THE Ashlar

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MINNESOTA MASONIC CHARITIES

MINNESOTA FREEMASONS ORG. 1853

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A MESSAGE FROM THE GRAND MASTER

Foster Solem



Dear Brethren of Minnesota,

As I progressed through the Grand Lodge officer line, I was informed (and observed) that one's year as Grand Master can be very busy with travel. Well, that has certainly held true for me! It has been an honor to travel to lodges and participate in activities that I would have never otherwise had the pleasure of doing.

June was quite a roller coaster ride and began with my attending the Grand Lodge of Indiana. Their Grand Session was held in the Grand Auditorium of the Scottish Rite Cathedral. It would be worth anybody's time (especially a Mason) to travel to Indianapolis to see and tour that building. It was indeed the highlight of the trip and an experience I will not soon forget. I then traveled north to the Grand Lodge Session in Manitoba. It was yet another great experience that I likely never would have done were I not your Grand Master. After Manitoba, I found myself on a fishing trip at Lake of the Woods with the Zuhrah Rod & Gun Club. As you might know, I am not an avid fisherman, but did manage to catch a few Walleyes. After that, the month of July kicked off with the Imperial Shrine Session in Reno, Nevada. I had never been to an Imperial session before, and it was a great learning experience of all that the Shrine does around the world. How fortunate Masonry is to collaborate with organizations that have such an impact on our society. I am humbled to be a member of an organization that does so much for so many.

Many great things are happening across our state. I was privileged to present Mount Tabor Lodge No. 106 with their recognition plaque for 150 years of dedicated service to the community of Detroit Lakes. Several of our lodges have reached that milestone, and it is, and should always be, a moment for pause to realize the enduring commitment for any organization to have maintained and remained constant to their mission for that amount of time.

Our Masonic Home in Bloomington is going through a wonderful renovation project that will ensure we continue having one of the finest facilities for our members and community. New windows are being installed in one of the wings of the home, and the rooms are being updated to further elevate quality of care, which helps provide the most enjoyable surroundings for those who live or are temporarily with us through a transition period in their lives. We should all be proud of the fine staff and management of the Masonic Home for their dedicated service to the cause of Minnesota Freemasonry.

It is with great excitement I share with you that the Grand Lodge of Minnesota has partnered with three other Grand Lodges to purchase Grand View, our trusted lodge management software system. Our vision for Grand View, now that it is owned by the fraternity, is that it will remain aligned with the values and needs of our Masonic organizations. We are looking forward to this new venture and will keep you posted on updates as they occur.

Through all the things that I have mentioned thus far, let's not forget about what makes us Masons and who we are as an organization. It is my firm belief that our ritual is the foundation and cornerstone to the survival of Masonry. In my travels both in and out of the state, I have heard talk about the ritual being "out of date," if not antiquated. Some jurisdictions would like to see proficiency exams eliminated, and the opening and closing ceremonies shortened. Recently someone said to me, "…memory work is not something we do very often in today's world."

When I was a child, I recall having a list of fifty phone numbers in my head that I could easily rattle off with minimal effort. Now, I can only remember a few. To some extent, perhaps technology has made our lives too easy, as we no longer must retain and store knowledge like before. Do you remember the saying "you are what you eat"? I suggest that Masons are what they memorize and then put into meaningful action.

The one thing we have which defines who we are, what we should be doing, and how we should be acting, is contained in the ritual. When we attend Lodge, the opening and closing ceremonies are constant reminders to us of those very things. The proficiency examinations for candidates are what gets them into the habit of learning and practicing the value teachings of our ritual in their daily lives, in addition to giving them ample opportunities to build strong, early connections to other members of the lodge. The proficiency process is about so much more than rote memorization.

It is imperative for all lodges to be adept in performing our ritual, which fulfills the obligations we have as Masons. A Lodge that cannot open & close, or perform the degree work, will not be able to sustain itself for an extended period because the essence of why we exist will have been lost.

It is my hope and prayer that all our lodges become proficient in the ritual to be a self-sustaining part within the fabric of Minnesota Freemasonry.

I am honored to be your Grand Master, and it is my pleasure to serve the Craft in every capacity that I can. I thank each one of you for who you are and all that you do. Together we will keep Minnesota Masonry healthy and strong far into the future!

With Brotherly Love,

Foster Solem
Grand Master



A MESSAGE FROM THE WORTHY GRAND MATRON

CJ Brase

Hello from The Order of the Eastern Star in Minnesota.

People outside the Masonic Family ask me what keeps me involved with Eastern Star after over 40 years. Part of the answer is simple: it's the people. But it is much more complex than that. These people, these Eastern Star and Masons, know how to care and how to work together to try to make the world a better place. They know how to serve.

We support many local, state, and even international organizations that can make a difference in the lives of people who need our help or support. There are so many events and fundraising opportunities with our Masonic bodies that we could be busy almost every day of the year.

How does one choose which function of Job's Daughters to attend or how many nights we can attend their meetings to act as adult advisers? How do you say "no" to the needs and events of our Demolay young men? They need our Eastern Star and Masons to have the opportunity to mature into outstanding men.

Our Masons are good men; the fraternity will make them even better through their practices and education. When we work together to put on a pancake breakfast, a fundraiser for giving veterans a service dog, or serve a meal for the food insecure, we get to know each other and have the opportunity to build long-term relationships with all of these different members who believe in the same values we do. We have become friends! And I am talking about real, true friends. The ones who are there for each other when we need them. We know about the health struggles of a member dealing with cancer, the Mason who recently lost his beloved wife of 53 years or the member who needs a ride to a counseling appointment. We help these Masonic, Star, Demolay, Job's Daughters, and Shriners when they need us, but we collectively step up to help humankind when we support and fund other causes or organizations.

We make a difference by uniting as friends and working together to be part of something bigger…. a world where we can shine our lights together to help become a beacon for others to follow.

Eastern Star has given me this gift of friends/people who are always there for me, and I am here for them.

I am honored to have the privilege of working with my Eastern Star Sisters and Brothers this year as Worthy Grand Matron of Minnesota.

We will serve our Minnesota together and become friends.

Fraternally,
C J Brase
Worthy Grand Matron of the Grand Chapter of Minnesota

UNLOCKING FUTURE SUCCESS: THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN YOUR LODGE

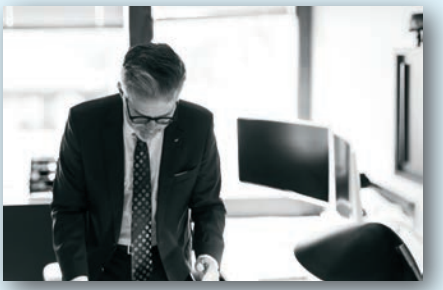
REED ENDERSBE,
DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP GRAND LODGE OF MINNESOTA

It's that time of year when lodge officers and committees are planning calendars for 2025 and beyond. We continue having insightful conversations with lodges across the state about the vital importance of meaningful community engagement, especially as it relates to expectations of new members. Of note, over 90% of lodge prospects who inquire about Freemasonry list "local community engagement" and "giving back" as one of their top aspirations.

Time and again, lodges contemplate fresh ideas for events which will enhance community engagement yet shoot down their own plans over apprehension of an event not being a massive overnight success. A recurring sentiment is that unless there exists a concrete example of a lodge having already executed an event idea with great success, "we aren't willing to try something new."

In other words, we don't always allow ourselves to show up in a small way.

Take a step back and ask yourself, what would the ideal outcome be for a new community engagement event? Get that vision in your head and work backward. You don't always have to wait for an example of somebody doing something before you attempt it; you've got to find your own way.



Long term success is never a revolution or quick fix, it's an evolution which is based on slow, sustainable progress. The commitment to sustainable progress is a key ingredient to our lives, both in and out of lodge: memorizing the ritual, learning a new skill, getting into shape, or in this case, planning and executing an event which yields long term social capital through meaningful community engagement.

It's okay to scale it down and start small. The real challenge is to commit to the long haul and evolve over time. Just ask the brethren of Star Lodge No. 62 how many decades they've been slowly, steadily growing their Annual Hog Roast event. How about Anoka No. 30 and the evolution of "Rib, Bibs, & Blues" every September? There are countless examples of lodge's community engagement events which started small, gained steam, and evolved over several years.

If your focus is on the first step, that's often what gets you going, and the momentum carries you forward.

(Suggested reading: Atomic Habits by James Clear)

HISTORIC REBIRTH:

MINNESOTA MASONS REVITALIZE ICONIC 1926 TEMPLE WITH JOINT MASTER MASON DEGREE



AUTHOR: BRO. TYLER MØE-SLEPIČKA

On Saturday, June 8, 2024, Lake Harriet Lodge No. 277 and Cataract Lodge No. 2 had the distinct privilege of conferring a joint Master Mason Degree at the Aveda Institute of Arts and Sciences in Minneapolis. If you're familiar with this iconic structure in the Northeast/Old Town Neighborhood, you likely know that it was originally erected as Cataract Masonic Temple in 1926 and served as their home until the Great Depression. Unfortunately, the economic challenges of the Second World War forced them to sell this masterpiece in the late 1940s.

The historic day of June 8 was made possible through the collaborative efforts of the brethren of these lodges and the generous cooperation of the Aveda Institute, the current caretakers of the building. The Aveda staff warmly welcomed our fraternity as "Friends of the Institute" and provided unparalleled access to this architectural marvel.

Following the degree, an inspiring oration was delivered by RW Bro. Chuck Brust, Junior Grand Warden, who challenged the new Master Masons to not simply wear a Masonic pin or a ring, but to truly live the tenets of our craft. His words resonated deeply with the audience, inspiring a renewed commitment to our principles. Lake Harriet Past Master and sitting Chaplain, Dale Seubert (68 years a Mason), remarked that it was the "…best Master Mason Degree I have ever witnessed." Five candidates were raised to the Sublime Degree that day, and by my estimation, five men's lives were forever changed. The countless hours craftsmen invested created a truly memorable environment in a backdrop that had not played host to Masonic activity for over 75 years.











On Sunday, August 11, the Grand Lodge of Minnesota returned to this beloved location and reenacted the original cornerstone ceremony as part of the pre-centenary celebration of Cataract Lodge No. 2. The day commenced with guided tours of the building, which were followed by the reenactment ceremony. This event further solidified the bond between the Masonic community and the historic temple, soon celebrating a century of history and Brotherhood.







the podcast



Join Minnesota Masonic Charities CEO John Schwietz and the Grand Lodge of Minnesota's Membership Director Reed Endersbe as they delve into Minnesota Masonry's rich history, key figures, and philanthropic efforts. Discover the essence of Freemasonry, its significant impact on Minnesota's development, and what it means to be a practicing Freemason in the Land of 10,000 Lakes.

Listening to the latest episodes is easy—visit our website at **mnmasoniccharities.org**!

TRAVEL WELL MY BROTHERS

FROM THE GRAND LODGE EDUCATION OFFICER BRADLEY PHELPS

"Travel well my Brothers". I closed my talk at MCME with these words. I suspect they were well received because they were genuine and from my heart.

I have become taken by symbols, the meanings they convey, and individual interpretations. Fascinated by hearing the stories and others' understanding of how they apply to their specific circumstances, I love to listen and learn. Given that, it is probably not surprising that talks of artists, seasons, how the planets move, and imitating the Divine plan are of particular interest to me. The first symbol that sparked my imagination was a certain point within a circle that I'm told exists in every well governed lodge.

I have learned that I am not alone in this interest because I have had no shortage of people to talk to about it. From the MN Manual (Badge of a Mason) we learn, "From east to west Freemasonry extends, and between the north and south in every clime and nation, are Masons to be found." A few interesting symbols to consider there – directions and a celestial path which might be recognized if another symbolic context is considered.

"Life is a gift from our Maker; a Divine spark kindled in mortal Clay; a gleam of light; a vision of gladness and then back to its Creator in everlasting fellowship. What each man crowds into his short period of time is his memorial. It is indelibly imprinted upon the hearts of those who were privileged to enjoy his fellowship." Beautiful words which can be found in our funeral work and are sadly at the forefront of my mind. I have recently said goodbye to too many friends and Brothers - each having played an important teacher role in my life.

Spring to summer, summer to autumn, and autumn to winter is the natural order of things. Though I am sad, I am happy for the memories, and proceed on my journey – pressing through obstacles, and things that may seem ugly in the moment.

In times of need, I often turn to music for comfort. A few of my articles have referenced lyrics that have touched my heart. Another one that I have been listening to repeatedly comes from a VNV Nation song, "I've crossed plains and the mountains, traversed oceans. From my home to the corners of the world. And for a moment I thought I heard you whisper. Mistaken for the wind across the stones." There's a lot to drill in-on in that verse, but I'll pick on "corners of the world." Isn't it curious that this phrase made it into our vernacular when we know the world is a sphere? Is this a holdover from when we thought the world was flat? Perhaps, but consider this …

If you look at astronomical symbols, you might see some you recognize. The depiction of the earth is a quartered circle – each line representing a direction. The circle being 360 degrees has four equal corners of 90 degrees. On reflection, I hope you understand why I would suggest that you are traveling them. It is another symbol that I would argue is present in all regular and well-governed lodges.

Finding balance between the mind, spirit and body is a key to happiness on our journey. Herman Hesse's book Sidhartha notes, "I can think, I can wait, and I can fast." Interesting skills that I believe correlate to mastering the mind, spirit, and body. I would suggest that we continue to work on this mastery so that, "… and late, very late, in life may you be transferred from the fading honors of an earthly Lodge to the mansions prepared for the faithful in another and better world."

I know these observations may seem somber. Zooming out, they should bring hope of a new day and a greater perspective of what it means to live a life well lived. May this bring you comfort and cause reflection that some day we may arrive at a different station of wisdom – one that looks back on the experience of a temporary physical existence and surrounded by those who we found ourselves missing.

Again, travel well my Brothers.

Fraternally,
Brad Phelps

UPCOMING EVENTS

Masonic Area Conference
Saturday, September 7th, Duluth Masonic Temple

Lodge Hall Dedication
Sunday, September 8th, Waconia Lodge

MMC Gala
Saturday, September 28th, Heritage Center

Masonic Area Conference
Saturday, October 5th, Nicollet Lodge (St. Peter, MN)

Masonic Area Conference
Saturday, October 19th, Aurora Lodge (Brainerd, MN)

Masonic Area Conference
Saturday, November 16th, Macalester Lodge (St. Paul, MN)

One Day to Masonry
Saturday, January 18th, Minneapolis, MN

99

Welcome back to the Masonic Conundrum!

The answer to Conundrum #99 is Daniel Boone. If you want to learn more about Daniel Boone and his life, this documentary is a good watch. Perhaps because of some of the publishing challenges of this conundrum, I do not have any correct responses to report. I have decided to run this none-the-less.



For some time, stopping at Defiance, MO and visiting Daniel Boone's last residence has been on my to-do list. When I led a group to Tail of the Dragon in 2023, circumstance was once again an obstacle, and I did not make it. Life happens. It is still on my list of stops, and I plan to do it soon. In the meantime, if you want to learn more about this location, this YouTube video is a great introduction.

It is suggested that Daniel Boone was a Freemason, and



indeed his Wikipedia entry states that he was. That said, evidence is largely circumstantial, and the Grand Lodge of Kentucky cannot find a record of his membership in Kentucky lodges. The same holds true for other areas where his family lived: Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, Missouri, etc. It is no surprise that Boone's membership in our Fraternity is disputed. Perhaps one of the more intriguing pieces of cited evidence comes from his son Nathan Boone, "Father's body was conveyed to Flanders Callaway's home at Charette, and there the funeral took place. There were no military or Masonic honours, the latter of which he was a member, as there were then but very few [Freemasons] in that region of the country." Apparently this is written in a biography referenced in the Scottish Rie Masonic Museum and Library Blog – which is now on my reading list. Boone's story is a complicated one of myth and legend. For example, contrary to popular belief, Boone's choice of apparel was not a fur hat as often depicted. Instead, Boone wore wide brim hats as was the norm for frontiersmen of his time.

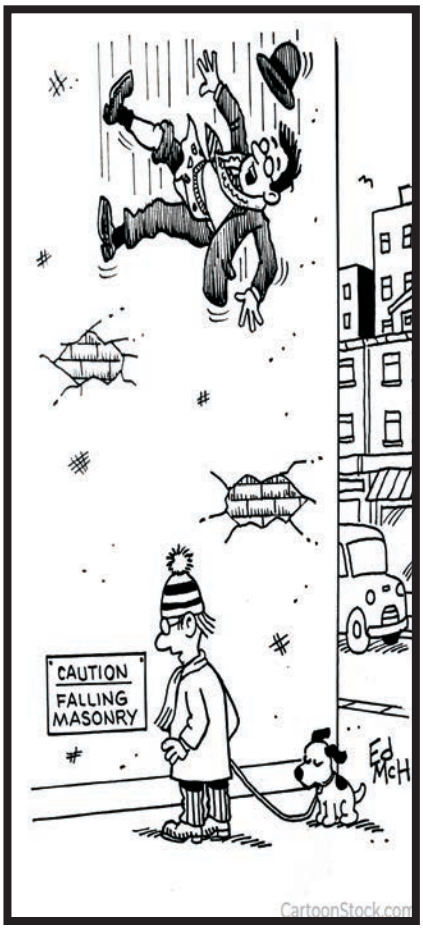
Daniel Boone's family emigrated to Pennsylvania in the American colonies during the early 1700s. A family of Quakers, the Boones were eventually disowned by the Society of Friends for "marrying out". Two of Daniels siblings married outside of the Quaker community, and father Squier Boone defended their actions. This led to the family leaving Pennsylvania.

Traveling south, the family crossed paths with other famous families – including the Lincolns (President Lincoln's grandfather). Interestingly, members of the Boone family married into the Lincoln family. These beginnings paved the way for possibly one of the most famous frontiersmen and explorers of American history. Living in a complex time, one cannot help but be awestruck while hearing the story of Daniel Boone, visioning the sights that he witnessed, and understanding the hardships he endured. From a humble beginning, Boone learned to read and write – as well as hunt; skills that would ultimately lead him on the path to establish settlement in modern-day Kentucky.

As I read over his documented words, I am taken aback at the introspection he seemed to possess, "Felicity, the companion of content, is rather found in our own breasts than in the enjoyment of external things; and I firmly believe it requires but a little philosophy to make a man happy in whatever state he is." -- Daniel Boone.

His bravery, perseverance and adventure are the making of legend and not only made him famous in his day, but inspired many stories – including one of my favorites, "The Last of the Mohicans". This was one of the first books I read in my youth. It brought wonder and intrigue to a single digit boy and has stayed with him nearly 40 years later. It is no doubt a contributing factor that continues to drive new adventures on two-wheeled chrome horses and learn about the likes of Daniel Boone and Buffalo Bill Cody.

Conundrum #100 Question: This Civil War surgeon, and lifelong student was also an explorer but is perhaps better known for his contributions in medicine. A statesman and student of many disciplines – this Mason is famous for mortgaging his house to buy a microscope to better serve his community. 3 others that shared his surname would join the ranks of our Fraternity; although despite common belief, one was not his eldest son.



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THE ASHLAR

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