



THE ASHLAR

A PUBLICATION FOR MINNESOTA MASONS, STARS AND FRIENDS

MINNESOTA MASONS' \$40,000 INVESTMENT IN VETERAN HEALING

**Magnus Veterans Foundation
is changing the way we care
for those who served**



MINNESOTA
MASONIC
CHARITIES



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A MESSAGE FROM THE GRAND MASTER

SHAWN CARRICK



THE ENDURING WORK OF MASONIC CHARITY

Masonic charity rests on the enduring pillars of brotherly love, relief, and truth. It remains a defining hallmark of our Craft,

a steady expression of compassion, responsibility, and the belief that communities grow stronger when we lift one another. Across our Jurisdiction, I continue to witness extraordinary charitable work, and I want to highlight three efforts that embody the very best of who we are.

Minnesota Masonic Charities (MMC) leads that work. As one of the most influential grant makers in our state, MMC is an exceptional steward of every gift entrusted to it. Its support shapes outcomes in education, cancer research, eldercare, children's health, community service, and the preservation of our Masonic heritage. Rooted in relief, integrity, and service to humanity, MMC reflects a long tradition of helping Minnesotans navigate challenges with dignity and hope. It offers every donor, regardless of contribution size, a meaningful way to create lasting impact. If you or your Lodge would like to explore opportunities, I encourage you to contact one of our regional directors: Markus, Reed, or Ethan at plannedgiving@mnmasonic.org.

Aligned in spirit with our Masonic values, Magnus Veterans Foundation continues its vital work supporting veterans and their families. During a recent visit, a small corner filled with toys and books for children caught my attention—a quiet but powerful reminder that their mission embraces the whole family. Magnus provides comprehensive medical, psychological, and social care designed to restore long-term health and stability. Their commitment reflects the very principles we uphold and offers Lodges a meaningful opportunity to

engage in charitable work beyond our formal Masonic structures.

As we approach the end of the year, I am preparing the next phase of growth for the charitable program I founded, Christmas in June. What began as a heartfelt effort to bring art supplies, books, teaching dolls, toys, and comfort items to young patients at the M Health Fairview University of Minnesota Children's Hospital has grown into a cherished tradition. With the continued support of Red Wing Lodge, our goal this year is to raise \$6,000 to sustain and expand this work.

Any Lodge seeking a worthy charitable cause is invited to adopt a month between June and November and raise \$1,000, which fully supports that month of the program and provides a direct, meaningful impact for the children we serve. Whether your Lodge contributes through a modest local drive or a coordinated community effort, every action strengthens this tradition. More information is available on the Facebook page: *Christmas in June for Children at the MN Masonic Children's Hospital*.

These are only a few examples of the remarkable work taking place across our Jurisdiction, and there are many more. I am deeply proud of the dedication our Brothers, Sisters, and youth groups show as they support so many worthy causes with heart and conviction. The officers and staff of the Grand Lodge stand ready to offer guidance, counsel, and encouragement as you continue in your great and good work. As the year progresses, I look forward to being with you in your Lodge rooms and at the events that matter to your members, supporting your efforts and celebrating the impact we create together.

Shawn Carrick

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



A MESSAGE FROM
THE WORTHY
GRAND MATRON

**DEB
RICKARD**

As the leaves turn and our calendars fill, I'm delighted to welcome

you to this special edition of our newsletter, dedicated to the veterans who have served our nation and the organizations that stand beside them. Honoring those who have given so much has long been close to the heart of the Order of the Eastern Star, and I'm proud of the many ways our members continue to answer that call.

One of the causes nearest to my own heart is our support of service dogs. Training and placing these remarkable animals is an international focus of our Order, and here in Minnesota we are fortunate to partner with Helping Paws, an ADI-accredited service dog organization. Our contributions to Helping Paws are designated specifically to fund the training and placement of service dogs for Veterans. When I think about what a well-trained service dog can mean to a veteran—greater independence, companionship, and confidence in daily life—I'm reminded that our giving reaches far beyond a single donation. It changes lives.

That spirit of service runs through everything we do. As members of Eastern Star, we strive to be examples of fidelity, constancy, loyalty, faith, and love. In living out those values, we work to improve our communities and ourselves, build lasting friendships, and leave our world a better place. Last year alone, our members volunteered more than 133,000 hours in hospitals, eldercare homes, Meals on Wheels programs, student mentoring, and so much more. I am continually inspired by your generosity and your willingness to show up for others. We truly love what we do, and it shows.

Looking ahead, this fall promises to be a busy and joyful season. I look forward to traveling across our Jurisdiction, visiting chapters, sharing fellowship, and seeing firsthand the good work happening in our communities. I hope to see many of you along the way.

Thank you for all you do for our veterans, for Helping Paws, and for one another. Together, we make a difference.

With love and gratitude,

Deb Rickard

Worthy Grand Matron, Minnesota OES
952-240-8918

Save the Date

APRIL 9-10, 2027

JOIN US FOR THE 174TH ANNUAL
COMMUNICATION AT THE PARK EVENT
CENTER IN WAITE PARK, MINNESOTA.

Watch *Grand View* for upcoming registration information!

RESTORING THE WARRIOR SPIRIT AT

MAGNUS VETERANS FOUNDATION



It was an unusually warm late September day. Still, the clear sky, breeze, and colorful fall foliage created a picturesque backdrop as Grand Master Shawn Carrick and his team toured **Magnus Veterans Foundation** in Dayton, Minnesota.

Minnesota Freemasons and Minnesota Masonic Charities have a history of supporting veteran-facing organizations, and after being introduced to Magnus, it was clear this mission was important to support. MMC CEO John Schwietz said, “It’s our collective honor to donate \$40,000 to this incredible group, ensuring everyone who steps onto this property knows they have the services and support they need.”

Joining the Grand Master on the tour were Scott Rich, Shawn Alderman, and Greg Vokovan, a Magnus patient. Veterans and their families founded the **Magnus Veterans Foundation** (MVF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, with the mission to heal and honor veterans

and their families through community fellowship and a comprehensive approach to restoring the body, heart, mind, and spirit.

If you don’t look closely, you may miss the turn into this sprawling country estate. When asked, Dr. Shawn Alderman, MVF, Founder & President, maintains, “A larger sign is a low priority; we are taking care of patients right now. That’s our number one priority, so everything else takes a back seat. It might cost us \$6,000 to put up a sign, but that’s 10 patients I can take care of in a year.”

Turning down a winding road lined with a white picket fence and a historic red barn to the right, you enter a serene country setting that instinctively calms nerves and promotes deep breaths. This organization’s holistic approach, including art therapy, social time, and specialized activities—like bladesmithing with Master Bladesmith Austin—is key to its success. Dr. Shawn knows too well that Veterans are skeptical. Many have

felt beaten down by the VA Health system and had their trust broken as a result. “But when you get out of the car here, something about this place feels peaceful, and that helps disarm them. When they walk through our door, a volunteer greets them, not someone who’s paid to be here, which soothes them a little more. They take in the view, and all of a sudden it hits them”.

Dr. Alderman’s aunt and uncle built this place, and his uncle created Sesame Street Live. They used to store the Sesame Street costumes in the red barn you pass on the way in. A memorial garden in the back pays homage to his aunt and uncle and sits at the forefront of the magnificent property views.

Many conversations focus on the growing need for veterans’ services of all kinds, but services connecting them to mental and physical health support are at critical mass. Right now, they serve over 1,000 patients (60% veterans, 40% families). Their goal is 5,000. To do that, they need to grow. The **Magnus Foundation** recently received funding to expand into a new clinical area and physical performance space. Construction is set to begin next month, with likely completion in February 2027. “We’re onboarding about 10-15 patients each week right now, but if we were to turn the spigot all the way on, that number would quadruple.”

“Now is the time for growth. We have people waiting to sign up, and we also have the funding to support it. Our business model relies mainly on community support

and donations, allowing us to operate on a small margin. We also don’t bill insurance companies, meaning we don’t have to spend hours on that documentation. Our physicians are focused on delivering psychological care,” Dr. Alderman says. Operational efficiency lets them provide services for a \$50 per-person-per-month donation, and they rely on 150 to 200 volunteers for administrative and maintenance tasks.

“We have had zero veteran suicides in over four years of operation; there’s not another organization in the world that takes care of veterans who can say that,” states Dr. Alderman.

Volunteer staff at Magnus handle all the administrative work and help connect veteran families with their communities. They keep operational costs down, which allows them to make those connections. “The gap between veteran families and our communities has never been wider than today. When people go out into their communities but don’t feel like anyone shares their background, that creates isolation and, for a veteran, typically leads to something happening” says Dr. Alderman.

Magnus defines goals for patients physically, spiritually, socially, and psychologically, and ultimately makes them better employees, better family members, and just better all around. That is an obvious connection to the tenets of Masonry. We can relate to being there for one another fraternally, with a shared goal of helping each other become better.

cont. on page 6



A Lodge Worth Coming Back To

cont. from page 5

If you're interested in learning more about the **Magnus Foundation** or supporting them at their upcoming military-style Gala in November, visit their website: [Magnusveteransfoundation.org](https://magnusveteransfoundation.org). Dr. Alderman will be the keynote speaker. While financial donations may seem like the most obvious way to offer support, keep in mind that Magnus runs on volunteers' time. If there is an interest in finding ways to connect your Lodge to volunteer opportunities, contact Nancy Alderman at 763-427-7832 or email contact@magnusveteransfoundation.org

To learn more about the Minnesota Masonic Charities Matching Grants Program, visit <https://mmasoniccharities.org/programs/grants-and-community-scholarships/>



ONE MISSION: SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE

It is easy to think of Minnesota Masonic Charities and Minnesota's Masonic Lodges as two separate things: one that gives grants, and one that meets on Tuesday nights. But they are connected by one mission.

Minnesota Masonic Charities exists because generations of Minnesota Masons and Eastern Star members chose to pool their resources to do more together than any Lodge or Chapter could do alone. Every grant it makes is carried out in its name and yours.

That is why, when Minnesota Masonic Charities supports MACV, Eagle's Healing Nest, and the Magnus Veterans Foundation, it isn't acting on its own. It is Minnesota Freemasonry keeping a promise it has made for generations: to care for people, strengthen communities, and stand by those who need us.

Many of our Brothers and Sisters have worn the uniform themselves. Honoring those who served is part of who we are.

So the next time you hear about a veteran finding home, hope, or healing, know that you had a hand in it.

One fraternity. One mission. Something every Mason and Star can be proud of.



VIEW OUR LATEST PHOTOS



By Justin Ortega

The meeting has ended, but the parking lot is still full. Brothers are finishing a conversation that began over dinner. One is still talking about a presentation, Masonic or otherwise, that gave him a new way to approach a difficult challenge he is facing in his life. Another has run into a Brother he hasn't seen in months, and within minutes they've picked up right where they left off. A brand-new Brother joins a conversation, shares his thoughts, and feels the connection with his Brothers that reminds him why he wanted to join the fraternity in the first place. It was the kind of evening Masons remember, and the kind they want to experience again.

The 2027 Masonic Leadership Academy is a chance to think seriously about how we can create more evenings like that. On February 12-13, 2027 Brothers from across Minnesota will gather at The Park Event Center in Waite Park to share ideas and prepare for the important work of leading their Lodges.

Leadership I is designed for Brothers preparing to serve or currently serving as Junior Warden. Sessions will explore the responsibilities of Lodge Officers, mentoring, ritual readiness, Lodge education, social events, and community outreach. Brothers will also begin the initial planning for a year in the East. Each topic offers a way to think about the Lodge experience they want to help create, from a Candidate's first conversations with his mentor to the fellowship that keeps members connected.

Leadership II is for Brothers preparing to serve or currently serving as Senior Warden. As they prepare for their year to lead their Lodge, they will consider how to make a stated meeting an evening Brothers value: one with worthwhile education, time for fellowship, and a purpose beyond just getting through the business. They will also discuss candidate education, finances, and how to give the Lodge a unified vision that lasts beyond a single year. Brothers from different Lodges will have time to compare ideas and consider what they can bring home.



District Deputies will have a dedicated training track. Everyone will come together for sessions on modern tools for Lodge management, preparing a budget, and welcoming new members. The Lodge idea exchange will give Brothers a chance to share something their Lodge does well and hear what is working elsewhere in Minnesota.

There is more to this Academy than the learning sessions. Friday evening will bring everyone together for dinner, a conversation and an opportunity to meet the Deputy Grand Master, followed by a Lodge meeting simulation where Brothers will see an example of a stated meeting that handles Lodge business efficiently while deliberately making room for engaging education and fellowship. Meals and breaks will offer time to catch up with familiar faces, meet Brothers you've never met, and continue discussions that started in the conference room.

Bring a Brother from your Lodge and make a weekend of it. You may come away with an idea for your next stated meeting, a better way to welcome a prospect, or the start of a future vision your Lodge can build on together. Just as likely, you will come away knowing a few more Brothers from across the state.

Through the early registration in Grand View, Lodges can register up to two attendees at \$200 each. Additional attendees are \$425 per person. Start making your plans to join us February 12-13 in Waite Park.

You won't want to miss it.

CONUNDRUM108: ERNEST BORGNINE



Answering correctly: WB Phillip Bodle (Mesaba Lodge No. 255), WB Al Farmer (Ionic Lodge No. 186), WB Harland Brand (Templar Lodge No. 176), WB Todd Mayer (Anoka Lodge No. 30)

The thing that strikes me about Ernest Borgnine is the warmth that he seemed to bring to his roles. As a kid, Disney’s *The Black Hole* captured my imagination and was one of the first movies I would see in the theater. During the Easter season, I would see him play a Roman Centurion on TV while I sampled my Easter candy spoils. Matt Stone and Trey Parker changed the face of comedy forever with *South Park*, and I remember going to see *BASEketball* with my wife. We laughed hysterically, and while this was perhaps not the type of movie I would have expected to see Brother Borgnine in, he was fantastic nonetheless. My riddle referenced these roles specifically. The Lodge I mentioned was, of course, Red Wing Lodge No. 8.

Brother Ernest Borgnine was born January 24, 1917, in Hamden, Connecticut. Joining the Navy in 1935, he served aboard the USS Lamberton and was honorably discharged in 1941. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, he re-enlisted in 1942, and served aboard the USS Sylph,

which was used for anti-submarine warfare. In 1945, he was once again honorably discharged from the Navy, having served for almost 10 years in total. He then went on to act with encouragement from his mother.

His acting career spanned several decades, earning him an Academy Award for Best Actor for Marty. Beyond the roles we have already covered, he appeared in *From Here to Eternity*, *Vera Cruz*, *Bad Day at Black Rock*, *The Wild Bunch*, *Airwolf*, and *SpongeBob SquarePants*, just to name a few.

According to the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, “In 2000, Ill. Borgnine received his 50-year pin as a Mason in Abingdon Lodge No. 48, Abingdon, Virginia. He joined the Valley of Los Angeles in 1964, received the KCCH in 1979, was coroneted a 33° Inspector General Honorary in 1983, and received the Grand Cross of the Court of Honour in 1991.” In 2010 he received the York Rite Medal of Honor. He was also a Shriner.

Brother Ernest Borgnine passed to the Celestial Lodge in July 2012.

... and now for Conundrum Question #109:

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

Tradition holds that this Brother and 14 others applied for membership in Boston’s St. John’s Lodge and were turned down. While he supported the Patriot cause during the Revolution, it was through a Lodge connected to British forces that they found their path to initiation. What was the Lodge in which they were initiated?

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)

HARD REALIZATIONS TO ADMIT

BY BRADLEY PHELPS, GRAND LODGE EDUCATION OFFICER

September represents a time when we all return to Lodge after many of us have taken a break for summer. Certainly, there are other activities that keep us busy: family vacations, the Shrine, MMCI, and Widows Sons all come to mind.

Spring and fall are times when many get slammed all at once: both from summer approaching and summer departing. On more than one occasion, it has caused me to pause and reflect, “How do I use my time more wisely? Are there opportunities for me to minimize the impact of this change of seasons?” Each year, I promise myself that I will tweak approaches and find better balance. Each year, I promise that I will be more mindful about what I commit to, and yet each year I seem to fall into the same patterns. Adding an additional twist, I was born a May Taurus. My family might say that this brings with it a natural stubbornness, but I don’t see it. Well, OK – maybe just a little...

I know that I am not alone. I hear others making the same observations as they scramble to get things done. Each year we talk about our symbols and methods of time management, and yet the discipline seems to escape us.

Reflecting personally, for much of my life, I have believed that one of the greatest lessons is learning how to face obstacles, to push on, persevere and grow. Like anyone,



I may find myself wondering about why certain trials are sent my way. Each time I try to remind myself that the trials are sent to sharpen us. On more than one occasion, I have become my own self-help coach and have told myself to push on, even when every ounce of my body wanted to quit. There have been some not-so-proud moments when I have cracked and sworn at a computer, motorcycle, or 3D printer. After my tantrum, and self-performed pep-talk, I’ve picked the tools back up, envisioned what completion might look like, and continued...

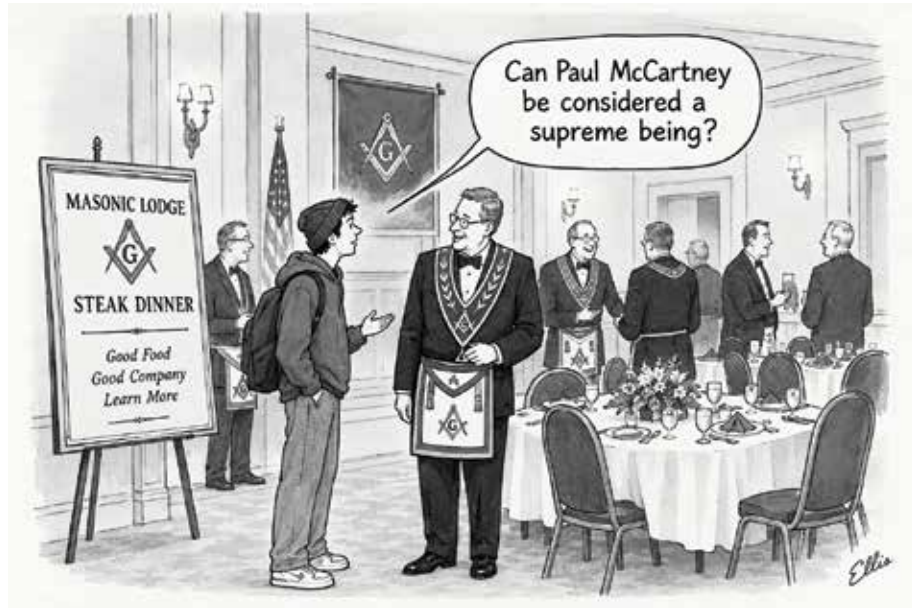
When I was very little, my mom was warned that if I were introduced to computers that I would become obsessed with them. No doubt I loved the games that they offered, but it was when I realized that I could bend them to my will that this prediction was proven true. I took great pride in being seen as having a type of “wizardry” that most didn’t possess at the time. I remember the sense of accomplishment I felt when a college Computer Science instructor mentioned that my perseverance was one of my greatest attributes. Despite my belief that computers were easy, and that people were hard, my path would always return to people.

Influenced by thinkers such as Stephen R. Covey, John Maxwell, and Simon Sinek, my StrengthsFinder signature theme of “Developer,” and the example set by my family role models, it is no wonder that my path kept leading me back to people. Maybe it was my tenacity that positioned me in situations of difficult projects, emergencies, looming deadlines, defusing potentially volatile situations with a sense of calm, and creating order from chaos. I may have had some of these abilities naturally, but Masonry is a huge, huge part of my ability to practice these disciplines effectively. Despite my challenges with saying no, Masonry has given me so much.

Many know that if I engage, I’m “all in.” That does not mean that I do it perfectly, or that I do not make mistakes. I care about what I do, the way I do it, and the people I choose to include. The other side of that sword is that I’ve been told that I have high expectations. As a result, I know that sometimes I push beyond what I should. In the process, there may have even been times when I have forgotten to see those who are around me. I may have felt compelled to take control of a bad situation, or to volunteer when I know I should not.

Read the full article here:





UPCOMING EVENTS



- **January 16, 2027** Grand Master's Degree Festival & Table Lodge, Minneapolis Scottish Rite
- **February 12-13, 2027** Masonic Leadership Academy, The Park Event Center Waite Park, MN
- **March 27, 2027** State Ritual Competition, North Star No. 23 St. Cloud, MN
- **April 9-10, 2027** 174th Annual Communication, The Park Event Center Waite Park, MN



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Please send guest or topic suggestions to reed.endersbee@mnmasonic.org

2027 RITUAL COMPETITION

Take Your Ritual Work Further.

The 2027 Ritual Competition is your opportunity to step forward, represent your lodge, and put your work into practice. Demonstrate your ritual prowess and be part of something that continues to strengthen our craft across Minnesota.

Regional Competitions

North Region – February 20, 2027, Aurora Lodge No. 100, Brainerd

Central Region – February 27, 2027, North Star Lodge No. 23, St. Cloud

South Region – March 6, 2027, Mankato Lodge No. 12, Mankato

State Competition

March 27, 2027, North Star Lodge No. 23, St. Cloud

Individual Competition Includes:

- Interrogatories
- EA Lecture, Part II
- EA Lecture, Part III



Online registration coming soon!

\$19,000 in charitable prize money will be awarded.

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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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.