



The Rough Ashlar



July 2025

Kempsville Lodge No. 196, A.F.&A.M.
www.kempsvillelodge.org

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From The Worshipful Master



June was a busy month for the Lodge! On June 13th, several members joined me at the Khedive Shrine Center for the Shrine's annual rodeo. The weather was threatening but the rain stayed away for the most part and we were all treated to some fantastic displays of roping and riding. Though only two bull riders made it the entire eight seconds, it was very entertaining to watch. In honor of Flag Day, June 14th several of us met after our Saturday morning fellowship and retired the flag that had flown since 2018. Now a bright new Stars and Stripes is being displayed out front.

June 21st was our annual Bull Roast. Members turned out in force the Thursday and Friday leading up to the event. Under the expert supervision of Worshipful Roger Taylor and Worshipful Chris Anders, 525 pounds of brisket was smoked, 200 pounds of potato salad was prepared and a multitude of coleslaw mixed. Saturday's operation ran like a well-oiled machine with over a dozen members manning the serving line, grill and dessert table. Thank you! We received multiple compliments on the quality of the meal and no one went away hungry. Due to the higher cost of everything from the meat to plates, our profit margin was less than in previous years and it will be necessary to raise the cost of the meal next year. However, I think all in attendance would agree that the meal would be a bargain at twice the price. A quick shout out to Right Worshipful Bill Knowles who was able to get the AC repaired quickly on the day of the event saving us all from a steamy dining hall!

The following Saturday, we held our monthly breakfast. Despite it being on right on the heels of the Bull Roast, we had a great turnout. A special thank you to John Donahue, Jay Keplinger, Chris Carter and Ron Clark who are there month in and month out to make sure the breakfast happens. There are others that help but these gentlemen are the core group that makes the breakfast happen.

Finally, in lieu of our weekly ritual school, we attended a Master Mason degree at Princess Anne No. 25 on June 30. It was a great degree and we were honored to be there to welcome another brother to the craft.

July we will continue to be busy. With a little luck we'll have a Fellowcraft sometime this month. We will hold an Entered Apprentice degree on July 15th at 6:30. I hope that you will join me at New Realm Brewery on July 24th at 7 pm for food, fellowship and beverages. This is an opportunity to get together and enjoy each other's company. I encourage you to bring your family. Please let me know if you will be attending by July 21st. The last Monday of the month will be officer development training at 6:30 with ritual practice to follow. The purpose of these sessions will be to prepare officers for their year as Worshipful Master, diving into the responsibilities of the office outside of the warden's certificate. Finally, we will have our lodge breakfast on the 26th.

In Memoriam

Two members of the lodge laid down their working tools for the final time recently.

June 10th, we lost one of the titans of the lodge in Worshipful Joe Thornton. Though he had not been in regular attendance at the lodge in recent years, he was very active when I first joined the lodge. He served as the Worshipful Master of the lodge in 1984 and was someone that I respected a great deal. He always offered thoughtful words of advice when I asked. He was regularly involved in the Shrine. A great number of brothers turned out to offer him Masonic Rites at his memorial service which was appreciated by his wife, Maureen and the rest family. Worshipful Bill Rosen did an outstanding job as usual delivering the rites. Worshipful Scott Foxwell led the memorial service, honoring Joe and providing comfort to all in attendance.

July 6th, Brother Keith Ingraham lost his long battle with cancer. Keith's illness is the reason that I find myself in the East this year. I admire so much about Keith and the way that he fought through his illness. Initially given just a few weeks to live, he refused to accept that diagnosis. He seized control of all that he was able to control, switching his diet, exercising, and undergoing a variety of treatments. He turned that diagnosis into 22 months of life, not just getting by, but thriving. He was able to mark the major milestones of 25 years of marriage to his lovely wife Kate, 25 years of naval service and his youngest daughter's graduation (via live stream). Through it all, I never heard Keith complain. He was a man of deep faith and commitment to his family and his country and I will miss him deeply.

Fraternal Visit

On June 26th, in conjunction with a business trip, I had the privilege of visiting Azure Masonic Lodge in Walpole, Massachusetts. The brethren there were extremely welcoming. The lodge shares the building with the Independent Order of the Odd Fellows. The lodge room was beautifully adorned with murals from both. The one drawback was it lacked air conditioning and it happened to be over 100 degrees on the day of my visit, so it was extremely warm in the lodge room.

Differing from Virginia, the lodges in Massachusetts can open under any degree for the purposes of their stated meeting. In this case, they opened a Fellowcraft Lodge. I very much enjoyed the fellowship, learning the differences in our ritual and the opportunity to learn more about how our craft is practiced in another jurisdiction. Also, very different from Virginia, lodges are allowed to have alcohol in their buildings. These enterprising brothers converted an old piano into a bar in their social hall. It turned out brilliantly!

Masonic Swag

I received several inquiries about lodge polo shirts and name tags. Please email me directly at justingrayshs@gmail.com if you would like a lodge polo or a name tag along with your size and exactly what you would like on the name tag. I will place the order the 28th of July. Polo shirts are \$25 and name tags should be around \$10.

From the Secretary

Brethren, we still have 22 members that have not yet paid their 2025 dues along with 12 members that owe for both 2024 and 2025. Paper invoices

were sent to all members earlier this year and you can always pay online by logging into your Grand View Member Portal at https://va.grandview.systems/users/sign_in. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me or the Worshipful Master if you need assistance. Remember, lodge dues are payable by January of one year to be current for that same year, e.g. 2025.

Trestle board

- Every Saturday: Lodge Fellowship, approximately 9-11AM
- July 15th: Entered Apprentice Degree, 6:30 PM
- July 20th: Brother Keith Ingraham's celebration of life. Masonic rites have been requested. 3 PM at the Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek Chapel. We will assemble the craft at the Food Lion parking lot located at 5193 Shore Drive, Virginia Beach and organize transportation through the gate. You will need to have an unexpired form of identification (ie: driver's license). Those with base access will drive.
- July 24th: New Realm Brewery. Fellowship, dinner and beverages, 7 PM
- July 26th: Lodge Breakfast, 8-10 AM
- July 28th: Officer Development Training, 6:30 PM, Ritual school to follow.
- August 12th: Stated Communication, Junior Warden Night

Thank you for your continued support!

Justin Gray
Worshipful Master