

SPRIG OF ACACIA MONROE DISTRICT NEWS

Greetings Brothers and members of the Masonic Family. In an effort to increase communication within our community, the Monroe Masonic District leadership team introduces the first edition of your quarterly newsletter, Sprig of Acacia. Conversations over the past several years, following the final issue of the Masonic Times indicated that the information found in the Masonic Times was an avenue of communication missed by many readers. The

Masonic Times was a great way to hear about district happenings, events, programs, Grand Lodge and more. We sincerely hope that this quarterly newsletter provides some of that. We also encourage you to submit suggestions and constructive feedback so that improvements can be made. If you are interested in submitting information for inclusion in the newsletter you can do so by emailing the District Team at monroemasonicteam@gmail.com.

DISTRICT DEPUTY GRAND MASTER

R.:. W.:. William Edwards



I am so happy to once again hear the familiar sound of gavels in the East and that lodges in our District are being called back to labor from the summer months of refreshment. The uncertainty of the past 18 months due to the Covid pandemic has been challenging in many ways and I was concerned how the fall months would proceed. At present, it looks like we can be cautiously hopeful for the future. I truly appreciate all your support, patience, and candid conversations as we have

worked through the pandemic protocols together. Regardless of the divisions facing the world abroad, as Brothers, we have been committed to finding a safe path forward focused on brotherly love. We must always remember that in union is strength and harmony peace. Thank you!

The District Team has been busy over the summer months planning for the upcoming year and our term. Many of our plans from last year were put on pause due to the Covid protocols. A positive aspect of the pause was that it provided an opportunity to step back and assess where we

are as a district. We realized that the reality of the current situation required that we delay, or adjust our plans. Personally, I am very excited about the opportunities ahead of us as we move forward together.

One of our first goals is to improve communication within the district. Having had conversations with lodge officers and Brothers around the district, it became obvious that we needed to try something different related to communication. Email lists, Facebook and OurLodgePage are all helpful tools. However, the consistent feedback was that intermittent electronic communications do not replace the effectiveness of the Masonic Times Newspaper for the sharing of information. After exploring different options and ideas, the team has decided to start publishing a quarterly newsletter. Thank you for reading the first issue now! This is your newsletter and I would appreciate your feedback and suggestions. If you have an interest, get involved. Let's see where we can take the newsletter over the next few years!

It is difficult for any organization to improve or adapt its culture. We have all heard various tales of the whippersnapper newly raised Mason wanting to try something new and are dutifully reprimanded with, "No change is needed. We have always done it this way!" We may not even know why it was done that way, just that we must keep doing it. Unfortunately, this attitude often stifles enthusiasm and drains one's passion for Masonry. In reality, aspects of Freemasonry have changed, adapted, and evolved over its three-hundred plus year history. We all experienced firsthand how the ritual could be adapted with Covid protocols to meet the current needs of the situation. The truth is, our District must continue to evolve and hopefully improve as well. This vision for

where we need to go is summed up in one phrase, **"Own It!" This is our second goal.**



Over the coming term, I am going to challenge all of us to approach Freemasonry with a new commitment to *Own It!* It is a mindset and a way of being. Many folks have a passion for music, golf, fishing, gardening or some other interest. I want to help nurture that same passion for Freemasonry. This is the same passion that has a golfer practicing his swing in early spring, in anticipation of the upcoming golf season. I ask each of you to take a moment. Reflect on something that you are personally passionate about and then ponder, if you have the same passion and commitment for Masonry. As I make my way around the district, I am interested in hearing your personal story.

"Owning it"; a series of simple choices over time. It involves taking the initiative and proactively owning your Masonic experience. Many opportunities exist such as volunteering a few hours of your time at the next lodge or district event or putting in the extra effort to learn and polish your ritual. Masonry is a full contact sport! We are not a social club for entertainment only. Yes, we have fun but we also have a profound purpose. It is an active brotherhood committed to helping others and

improving ourselves physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually in our quest for Masonic Light.

The strength of our district is inherently interconnected with the strength of our lodges. A vibrant district requires strong and active lodges. **Our third goal is to help support the growth of lodges and promote visitations**, as Covid protocols allow. Throughout the year, we will be promoting the programming and service projects of the individual lodges. This approach has multiple benefits. Rather than creating additional district programming or events, we can attend quality programs that are already being prepared by the Worshipful Masters and their lodges. Imagine sitting in a lodge room with an additional 10 to 20 visiting Brothers that just show up. The vision is simple – think “*Masonic Flash Mob*” to use modern



phraseology. We promote the event, Brothers show up, and enjoy the program or support the event. Masons enjoying time with fellow Masons. It is a win - win for everyone! To encourage visitation, the Masonic Service Bureau has Masonic Passports available for \$10 each. The passports have a sheet for the lodge

stamp and a place to record your visits. The Monroe District Traveling Gavel is also up for the taking. Established in 1970 by Masters and Wardens, it is a fun competition that promotes Brotherhood.



In closing, I would like to share the words of an Anglican Bishop found inscribed on his tomb in Westminster Abbey (1100 A.D):

“When I was young and free and my imagination had no limits, I dreamed of changing the world. As I grew older and wiser, I discovered the world would not change, so I shortened my sights some-what and decided to change only my country. But it too seemed immovable. As I grew into my twilight years, in one last desperate attempt, I settled for changing only family, those closest to me, but alas, they would have none of it. And now as I lie on my deathbed, I suddenly realize, if I had only changed myself first, then by example I would have changed my family. From their inspiration and encouragement, I would then have been able to better my country and, who knows, I may have even changed the world.”

As Masons, we are taught that although our personal contact with others may be circumscribed by the limits of the circle within which our daily life is lived, your influence passing through and from those whom that circle may surround will reach further than you can conceive. Masonry bids that you do you very best in that which lies nearest to you. **Seize the day Brothers and Own It!**

GRAND STEWARD

R.:W.: Allyn J. Borrino

Well we're back in the thick of it Brothers. We have persevered and survived the restrictions of the past year or so. With this survival we find our Masonic Family together again to perform

the work of the Craft. Out of Darkness and into the Light. On behalf of your Monroe District Team we eagerly look forward

to attending lodge meetings once again and sharing fellowship with all.

Masonic training this season will include the **Road to the East** program, which all are welcome to attend. While this training is required of Wardens prior to ascending to the East, I would encourage Deacons, especially the Senior Deacon, to attend the Road to the East training. Not only if you hope to sit in the East one day, but to have a better knowledge of the workings of your lodge, responsibilities of the Master, leadership skills and a host of interesting information. This training will assist you in planning your time in the East as well as offer the time to prepare properly for a successful year as Master. Road to the East training will take place in winter 2022.



The **Masonic Development Course (MDC)** will also be offered, firstly for Entered Apprentices, and continuing through the three degrees. I will be reviewing Trestleboards in an effort to capture as many Entered Apprentices as possible prior to their Second and Third Degrees. The MDC course for Fellowcraft and Master Mason will also take place throughout the season. While the date and venue have not yet been determined, the EA course will take place in the late fall.

Included in this newsletter you will find dates of Masonic educational interest being shared by lodges in the district. Take a look, find a program of interest and make a date to attend a neighboring lodge for more Light in Masonry. We are also encouraging Brothers to get their Masonic Passports at the Service Bureau. Use them while visiting other lodges, not only throughout the area, but throughout the world. As a "Traveling Man" you will now be able to keep a permanent record of your travels.

Congratulations to the current sitting Masters who completed the Master's Chair training on July 14, 2021. It was a pleasure spending the time with all of you and I am excited for your year. Look well to the East my Brothers.



ASSISTANT GRAND LECTURER

V.:W.:James MacDuff

The beginning of the new Masonic year finds some Lodges hitting the ground running, in that there was continuing activity through the summer months with planning and/or practices with Opening/Closing or Degree work.

Remember, that Grand Lecturer's Convention will be Thursday, October 14th, now confirmed to be at the Damascus Shrine in Webster. Times and Dinner details are still yet to be confirmed. The Grand Lecturer will be diving deep on the Entered Apprentice Degree. The why? This is THE FIRST ritual that a gentleman has upon his entrance through the inner door. We have one chance to make a first impression. We can create a desire for that gentleman to come back for more, or ... not.

I am tasked in my duties to hold four (4) Schools of Ritual this year. This can be a mix of District and individual Lodges: Do you have any gaps in your Trestleboard? Is there Ritual I can help you practice with (think 3rd Degree

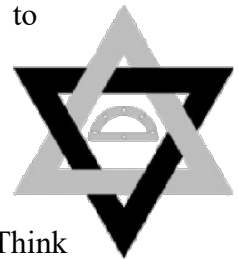
Hiramic Legend)? Reach out to me individually and let's work out a plan.

FOR DISTRICT Schools of Ritual: You may want to consider hosting a School? Think about that and let me know.

NEW RITUAL, which is to new to play with: THE OPENING CHARGE. This can be **read** after informing the Tyler. I'll send this out to the Master/Secretary group distribution.

STANDARD RITUAL: *Did You Know?* When Opening on the 3rd Degree ... it is the Master's prerogative to use a 5 or 7 person opening, it is not limited to 3. *HACK:* A 7 person opening is a GREAT way to get the entirety of your Officer Line involved in Opening and Closing.

Lastly, what can I do for you? Call/Text/Email me. 585.298.0890, bricklayer.jsm@gmail.com



DISTRICT COMMITTEES

Committees can be among the most important working forces of an organization. They serve as work units of the organization, taking work and breaking it into meaningful and manageable chunks. They efficiently carry out the work of the organization. A committee can be one of the most productive tools that an organization has to work with. Whether one is chairing a committee or is a committee member, he faces the challenge of getting involved in the work the committee was formed to accomplish. A committee member's contribution and participation on the committee will determine its success or failure. Joining a committee is also a great way to develop friendships with Brothers while working for a common goal.

The following committees have been formed in order to maintain the district's programs and ultimately its success. Please consider getting involved in your district in one way or another. Whether you join a committee or assist in other ways, this district is yours and its success is dependent upon the success of these committees. We encourage every Brother, regardless of title, position or time in the Craft to consider getting involved in your District.

MONROE MASONIC DISTRICT COMMITTEES

- **Brotherhood Fund**
- **Etiquette and Protocol**
- **Have-A-Heart 2022**
- **Leadership and Educational Services**
- **NorthStar Program (Membership Development)**
- **Monroe District Communications**
- **Public Awareness**
- **Ritual Club and Degree Team**
- **Youth**

R.:.W.:. Derek VanHouten
R.:.W.:. John Zabel
R.:.W.:. William Edwards
R.:.W.:. Allyn J. Borrino
W.:. Michael Pettinato
R.:.W.:. Allyn J. Borrino
W.:. Christopher Mahood
V.:.W.:. James MacDuff
W.:. Gary Burke

Brotherhood Fund - R.:.W.:. Derek VanHouten
Derekhouten1@mac.com 585-278-3876

Masters, what I need from all of you is the name and contact information (cell phone, email, etc) of your current Lodge Chairman. If you don't have a Chairman please contact me. I will be accompanying the DDGM on his official Visits this fall.

years and the Monroe District has always been in the top ten Districts in the annual campaign and we need to continue to support this cause. One main consideration of the Fund is that it is a 501(c)(3) charitable fund so any donation is a tax deductible donation.

The Brotherhood Fund is the engine that ensures that the several charitable programs of Grand Lodge function. I have been around for many

I look forward to meeting all of you this Campaign season and thank you for your time.

Etiquette and Protocol - R.:.W.:. John Zabel
zabelj@mindspring.com 585-576-4868

The Etiquette and Protocol committee of the Monroe District has the function of assisting the lodges in the district in the proper procedures to be followed in regular lodge meetings. This includes how the Master is addressed, how the members are to be dressed, how Grand Lodge officers are to be introduced. It also includes such things as who and how Brothers are seated in the East and the proper method of addressing a Brother while in Lodge. Outside of the lodge,

the protocol includes addressing mailings to Brothers, social media use and abuse, community contact methods, etc.

The committee can supply a program for a lodge meeting night to cover etiquette and protocol with a question and answer period, including some historical information on various aspects of Masonic protocol. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or interest in this committee. Thank you.

NorthStar Program - W.: Michael Pettinato
mpettina@reslife.rochester.edu 718-928-8117

As you likely know, NorthStar consists of two components. The first is a means of getting to know potential candidates before they join a lodge, and the second is the mentorship component of a new Brother after they have joined. In both cases, the idea is to make sure a candidate is a good fit for a lodge and also to assure they don't fade away or lose interest in Masonry at the two-three year mark. Every lodge can feel free to adapt or change the NorthStar program to fit their specific needs or the specific needs of a candidate.

What I've found in my time overseeing NorthStar, is it can be a great weeding out program. We get dozens, even hundreds of names sent to us from Grand Lodge or the Masonic Service Bureau and while most never pan out, that in itself is showing the program is working well. I generally find that those who go through the NorthStar program tend to stick around, and it can be an especially useful process for candidates you don't know.

I think in future newsletters I will talk a little bit about how Lodges can help me as the NorthStar Chairman for our district, and how we can interact.

However, what I would say is I am looking for motivated and interested individual Brothers who would like to get more involved. Specifically, I am hoping to find Brothers who can help the District NorthStar program better connect to their local lodges. This could mean following up with your blue lodge about potential candidates and getting updates on their status, relaying feedback, and also helping your lodge NorthStar Chairman with the follow up mentorship piece if needed. It could also be working with other lodges not your own (a great chance to connect across the district). I would also help you become familiar with the NorthStar database and the work that goes into maintaining that.

If you are interested in working with the NorthStar program, do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Public Awareness - W.: Christopher Mahood
Csm1066@gmail.com 814-397-3121

The Public Awareness committee has the purpose within the district of helping in three different ways. The first is external advocacy and information sharing with the public to share what masonry can add to the community. This takes many different forms including social media, working and partnering with media outlets, and also community advertising. The biggest purpose externally is to help develop,

facilitate and keep a list of resources and tools that lodges can utilize to quickly reference and get word out on the street.

The second way the committee can assist is to keep working to find solutions that can aid in new individuals in finding a lodge within our district. We want to keep trying new approaches that will hopefully aid in us making the

NorthStar program successful, but ultimately your lodges successful.

The last and most important way we want to help the district is to help you and your lodge communicate, facilitate and share information about your lodge, its events and help increase participation between different lodges within our area. We want to be an extension of your

lodge for communicating and making your events more successful.

So – think about how we help you and your lodge get the word out about an event that your lodge is hosting and how we can spread the word about Masonry. Better yet, if this seems interesting and something you would like to help with reach out to me and join our committee! Many hands make light work.

**Masonic Youth Organizations - W.: Gary Burke
gburke80@gmail.com 585-576-4868**

As the leader for the Monroe District Youth Committee, I'd like to take this opportunity to explain what each of the three youth groups are. Many in the Monroe District are aware of DeMolay for young men and The Triangles, some may not be aware of the International Order of the Rainbow for Girls. While the DeMolay and Triangles have been around the Monroe District for decades, Rainbow has not. Rainbow has existed for decades, in the surrounding Districts. Many members and leaders of this fraternity have begun their careers in one of these youth groups. It's our responsibility to see that these youth groups have our support so that the young women and men develop into supportive and active members of the adult fraternity. They truly are our future.

The Organization of Triangles, Inc.

The Organization of Triangles, Inc. is a youth organization located in the State of New York, for girls aged 10 through 21 years. Triangle is only active in New York State and does not have affiliations in any other state or country. For ninety years, the Organization of Triangles, Inc., has been helping to prepare girls to build "A Finer American Womanhood". Triangle

provides a safe and wholesome environment to learn, grow, and accomplish with adult guidance. Triangle tries to develop in each of its members a devotion to high ideals, a better understanding of duty to Home, God, and Country, and stresses the importance of education in the development of intellect and character. They also make life-long friends and have fun!

The International Order of the Rainbow for Girls

Rainbow is a nonprofit organization that strives to give girls the tools, training, and encouragement to let their individual spirits shine bright. By providing members with a safe, fun, caring environment where responsible, older girls can interact and mentor younger girls through family involvement. Rainbow is an organization that supplements school, church, and family, not something meant as a replacement. From volunteering for different charities, to working to improve their public speaking, to mastering the lessons of Rainbow, members tackle lots of challenging hurdles but always walk away with a sense of pride and accomplishment. Whether they dream of

becoming a successful veterinarian, a talented musician, or a loving mother, Rainbow Girls learn that they can accomplish anything and that they can make a difference.

DeMolay International

DeMolay, the premier international youth leadership organization, striving to shape young men into leaders of character. By epitomizing timeless values and accepting the challenge of leadership - both of character and of action - the young men of DeMolay transform themselves into citizens of the highest caliber. Each young man takes ownership of his DeMolay experience. From generating ideas, planning events, coordinating logistics, and executing their plans, each DeMolay Chapter is

responsible for defining their success. All of this is accomplished under the mentorship of trained Advisors, selected from the local community, enabling each Chapter to be uniquely tailored to support the interests of its members.

DeMolay is an inclusive organization that only asks of young men interested to believe in a higher being.

A high level of involvement and enthusiasm is far more important for success in DeMolay than any particular skill or ability.

The Seven Cardinal Virtues that are taught through the DeMolay experience are: Filial Love, Reverence for Sacred Things, Courtesy, Comradeship, Fidelity, Cleanliness and Patriotism.

Have-A-Heart 2022 - R.:W.: William Edwards
billeds585@gmail.com 585-472-2229



The annual Have-A-Heart fundraiser to support the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Rochester will be in February 2022. We need your help! If you are interested in assisting with organizing the fundraiser, please contact R.W. Brother Bill Edwards as we will start planning the event in early December. The Have-A-Heart fund raiser was established by the Rochester area Masons in February of 1988 and

to date with the support of the community, has raised over \$440,000 for the local Ronald McDonald House Charities. Due to the Covid-19 safety protocols, in 2021 we are not able to hold the fundraiser in the area malls. We are hopeful that this year we will be back in the malls in mid-February as well as accepting online donations during the month of February.

Ritual Club & Degree Team - V.:W.: James MacDuff
bricklayer@gmail.com 585-298-0890

Brethren: Ritual, as we all know, is what makes Freemasons, Freemasons. The Ritual is the blueprint ... yes, the blueprint in the blue book ... it is the blueprint for Masons to live a righteous life, in all our doings and undertakings.

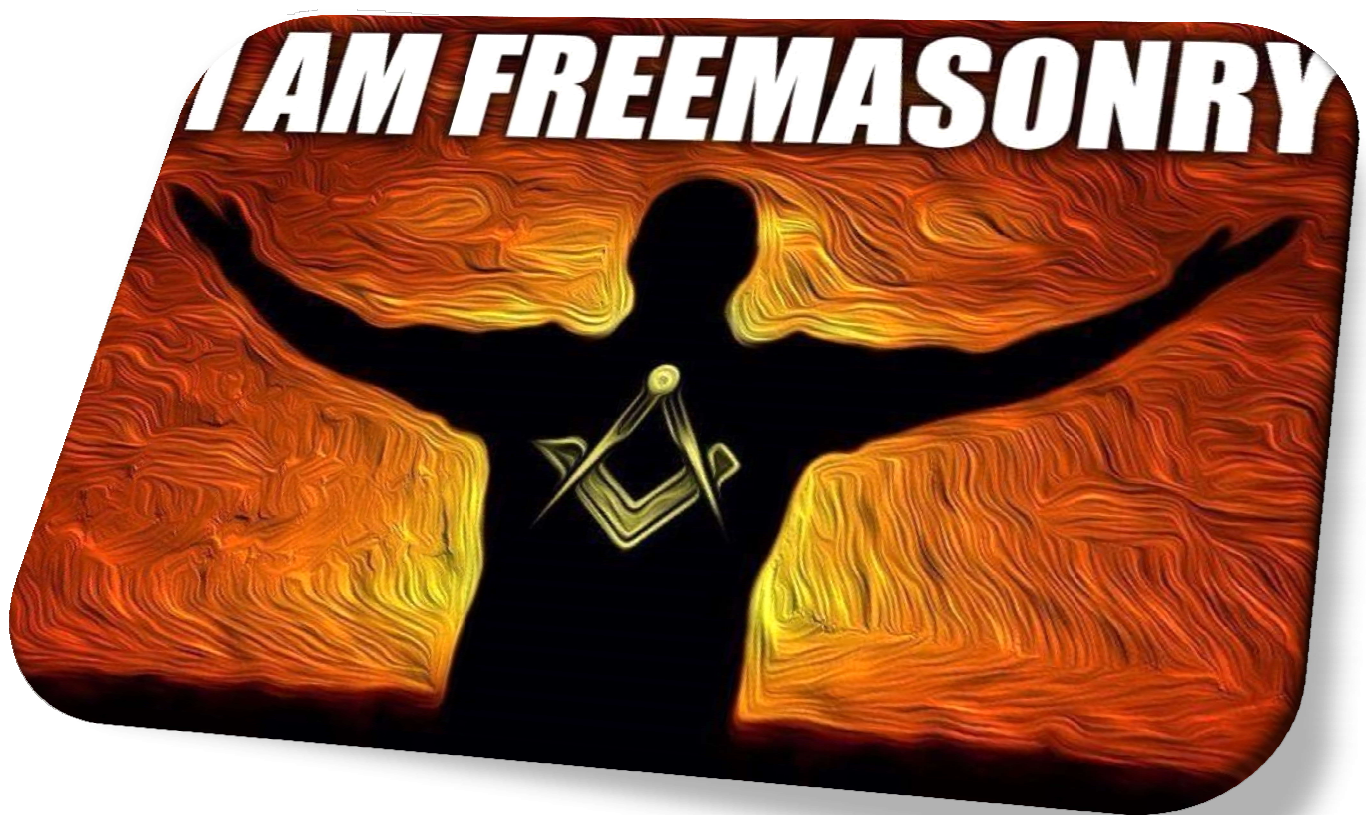
We are renewing the focus on the lifeblood of Freemasonry – Our Ritual. Particularly after 2020, there is now, more than ever, a need, a want and a desire to get back into the quarries. Ritual is our foundation.

Ritual is the first, best, stickiest way to get our new Entered Apprentices involved. It is a great way to get Brothers involved as a “many-hands-make-for-light-work” (IE, think Lecture of Reasons from the EA Degree), and of course we expect our Officer Line to be Masters of this Craft, to lead the Lodge forward.

Some of us remember, in years past there was a Shrine Degree Team. In this spirit from yesteryear, we are rebuilding a District Degree Team. I am calling any/all members from any Lodge to contact me if you have an interest in

being part of this team. What pieces of Ritual do you do well? Which pieces do you wish to improve in? Does being around other like-minded Ritualists appeal to you?

Then please, reach out to me directly. I’ve heard from a couple of you already. NOT ONLY can this group help those who want to improve in their Ritual ability, but we’ll be able to help any Lodge within the District who needs an extra hand or two in their Degree doings. I look forward to hearing from you!



MONROE DISTRICT CALENDAR

Grand Lecturer's Convention	Shrine Center	October 14, 2021
Clio Lodge #779	1 st Degree 2 nd Degree	November 16, 2021 January 18, 2022
Ecclesia Lodge #1189	An Evening with Michael R. Poll Zoom lecture follow up to his book, The Particular Nature of Freemasons Winter Observant Lodge meeting	September 29, 2021 December 4, 2021
ERAC Lodge #154	Fortitude discussion Buffalo Soldiers; presented by Prince Hall 2 nd Degree	October 11, 2021 November 8, 2021 November 22, 2021
Fairport-Flower City #476	Brother-Bring-Friend Table Lodge	October 25, 2021 November 22, 2021
Inspiration Lodge #109	Table Lodge Freemasonry; An Educational Institution	September 28, 2021 October 26, 2021
Oatka Lodge #759	1 st Degree	December 12, 2021
Union Star Lodge #320	Historical Lecture 2 nd Degree	October 11, 2021 November 8, 2021
Unity Lodge #479	2 nd Degree w/ dinner 1 st Degree w/ dinner \$2.00 Dollar Bill presentation 3 rd Degree w/ dinner	September 27, 2021 November 8, 2021 November 22, 2021 December 13, 2021
Webster Lodge #538	Brother-Bring-Friend w/ dinner EA Historical Lecture 2 nd Degree	October 7, 2021 October 21, 2021 November 4, 2021

“NEW” - 2022 Monroe District Table Lodge currently being planned for late April 2022. If you are interested in assisting on this planning committee please contact R.:W.:Allyn J. Borrino at ajborrino@gmail.com or call 585-329-4761. An event like this could use your special talents and interests. Thank you in advance.





All Masons are welcome to join Ecclesia Lodge for a Zoom meeting entitled

An Evening with Michael R. Poll, author of the book

The Particular Nature of Freemasons

Date: Wednesday, September 29th

Time: 7:30 PM

This program is a follow up to the Ecclesia Lodge program of Saturday, September 11th, 2021. After reading and contemplating this work we debated and discussed it at length. At the Zoom meeting we will engage the author directly, discuss the work, ask questions, and learn more about his important messages contained in this book which he authored in the Spring of 2020.

About the author; Brother Michael R. Poll is the owner of **Cornerstone Book Publishers** and editor of *The Journal of The Masonic Society*. He is a Fellow and Past President of The Masonic Society, a Fellow of the Philalethes Society, a Fellow of the Maine Lodge of Research, Member of the Society of Blue Friars, and Full Member of the Texas Lodge of Research.

Please join us for this Zoom meeting at the following link –

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87275281329?pwd=RFk2MTY4N1dNOW1TMnpRbzR0b0k0dz09>

Meeting ID: 872 7528 1329

Passcode: 92921

Dial by your location +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 872 7528 1329

Passcode: 92921

**TO SUBMIT INFORMATION TO THIS NEWSLETTER SIMPLY CONTACT
THE DISTRICT TEAM AT**

monroemasonicteam@gmail.com

YOUR THOUGHTS AND IDEA ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

HENRIETTA MASONIC CARE COMMUNITY UPDATE

We have exciting news - plans are REALLY starting to come together for the Henrietta Masonic Campus and Community Center! R.: W.: G. Michael Morris, a Trustees of the Masonic Hall & Home, will provide an update on the recent progress of the design plans for the Henrietta Masonic Care Campus and Community Center. R.: W.: Morris would like to solicit input in the design of the Masonic Lodge portion of the Community Center. The Trustees are putting together the funding strategy for the campus with construction expected to start in Q1 or Q2 2023.

***Join us Tuesday October 5th ***

via Zoom for the Henrietta Masonic Care Campus Update
Time: Oct 5, 2021 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Zoom Meeting info:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84451018970?pwd=SUxRZlNvalY2Q0o4RzBLVHJEeG5zQT09>

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 844 5101 8970

Passcode: 1234



GRATITUDE

The District Team would like to thank the Brothers from ERAC, Ecclesia, Inspiration, Oatka, Seneca and Webster lodges for making the time to “Own It” by giving a little bit of their time on Sunday, September 19th and cooking hot dogs for the over 900 walkers participating in the Mary Cariola Children’s Center, 2021 “Walking On Sunshine” fundraising event.

As we learned as Freemasons, we have a duty to our neighbor, in acting upon the square, and doing unto others as you would have them do unto you.

