



John H. Austin
Right Eminent Grand Commander
Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Maryland

NOVEMBER 2022 NEWS

GREETINGS SIR KNIGHTS!

We have just completed the Annual York Rite Grand Sessions in Ocean City Maryland. What a long and fun weekend. The weather at the beach was very nice, if you like wind! The views from the hotel were wonderful but it was a bit blustery starting Friday evening and through the weekend.

Nonetheless the work of York Rite Masonry chugged along with a Grand Council meeting Friday afternoon, followed by the Installation of officers. Congratulations to Most Illustrious Grand Master Bill Hare and his new line of officers. A fond farewell to Most Illustrious Past Grand Master Randy Disney and a job well done sir! A nicely attended reception and dinner ended the day along with some awards being presented Friday evening. Congratulations to Georgia Myers (Mrs. Michael Robbins), president of the SOOB of Carroll Assembly upon receiving the Companion of the Temple Award!

Saturday Morning the Grand Chapter took its turn to hold the annual meeting of Companions. Officers were installed following the session. Congratulations to MEGHP Andy Martinez and his new line of officers. MEPast!GHP Bob Chase did a fine job running the show and we congratulate him on an effective year as Most Excellent Grand High Priest. One of the outstanding things that Bob focused on was service awards and he travelled the state celebrating our long-time members. Nice Work Companion Chase!

The afternoon Grand Commandery Conclave ran very long. We had a number of items to attend to, some held over from previous such meetings. The constitutional changes that were required from Grand Encampment decisions at the 68th Triennial were finally adopted. The GIG Fred Spicer reported on the Inspections this year with Chesapeake Commandery awarded the Grand Inspector General award for most improved performance, Jacques DeMolay and

Monumental Crusade Commanderies gained recognition for their very fine showing at inspection this year. Congratulations to those winners. We said goodbye to Fred as he has completed several years of service as GIG. A parting gift of a beautiful Knights Templar Shield was presented to our GIG and we thank him for his years of service. Later in the program the incoming GIG REPGC Randolph Disney outlined his new program of education and drill which will begin implementation immediately. Check the Website in the next couple of weeks for his outline of education which will entail incoming Dais officers of Constituent Commanderies to become fluent in the Orders in a year-by-year approach. This new program is welcome and will assure that our ritual undergoes an energetic revival.

We were honored to have present Department Commander James Steele who assisted throughout with advice and presentations. His comments were given later at the Saturday evening banquet.

The new Grand Encampment Meritorious Service award was presented to SK Gary Paul Shircliff for his excellent and long running work to rescue Antioch Commandery in Cumberland Maryland. I was honored to make the presentation along with his Eminent Commander and new Junior Grand Warden SK Sam Lane. The Meritorious Service Award was also granted to SK Dan Brewer of York Commandery. SK Dan was not able to attend, and this award will be presented at a later date. Congratulations to Sir Knights Shircliff and Brewer!

Presentation of recognition was made to SK George Christoff for his role in assisting with the State of Maryland 100% Life Sponsor Program. EC Bob Candler was also a part of this effort but was not able to attend. His certificate will be presented at a later date.

I was able to show off a special plaque from the George Washington Masonic National Memorial which was in recognition of Maryland's support of the upcoming Centennial of the Memorial and the Cornerstone reenactment scheduled for February. This plaque shows our new status as Master Architect Patron of the Memorial.

It was announced that Grand Recorder Kris Brown has submitted his resignation to focus on his recovery from disabilities, I have regretfully accepted it and we wish him continued success in his rehabilitation. Stay tuned for information on how we will honor Kris's past duty. An election was held to find his successor and Assistant Grand Recorder Vernon Huebschman has been elevated to the position. We are grateful to SK Vernon for his willingness to undertake the role. He is well qualified and welcome.

Following the election, the officers of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Maryland were installed with REPGC Clifton Friel presiding, REPGC Charles E. Warns II as Marshall and REPGC Richard Naegele escorting the ladies to help with the celebration and presentation of officers Jewels. I thank my Lady Kandi for her presence and in placing my Jewel.

I wish to thank the Sir Knights of Maryland for the honor bestowed upon me for the 2nd time as your Grand Commander. I pledge to you all that I will use all of my energy to uplift and support the Commanderies across the State of Maryland and each of you individually as I embark upon my new term. Lessons learned in the first term will help as we continue the programs that I have outlined for the past year and incorporate some new efforts that Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander Bradley Andrukitis will begin to outline.

I want to thank Lady Kandi additionally for her wonderful work with the ladies' program at this years Sessions. She and her team of Ladies, Christine Andrukitis, Debbie Chase and Rita Treklas made all of those women and wives in attendance welcome with a full afternoon of activity and a fine luncheon. By all indications it was a huge success and Kandi is to be congratulated on her creative and inclusive work.

The annual Saturday banquet was great with addresses by our wonderful youth of the DeMolay, Rainbow Girls and Job's Daughters. Award presentations were made by each of the Heads of the Maryland York Rite Bodies and the representatives of the National Governing bodies.

For the Grand Commandery, Marcie Lapp was recognized with her plaque as Companion of the Temple.

Gary Kennedy received the Knight Commander of the Temple award for his work in making Maryland 100% Life Sponsors with Knights Templar Eye Foundation.

Department Commander Steele also presented Gary and the State of Maryland a special award recognizing the 100% participation of the KTEF.

The highlight of our awards was the recognition of Franklin (Crabby) Williams with the Knights Templar Cross of Honor (KTCH) from the Grand Encampment. Sir Knight Williams was surprised and honored by this recognition for his ongoing work with Thomas J. Shryock Commandery, and Masonry in General. Congratulations Crabby!

Lastly as we enter the holiday time of the year. Lady Kandi and I wish each of you a fine Thanksgiving and hope that you enjoy the holiday with the Grace of God and the blessings of family and friends as we celebrate the feast of our forefathers.

In His Service,
John H. Austin
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