



# FREE STATE Freemason

A PUBLICATION OF THE GRAND LODGE OF  
ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF MARYLAND



VOLUME 49, ISSUE 1

WINTER 2024



## HARVEST HOME DAY

2023

(SEE PAGE 22)

FREE STATE FREEMASON ARTICLES  
AND ADVERTISEMENTS

The *Free State Freemason* is published bi-monthly from September through June (there is no issue in July or August). Deadlines for submissions are the 1<sup>st</sup> day of February, April, August, and October for publication in the following issue. These dates **ARE FIRM** and can not be changed due to printing schedules.

ARTICLE SUBMISSION

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\*Five (5) issues



*The Maryland Free State Freemason is published six times annually for the members, families and friends of Ancient and Accepted Masons of Maryland. The views expressed in the Maryland Free State Freemason do not necessarily reflect those of the Grand Lodge of Maryland, or its officers.*

SUBMISSIONS & GENERAL INQUIRIES

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*Submitted articles should be between 250 and 600 words, and whenever possible, relevant high-resolution images with proper credits should be included. Check details at the left hand panel. Articles are subject to editing and, if published, become the property of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Maryland. No compensation is given for any articles, photographs, or other materials submitted or published.*

# FREE STATE Freemason

A PUBLICATION OF THE GRAND LODGE OF  
ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF MARYLAND

VOLUME 49, ISSUE 1

MAKING GOOD MEN BETTER

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Maryland Masons husk corn at Harvest Home Day, 2023



*FREEMASONRY is the oldest fraternal organization in the world. It is dedicated to promoting improvement in the character of its members. A Mason is taught to be a good citizen, to be of good character, to care for those less fortunate, and to give back to his community.*

*THE MASONIC FRATERNITY contributes over \$1 Billion each year to its philanthropic pursuits. Over \$750 Million of that in the United States alone. The Crippled Children's and Burns Hospitals sponsored by Shrine Masons are world famous for their ability to help those most in need.*





# GRAND MASTER'S MESSAGE

Brethren,

Over the last year the spirit of cooperation between myself, the Deputy Grand Master, the officers of the Grand Lodge, and the officers of the constituent lodges has continued. To the Grand Lecturer and his Deputy Grand Lecturers; the President of the Board of Grand Inspectors, to the Grand Inspectors; who all who have loyally and faithfully carried out their duties, to those serving of the various Boards and Committees—I extend my sincere thanks. The Worshipful Masters and Secretaries with whom I have come in contact during my term as Grand Master, I thank you for the courtesies shown me and those who have traveled with me.

## RITUAL

Our Grand Lecturer and his Deputy Grand Lecturers have made excellent progress in reestablishing the area DGL Schools and these are posted monthly in Compass Points. It is my opinion, if the work in the Lodges continues to progress – we not only will be able to move men through the degrees in a timely manner, but that their experience will be a most favorable one. I believe this will translate into pride in Freemasonry their friends and coworkers will notice and if one of these asks about masonry, the brother can be confident that their friend's experience will be an outstanding one.

On several occasions I have contacted a sitting Worshipful Master inquiring about someone who either is over or is fast approaching a constitutional deadline. Please understand, this is not done to put any officer or lodge "on the spot" but to see if there is

anything the Grand Lodge can do (within constitutional limitations) to assist.

I have also turned down several requests for lodges to have "casual dress" at their stated meetings. If a Lodge is holding some sort of "special night" (wearing your favorite team jersey, Hawaiian Night, etc.) and they are not otherwise having any degree work or catechisms – these I have granted. Just to have casual dress at a stated meeting, with no other purpose other than casual dress...those have been and will continue to be declined. Stating the reason "to increase attendance" will not work (at least for the next year), this was tried a number of times under Grand Master Mills and when I visited a Lodge and compared the "before casual" communication with the "casual" one, there is little to no difference and with three Lodges I checked as RWDGM – hurt attendance.

## FINANCES & CAPITAL EXPENSES

As per the Grand Treasurer's Report, the Grand Lodge is in a stable position financially. The last year has been hard on our Investment Portfolio, but so far this year it is headed in the right direction. With the addition of new budget line items (i.e. the Grand Master and Deputy Grand Master, etc.) you as members of the Grand Lodge will have a better idea of where your money is going.

## REGIONAL MEETINGS

There were four Regional Meetings held in February and March across the state: Grand Lodge, St. Alban's-Birmingham Lodge #233, Coats Lodge #102 and Friendship Lodge #84. I thank the Lodges and the Temple Holding Companies for allowing us to hold our meetings in their buildings, for providing the lunch and thank you to those who attended and participated in our enlightened discussions.

## CLOSING

It is with a feeling of regret that I have been unable to accept all the invitations that have come to me over the last year. I have had to decline many invitations to visit lodges and attend other functions, on account of previously having accepted another invi-

tation on the same date. Our Deputy Grand Master, Senior and Junior Grand Wardens have filled in as their time allows and I thank them for representing the Grand Lodge on their travels.

I commend the Grand Secretary, Grand Treasurer and the office staff for all their work, this work is so well organized and so well carried out that few matters need to be referred to the Grand Master and this has allowed the Grand Master and Deputy to concentrate on the Blue Lodges in Maryland.

As I mentioned at the Semi-Annual, the Deputy Grand Master and I have worked well together over a couple of decades in a few collateral bodies in Mary-

land and continue to do so in the Grand Lodge. There is no use of my starting a new Grand Lodge Program, making a new Grand Lodge Award, changing, continuing, or enacting a new policy or procedure unless he continues it. I have asked the Deputy on many occasions if there is any program, etc. he would like to implement – if there is, we might as well start now.

Sincerely & fraternally,

Frederick A. Spicer

Most Worshipful Grand Master  
of Masons in Maryland



# REGIONAL MEETINGS



## 2024 REGIONAL MEETINGS SCHEDULE

The Grand Lodge of Maryland will once again hold Regional Meetings at locations throughout the state during February and early March. All meetings will begin with coffee and doughnuts at 8:00am. The meetings will start promptly at 9:00 am. Lunch will be served to all attendees after the meeting.

As a reminder, all Worshipful Masters, Secretaries, and Lodge Membership Chairmen are required to attend one meeting. Dress for attendees is business casual.

Below is the list of scheduled meetings. These dates, and all Grand Lodge events can also be found on our website on the Grand Lodge Calendar at [www.mdmasons.org](http://www.mdmasons.org).

### Saturday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

Grand Lodge of Maryland – Corinthian Room  
302 International Circle  
Cockeysville, MD

### Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Centennial Lodge No. 174  
6110 Croom Station Road  
Upper Marlboro, MD

### Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Wicomico Lodge No. 91  
110 N. Division Street  
Salisbury, MD

### Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024

Ali Ghan Shrine  
13100 Ali Ghan Road, N.E.  
Cumberland, MD



## DEPUTY GRAND MASTER'S MESSAGE

Brethren:

Our Masonic Ritual is what separates us as a fraternity from mere social clubs. It sets the groundwork of ideals, myths, symbols, rights, obligations, responsibilities, and goals of the Craft so they can be taught to the initiate to help him achieve enlightenment and spiritual growth to assist him in accomplishing his personal goals.

When we retire into our own spaces for Lodge meetings, we achieve a physical separation from the world at large; whether it's behind the walls of a Temple or in the seclusion of a low valley or up on a hill. By joining in the opening ceremonies and conforming to a dress code of standard attire, we effect a mental and spiritual separation from the outside world; allowing us to experience that we are meeting upon the level and to be reinvigorated with the tenets of our profession.

To best accomplish the goal of setting the members in the proper attitude and spiritual frame of mind, the officers should be proficient in the ritualism of their positions. It's distracting to all in attendance and counterproductive to have the officers stumbling in their parts and/or being prompted. It's therefore incumbent on us to not appoint Brothers to positions if they don't agree to fulfill their duties; and no Brother should accept an appointment or election to an office

It's distracting to all in attendance and counterproductive to have the officers stumbling in their parts and/or being prompted. It's therefore incumbent on us to not appoint Brothers to positions if they don't agree to fulfill their duties; and no Brother should accept an appointment or election to an office unless he understands the requirements and is agreeable to perform them.

unless he understands the requirements and is agreeable to perform them.

Some Brothers do have more difficulty than others in learning ritualistic parts. I've been asked how I manage to keep the parts that I know straight from each other. It's not an innate ability to hear a part and immediately know it— it takes a lot of time and effort. Much of our Work isn't phrased in modern vernacular; arcane wordings and terms are used; and some parts seem grammatically incorrect.

My advice to someone starting to learn a part is to do an internet search on the term "How to memorize a part". Many tried and true techniques exist, but each person has his own particular way of learning that best accomplishes the goal. Some learn better by the old version of "mouth to ear" by hearing it from somebody else and repeating it back, while a more visual learner is aided by the ciphered text in the Maryland Masonic Manual. Yes, we learn more quickly when we're young, but the more we practice, the easier it becomes to learn more.

My technique is a hybrid of both audible and visual. I've picked up some parts solely through "osmosis" by hearing them done by others throughout the years. However, I rely on seeing the written page for some of the parts which are more difficult for me to get down. In learning many of them that have strange wordings, I end up visualizing where they are on the page, which helps me recall the exact phrasing.

I usually start by reading through the entire ceremony a couple of times to get a feeling of how that part relates to the overall degree and to make sure I under-

Lodges were anciently dedicated to King Solomon, who was our first Most Excellent Grand Master; yet Masons professing Christianity dedicate them to Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist, who were two eminent Christian Patrons of Masonry; and since their time the Lodge, a certain point was a certain point

## MEMORIZATION

stand how to pronounce each word correctly, and what my part really means—what the information is that I am trying to relay. If you don't understand what your part is really saying, you're only trying to memorize a string of words in the correct order, which is very difficult. It's much easier if you understand the underlying point to your part and figure out how to relate that message to the candidate or target audience.

I then start with one sentence or even a phrase and repeat it out loud until I can do so without referring to the source. Then do the next phrase, and when you're comfortable with it, repeat from the start. Once that's smooth in your memory, keep adding phrases. In learning a new part, I usually only do this for a maximum of an hour at a time, so I don't get burned out. Then after a diversion of at least an hour, go back and see if I can do the piece up to the place that I had gotten to. If the part has major sections, I keep going until I get the section down and then stop for the day. Start the next day by refreshing the previous section(s) and making sure they're able to be spoken smoothly without long pauses or looking at the source. By building your memorization of the part in this manner, it is more likely to go into your long-term memory so it can be recalled when needed. By saying the words out

loud, I hear them as well as try to recall them and that reinforces the learning process. Also I identify certain combinations of words which are more difficult for me to pronounce, so I can spend more time in making sure I pronounce them clearly, and not just remember the order of the words. One example is a phrase from one of the collateral Bodies: "that merely grasps at novelty"; it's a simple phrase, and the words aren't unusual, but I have to pronounce it really slowly to ensure that I say the word "grasps" correctly and understandably.

Even for parts that I've known and done for years, as practice before I'm going to do them, I go over them by saying them out loud to make sure I can speak the words smoothly, slowly, and understandably. The goal isn't to be able to rattle off the words as quickly as possible; but to get the message of the part across to the candidate in an impressive manner.

Remember that the major reason of doing ritual is to get yourself in the proper frame of mind for what you're doing, and to get the candidate/audience to understand the message you are relating and to convey it in a sufficiently impressive manner that he is inspired by it so that he takes its meaning and translates it into his personal beliefs and carries it into his future actions.



## FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND SECRETARY

**C**harity is one of the principal characteristics of a Mason and it can be practiced in many ways.

In the Entered Apprentice degree, we are admonished to have faith in God, hope in immortality and charity to all mankind. And we are told that the greatest of these is charity, for our faith may be lost in sight, hope ends in fruition, but charity extends beyond the grave through the boundless realms of eternity. In the Master Mason degree, we were obligated to aid and assist all distressed worthy Master Masons and their widows and orphans wherever they may be found.

I'd like to take a few moments and take a closer look at how we, as Masons, practice this grand ideal of Charity. With just the least bit of consideration, we all can reasonably determine that this lesson is meant to encourage regular charitable acts as Masons, as a group and individually. If taken seriously as a part of that constant endeavor to become better men, it can help lead us to make kindness, caring and generosity a part of our daily lives.

Masonic Benevolence has many faces and there are several levels of charitable action. I'd like to examine a few, from the very broad to the most personal. Let's start with the very broad and most obvious.

We have all heard of the Shriners and the wonderful work they do at their various hospitals – helping children with severe orthopedic abnormalities, children with severe burns and other various ailments. They have a long history of providing these services at no cost to the family, providing transportation to the hospitals and other support for the families during treatment. They also lead the field in research for

treatment of various childhood diseases and disorders. Maybe you know about the Tall Cedars of Lebanon, another masonic-based organization that provides charity to others in the form of treatment and research related to muscular dystrophy. They have been at the forefront of raising money for this worthy cause for decades. The Knights Templar Eye Foundation – supported by and funded by the Knights Templar of the York Rite is another example of masonic benevolence. Then there is the Scottish Rite clinic for Childhood Language disorders, again at no cost to the children. Some others that you may have heard of locally are:

Masonic Charities of Maryland, Inc – awarding scholarships to graduating seniors throughout Maryland, supporting the Masonic Model Student Assistance Program ( provides training to teachers for being able to identify children with problems that would put them at risk such as drug abuse, bullying, parental abuse, etc.), MDChip program which provides free identification kits to parents of children that can be helpful in cases of kidnapped or missing children. Other programs supported by Masonic Charities of Maryland are the OneLove Foundation, the Battie Mixon Fishing Rodeo, etc.

These are all examples of charitable works that have been developed over time for the express purpose of helping our fellow man. The motivation behind them, I'd like to believe, is the concept of charity implanted in us through the principles and ideals of Masonry.

The next level of charity that many Masons engage in is direct actual financial aid. This occurs in many different ways. Anybody who has been a member of a Blue Lodge for any period of time has witnessed many times the donation of money to various causes. A few examples of these are: the local fire departments and police departments, children's athletic leagues and events, brothers or families in financial distress, etc. Many of the lodges and individual

brothers are quick to donate when we receive an appeal for aid to other jurisdictions in times of disaster such as fire, floods, earthquakes and hurricanes. We do all this on a regular basis without hope of reward or recognition.

There is not enough time in this short presentation to list and praise all of the various monetary charitable works that are performed by masonic organizations and individual masons. That list would be extensive. We can be safe in saying that our fraternity is a group of generous and caring men who give freely to our fellow men. And, I might add, that although we are bound by our Masonic obligation to be charitable, we must also exercise discretion when giving financial aid. Be attentive to the motives of those seeking funds, as they are probably aware of our teachings concerning charity and we do not want to be taken advantage of as a result of our generosity.

There are other types of charity, which I believe are truly the charity referred to in our ritual that will live on "through the boundless realms of eternity".

The definition of charity is not restricted to helping our fellow man financially. I have witnessed in my life the charity exhibited by my brethren in the form of actions of helping one another with problems such as auto repair, construction projects, home repair, providing needed transportation for doctor appointments, shopping and many other activities that don't require us to write a check or reach into our pocket. Donating blood is another example of being charitable to our fellow man that costs us nothing but a half hour of our time. These are all a part of charity, whether we think of it that way or not.

The next level of charity to consider is the type that inspires us to aid others in their spiritual or emotional needs. There are many times in people's lives that a comforting thought or gesture may be needed, but not sought. As caring individuals and as obligat-

ed Masons, we should be willing to take that step to sooth the unhappy or misfortunate. Offering friendly advice and counseling is a charitable act that few will ask for but most likely will be appreciated when offered. These are examples of charity that extend beyond the grave.

The last, but certainly not the least, form of charity is one that is the easiest to perform and easy to make a part of our regular way of life. In our daily interactions with others, the words and phrases we use to communicate with each other, the simple acts and deeds performed throughout the day may seem small and insignificant but when practiced in a charitable manner, can make a difference for ourselves and so-

ciety. Charity can be practiced by something as small as holding the door for someone, wishing people a "Good morning" or other kind greetings. Charity can be practiced when driving – are you quick to let someone over when they are signaling a lane change, do you pause to let someone pull out of a parking space? The simple act of making someone's day a little more pleasant or easy is charity that we can all practice with little effort.

All these examples and levels of charity can be defined as love for our Brother and our fellow man. The monetary acts of charity can easily be tracked and the effects observed. But there is no way to track the immeasurable impact, influence or consequences of our individual acts of charity. We can only hope that by spreading this form of our love for humanity through our charitable acts, that the goodness derived will truly extend through the boundless realms of eternity.

Sincerely, Your Brother,  
Ken Taylor, Grand Secretary



## GOT PURPOSE?

By Bro. Earl "Hank" Griffin, W. Grand Chaplain

**A**wake. Probably. Sometimes it is hard to be sure. Darkness, and the sensation of floating. Warm, not too warm. Just the right amount.

"Where am I," I wondered. Pitch black and silence.

"Am I awake or dreaming?"

The soulful cry of coyotes. First one, then more, followed by the beautiful serenade of dozens. If I were sleeping before or languishing in the between state of sleep and wakefulness, that lovely communal song brought me entirely to consciousness.

My bride sleeps next to me oblivious to either the coyotes or my sleepless state. "She is lovely," I thought and reached for her then decided better. "Just because I can't sleep doesn't mean that she should be robbed of her rest." I rose from our bed silent in the dark.

Reaching out, my hand brushed wood panel then fabric. A very slight part in the curtain allowed moonlight to light my way. Pants, shirt, socks, and boots. Prissy, my little blue haired dog was no fool. Like me, she knew it was best to be quiet when Herself was sleeping. She placed her head against my hand. Together, we were prepared to step out into the relative wild.

On the way out my Winchester carbine found its way to my hand as did a light. My little friend and I crept outside where she could run, and I could stretch and walk without worry of disturbing my wife or the children.

In those days we lived in the deepest, most remote of East Texas wilderness. There were more coyotes by far there than men. Bears were known to roam as were panthers. There were no other houses around us for... a good while. The nearest humanity was north but not more than a general store with a single gas pump, closed more often than open. There was nothing like help nearby, should it ever be needed. Actual civilization was an hour away.

In that place, in those days, there was no help coming moments or even minutes after a phone call to 911. There were no 911 addresses then. If one needed and called for help it was, or should have been, understood that help would probably come, eventually but not until they had gotten turned around or just lost, repeatedly. Thus, the rifle.

Prissy, an unusually good and able dog, didn't run off when we stepped out. She waited for my direction. We took a walk around the house, along the fence, then the

treeline, out by the road, and finally I gave her the signal. As I sat in my lawn chair the little dog, an eighteen-pound blue heeler, ran off to tend to her needs and maybe kill a few squirrels (Oh, my goodness, that dog hated squirrels! But more on that another time).

On the way outside the clock read: 2:11 am. I'd gone to bed at 11:00 pm. Experience taught me that I was done sleeping for the night.

"Sleep is for sissies. You can sleep when you are dead," I thought and chuckled aloud as I heard my father's voice speaking those words in my thoughts.

Around me the half moon lit the clearing surrounding the house, the unused two-lane road out front, and the house itself. Beyond that was the black of trees in every direction. Just as it was night after sleepless night. Quiet. Lovely. Remote.

Above was a cloudless sky illuminated by the silver half-moon. Stars of every color were strewn from one horizon to the other. Having shot out... er, I mean to say, as the security light was not currently in working order, the natural beauty of Creation was all around me in the most extraordinary evidence, unencumbered by light pollution. St. Elmo's fire flickered in the south.

For some months Prissy and I often found ourselves similarly situated. If I'm candid, night after night I sat out after patrolling the perimeter, trying to sort things out.

I'm married. Have pretty babies. Am employed.

Now what? Mindless entertainment and distraction were not the answer. I was active in my faith but there was only so much to do.

Something was missing. I didn't understand what exactly but, something. My father was dead more than ten years by then or I might have asked him.

Instead, I got on my knees. "Lord, please, I need something more but don't know what..." I'd repeated that and similar prayers many times over several weeks. Eventually, my prayers changed from, "Please help me discover what is missing," to "I am grateful for a new opportunity, please help me do the best I can."

Beneath the moonlight, there in the starlight, serenaded by communities of coyotes in every direction, I remembered the feel of it. Heavy bond paper, folded, blue, imprinted with an illustration of the Grand Lodge. My petition, beautiful it was.

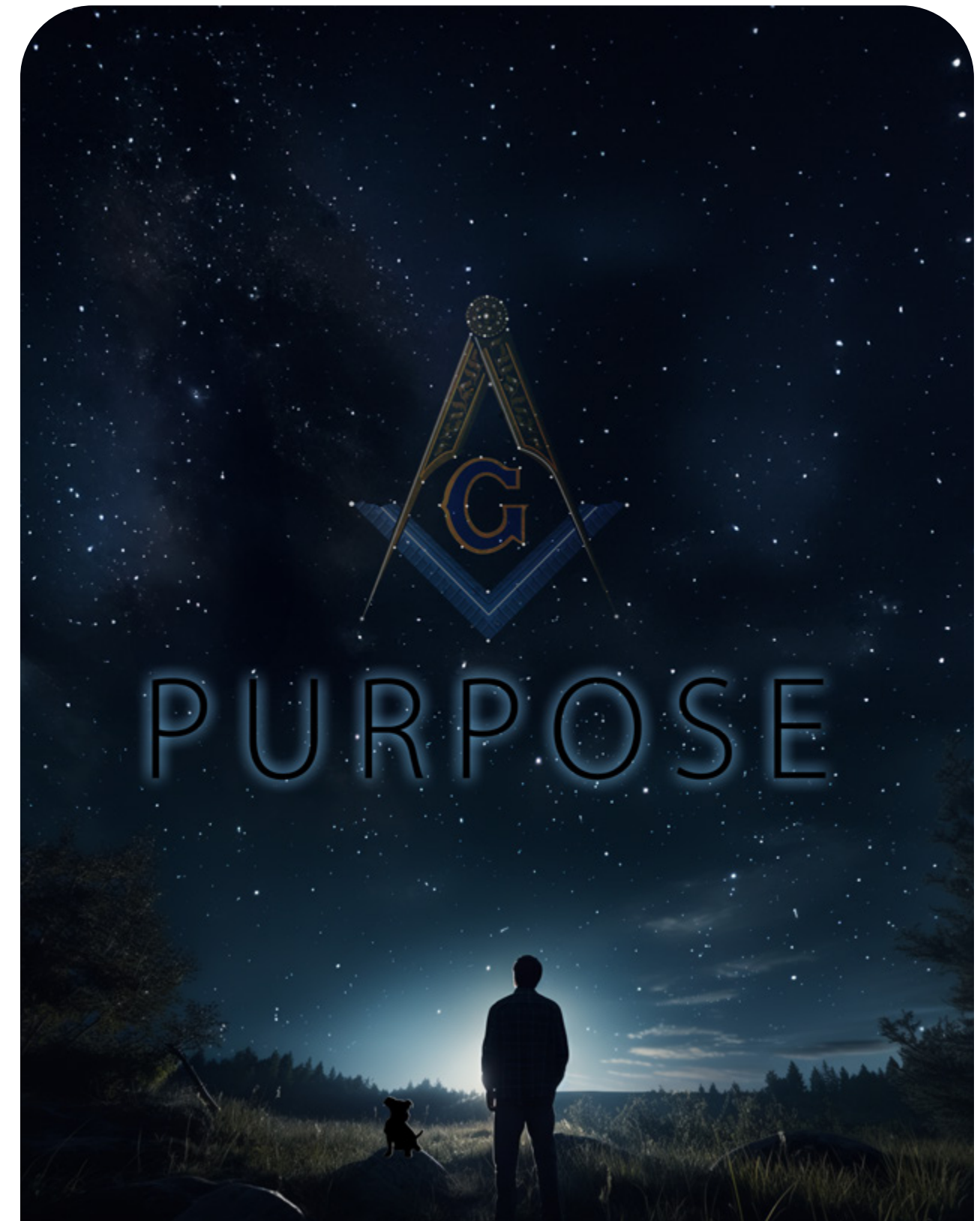
Earlier, before bed, a phone call, "Your election was successful." No longer was anything missing. Finally, I had a purpose again.

To strive towards something, a goal, an object, or some aim with determination, resolution, and intent, is to have purpose. Men who aspire, strive, and work hard to accom-

plish – men of purpose, are men who are of the greatest use to their family, community, and the greater world.

When someone asks you, "What is Masonry? What does it have to offer?"

Tell them, "Purpose. Masonry gives one Purpose!"





2024 GRAND LINE OFFICERS OF  
**THE GRAND LODGE OF A.F. & A.M. OF MARYLAND**

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## Mordecai Gist

HERO OF THE REPUBLIC

By Bro. Chales J. Matulewicz, RW Senior Grand Warden

Hidden away, behind the Enterprise rent-a-car on the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue in Brooklyn, New York hangs a little read plaque on the façade of brownstone VFW which reads:

HERE LIE BURIED 256 MARYLAND SOLDIERS WHO FELL IN THE BATTLE OF BROOKLYN AUGUST 27, 1776.

An ocean of time may separate today's Brooklynite from that August day; but had it not been for these 256 sons of Maryland the Republic would have ceased before it truly began.

As the revolution unfolded Brother General William Howe found British control of Boston no longer tenable after Brother Colonel Henry Knox unexpectedly installed the heavy artillery liberated from Fort Ticonderoga facing into Boston. The fortified emplacement was located on the Dorchester heights and with its command of both Boston Harbor and the city itself it made retreat to Halifax the best option for the British to regroup and preserve their forces until they could be redeployed in the Spring. Redeployment to Staten Island began in July of 1776 Howe was ordered to not engage until reinforcements arrived in August in the form of British regulars and Hessian merce-

naries. With his newly combined forces Howe sought to push Washington out of New York and place the harbor, economic center, and home of leading revolutionaries under the control of the crown, and it is that offensive push during the battle of Long Island where Gist and the martyrs from Maryland take their place in history.

With 32,000 British troops now on Staten Island, Howe (who as a member of parliament advocated for more leniency for the colonials) attempted to use pardons to use clemency to smother the revolution. An effort which failed with General Washington stoically stating in reply *"Those who have committed no fault want no pardon."* We see MW Gist's New York story begin in August where Gens. Clinton and Cornwallis land with a combined force of 20,000 Hessian mercenaries and British red coats land on Long Island. While the surrounds of New York City had been fortified by Washington if Howe could destroy the Americans at Long Island, he could bring the ground war to a swift end capturing the American military command and the port of New York in a single decisive action.

The superior numbers of the British made the Colonists' holding of the defenses an impossible task, and with

control of the harbor firmly in the hands of the British Navy a tactical withdrawal to Manhattan would be the only means of escape for Washington and his army. After fierce fighting Washington made the call to withdrawal selecting the Marylanders to buy the colonial's time. This sacrifice would memorialize Maryland in the mythos of the revolution. The immortal 400, or the Maryland 400, held their ground while being pummeled by the combined force of Hessians and British regulars holding back the British during this action. The Marylander's fought until they ran out of ammunition and then continued to resist with bayonets and even their bare hands until overcome by their opponents and there died some 256 Marylanders lead by Brother Gist as all the other officers had been killed or were incapacitate.

Viewing the decimation of the Immortal 400 it is said that General Washington mournfully turned to an adjutant exclaiming, *"Good God, what brave fellows I must this day lose!"* But Gist survived, held back the most powerful ground force of its day, and ensured that the fledgling army of the Colonials lived to fight another day.

Brother Mordecai Gist was born in Baltimore on February 22, 1742, and after his schooling at St. Paul's Parish School became a merchant doing business on Pratt Street. Seeing the troubles ahead for the Colonials he formed the Baltimore Independent Company which was incorporated into General Smallwood's 1<sup>st</sup> Maryland battalion in 1776. We know that he was the founding Worshipful Master of Lodge 27, which was chartered in 1780 as a traveling Lodge for the Maryland Troops under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. The date and place of his three degrees may be lost to time, but his sacrifice for the republic stands on its own. After his command in Brooklyn, he fought in numerous other engagements, culminating in his service in the Southern division under General Greene where he commanded the Light Corps under General Laurens and contributed to the defeat and capture of Cornwallis at Yorktown. Brother Gist returned to private life in South Carolina where he remained engaged in Freemasonry being elected to serve as Grand Master of the Ancient York Lodges in South Carolina in 1780 where he grew the Craft and served as the Vice President of the Maryland brand of the Society of the Cincinnati. Brother Gist laid down his working tools on August 2, 1792, at age 50 having saved the republic through his leadership against unbelievable odds as one of Maryland's most beloved sons.



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- Tacyn, M. A. The Maryland 400 in the Battle of Long Island, 1776.
- Myers, W. S. "Mordecai Gist and the Maryland 400: Another Chapter in the History of the American Revolution."



Has your lodge had an event you would like to share in THE FREE STATE FREEMASON? Just send it to [tfoster@glmd.org](mailto:tfoster@glmd.org) and we'll be happy to publish it in a future edition. Please format any text as a Microsoft Word® document, and make sure any digital photographs submitted are at least one megabyte in size.

## STEPHENSON LODGE HOLDS ITS ANNUAL STEAK NIGHT

### DEGREES FOR BRO. TANNER B. WILSON

Esdraelon Lodge no. 176, Cardiff, Maryland, is proud to welcome Bro. Tanner Brettell Wilson to the membership rolls.

Bro. Wilson is actively serving in the US Army and is stationed at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. Bro. Wilson desired to join his family Lodge in Maryland and his petition was approved by Esdraelon Lodge in February; however, the logistics of conferring the degrees presented some challenges. The Grand Lodge of Oklahoma was contacted by the Grand Lodge of Maryland and was requested to do the Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft degrees by courtesy. The request was granted and Bro. Tanner B. Wilson received his Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft degrees on Saturday, September 9th in Lawton, Oklahoma by the officers and members of Mount Scott Lodge #540 A.F. & A.M. Four members of Esdraelon Lodge flew out for this special event: Bro. Nathan D. Wilson JW (brother to Tanner), Bro. G. Wilson Tharpe PM, Sec & Bro. Henry T. Jones PM (cousins to Tanner) and Bro. D. Scott Schubert PM, SW.

The day started early and concluded with a delicious meal.

Bro. Wilson is being deployed to Germany and will receive his Master Mason degree at a later date.

Many thanks to the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma for granting this special request and to the Officers and Members of Mt. Scott Lodge No. 540, Lawton, Oklahoma for their Hospitality and Brotherly Love. It was a memorable day.

Congratulations, Tanner!



*Degree for Bro. Tanner Wilson*



### Mid-Atlantic Mechanics' Social Club

Visit [www.iuom.org](http://www.iuom.org) to learn more

Friendship.  
Brotherly Love.  
Truth.

On October 18<sup>th</sup>, Stephenson Lodge held their Annual Steak Night after getting a dispensation to cancel their regular communication. The event, which requires an online pre-order, sold out within a few days of being posted. Many local Brothers know about the event and patiently anticipate it to be announced. The event is posted on Facebook on the Grand Lodge's page along with other local county Lodges. Due to Stephenson Lodge's limited dining seating capacity, only so many tickets are available. Once the tables are filled, the event closes, and tickets are no longer available. The ordering web page posts the number of remaining tickets.

The steaks were rib-eye cuts. Each is grilled outside the Lodge on a special grilling station over a hot fire. Each diner selects a colored plastic steak marker: rare, medium-rare, medium, medium-well, or well-done. These markers are collected and given to the cooks monitoring the steaks' doneness. When a steak hits a degree of doneness, the

marker is inserted, removed from the heat, and conveyed to the Lodge. Each diner also has a table marker with the desired doneness in front of their plate. This way ensures that the correct number of steaks are cooked to the proper degree of doneness.

Besides the steaks, salad, baked beans, baked potatoes, green beans, sauté mushrooms, grilled onions, rolls and butter, and various iced tea, water, and sodas were available for dinner. All the sides were home-made. Following this huge meal was a specially decorated sheet cake.

Roughly fifty Brothers and friends were able to partake of the meal. No one left hungry. A special thanks goes out to the committee members for putting on another spectacular fall event. Past Master Carl Lee procured the steaks, and our superb cooks were Bill Bridges, PM, Keith Thompson, PM, and Buzz Vaughn.

Stephenson Lodge looks to have another Steak Night for 2024. Watch future announcements to find out when.



# TALL CEDARS BALTIMORE FOREST 45 TEAMS UP TO SUPPORT STRONGEST HEARTS

By Bro. Bruce Mulligan, Sr. Deputy Grand Tall Cedar



**B**altimore Forest 45 has decided to help support the advanced research and development of a treatment for people affected by Duchenne's or Becker's.

We strongly feel that by supporting Strongest Hearts and their contribution being given to Hunterian; an industry leading CRISPR lab, focused on using CRISPR to create therapies for the worst genetic diseases, we can positively impact the lives of many Muscular Dystrophy families. Strongest Hearts is a Non-Profit committed to finding a cure to muscular dystrophy through research and gene editing. Please help us reach our goal to fund the CRISPR research and help families battle this life changing disorder.

Hunterian is dedicated to the eradication of DMD and BMD and the use of CRISPR to attack other types of muscular dystrophy in the future. We ask that you join us in our fight against Muscular Dystrophy and other neuromuscular diseases.

## MISSION - VISION - VALUES

**Mission:** Strongest Hearts mission is simple, we look to raise funds to provide funding for research to find a cure for muscular dystrophy as we work to provide education to families and the medical community, improve early identification and aid with those suffering from the rarest and most serious forms of Muscular Dystrophy (MD).

**Vision:** Today there is no cure for MD. Our vision is to live in a world where MD can be identified at birth or in utero and treated with a single treatment that permanently stops the disease.

**Values:** Healthcare is generally difficult to navigate, but for families affected by rare diseases it can be a nightmare with treatments promising miracle cures or giving false hope. Strongest Hearts is dedicated to finding a cure in an ethical manner, by working only with vetted and accomplished researchers and physicians and with full transparency. This means that 93% of all funds raised go directly towards the research. Strongest

Hearts is partnering with industry leading, doctors, attorneys and other non-profits to ensure that we are marching towards our mission of curing MD. Additionally, the research will be shared with our community so they can see the results of their giving.

## HISTORY

Ryan and Tania founded Strongest Hearts in 2022, after their only son was diagnosed with Becker's Muscular Dystrophy. Strongest Hearts is on a mission to find a cure for muscular dystrophy while also working to provide education to families and the medical community to improve early identification and aid those suffering from the rarest and most serious forms of muscular dystrophy.

In 2021, a 6-year medical odyssey finally ended when the founders' son was diagnosed with BMD. While receiving a diagnosis was a relief, the lack of treatment meant that relief was quickly replaced by fear, anxiety, and hopelessness. Many nights have been spent not sleeping and worrying about the future of our special boy.

That all changed when the family was able to meet with doctors working in CRISPR and that a cure for MD was within reach. The mission became immediately clear: GET THIS DONE NOW.

Over the course of 12 months, the family started Strongest Hearts, organized CRISPR testing with Hunterian, created a partnership with PPF and is rapidly moving to discovery and pre-clinical phases of therapeutic development.

MD never stops and we have dedicated ourselves to ensuring that we stop it.

## RESEARCH

Today, there are limited treatments for muscular dystrophy, leaving parents and children with few options. Current treatments, such as steroids and physical therapy, only help in limited ways.

Ultimately, MD robs patients and families of life itself. Even with newly approved drugs like Endo-sys 51 (this is a gene therapeutic that specifically targets those individuals with very specific mutations) the increases in dystrophin are limited. While any improvement is monumental, we believe we can do more!

Enter CRISPR, the promise of which cannot be overstated. CRISPR provides the ability to fix mutated genes, like dystrophin, allowing the body to produce it and live a normal life. Strongest Hearts is funding research that could treat nearly 90% of people affected by Duchenne's or Becker's.

## EDUCATION

Even when families do find a diagnosis, they are left to do much of the research on their own, with no idea on how to begin even tackling something as daunting as treatment for a condition like DMD or BMD.

Strongest Hearts is dedicated to helping families, physicians and physical therapists understand the disease, what the realities are and how to find out about it much earlier. Early detection can help families deal with the large financial planning and burden, makes plan for care, avoid potentially harmful activities and give peace of mind and guidance.

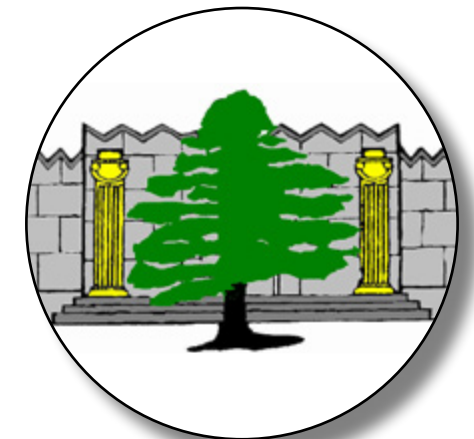
## DONATIONS

Donations or petitions to join our Tall Cedars Forest may be made by contacting:

Baltimore Forest 45, Tall Cedars of Lebanon  
2501 Putty Hill Ave, Parkville, Maryland 21234  
(410) 668-4545

[baltimoreforestscribe@gmail.com](mailto:baltimoreforestscribe@gmail.com)

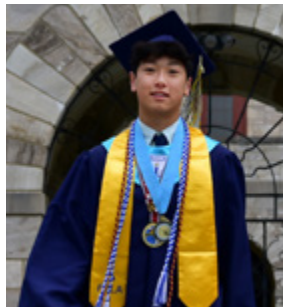
Strongest Hearts Foundation is a project of Players Philanthropy Fund a Maryland charitable trust recognized by IRS as a tax-exempt public charity under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (Federal Tax ID: 27-6601178).



# NEWS FROM MASONIC CHARITIES OF MARYLAND

By Tom Foster, MCM President

**2023** proved to be another successful year for Masonic Charities of Maryland! Our Annual Scholarship Program again awarded over \$75,000 in scholarships to graduating seniors from Maryland's public high schools. Our top scholarship, the C. David Haacke prize of \$5,000 was awarded to Arthur T. Wang who graduated from River Hill High School in Clarksville, MD. In addition to having excellent grades, Mr. Wang was heavily involved in volunteering and community service. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he formed his own charitable non-profit to provide an opportunity for a student-led and student-run organization managing many projects. He is currently attending Vanderbilt University.



Bro. Richard Thurfield has assumed the duties of chairman of the Scholarship Program for 2024. He has devised an online scholarship application to ease the process and to ensure all public-school students have the ability to apply. These will be released shortly.

MCM again was involved in making The Grand Master's Cup Golf Tournament a big success. Thanks to our many sponsors and participating golfers, over \$10,000 was raised to help MCM carry out our charitable mission. This year, the Grand Master's Cup was captured by the team representing Mt. Moriah Lodge No. 116.

MCM again was involved in making The Grand Master's Cup Golf Tournament a big success. Thanks to our many sponsors and participating golfers, over \$10,000 was raised to help MCM carry out our charitable mission. This year, the Grand Master's Cup was captured by the team representing Mt. Moriah Lodge No. 116.



Finally, the Board of Directors introduced a proposed amendment to the Constitution. In brief, this proposes that all remaining funds that were collected via the \$3 annual assessment to fund the **Maryland Masonic Child Identification Program** be returned to the lodges on a per capita basis as a donation to the local charity of their choice. This option was selected because these funds which are managed by MCM come under specific laws which state that MCM can only donate funds to qualified charities. More information will be provided in the months to come, and the proposed amendment will be balloted upon at the Semi-Annual Communication in May of 2024.

Masonic Charities of Maryland belongs to every Maryland Mason. For the entire Board of Directors, I thank you all for your continued support.



## CORINTHIAN ROOM CHAIR PLAQUES

Create a lasting honor or memory by purchasing a brass chair plaque for permanent display in the Corinthian Room. Less than seventy-five chairs remain available. The cost is \$200 per plaque. Simply fill out the below form and return it to the Grand Lodge Office with your check made out to "The Grand Lodge of Maryland". Requests for specific locations will be honored to the best of our ability based on availability. Plaques for chairs in the Grand East are available at a cost of \$500. Contact Tom Foster at [tfoster@glmd.org](mailto:tfoster@glmd.org) for further information.



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# SCENES FROM HARVEST HOME DAY

Although the weather started with rain, the spirits of the nearly 1,000 in attendance at the 2023 Harvest Home Day were not dampened. Masons and their guests from all over Maryland made and renewed friendships, and of course, the traditional feast of sausage sandwiches, pancakes, and pumpkin pie.

Glen Burnie Lodge No. 213 posted the highest turnout, with fifty-four Brothers in attendance. Top honors in the Annual Corn Husking Competition went to the team from Silver Spring Lodge No. 215. Finally, the Cornhole Competition was won by the team of Timmy Fenhagen and Nolan Wietscher representing Concordia Lodge No. 13.



Grand Master Spicer presents the 1st Place plaque for the Cornhole Competition to Bros. Timmy Fenhagen and Nolan Wietscher of Concordia Lodge No. 13.



The team from Silver Spring Lodge No. 215, which won the Corn Husking Competition.

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# SAVE THE DATE

*Grand Master's Bull and Oyster Roast*

*Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup>*

*in the Grand Lodge Ballroom*

**Tickets available soon!**

