally known as "A Lodge of Entered Apprentices and One of Table Instruction." This year, the new DDGM asked, "How long has that been going on?" This became a task for the District Historian!

He launched a lively email discussion among the combined Past Masters of both lodges.

continued on next page



Montgomery Lodge Restarts myCHIP in Milford

Montgomery Lodge teamed up with its Milford, MA, community on March 15, 2025, to re-introduce myCHIP during the Family Fun and Disability Awareness Fair at Milford High School. It was a great day of camaraderie and conversation with many parents, grandparents, guardians, and youth. It was great to hear many people speak fondly of myCHIP. Bro. Al Spittler started the conversation with Montgomery Lodge after the 2024 Family Fun Day held at the American Heritage Museum in Stow, MA. He organized a presentation and several meetings to help ensure the lodge was comfortable with the program. MyCHIP (Masonic Youth Child Identification Program) provides a tool to help local and national law enforcement find and identify lost or missing children. Since its inception in 1988, more than 300,000 children have been identified, and it continues to assist families today. **-Bro. Brian Beck**



▶ Traditions from page 27

Who better to ask? A very interesting exchange took place. Rt. Wor. Jim Franklin said, "It's got to be at least 20 years." Rt. Wor. Don LaLiberte thought it went back 25 years. Everyone seemed to agree on the reason. The two lodges meet on the same night, so it was one of the few ways to get to see each other. Wor. Dave Libby tracked it as a regular annual event back to 2004. Rt. Wor. Jeff Gardiner backs that up in Norfolk's recently published history, documenting Wor. Dave Boston of Norfolk, and Wor. Jeff Mendenhall of Norumbega

Fraternity, scheduling a Table Lodge on Saturday, May 22, 2004. But, Jeff Gardiner remembers attending a joint Table Lodge, when he was Senior Warden, in 1990!

Rt. Wor. Pete Peterson concurs, and adds that he and Rt. Wor. Scott Inglis got this ball rolling in 1990. They remember it happening regularly since then, but maybe not annually – yet. Dave Libby could not find it listed in his notices from 2001, 2002, or 2003 (Wow. Do you keep all your notices?) So it appears everyone was sorta right. It looks like it happened the first time in Scott and Pete's year, 1990. And it

happened often after that. And it can be documented happening annually since 2004. Recently, it developed into a joint meeting as well. This year, both lodges met on the second Monday of March in Needham. Each opened separately, and the business of the evening was the Table Lodge. The silver lining is it prompted Norfolk and Norumbega Fraternity to schedule other events together. There have been Halloween parties, Christmas parties, and other get-togethers, specifically designed to keep up the bonds between the Brethren of these two lodges. Now that's Brotherly Love! **-Rt. Wor. Robert Caron**



New Moon Lodge Holds Veterans Dinner and Resource Fair

New Moon Lodge held their inaugural Veterans Dinner and Resource Fair at the Masonic Temple in Pittsfield, on November 9, 2024. In an interview with iBerkshires.com, Wor. Bernard Tremblay said, “We keep copious records of the events and things that go on during the course of our history here, and the last time we had any type of event like this for Veterans was at the end of World War One, which I can see on the Dedication of the Memorial Plaque in the lodge room upstairs.” Wor. Tremblay, the Master of New Moon Lodge, said these resources had never been gathered in one place before. “So, this was very unique. I talked to the Veteran services group around the perimeter, and they themselves said they haven’t seen anything on a local level like this.”

The idea for holding a resource fair came from Bro. Kyle Kuffel, the Veterans Service Officer for the 31st Masonic District. Bro. Kuffel is retired from the US Army, and works with Hope for Warriors. He explained, “The thought occurred to me that I wasn’t aware of all the things that are available to Veterans. And so, I thought, let’s have a resource fair with it, so that people can come, figure out, and find out the information about these organizations.”

Andrew Berry, a speaker at the event, is a psychologist who works with Veterans. He spoke on the profound changes combat can have on a person’s identity and mental well-being, and the importance of open dialogue and community support to help Veterans in crisis. He highlighted the vital need for social engagement, and ongoing support, to address the challenges Veterans face transitioning back to everyday life. He said, “The goal of me talking to you guys tonight is to get a conversation going. To get a real, meaningful, conversation going. Let’s make talking about this the norm, instead of the exception. What am I emphasizing when I say that is simple. Veterans and first responders are trained to think of everybody else around them absolutely first, and themselves absolutely last, if at all.”

The event was attended by over 200 Veterans and their families. Organizations such as Hope for Warriors, American Veterans Archaeological Recovery, High and Mighty Therapeutic Riding Center, US Dept. of Veterans Affairs, and Massachusetts Veterans Service Officers were present to connect attendees to a variety of resources. Brothers Kuffel and Tremblay are working with the Veterans Services Committee to create a roadmap for repeating this event down the road, both at New Moon Lodge and in other Masonic Districts across the jurisdiction.

-Rt. Wor. Michael S. Nemeth

► **Merger** from page 25

in earnest to plan for the event, including the creation of a new set of bylaws.

Given the previous level of cross-pollination between the two lodges, the first meetings were held post-merger, and the members of both pre-merger lodges were warmly welcomed, and acted like one large family

of friends and Brothers, as though the merger had happened years ago. According to RW Bro. Manzo, the credit for the successful merger belongs to everyone who participated, including those who actually voted for it! It was truly a team effort. The future looks bright, with many events planned during the rest of the current year, including lodge nights out (social

events at local restaurants), and a trip to the Touro Synagogue in Newport, RI. M. Wor. Bro. Hays helped form it in 1759, and it opened in 1763. A visit to his grave a few blocks from the synagogue is planned, to pay respects. Moses Michael Hays Lodge now meets in Newtonville, on the second Thursday, and all are welcome to visit.

-Rt. Wor. Steven Cohn

ple from England came to Boston on a cruise. He was a fellow traveler, and came to Grand Lodge to take a tour. After the tour, and awaiting departure, he had a medical emergency that kept him in Boston. Sadly, he passed in hospital, and his distressed widow, not knowing anyone here in the US, reached out to the Massachusetts Grand Lodge. There, Jim and Jim Orgettas did whatever every worthy brother would do, and assisted the widow to get her lodging, made arrangements for their return, and provided a comforting voice in a most anxious and trying time. That is what we do as Masons.

In addition, our philanthropy, charitable activities, and services to others, are second to none. We as Masons excel in providing relief to our distressed brethren, their widows and orphans, as well as the multitude of charities supported by the generosity of our members that give to the local and global community. Take pride in this noble feeling, having the ability to make a meaningful impact to society at the local, state, and national level. Once you are a member, the opportunity to seek further light is nearly perpetual, from growing within our appendant bodies, having access to the Grand Lodge library, lectures, and dedicated academies, to gain further light in our Craft. Both in person and online, you learn those timeless spiritual, moral, and philosophical lessons which provide guidance, wisdom, and perspective.

Being a Mason, you learn and develop personal and professional skills, increased confidence in public speaking, how to plan and organize, being part of a team, and given a role with responsibility in the team's success. This sometimes gets under-appreciated, as leadership is learned through thoughtful development, and increasing roles with greater responsibilities. One of my key lines to my subordinate leaders was to leave it better than when you found it, and set the next person up for success. Many brothers take the time to freely teach, coach, and mentor others, with the goal to see them be better Masons, thus ensuring our organization gets

better with the next generation of Masonic leaders. Knowing you are part of the Freemasonry organization, with its centuries of history that continues to preserve and participate in ceremonies and traditions that remain true to our core tenets of brotherly love, relief, and truth that positively shapes society. We are relevant, not just of our age, our history, and traditions, these are just static things, we are relevant and dynamic because of you, our members, who do all of the above to ensure our fraternity remains ready and relevant.

So, is there greatness in you? Of course there is, and I hope this talk rekindled your reasons for why you joined and remain part of Freemasonry. I close with a request for each of us. To think of Freemasonry as that precious pearl found by the merchant written in the Book of Matthew. For those unfamiliar, a merchant discovers a most precious pearl and values it so much, he goes and sells everything to obtain it. Brothers, we do not need to sell anything, as we already are members of Freemasonry. As we pass into 2025, take the time to remember your own reasons why you joined, and continue to stay in our precious and special Fraternity. Go and tell your story with an earnest heart, and genuine love, to get others to join. Collectively, we will leave Masonry better than when we found it, and set the next Masonic generation leaders up for success. Thank you, and may God bless our Fraternity, our Commonwealth, and the United States of America. ■

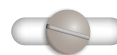
► **MacLeod** continued from page 19

who will carry the torch of Freemasonry into the future. Let us remember that the power to adapt and grow resides within each of our local lodges. Together, we can ensure that Freemasonry remains a vibrant and relevant fraternity. A beacon of strength, hope, and brotherhood in an ever-changing world. Thank you all for being here this evening, and may God continue to bless our great fraternity. Thank you, Grand Master, for this wonderful opportunity to serve. ■

MAR



Plate Stories



Massachusetts
25

I was filling up with the cheapest gas I could find, when the driver of the car in front of me, after sighing over the price, saw my plate.

"I've always wanted to become a Mason. How long have you been a Mason?"

"About 19 years, I think. It's really fun."

"My father was a Mason, and I always thought about joining, but never actually did it."

"The hardest thing about being a Mason is saying 'No.' There are

so many great things to do, I have to say no, or I'd be out every night. But, even having one night a month, lodge night, where I don't carry my keys, turn off my phone, and I'm just with friends, having a great meal, and trying to do some good, is enough."

We talked a bit more about going to lodge, and the fine array of Brothers who are there. He explained that he may do it sometime. I remembered that I had one of The Patriot cigars in my car, the

Hiram & Solomon cigar dedicated to the Grand Master, M. Wor. George F. Hamilton.

"Do you smoke cigars?"

"No, not for a while."

"Here, take a look at this. This is a Grand Lodge cigar."

"Wow, nice."

After we parted ways, the regret set in, I had a few copies of TROWEL in my trunk, and should have given him one.

-Wor. Lee H. Fenn

Master Planning Underway at Overlook

As senior living and the healthcare industry continue to evolve, it is essential for the Overlook Masonic Health System of MA to progress and modernize with the times, blending existing and future amenities and services to meet the changing needs and expectations of our residents, team members, and the surrounding community. We must also ensure profitability, to sustain our organization and mission for another century.

The Overlook has committed to a multi-phased, master planning process, with smaller projects that will be completed over a period of several years. We have partnered with South Coast Improvement Company as the general contractor, as well as RLPS Architects for design and interiors, for the completion of the first phase of the master planning.

The project will increase Overlook's Post Acute Unit from 27 to 40 private rooms, while reducing the long-term care facility from 112 to 78 private rooms. This will ensure we can serve our own Overlook members, while also increasing our ability to serve the surrounding hospitals, and greater community members.

The expanded Post Acute Unit will thrust Overlook's Health Center entity to profitability for the first time in the organization's history, and it will:

- Improve the resident experience by shifting our delivery of care to a more personalized, resident-centric approach, with a safer, more efficient, consolidated environment for residents, patients, and team members.
- De-emphasize the institutional setting by providing a more modern setting, with an emphasis on the look and feel



of hospitality throughout.

- Significantly enhance our culinary program through a visible, interactive environment, with a concentration on the dining experience - flavors, aromas, and the ability to view the preparation of food.

- Offer a more robust therapy program through additional therapeutic space, with a concentrated focus on healing.

Future phases are a work in progress. Deferred maintenance issues across the Charlton campus will be addressed. The number of cottage homes will increase. Assisted living memory care at Fieldstone will expand. Renovating the Skilled Nursing Center, and adding capacity for couples in enhanced living at Stonebrook will occur. A variety of beneficial partnerships and affiliations will strengthen Overlook's continuum of care and services, appealing to a wider variety of individuals.

Doing what is best for all we serve, including Masons and their brethren, remains the foundation of The Overlook Way, crucial to our guiding principles, beyond the need for profitability and long-term viability in today's increasingly competitive business landscape. We are committed to enriching the standard for senior living, optimizing our delivery of quality care, services, hospitality, and positively impacting the lifestyle and health of the residents. This is just the beginning! Stay tuned for future updates. ■





ASK THE GRAND LECTURER

by Rt. Wor. Nicholas J. Mantello

Senior Grand Lecturer of the Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts



Q: Can the Senior Warden open and preside over the lodge he is a member of, if the Worshipful Master is present?

A: It was difficult to find a firm solid answer. Every book that I consulted would confirm the answer is yes, but always ended with “In the absence of the Master.”

That leaves a bit of wiggle room for a response. Absence? From the city, building, lodge room, or the chair? I consulted with the Grand Lecturers at our quarterly meeting, and a few Past Grand Masters, along with anyone who, I thought, would have a knowledgeable opinion. After careful consideration, I agree with the popular answer of “Yes, he can.” As you know, many lodges do a step-up night, as it is a tradition. As a Past Grand Master, Most Worshipful Donald G. Hicks placed his hand on my shoulder and said, “The Master rules and governs his lodge, and if he would like the Senior Warden to open, then it is his prerogative”.

As a reminder, in most cases, the Grand Lecturers know the answers to your questions. Do not hesitate to ask a Past Grand Master. They are very approachable, and have an incredible and vast knowledge of our Fraternity.

Q: Which point of the Compasses is hidden when on the Bible for the Second Degree?

A: In most illustrations, the right point is hidden. But, it is not the mandatory position. Our ritual states, one point of the Compasses elevated above the Square the other being hidden, it does not specify which point. A second part of this question occasionally pops up. Is the point actually under the Square or any part of that leg of the Compasses? As long as one leg of the Compasses is under the Square, and the other above, it is correct.

Q: Does the Bible need to open on a certain page when the Square and Compasses are placed on a certain degree?

A: No. Almost all lodges have their Bibles bookmarked to the corresponding passage of the degree, and practice opening the Bible on that passage. I personally like it, but it is not mandatory. When changing from one degree to another, it is much more expedient to only change the Square and Compasses, and not the page.

A note for our newer Brethren, remember it is always Compasses never compass. A compass gives you directions.

To ask the Grand Lecturers a question, send an email to Rt. Wor. Nicholas Mantello, nicholas.j.mantello@gmail.com.

► M. Wor. Hays from page 12

when the two Grand bodies in Massachusetts were moving toward a union with each other. Both had suffered during the Revolution and its aftermath, and it was clear that they would be stronger together than apart. There were many hurdles to overcome – traditions, ritual, and the prerogatives of the constituent lodges and their members. Even in the conferral of degrees, the English and Scottish antecedent forms had to be reconciled in an organization that could find a satisfactory home in a wider Masonic world. Brother Hays’ experience in the wider world, his generosity of spirit, and his embrace of Masonic values, made him the ideal

person during the negotiations.

On March 5, 1792, the two Grand Lodges met to establish the new united Grand Lodge. The officers of each constituent body resigned, and elections were held. Brother Hays and Brother John Warren, the two living Past Grand Masters, were offered the opportunity to take an office of dignity, but neither accepted, and John Cutler was elected the first Grand Master of the new Grand Lodge. The formation of this body was a momentous event, as it was now officially independent of its previous allegiances. There was no guarantee of its success, but it thrived and grew, soon finding its proper place among the Grand Lodges of the world. Brother Hays had a great influence in

its initial and continued success.

We cannot completely understand the world, particularly the Masonic world, of more than two and a half centuries ago, any more than Brother Hays would understand the connected, high-speed, and multicultural world of today. But, we do know that despite being a Mason in a very different time, he took the same oaths and obligations that every Mason takes. He practiced charity, held deep faith, and most of all, believed in hope. Were he to walk through any lodge door today, he would gladly be taken by the hand as a Brother. The distinction and respect he would enjoy is well-earned, and well-deserved, and perseveres from his time through to our own. ■



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The Overlook has been awarded Best of Central MA Senior Living Community by Worcester Telegram & Gazette for seven years running.





A Momentous Rededication at the Bunker Hill Monument

June 16, 2025 | 9:00 AM

Join us in celebration as we honor the historic cornerstone laying of 1825, graced by the presence of the Marquis de Lafayette and Daniel Webster. In a powerful tribute to their legacy, witness the procession of over one thousand Freemasons, journeying from the Charlestown Naval Yard, to the base of the Bunker Hill Monument, a living symbol of our enduring brotherhood, and the spirit of liberty.

The 250th Anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill

June 17, 2025 | 9:00 AM

Gather with us at Forest Hills Cemetery for a moving graveside service commemorating the 250th anniversary of the heroic sacrifice of Brother Dr. Joseph Warren. This observance honors one of our nation's, and Freemasonry's, most revered patriots. After the service, we continue the celebration at the Bunker Hill Monument, where the day's events will be marked by a wreath-laying ceremony, conducted by King Solomon's Lodge, forever preserving the memory of those who sacrificed everything for freedom.