



John H. Austin
Right Eminent Grand Commander
Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Maryland
OCTOBER 2022 NEWS

Greetings Sir Knights! September came in with a rush and ended with a Storm! What a time as all Masonic activity in Maryland seemed to restart with a bang, with lots of events, culminating in the annual Harvest Home being rattled by Hurricane Ian. Nonetheless we had a fine showing of Masons of Maryland and several other States showing up for the great sausages, pancakes and Pumpkin pie which are the feature of an early morning gathering at the Grand Lodge. For the first time in a while your Grand Commandery had a presence thanks to invitations from Maryland Masonic Homes and Grand Master Marlin Mills. I set up a large 10x20 tent beside the refreshments tent on the grounds, but this proved futile as the weather was not conducive to showing our wares and offering Knights Templar information. Fortunately, the Grand Master set up indoor tables for the various Masonic bodies and we set up offerings of Hats, shirts, swords and slings, and brochures about York Rite and Grand Commandery of Maryland. We had lots of visitors and we also had tours of the Gothic and Oriental rooms which got plenty of action. Many thanks to Sir Knights George Christoff, Scott Lapp, Fred Rossmark for their many hours of service in this undertaking. Thanks also to EGG and Quartermaster SK John Mitchell for his help in setting up items for display and sale the night before with me. SK Christoff, nearly single handedly sold Commandery items bringing in \$800 which goes to our uniform fund and also to one of our charities, the Little Sisters of the Poor. We had about 100 individuals tour the Gothic room with perhaps 70 inquiries about Knights Templar membership!

Earlier in September My Lady Kandi and I were honored to be the guests of the Grand Commander of Pennsylvania SK Harry Smith and his Officers at the annual Friend To Friend Memorial Service and Banquet in Gettysburg PA. I was further honored to be asked to share the duty of laying a wreath at the memorial with REGC Smith. It was a crisp and sunny morning when a couple dozen Knights marched up the hill to the monument and offered solemn prayers in a very moving ceremony. This was followed by a rousing and memorable service at the local hotel where the events were centered. Next year we hope to be able to once again, invite the Sir Knights of Maryland to return to this solemn occasion, with a new location- the Pennsylvania monument on the actual Battlefield. The following week activity for your Grand Commander and the heads of the York Rite bodies continued with what an annual Festive Board at

Pentalpha lodge # 194 in Germantown. This is a Lodge and York Rite event which is lots of fun and highly thought of. Most Worshipful Grand Master Marlin Mills and his wife Brenda were our guests of Honor. We were also joined by York Rite College Governor Bill Hare, MIGM of Royal and Select Council Randy Disney, MEGHP Bob Chase was represented by Companion Bob Reynolds, I was there representing Grand Commandery of Maryland, and Carroll Assembly President Georgia Myers represented the Social Order of the Beauceant. It was a fun evening, made more so by the presence of renowned Author and Masonic wunderkind Brent Morris who treated all to a talk featuring Cryptography and the unraveling of a document called the 'Folger Cipher'. All present enjoyed being guided through the process of deciphering the hieroglyphics which were put before us. A great event with lots of compliments from the attendees.

The following day we shuffled off to the Mid Atlantic Department Conference set up by Department Commander James Steele and his Lady Shirley in Crystal City Va. Most Eminent Grand Master of the Grand Encampment SK David Kussman greeted your Dais Officers and those of 6 Knights Templar Grand Commanderies. He and his staff walked us through current and upcoming Grand Encampment programs. It was a 10 hour day of meetings. We also had 2 Sir Knights attend the leadership program being offered at the same time. A full weekend and very informative.

At the end of this month is the York Rite Annual in Ocean City. We hope to see many of you there. This year we will be welcoming a new Grand High Priest in Chapter- Andy Martinez and a new Most Illustrious Grand Master - William Hare. I will be continuing as your Grand Commander with many members of the Grand line returning with a couple of new officers in Appointed and Elected roles. I want

to thank all members of the Grand line who served this year. We did plenty but have much more to do. Please join us if you can. There is still time to register, and you can do so by going to the website - yorkritemaryland.org – and filling out the registration form. Please note that there is a Ladies program which is free to your Lady should be lots of fun, and you'll need to specify her choice of meal when you register. Also note that we have added a banquet on Friday night which should be fun and a nice ice breaker. We'll be presenting some awards at this dinner to take some of the pressure off the Saturday night Banquet.

Stay safe as we send our thoughts and prayers to the People of Florida who have lost their homes and lives.

In His Service,

John H. Austin

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Annual Laying of Wreath at Friend to Friend Memorial, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
Grand Commanderies of Maryland and Pennsylvania

