



THE ASHLAR

A PUBLICATION FOR MINNESOTA MASONS, STARS AND FRIENDS



FINDING THE NEXT GENERATION

**NEW MEMBERS: TIME TO MEET
THEM WHERE THEY ARE**

MINNESOTA
MASONIC
CHARITIES



Seek and You Shall Find	3
A New Room, A Shared Cause	4
Finding the Next Generation	6
Conundrum 107	8



A MESSAGE FROM THE GRAND MASTER

SHAWN CARRICK



Brothers, Sisters, and Members of the Minnesota Masonic Family,

As we continue to enjoy summer, August also marks the time when fall gives way. Our Lodges prepare to return from darkness and resume their labors. There's a special warmth in those

first meetings back: the familiar faces, a renewed purpose, and the joy of welcoming new Brothers to the path. Ritual is at the heart of that return. It's how we teach, how we inspire, and how we ensure every candidate feels the dignity of Masonry.

The Grand Master's Degree Festival & Table Lodge will be held in January, and Lodges that wish to have candidates participate should begin planning now. Identify your candidates, prepare them well, and coordinate your calendars so they're ready for this meaningful experience. If your Lodge has concerns about providing the Entered Apprentice degree for your soon-to-be Brothers, remember that our Custodians of the Work are here to help. They'll support Lodges in strengthening Ritual and

in coordinating Entered Apprentice degrees for those needing help preparing candidates for the festival.

If you are looking for some wonderful educational opportunities, there are two available. The Masonic Camp at the end of August and the Masonic Retreat in September—both are tremendous options for fellowship, learning, and strengthening the bonds that unite us. I also encourage you to visit a DeMolay Chapter and a Job's Daughters Bethel. Your presence means more to our Masonic youth than you may realize.

As we look toward fall, please remember that the Minnesota Masonic Charities Gala is on September 26. This annual gathering is a wonderful opportunity to come together, learn, and stand united with MMC as we work to make a meaningful difference in the lives of so many.

I look forward to being with you in your Lodge rooms and at the events that matter to your members, supporting your work and enjoying the fellowship that keeps our Craft strong. If you would like me to visit your Lodge, please reach out.

Shawn Carrick

Grand Master, Grand Lodge of Minnesota
651-755-4519

A MESSAGE FROM
THE WORTHY
GRAND MATRON

DEB RICKARD

First, let me invite you to our Oktoberfest fundraiser on October 10 at the Anoka American Legion, starting at 4:30. This is our major fundraiser for Alzheimer's, another awful diagnosis that has affected all of us. There will be dancing, food, raffles and silent auctions. Cost is TBD, but usually it has been around \$20. We will also be kicking off the "Mr. Legs" contest that evening. If you are interested, at least a couple pair of those legs should be familiar to you. Of course, the votes are



your dollars. Who would you like to see crowned at next year's Grand Chapter?

As we are talking to yet another Chapter that will be closing, I can't help but wonder why we are not able to reach people. We used to have so many members, and it was "secret" back then. I also wonder about the Masons. Why are you not joining? Why are you not encouraging your significant others to join? I REALLY would love your input. Please contact me if you have feedback to provide: deb.rickard.mn@gmail.com or 952-240-8918.

Enjoy the rest of the summer!

Deb Rickard

Worthy Grand Matron, Minnesota OES
952-240-8918

SEEK AND YOU SHALL FIND

BY BRADLEY PHELPS, *GRAND LODGE
EDUCATION OFFICER*

"Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." I have heard those words somewhere along the line, as I suspect we all have. Recently, a Brother and I were speaking to a new petitioner, and I found myself sharing something that I know to be true: I am not the same man who first knocked at the door of this Lodge some 20 years ago.

At different points in my journey, I would have reflected on those words in very different ways. As a young man first knocking at the door of the Lodge and seeking light, they likely carried one meaning—an invitation of discovery, growth, and perhaps to learn something he did not yet fully understand. Years later, those same words took on a different weight when they were engraved upon the gavel my wife gifted me, and as I was elevated by my Brothers. With it, I was given the honor of presiding in the East and caring for Rochester Lodge No. 21. In that season, the words spoke of leadership, responsibility, and service.

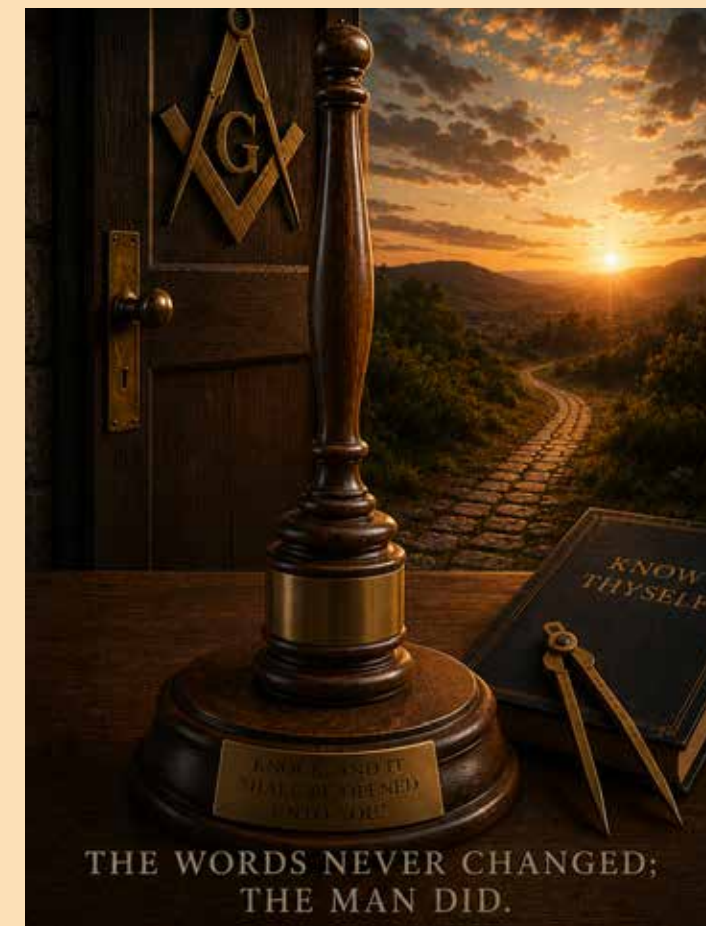
My conversation with the new petitioner, and one of my original mentors brought those same words back to me once again. And now...? Now they carry yet another meaning. Why? The words never changed; the man did.

Each of us is a story unfolding upon the level of time. Perhaps that is why great works of art continue to resonate across generations - reflecting both the comedies and the tragedies that shape our human experience. As a friend once reminded me, pushing through that brings us closer to our creator. Each of us views life through the lens of our own experiences: with all the beauty, scars, strengths, and biases that come with them.

One of the great gifts that the Lodge experience offers us is a place to wrestle with those truths. It challenges us to better understand men, to appreciate the importance of the journey, to think critically, and perhaps most importantly, to discover our own potential as we get to "*know thyself*". As we travel that path, we must be willing to ask a difficult question: Are we seeing the world as it truly is... or only as it appears colored by our experience, ego, and bias?

To assume we already possess truth and to close ourselves off from growth, correction, or deeper understanding is a danger every man faces. We may think of ourselves as Masters and yet we would be mistaken. Today, we even have a name for part of that struggle: the Dunning-Kruger effect.

The principle itself is far older than modern psychology. It appears throughout sacred writings, in the teachings of



philosophers, and in the stories of great men who wrestled with the same enduring questions: Who are we? Why are we here? How should we live?

The more we invest ourselves in the temptations of this life, the more we lose sight of what is truly important. What difference does making a few more dollars make if we never have the time to enjoy the fruits of our work?

In an age of technology, instant information, endless notifications, and the constant pull of immediate gratification, patience has become a rare discipline. We are being conditioned to react rather than reflect—rewarded by the chemistry of convenience, speed, and stimulation.

And still... I would ask us to remember another way.

An older way.

A proven way.

A meaningful way.

A path that demands reflection, perseverance, humility, and perspective. Craftsmen, I would ask us to be patient and understand that we will receive the secrets of eternity when the time is right. A stone shaped too quickly may crack under pressure. A careless strike may chip it in ways that make it useless for the builders' use.

Read the full
article here:



A NEW ROOM, A SHARED CAUSE

Minnesota Freemasons and Masonic Charities raised **\$72,700** for cancer research at the University of Minnesota's Masonic Cancer Center with **\$36,350** from the inaugural M Series event, doubled through their matching contribution.

M Series was created to expand our reach to people with no connection to Freemasonry but a deep connection to the causes we champion. This year, that meant the fight against cancer. Half of the room were first-time guests, and 40% had no Masonic affiliation: proof the strategy is working.

Guests heard from cancer survivor Drew Evenson, along with Dr. David Largaespada of the Masonic Cancer Center, who explained why clinical trials matter and how research becomes real treatment.

Thank you to our sponsors — Virtue Fundraising, Pathway Talent, Masonic Cancer Center, Brandography, the Youngdahl Family, and the Family of Gayathree Subramaniam — and our vendors: Liquidmotion, Chowgirls Catering, Surdyk's Catering, The Traveling Photo Booth, and Mode T Productions.

Every guest who walked away with a greater understanding of what Minnesota Freemasons and Masonic Charities do is a win for the mission, and every one of them is a potential advocate for us in the future.

Want to help fund the next breakthrough? mnmasoniccharities.org/donate/



Before a child can read, write, or make a friend, they have to be heard.



Right now, thousands of Minnesota children are struggling with something most of us take for granted: understanding the world through language. A missed word here, a misinterpreted sound there. It may not sound like much until it adds up to a child falling behind in school, pulling away from friends, and starting to believe something is wrong with them. The research is clear: early, unaddressed communication and hearing challenges shape a child's entire trajectory, academically, socially, and emotionally.

Here's what most people outside our fraternity don't know: Minnesota Masons already stepped in.

More than 30 years ago, a small group of Scottish Rite Masons in Duluth, led by Daniel Levenduski, decided that no family should be turned away for lack of money when their child needed help finding their voice. They built what is now the Minnesota Masonic Children's Clinic for Communication Disorders. Since then, it has provided completely free speech, language, and hearing services to children from birth to age nine — no Masonic connection required, no cost to families, ever.

Over 2,700 children have found their voice there. And it's still happening today, because members like you keep it going.

This isn't a program we merely fund. It's a promise we made, one Lodge, one Brother, one Sister at a time, and it's one of the most beautiful examples of what Masonic charity looks like.

WHAT'S UNDERNEATH IS WORTH EVERYTHING

YOUR SEAT CHANGES A CHILDHOOD.

August 20 • 5 p.m.

MASONICCHILDRENSCLINIC.ORG/DINNER

Join us at the Annual Dinner on August 20th to celebrate the Masonic Children's Clinic, and to see, up close, how your gifts can change a childhood.

Buy Tickets Now

When: August 20
Cocktail Hour begins at 5:00 p.m.

Where: Greysolon Ballroom
231 East Superior St., Duluth, MN 55802



FINDING THE NEXT GENERATION

New Members: Time to meet them where they are



For generations, our approach to growth has been the same: build something good and trust that the right men will find their way to our door. That approach isn't wrong, but it isn't enough anymore, and we don't have the luxury of waiting to find out.

Younger men today aren't scanning the newspaper for Lodge notices or waiting for an uncle to make the introduction. They're busy, skeptical of anything unfamiliar, and unlikely to walk into a building they've never been invited into by name.

If we want them, we have to go to where they already are: the brewery, the coffee shop, the county fair booth, the

community service day, instead of waiting for them to come to us. This isn't about changing who we are. It's about changing how we show up.

Every Lodge, rural or metro, has a version of this it can run: an open house, a public service project, a casual night with no Ritual and no ask, just an honest look at what we do and why it matters. The checklist below is meant to make that easy to plan, even for a Lodge that's never hosted one before because the Lodges that start experimenting now are the ones that will still be here to welcome the next generation.

Set expectations before anyone walks in

- Publish a simple one-page "what to expect" for prospects: what a typical meeting looks like, what's asked of a new member in year one, what isn't asked
- Name one person (not the WM) as the point of contact for prospect questions, and post that name somewhere a prospect will actually see it
- Respond to any prospect inquiry within 48 hours, even if the answer is "give us a week"

Build a real first-90-days plan for new members

- Assign a mentor/coach at petition, not after raising
- Schedule three check-ins in the first 90 days: after the first degree, at the one-month mark, and at 90 days, each with a specific person responsible
- Give every new member a written (or emailed) outline of what's ahead in the next six months, so nothing feels like a surprise

Create a standing check-in for members who've gone quiet

- Define "quiet" concretely: missed three consecutive meetings, or six months with no contact beyond dues notices
- Assign someone (membership committee, not just the Secretary) to reach out personally, not by mass email, within a set window after a member crosses that line
- Track this the same way you'd track a prospect pipeline: who's drifting, who's been contacted, what they said

Communicate on a cadence, not just when there's news

- Commit to a fixed communication rhythm (monthly at minimum) to all members, not just active attendees
- Include what's coming, not just what happened, so members can plan to show up
- Ask at least once a quarter, directly, whether members are getting what they need from the Lodge

Make the "casual entry point" work for retention, not just recruitment

- If you run an open house or public event, have a same-week follow-up ready for anyone who shows interest, not a "we'll see him at the next one" hope
- Capture contact info at the event and use it within a week
- Loop first-90-days mentors into these follow-ups so the handoff from "interested" to "onboarded" has an owner

CONUNDRUM107: WILLIAM MORGAN



(With assistance from ChatGPT)

The answer to Conundrum 107 is William Morgan. WB Jerry Johnson (Accacia No. 51) answered correctly.

On our way back from a two-wheeled adventure through the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Tail of the Dragon, we made a stop in Carthage, Illinois and visited the place where Joseph Smith and Brother Hyrum

Smith were killed. After hearing more of the story and the controversy surrounding it, we continued to Nauvoo, where I found myself staring at a church exterior adorned with unmistakable Masonic symbols.

That alone is an interesting story, but you may be asking yourself, “What does this have to do with William Morgan?” I’m glad you asked. Somewhere along the trip, my traveling companion leaned over and quietly said, “You know who Joseph Smith was married to...?”

After a blank stare from me, he continued, “William Morgan’s widow.”

It is amazing how small the world can sometimes feel. We’ll come back to that.

William Morgan was a resident of Batavia, New York after spending time in Canada. He claimed that while in Canada he had been raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason. Morgan later sought further participation in Masonry, including Royal Arch Masonry, but upon investigation, some local Masons questioned both his credentials and his character. Following disputes with local Masons, Morgan announced plans to publish an exposé titled *Illustrations of Masonry*, revealing portions of Masonic Ritual and ceremony. The publication angered many Masons in western New York and further inflamed tensions already surrounding the Fraternity.

After several unsuccessful attempts by local Masons to halt the publication, Morgan was arrested on claims involving an unpaid debt and allegations connected to borrowed clothing. After being released, he was re-arrested on another charge. On September 12, 1826, Morgan was

released into the custody of several men and placed into a carriage. He was never seen again.

What ultimately happened to Morgan remains unknown, though many believed local Masons were involved in his disappearance. Certainly, several Masons from the area were later put on trial in connection with the affair. The incident helped ignite the Anti-Masonic movement in the United States and contributed to the rise of the Anti-Masonic Party, one of the first significant third parties in American politics. At the time of the Morgan affair, Joseph Smith was living in western New York and was surrounded by growing anti-Masonic sentiment.

Morgan’s widow, Lucinda Pendleton Morgan, later remarried George W. Harris and eventually became associated with the growing movement led by Joseph Smith. By the late 1830s, Lucinda is believed by many historians to have become one of Joseph Smith’s plural wives, although she continued living with George Harris for a time.

Ironically, during this same period, Joseph Smith’s relationship with Freemasonry appears to have changed considerably. In 1842, both Joseph and his Brother Hyrum Smith became Freemasons in Nauvoo, Illinois. In 1841, the Latter-day Saints also performed a posthumous vicarious baptism for William Morgan, among the earliest such ordinances associated with the developing practice of baptism for the dead.

Read the full article here:



... and now for Conundrum Question #108:

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

**In the vastness of space, he once played his part,
Aboard the Cygnus, where mysteries start.
Then came a game where the old rules were blown,
Trading his horses for a “Lazy Boy” thrown.
Alongside Stone, with satire and cheer,
He made the absurd feel strangely sincere.
Search a Southern Lodge and there on the wall,
His signature still hangs admired by all.
Who is this star with Masonic ties,
Linked to black holes and comedy’s disguise?**

Send responses to masonicconundrum@gmail.com. Remember to include your name, Masonic title, and your Lodge name and number.
Example: WB Brad Phelps (Rochester Lodge No. 21)



The Masonic Histories & Mysteries Podcast: Relatable discussions about Freemasonry and taking agency over your life.

Unafraid of vulnerability in the pursuit of authentic friendship and personal growth.

Every week, host Reed Endersbe pulls up a chair with someone who has a story worth hearing: a cancer researcher explaining how a Masonic pilot grant became a breakthrough, a 23-year-old cancer warrior sharing their journey, a Marine-turned-Lodge-leader on rebuilding Brotherhood and Lodge culture from the ground up, or our Grand Master on getting back to basics.

New episodes every week on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

New Hire Welcome

Justin Ortega joins Minnesota Freemasons as Director of Programs and Events with a background in leadership development, member engagement, and event management. Over the past three years with the Grand Lodge of California, he served in membership operations roles supporting statewide membership development programs, retention efforts, Lodge leader training, and member education initiatives. Prior to joining the fraternity professionally, he served as a Junior ROTC instructor and completed a 20-year career in the United States Marine Corps, retiring as a First Sergeant. He holds a B.A. in Human Resource Management. Justin and his wife Melissa reside in Woodbury.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **September 19**, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., South Area Conference (GLMN), Mankato Lodge
- **October 3**, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., Northeast Area Conference (GLMN), Mesaba Lodge (Hibbing)
- **October 17**, 9 a.m. — 1 p.m., Northwest Area Conference (GLMN), Otter Tail Lodge (Pelican Rapids)
- **January 16, 2027**
Grand Master’s Degree Festival & Table Lodge, Minneapolis Scottish Rite
- **February 12-13, 2027**
Masonic Leadership Academy, TPEC (Waite Park)



VIEW OUR LATEST PHOTOS





THE PILLARS COLLECTIVE

The Pillars Collective: Building on What Came Before

Freemasonry has never just been about Ritual and fellowship. From its earliest days, it has been about *giving back*. In Minnesota, that instinct built things: a cancer hospital, a language clinic for kids who need help finding their voice, a home for Brothers & Sisters and their families in their later years. None of it happened because a few people gave a lot. It happened because generations of Masons, many of them giving what they could, when they could, decided their Lodge dues weren't the ceiling of their commitment. That's the legacy The Pillars Collective carries forward.

We're focused on the future of our membership, and we know who we're recruiting: sharp, engaged, Masons, some of whom are just getting started in their careers, their families, and their Masonic journey. If that's you, hear this clearly: **The Pillars Collective isn't only for people who can give a lot. It's for anyone ready to give something, consistently.**

A five-dollar monthly gift from a new Mason today is the same kind of commitment that built the institutions we're proud of now, it just needs time to compound. That's how this has always worked.

Every Pillar, whether you're just starting a \$10/month gift or renewing decades of giving, gets recognized in The Ashlar starting this November. Because the goal was never just to fund what Minnesota Masons have built. It's to make sure the next generation sees itself as the one building what comes next.

Ready to start, at any level? Talk to Reed in the Metro, Ethan in the South, or Markus in the North, or start today at mnmasoniccharities.org by clicking "Donate" and choosing a recurring gift.

*Every act of generosity — big or small — builds something that lasts.
This is your chance to be part of it from the beginning.*

To connect with one of our Regional Directors in your area, contact:

Reed Endersbe (Metro)
reed.endersbe@mnmasonic.org

Ethan Seaberg (South)
ethan.seaberg@mnmasonic.org

Markus Mueller (North)
markus.mueller@mnmasonic.org

CALLING ALL LODGES & CHAPTERS

This year's Minnesota Masonic Charities Gala is bringing back the Silent Auction Challenge, and we want **YOUR LODGE & CHAPTER** in the mix.

Build a package worth \$500+ to contribute to this year's gala auction. Put your creativity on full display, and see if you've got what it takes to out-raise the competition. Friendly rivalry, real impact for Minnesota Masonic Home.



Deadline to join: September 1, 2026

Details: mnmasoniccharities.org/gala

MINNESOTA MASONIC CHARITIES



GALA

SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

MINNESOTA MASONIC HOME, BLOOMINGTON

MNMASONICCHARITIES.ORG/GALA

THE ASHLAR



MINNESOTA
**MASONIC
CHARITIES**

11411 Masonic Home Drive
Bloomington, MN 55437
mnmasoniccharities.org

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TWIN CITIES, MN
PERMIT NO. 6243

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

To contribute news articles and photos about your Lodge activities or upcoming events, please email them to **theashlar@mnmfreemasons.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:
mnmfreemasons.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.