

THE Ashlar

A PUBLICATION FOR MINNESOTA MASONS, STARS AND FRIENDS

MINNESOTA
MASONIC
CHARITIES



November 2025

HIGHLIGHTING THE MINNESOTA ASSISTANCE COUNCIL FOR VETERANS (MACV)

ENSURING EVERY VETERAN ACHIEVES
AFFORDABLE, DIGNIFIED, AND
SUSTAINABLE HOUSING

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A MESSAGE FROM THE GRAND MASTER

ROBERT S. DAVIS



Brethren, leadership is the cornerstone of every member's Masonic experience.

A Lodge's vitality, unity, and service to its community depend not only on ritual proficiency or administrative skill, but on how effectively it

cultivates leaders—both within its walls and beyond them. As Minnesota Freemasonry seeks renewed relevance and growth, the question before us is not whether we develop leaders, but how we do so.

Internal leadership builds confidence, deepens understanding of our values, and strengthens relationships among members. It fosters trust, mentorship, and continuity, preserving our traditions and ensuring stability.

Yet inward-focused leadership can become self-limiting. Too often, training stops at the Lodge door. We may master governance within, yet miss opportunities to apply those lessons to the world around us. Without civic engagement, leadership risks becoming insular.

Collaborative leadership expands the circle. It invites Masons to learn with and from civic, business, and nonprofit leaders who share our commitment to community improvement. Internal leadership strengthens who we are – our identity and values. Collaborative leadership projects those values outward into the community.

Imagine a day when the Grand Lodge of Minnesota joins hands with the University of Minnesota's Center for Integrative Leadership to address challenges that affect all Minnesotans: youth engagement, public trust, and the strength of local service organizations.

When Masons sit at the same table as city officials, educators, and nonprofit leaders, they bring centuries of moral philosophy into today's civic discussions. That engagement reminds the public that Freemasonry remains a living force for good.

Every Brother has the power to make a lasting difference. By giving to Minnesota Masonic Charities and designating your gift to support a Collaborative Leadership partnership with the University of Minnesota's Center for Integrative Leadership, you help ensure that Masonic values continue to shape Minnesota's future.

A MESSAGE FROM
THE WORTHY
GRAND MATRON

Kathleen Taylor

Happy Autumn, Brothers and Sisters!

From my travels as Worthy Grand Matron (WGM), I am surprised at the number of brethren who don't know what OES is all about! So, this month, I will provide a summary of who we are and the projects we support.

The Order of the Eastern Star (OES) engages in various activities that support veterans, recognizes female veterans within their own membership, and donates to veteran assistance councils.

We promote the training and placement of service dogs for veterans as a primary charitable focus. We partner with Helping Paws to help train service dogs to assist veterans in need. Three of our most dedicated



Helping Paws volunteers are Jordy Stradtman, Beth Brown, and Jane Ward. We host various fundraising events to support this program.

We also support the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) and Eagles Healing Nest with essential items and financial assistance to struggling veterans.

In addition to supporting our veterans, we are involved in other charitable initiatives, such as Alzheimer's awareness, cancer research, and religious scholarships. This year, our projects include the Masonic Institute for Developing Brain and the Masonic Home, providing much-needed improvements for both employees and residents.

If you would like more information on how to become a Star member, please feel free to contact me or any of our members. We'd love to have you join our family and our work!

As in my previous article, if there is a fundraiser or other activity that we could attend, we would love the opportunity to share adventures with our Masonic Brethren. Just let us know and we'll try to be there!

ORDER FROM CHAOS

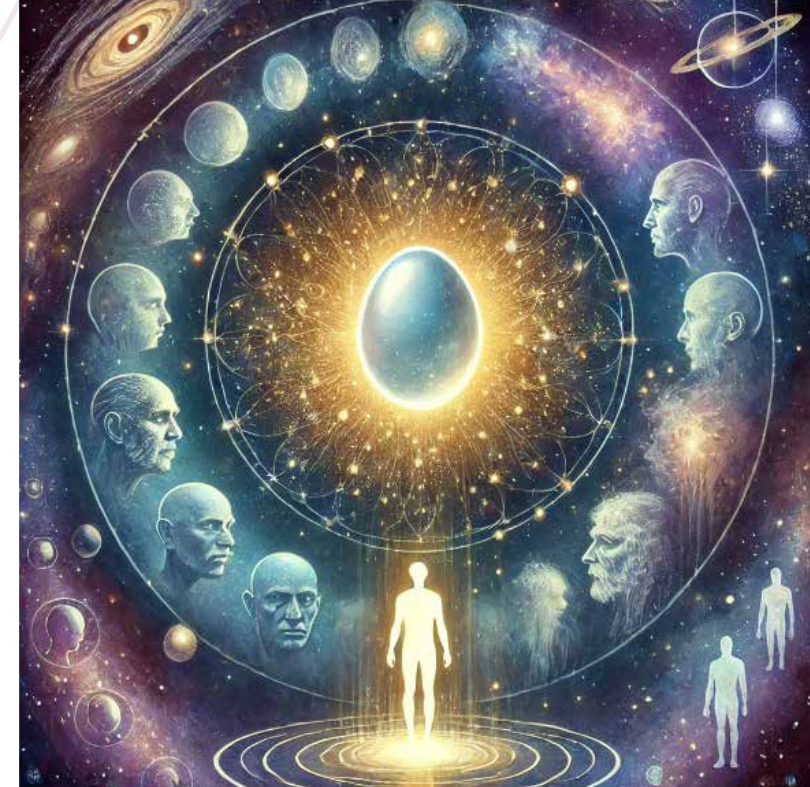
BRADLEY PHELPS,
GRAND LODGE EDUCATION OFFICER

It is said that Einstein once said something along the lines of, "In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity." It is a concept worth reflecting on – especially in these uncertain times, and an idea that helps us take the hardest and most important step: the first one. In what seems to be a very chaotic world, how do we transform chaos into order? Good question.

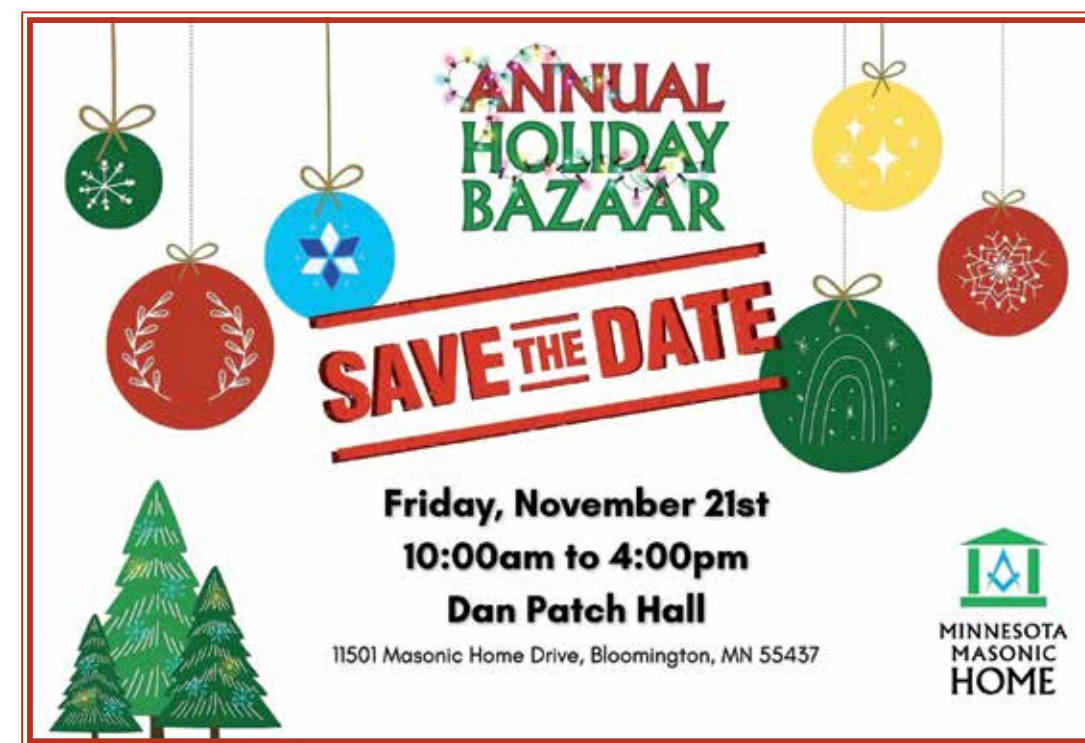
The first step is to consider goals and determine what is important to us. Identifying priorities and desired direction helps establish guardrails for the path we walk. This process involves examining one's own roles and objectives, as well as outlining steps to achieve desired outcomes. While this approach is commonly applied at the lodge through exercises like planning annual calendars, officer meetings, or committee work, it also applies to personal development. One critical error is to create such resources and never re-visit them again, or to only do so infrequently.

At a recent area conference, we discussed mission statements. It is important to capture the mission of an organization – especially if it helps to center itself. As famous Apple Evangelist Guy Kawasaki highlights, if you want to be successful as an organization, the organization must make meaning. For Masons, that could be a lot of things – but perhaps a good start is remembering the promises we have made to the lodge and supporting those around us. Further, who benefits from a mission? Is it intended solely for communicating who we are to those who seek admission into our lodge, or does it serve another function?

For communicating with others, a Mantra might be more meaningful. That said, I'd pose that the power behind a mission statement is in recognition of value, and a tool for prioritization. As a silly example, I might ask myself if it is appropriate for a lodge to invest in an ice cube shop in Alaska. Does this potential investment support the organization's mission, and in what ways? Lodges should discuss opportunities and their mission statement in this way.



Read the full
article here:



MISSION GRANT FOCUS

MINNESOTA VETERANS

The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) is dedicated to ending Veteran homelessness across Minnesota by providing safe, stable housing and personalized support services. Since 1990, MACV has grown from serving 13 Veterans to stabilizing more than 2,800 Veterans and their families each year, helping them regain independence, dignity, and opportunity. We are working towards our vision for every Veteran to achieve affordable, dignified, and sustainable housing.

Each Veteran who engages with MACV has a unique story and path to long-term housing stability. Our staff meet Veterans where they are—on the streets, in shelters, or in transitional housing—listening first and creating personalized plans that address housing, health care, employment, and financial needs. Funding from the Masons has provided critical direct financial assistance to support the housing stability of Veterans who would otherwise fall through the gaps in other government funding and programs. In addition, the Masons have provided early-stage pilot program funding to create several of our most impactful programs. For example, MACV's landlord engagement program creates dozens of positive housing outcomes for Veterans each year, where traditional landlord arrangements are not possible. Our healthcare navigation program supports Veterans in accessing healthcare to address needs impacting their housing stability. Supportive housing provides safe, stable homes while offering wraparound services to help Veterans thrive in their communities.



Every neighborhood is stronger when every Veteran has access to safe, stable housing. Since 2022, MACV has added 160 housing units dedicated to Veteran households with the most significant barriers to housing stability. MACV offers more than 230 housing units in total for Veterans who need extra support, including newly expanded options like Veteran Village, our first townhome-style community in Eagan. Built with a trauma-informed design and long-term stability in mind, Veteran Village is a model for creating lasting pathways to housing, belonging, and stronger neighborhoods. This project was made possible through collaboration with partners like Lennar, Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Housing First Minnesota Foundation, and countless community supporters.

Ending Veteran homelessness across Minnesota requires coordination, commitment, and statewide reach. Support

from the Masons over many years has been foundational to the progress we have made as the statewide nonprofit organization leader in building a Veteran homelessness response system in Minnesota. MACV operates regional offices in the Twin Cities, Duluth, and Mankato, and our statewide volunteer network helps expand the impact of programs, events, and housing initiatives. Across every level—from individual neighbors, to entire neighborhoods, to the state—MACV's work is about more than housing; it's about ensuring stability, dignity, and opportunity for every Veteran we serve. Because when every Veteran has a place to live, every neighbor, every neighborhood, and our entire state is stronger.



Fraternity Around the World

In early August of this year, WB Arun Natarajan (Cataract Lodge No. 2) had the opportunity to visit his affiliate home Lodge, "Lodge Harmony No. 217" in the southern city of Chennai, India, while taking a short weekend detour from his work trip to Asia.

On recommendation from MWB Foster Solem, WB Arun is serving as the representative of the Grand Lodge of India to the Grand Lodge of Minnesota.

He was able to meet with key officers from the Grand Lodge of India and pass on gifts from the Grand Lodge of Minnesota, which included a copy of the Minnesota Masonic Manual, autographed by MWB Bob Davis and RWB Keith Reiersen, Grand Master's coin of both MWB Bob Davis and Immediate PGM MWB Foster Solem, and few other meaningful Minnesota Masonic swag.

In return, the Grand Lodge of India sent WB Arun, a spectacular crystal gavel and a plaque to be handed to the Grand Lodge of Minnesota as reciprocity gifts.

Significant brotherly love prevailed across international waters, and true friendship was conciliated between the two Grand Lodges.



In the Photo (L to R) VW Bro Uma Shankar (Lodge Harmony No 217), WB Arun Natarajan, RWB Kamakoti (Grand Secretary of Grand Lodge of India)

HEALTH + WELLNESS

Can't be there? Participate virtually!

And walking is just fine!

The Minnesota Freemasons are lacing up again for the 16th Annual Goldy's Run in support of the University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital!

Last year, nearly 50 Masons and friends joined the team to walk, jog, or run for this incredible cause. This year, we're aiming higher; let's double that number in 2026!

NEW this year: Your registration fee is on us! Minnesota Masons will cover the cost for you AND a guest to participate.

Whether you run, walk, or cheer from the sidelines, your presence makes a difference for kids and families who need it most—even if you participate virtually!

RSVP now, invite your lodge brothers, family, and friends, and let's show up strong in our Masonic blue!

Visit mnfreemasons.org/goldys-run for more information

GOLDY'S RUN

Step up, lace up, and make a difference.

University of Minnesota Campus

Distances for every level: 5K, 10 Mile, and Kids Run

Your registration fee is on us! Minnesota Masons will cover the cost for you AND a guest to participate. Whether you run, walk, or cheer from the sidelines, your presence makes a difference.

RSVP now, invite your lodge brothers, family, and friends!

Visit mnfreemasons.org/goldys-run to REGISTER WITH CODE MASONSACTION

April 12, 2026

Start: 7:30 am - Finish

420 SE 23rd Ave, Minneapolis MN 55455

MNFREEMASONS.ORG

CONUNDRUM 104 – RUDYARD KIPLING




The answer to Conundrum 104 was, of course, Brother Rudyard Kipling. WB Jerry Johnson (Accacia Lodge No. 51) answered correctly.

Born in British India, Kipling was a British author who penned such greats as the *Jungle Book*, *The Man Who Would Be King* and several famous poems including *If* (which was hinted in the conundrum question):

**If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same:
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em
up with worn-out tools;**

–Excerpt from "If" by Rudyard Kipling

Read the full text here:




Born December 30, 1865 in Bombay, India, Kipling moved to the UK when he was five and remained there until he was done with school. After school, his father helped him obtain a job in Lahore, where he served as Principal of the Mayo College of Art and Curator of the Lahore Museum. Kipling was to be the assistant editor of the Civil and Military Gazette. In 1889 he left India a second time to move to London but first traveled to San Francisco via Rangoon, Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan. During his North American travels, he met Mark Twain in Elmira, New York (an interesting story you should follow-up on).

In 1914, Bro. Kipling signed the “*Authors’ Declaration*,” in support of World War I war efforts. Signed by 53 prominent British novelists, poets, dramatists, and scholars, the manifesto condemned German invasion of Belgium. Sadly, he would lose his son John in the Battle of Loos in 1915.

The Grand Lodge of England reports that Bro. Kipling was initiated at the age of 20 in the Lodge of Hope and Perseverance No. 782 in Lahore in 1886. Kipling’s Father John Lockwood Kipling was a freemason, and Rudyard received dispensation to be made a Master Mason while under the age of 21. His lodge had hoped for a good secretary, and Rudyard was immediately given this office because, as a journalist, he had a typewriter. He later joined the Lodge of Independence with Philanthropy No. 391 in Allahabad.

Read the full article here:



Conundrum #105

Short and sweet, and please don’t cheat
(by looking it up):

**To one of our MN Masonic Podcasts
you should go: who enjoys tennis,
collecting coins, and knows about
depth finders and bass fishing?
Remind me: which episode am I
referring to, and who was the guest?**

Please send answers to
masonicconundrum@gmail.com.



PODCAST

MINNESOTA



MASONIC HISTORIES & MYSTERIES

MINNESOTA MASONIC CHARITIES





UPCOMING EVENTS





OES Bingo!

Saturday, November 15, 2-6 pm
Princeton Masonic Lodge 101 6th Ave N
Proceeds benefit local charities

2026 Minnesota Masonic Events

- **One-Day-to-Masonry**
Saturday, January 17
8 am-4:30 pm
Minneapolis Scottish Rite
- **Annual Monitor Exams**
Friday-Saturday,
February 6-7
Minnesota Masonic
Heritage Center

- **Texas-Minnesota Reunion**
Saturday, February 7, 11 am
Rio Grande Valley, TX
- **Masonic Leadership Academy**
Friday-Saturday, February 13-14
The Park Event Center, Waite Park
- **Arizona-Minnesota Reunion**
Saturday, February 28, 11 am
Phoenix, AZ



**PREP
FEATURE
OF THE WEEK**

WEDNESDAY 10P

PRESENTED BY:

MINNESOTA MASONIC CHARITIES

TUNE IN & TELL YOUR FRIENDS!

Minnesota Masonic Charities has partnered with KARE 11 as a sponsor of the **Prep Sports Feature of the Week**, airing Wednesdays during the 10 p.m. news. This partnership underscores our dedication to youth and families, aligning with our scholarship and education initiatives as we prepare to launch the 2026 scholarship season on January 1.

Watch the commercial



THE Ashlar



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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

To contribute news articles and photos about your Lodge activities or upcoming events, please email them to [**theashlar@mnfreemasons.org**](mailto:theashlar@mnfreemasons.org).



If you would like to receive the digital version of the Ashlar in lieu of the paper issue, please sign up on Grand View.



MINNESOTA FREEMASON APPAREL SHOP

Click or scan the QR code or visit:
mnfreemasons.org/shop

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.