Kentucky Disaster Relief Appeal Conclusion

The Grand Lodge of Kentucky Disaster Relief Appeal concluded May 31, 2022. $392,807.00 was collected and provided to the Grand Lodge of Kentucky. Any funds sent after May 31, 2022, will be forwarded accordingly.

Grand Master James H. Gibson would like to thank the Masonic Service Association of North America (MSA), and the Masons of each Grand Jurisdiction that generously donated to help the Masons of Kentucky affected by the tornadoes in December of 2021.

Article submissions for Short Talk Bulletin and Emessay Notes

To submit articles for the Short Talk Bulletin and the Emessay Notes, please email the articles to editor@msana.com. Please include a short Masonic bio about yourself. Articles for the Short Talk need to be 1200 to 1300 words. The Emessay Notes articles should be less than 1000. Thank you for your consideration and support of the Masonic Service Association.

Two Articles from Maryland

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Utility Masons: In Search of a Chair

Many Masons are content to remain sideliners or fill officer positions other than the Worshipful Master’s chair. Lodges struggle to restore sideline attendance and maintain the confidence and competence necessary to conduct meetings and confer degrees. Filling the officer chairs for Stated Communications and being able to memorize and recite the narratives associated with degrees are crucial to the continuity and tradition of our Fraternity. How impressed we have all been to watch a Senior Deacon lead his Fellow Craft brothers through the rich understanding of the Middle Chamber Lecture, often flawlessly! The Scriptural passages associated with the Grasshopper Speech, recited by a well-practiced Junior Warden, are even more appreciated by soon to-be raised Master Masons in the events leading up to that memorable moment in their Masonic journey. More than
once, we have been amazed at the clarity and efficacy of responses from a last-minute officer substitute.

But those who perform these roles move on, often to higher chairs, leaving their successors with the daunting task of acquiring competence in the narratives and floor work in Masonic degrees, sometimes working against a time constraint to prepare. It is not unusual to face the challenge of finding a last-minute replacement for an absent key officer with a pivotal part in a degree. Fortunately, this is the time when the “utility” Mason steps up and fills the void. This Mason is comfortable in most, if not all, the roles of degree work and appreciates the call from the Worshipful Master to save the day!

You probably know someone who is the embodiment of this description. The East is not in his Masonic life plan. He is perfectly content to fill any chair and conduct the accompanying lecture or narrative in a style that reflects his comfort and competence. It would appear that he has done this hundreds of times and, in fact, he probably has. He so loves Masonry and the associated degree work that he relishes the opportunity to participate and contribute. These “utility” Masons are the backbone of Lodge ritual work and without them, there would likely be many cancellations and delays. They are too often taken for granted and underappreciated. Yet, they do not seek recognition but are most deserving of it nonetheless.

If you know such a Mason in your or a nearby Lodge, consider an opportunity to single him out at Lodge meeting or special event to express your appreciation for this unheralded and dedicated Brother whose love for our Craft energizes his zeal for tradition and, by so doing, shows the Masonic world at-large what it means to be a Mason in search of a chair.

The Yoda Society

In his ascendency to the East, the Mason’s determination and focus are pointed directly at that target. The lecture practices with his predecessor, the floor work rehearsals, the opportunities to conduct Lodge meetings and degrees, and attendance at the Leadership Symposium pave his way for that all-important chair.

Once in that role, his energy and enthusiasm drive his vision, as he manages the many matters, issues, and members within his care. Today, most Worshipful Masters serve more than the prescribed single year. I doubt that no one in that chair has not commented that the second year is easy, after learning the myriad responsibilities of leadership during the first year.

But, like everything else, life and leadership move on. Succession is inevitable. The Master prepares his Senior Warden and looks forward to being on the sidelines once again. After more than two years in the East, this anticipation becomes even more evident. However, that satisfaction of accomplishment and relief are short-lived.

The hard-wired attraction of new challenges lures the Junior Past Master to seek other ways to assist the Lodge. As advisor to the new Master, catechism instructor, committee member (usually chair now), utility Mason to fill any chair, elected Lodge office, or Grand Lodge appointment, just to mention a few, the Past Master continues his dedication to the Masonic Fraternity in so many ways.

Recognizing this post-East involvement in many of my Past Master colleagues, I sought a small way of singling them out. I decided to award them membership in the Yoda Society. This is not a collateral body or one sanctioned by the Grand Lodge. It’s just my way of expressing thanks to our Past Masters who have continued their commitment to Masonry in other ways after leaving the East. For a symbol, I chose Yoda, the Jedi Master, whose counsel provided the ethical, moral, and spiritual direction to the Force. To me, our post-East Brothers act in this role for our ancient Fraternity. Without their constant oversight, active involvement in all affairs Masonic, and valuable counsel, our future would suffer greatly.

The Yoda pin they wear on their lapel shows the Fraternity that they are a special breed of Mason, entitled to our appreciation. Do you know a Past Master who deserves membership in the Yoda Society? Pins are easily available online.