

# THE Ashlar

A PUBLICATION FOR MINNESOTA MASONS, STARS AND FRIENDS

MINNESOTA  
MASONIC  
CHARITIES



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A MESSAGE FROM THE GRAND MASTER

## Dayton L. Berg



### We Will Bounce Back

I am now approaching the halfway point of my term in the Grand East and am pleased to say that it's been immensely enjoyable. But as I travel across our state for various lodge visits, one question seems to come up on a regular basis:

"Why are we in decline and how much longer will Freemasonry last?"

That is a fair question, and no doubt Freemasonry has certainly had its up and downs. However, no singular issue has been able to prevent Freemasonry from successfully rebounding after a challenging rough patch (the historical anecdotes are numerous). In areas of Europe during WWII the Craft was forced underground, yet we resurfaced stronger than before.

The reason Freemasonry refused to give up is simple: we have never given up on our tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. Our four cardinal virtues continue to be temperance, prudence, fortitude, and justice. Institutions founded on principles such as these retain their relevance and importance, no matter the obstacle.

When I see the many lodge activities taking place across Minnesota, I firmly believe that we are on the edge of a resurgence. The tenets of our profession have never been more needed in this divided world, and we have a golden opportunity to make a positive impact.

Fraternally,

— Dayton L. Berg  
Grand Master

A MESSAGE FROM THE WORTHY GRAND MATRON

## Sharon Barlow



### Greetings from Eastern Star.

Fall is definitely in the air! Soon, I am sure we will have some fluffy stuff on the ground! It is not my favorite time of year. After all, who enjoys driving when the roads are snow-covered and combined with a northeasterly wind? Most people will stay home; however, Eastern Stars are different. If there is a meeting or a guaranteed good time planned, we will do anything in our power to get there.

We may have declining membership or chapters closing. Still, we are a hardy group if the Purple Party for Alzheimer's Benefit, held October 14th, at the American Legion in Anoka, indicates this organization's stamina. It was an evening to behold with the excellent time everyone seemed to be having. Not only was the food great, but our Sisters and Brothers donated so generously of their time and talent that we can consider the evening nothing less than a total success.

So, having gotten the fall season off to such a good start, let's keep the ball rolling and make all our functions successful.

Remember:

Things turn out best  
For the people who  
Make the best of the  
Way things turn out.

— Sharon Barlow  
*Worthy Grand Matron*  
Minnesota Grand Chapter Order of the Eastern Star

# Leadership in Masonry: Radio and Dreams

FROM THE GRAND LODGE EDUCATION OFFICER WB BRADLEY PHELPS



## A Time for Reflection

Summer has passed us by at a rate that seems like it is approaching 299,792,458 meters/second. If it went much faster, perhaps I could go back in time and re-live it; something that I'm sure the

Einstein fans in the audience would agree would be quite something. All that said, I find myself sipping on my coffee and reflecting on events of the summer, what I have been able to achieve, and what I could improve on.

It is important that each of us celebrate our accomplishments while considering how we can continually and incrementally improve. ... After all, each of us is a work in progress. I have wonderful memories of family, friends, camping, visiting new places, music, motorcycles, writing, learning, and growing. I also realize that I could improve reaching out, meeting new people, and soliciting their ideas. It is something in the forefront of my mind and something I continue to work on.



Recently, I had the privilege of visiting Nelson Lodge, Metro East, and Metro West. At Nelson, we had a deep discussion reflecting on one of the great disrupters of our

time: Artificial Intelligence. Inspired by concepts in the book, "Scary Smart: The Future of Artificial Intelligence and How You Can Save Our World" by Mo Gawdat, we discussed and reflected on what we need to think about as Freemasons as AI unstoppably enters our world and impacts our lives. It triggered many deep and philosophical questions about ethics, the nature of man's desire to create, and what we as Freemasons will teach AI.

At Metro West and East, we discussed finding lodge meaning and balance between direction and autonomy. It was a wonderful (sometimes vulnerable) interactive discussion about the benefits and challenges of both direction and autonomy. Together, we continued to reflect on what we should be considering as lodges and individuals with those specific viewpoints in mind.

For all my talks, I want to thank everyone involved. Your hospitality is greatly appreciated. Your engagement and participation in the discussion makes my job easier. I also get the added benefit of learning from you – something I appreciate very much. I hope that you will consider having me back for follow-up visits. As I have shared in past articles, I love to travel and meet others. Please do not

hesitate to reach out and request a talk with me. The best way to contact me is via [traveler@bythecompass.org](mailto:traveler@bythecompass.org), by social media, or by phone.

Additionally, I would like to make you aware of a couple of other opportunities coming up that I hope you will be excited about. I will be hosting our first education Zoom town hall on Sunday, Sept 24 at 8:00pm CST. My intention is to have these types of interactive meetups quarterly. Anyone is welcome and it is not limited to Lodge Education Officers. I would like to hear your thoughts about Masonic Education. Specifically, I would like your feedback on what is working, what could be improved, and any topics you would like to learn more about. Zoom connection information is being distributed via social media and email. I will also make sure it is on our Grand Lodge calendar in Grandview.

The Midwest Conference for Masonic Education (MCME) is also coming to Minnesota in May of 2024. MCME is a traveling education conference, and it is a great opportunity to learn new things, network, and meet Brothers from other jurisdictions. I attended Ohio this year and made many wonderful new friendships. Again, this is not limited to Lodge Education Officers and there are a variety of topics that should appeal to every Freemason. The conference will be held May 3-5 in Bloomington, and the theme this year deals with educating educators. The keynote speaker is Dave Baranek, a TOPGUN instructor. To learn more about MCME, please visit: <https://mcme1949.org>

Finally, I wanted to let you know that I have heard your thoughts and concerns about finding relevant information and education materials. To help with the information overload, I am working on a Grand LEO virtual desk page to help organize links and content that I have referenced, articles, publications, sites, and education materials that will be of interest to you and your lodges. I know education is a big commitment, and if there are barriers of entry getting to the right information, I want to address that. There will be more information about that soon. As always, if there is anything else I can do to help, please do not hesitate to call me.

I look forward to our paths crossing again soon, Brothers. In the meantime, I hope that life is treating you well. I hope that you continue to look at those that are around you and realize the impact you have made on them. I hope you will cherish the impact that they have made on you.

Fraternally,  
Brad Phelps  
Grand Lodge Education Officer

To view full article



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# 18<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MINNESOTA MASONIC CHARITIES GALA



We are thrilled to announce that the 18th Annual Minnesota Masonic Charities Gala was an incredible success, leaving a lasting impact on our community. Through the generosity of our sponsors, in-kind donors, and attendees, we raised over \$100,000, a record-breaking amount, for our scholarship program. This remarkable achievement will enable us to empower even more students to pursue their dreams of higher education, making a tangible difference in their lives.

In addition to the funds raised for scholarships, we are delighted to share the heartwarming news of a generous \$32,000 donation to the Masonic Children's Hospital by Roger McNear and the Clays and Camps for Kids, Twin Cities. What began in 2010 as a Sporting Clays shoot

to raise funds to augment MMC's grant. It is now held annually on the 4th Saturday in April at the Minnesota Horse and Hunt Club to help fund Children's Health at the Masonic Children's Hospital and provide diversion programs for MN Shriners for Children. It comprises Masons who care from several Lodges around the state and Shrine Temples.



This contribution will undoubtedly make a significant difference in the lives of young patients, and we are incredibly grateful for the outpouring of support.

We want to extend heartfelt gratitude to the







first-time attendees. Your enthusiasm and support were crucial in making this year's gala successful. The unity and spirit of the Masonic community have been instrumental in bringing our vision to life, demonstrating the profound



impact we can achieve when we come together for a common cause.

We look forward to our next gala on September 28, 2024, with renewed excitement and anticipation. Together, we will continue to make a profound difference in the lives of

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Gala Event Photos!

students and the broader community, creating a brighter and more hopeful future for all.

Scholarship season is coming up fast; if you have a student you'd like to share this opportunity with, know that the application window opens on January 1 and closes on March 15. For more information visit: [mnmasoniccharities.org/scholarships/](https://mnmasoniccharities.org/scholarships/)

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Photo Booth Photos!



# MASONS DONATE FIRE SUPPRESSION TOOLS TO FIRE DEPARTMENTS

We are delighted to share some remarkable news in the spirit of Fire Prevention Month. Minnesota Masonic Charities and the Grand Lodge are thrilled to announce that 999 Lodges across the state have donated over 75 fire suppression tools to our dedicated first responders. Fire safety is a crucial aspect of our commitment to community well-being, and these devices play a pivotal role in safeguarding lives and property.

With the capability to reduce fire temperatures by over 1000 degrees in just 30 seconds, it's a life-saving and property-preserving statistic that speaks volumes. Since the collaboration between the Wisconsin Masons and the Minnesota Masons began distributing these devices, 15 have already been deployed.

We are immensely proud to continue offering this opportunity to lodges, empowering them to make a difference in their communities. By promoting the donation of these essential tools, working closely with local media, and sharing your events with your neighbors, we can ensure that our first responders have the proper resources they need to save lives. Let's keep the flame of compassion and safety alive! Learn more about our initiative QR code here.



**BY JIM ROMSAAS**  
**MESABI TRIBUNE**



EVELETH—The Virginia and Eveleth fire departments each received a potentially life-saving fire suppression tool (FST) Monday from Eveleth Masonic Lodge #239.

The firefighting devices are invaluable to those battling fires and citizens trying to escape a blaze.

"The big significance behind it is it will reduce the temperatures in a smaller, contained structure," said Past Grand

Master James A. Christensen. "When you can drop the temperature a thousand degrees, my God, that's unbelievable. When we fight fires, these firefighters know the significance of dropping a fire a thousand degrees and how that can help save their lives and citizens' lives. That's such a significant factor."

"One just has to pull the pin and throw it in," he added. "Incredibly in only 35 seconds, the fire is suppressed ... making a substantially safer environment, should you need to extract trapped citizens or firefighters." Eveleth Fire Chief Guy Spurlin and Virginia Deputy Fire Chief Erik Jonassen already have plans for the new equipment. Spurlin said he plans to place the FST in the chief's squad command vehicle, which is often first on scene and can cut down the fire temperature sooner with the FST's chemical reaction. "We're all about community safety," he said. "If we can knock a fire down faster, that just makes it that much better." The average fire is about 1,200 degrees, he added, but they do get hotter.

"We're putting the piece of equipment on our ladder truck due to the mines in the area," Jonassen said. They have large rooms with high voltage electronics and fires in those areas are not conducive to battling with water. Regarding fighting a potential fire with water, the same can be said for the Century Link regional internet serve in Virginia, he added.

Members from both departments have already received FST training, which was also paid for by the local Masonic lodges.

The compact FST unit can fit in the trunk of a squad car or a first responder vehicle. "These compact units can suppress a rolling fire in a contained area and will dramatically reduce fire and water damage in enclosures like houses, garages, stores, or sheds," Christensen said.

The donations of the FSTs and other fire department equipment are a big part of what the Masons do.

"The members of the Eveleth Masonic Lodge #239 have been a part of the community for over 120 years," Christensen said. "We are committed to ensure that we make our communities a better and safer place." One bigger donation was providing the first "Jaws of Life" vehicle extraction tool to the Eveleth Fire Department, he said.

"Eveleth Masonic Lodge, with the help from grants provided through the Minnesota Masonic Charities, is proud to make our communities better and safer places."

Eveleth Mayor Bob Vlasisjevich was pleased with the added equipment for each city.

"It's nice to see the technology coming to our departments because they work so close together. We've got cutting edge equipment and the people know how to use it."



# UPCOMING EVENTS



## MN Freemasons Membership Event

Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup> @ 11am  
Minnesota Masonic Heritage Center

## Annual Texas-Minnesota Reunion

Saturday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> @ 11:30am  
Rio Grande Shrine Club

## One-Day-To-Masonry

Saturday, January 20<sup>th</sup> @ 8am  
Minnesota Scottish Rite

## Junior Warden Conference

Friday, February 9<sup>th</sup> @ 1pm  
The Park Event Center, Waite Park

## Grand Lodge Monitor Exams

Friday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 8am  
Minnesota Masonic Heritage Center

## Annual Arizona-Minnesota Reunion

Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup> @ 11:30am  
Phoenix Shrine Center

### MASONIC CONUNDRUM

#### WELCOME BACK TO THE MASONIC CONUNDRUM!

97

I was not old enough to meet this man, but in my travels on a southwestern course, I found another scout, fellow Iowan, and Brother buried on the Lookout. So popular was his show that two states are said to have fought over where his final resting place would be. Can you believe that? Who was he?

98

In my youth, in Clark Griswold fashion, I traveled southeast with my parents and visited a museum of three rings. In the exhibits, I remember being in awe of a performing General and learning about the wedding to his queen – an event that drew 10,000 people. Later in life, I discovered him to be a Brother. Who was he?

Submit responses to: [masonicconundrum@gmail.com](mailto:masonicconundrum@gmail.com). Please remember to include Name and Lodge with your response.



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## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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## THE ASHLAR

The perfect ashlar shows what can be done with a rough, unpolished and unsightly piece of stone as a result of skill, industry and perseverance, so man, with all his rudeness, roughness and imperfection, may, under the operation of the Divine workman be polished and prepared until he becomes a noble character fit to be included as a part of the great spiritual temple which will abide forever.