



# The Ashlar

The Bull Roast Edition



May 2025

**Kempsville Lodge No. 196, A.F.&A.M.**  
**[www.kempsvillelodge.org](http://www.kempsvillelodge.org)**

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## 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Bull Roast

When I think of the month of June, the first thing that comes to mind is the annual Bull Roast! Please sell or buy your enclosed tickets and if you can assist during the Thursday and Friday leading up to the event please come out and help. As for Saturday, we need everyone that is able to come assist. It's always a fun day and there is great pleasure in accomplishing a big job well. Remember, the Bull Roast is how we are able to provide two annual scholarships to two deserving young students as well as make our annual gift to MAHOVA! I'm looking forward to seeing you on Saturday, June 21st!

## The History of The Bull Roast

It all started way back in 1985. Brothers Tom McGowan and Don Meyer had an idea to create a fund-raising event for the lodge and thus the Kempsville Lodge Bull Roast was born. What started off as an idea grew into our biggest fund-raising event of the year. This annual event has raised over \$40,000 in scholarships to deserving Vo-Tech students and over \$45,000 for the Masonic Home of Virginia (MAHOVA). What these two brothers started has become a pinnacle event for our lodge. Not only raising funds for scholarships and MAHOVA but also creating an event for brothers to get together and be a part of the best masonic fellowship around.



Here are a few glimpses into the past...



For years, Tom McGowan began early to collect "seed money" from members used upfront to buy food and supplies.

Lodge officers and active members participated in the multi-day preparation task. Everything, except for store-bought dinner rolls, was prepared from scratch in the lodge kitchen. The menu was delicious and plentiful. Members volunteer to work shifts from preparation to clean up - it has always worked well.

In the Early days, Henley Morgan lit off the cooker before sunrise under the trees in the backyard. For hours he slowly cooked the beef to perfection. The beef was carried from the cooker to the kitchen throughout the day for slicing. Bill Nolan became the official meat-slicer, year after year (is that against or with the grain? DO NOT ask!). And, after a heavy rainstorm one year, we wisely decided to move the cookers to the covered picnic area next to the parking lot and have been doing so since. The pit-crew continues to light off the cookers early and cook the beef to perfection.



Denny Harrison once donated cases of canned baked beans. George Fausel provided homemade horseradish each year, until his passing.

Mostly retired members would gather early on Friday morning before the event, for the annual potato peeling and dicing project used in the potato salad. Don Meyer would cook breakfast for all who came to help. Another wonderful time for masonic fellowship.

Don Meyer would also clean out the pantry, adding anything and everything to the baked beans (he called it his "grandmother's secret recipe"). He loved liquid smoke!



An annual trip was made to Wayne Flora's house to pick up the large "buffalo-chopper" used to chop the heads of cabbage and other vegetables for the coleslaw.

Cake mixes and icing to make desserts were available for members to take home. Member's wives brought homemade desserts as well. Everyone remembers Pat Connard's pineapple upside-down cake! And then there was that mysterious rhubarb pie.



Prior to his passing, Brother George Columbus Miller, who worked for a commercial meat-sales company in Norfolk, was the source of the beef. Today it is Restaurant Depot or Sam's Club. Brother Miller also worked at the check-in table and trained Buddy Pate to collect donations - also to eat roast-beef biscuits all day.

Brother Bob Metz arranged for live organ music to be played in the dining hall during the event where various organists played throughout the day.

By the end of the day, the workers were tired and on occasion, slightly grouchy. One year, a new member

suggested, "we should do this more often,". The idea WAS NOT well received!

In recent years, we invited our local "first responders" to be our guests. We also have provided take-out meals to hospital emergency room personnel. And we always invite our lodge Widows as guests.

Lastly, we owe a debt of gratitude to Right Worshipful Tom and Right Worshipful Don for their insight and initiative in getting this worthwhile event off the ground so many years ago. It has certainly contributed so much to so many.



Let us make this, our 41<sup>st</sup> Kempsville Bull Roast, a tremendous success. We look forward to seeing you June 21<sup>st</sup>.