

NEW HAMPSHIRE KNIGHT TEMPLAR NEWS



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August is for changes and strength.
– Luke Hamlet

Sir Knights,

How Summer is flying by! It's hard to believe that we are in August. The Boston Nine appear to have righted the ship, and are very much in the pennant hunt, nipping at the heels of the Evil Empire. Given the heat these past several weeks, it hardly seems plausible that football preseason starts this weekend.

Sunday, June 29, last, the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of New Hampshire celebrated the centennial of the dedication of the cornerstone of the Manchester Masonic Community Center which has been a prominent landmark in Manchester's North End for nearly a century. It is the home of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of New Hampshire and, fittingly, the event was attended by representatives of all organizations that comprise the New Hampshire Masonic Family.

Led by an honor guard from the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar and the Grand Sword Bearer of the Grand Lodge, the Masons marched down Harrison Street to Temple Court where, under the direction of Brother Scott R. Borthwick, the Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New Hampshire, they reenacted the setting and dedication of the cornerstone, one hundred years ago. Brother David S. Collins, Most Worshipful Past Grand Master, spoke on the history of Freemasonry in New Hampshire and Manchester and the construction of the majestic edifice.



Sir Knights led the procession to the Masonic Community Center on Temple Court.



The Grand Master, his Marshall, other Officers, and Brethren followed the Grand Sword Bearer.

Among the civil dignitaries present for the occasion were the Honorable Jay P. Ruais, Mayor of the Queen City, and the Honorable and Sir Knight Sherman A. Packard, Speaker of the New Hampshire House of Representatives. Mayor Ruais, in his Proclamation, declared, “Manchester’s Masonic Temple on Elm Street has been a positive force in the city for 100 years.”



Presentation of the Colors in the Grand Lodge Hall.

Her Excellency Kelly A. Ayotte, Governor of New Hampshire, sent a Proclamation, acknowledging that Masons “have played vital roles in Manchester’s civic and charitable life for generations” and that the Masonic Community Center has been “a sacred and unifying space for lodge meetings, Grand Lodge events, and meaningful public gatherings.” She called upon “all citizens to recognize the Center’s century of service and celebrate its legacy of fraternity, civic engagement, and community leadership.”

On behalf of the House of Representatives, Speaker Packard expressed, “gratitude to the Manchester Masonic Temple for sharing its rich history with the community of Manchester and to the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and Masons who make sure the time-honored tradition of Masons can be carried on for many generations to come.”

The ceremony of the cornerstone dates back to the early eighteenth century and symbolizes the establishment of the building upon a strong foundation. The stone is tested with traditional Masonic working tools, the square, level, and plumb, to ensure that it is “well formed, true, and trusty.” It is then placed with the aid of a wooden setting mall. The cornerstone is anointed with corn, wine, and oil, symbolizing prosperity, health, and peace and the hope that the work of the builders and those who occupy the building will be so blessed.

Masons have laid the cornerstones of many notable, public buildings, including the United States Capitol, the White House, the Washington Monument, and the New Hampshire State House. The Grand Lodge rededicated the cornerstone of the State House in September 2016, during the celebration of its Bicentennial.



The Most Worshipful Grand Master “sets” the cornerstone. On the tables are the three chalices containing the corn, wine, and oil and the Holy Bible.

We Templars are proud members of the oldest and largest fraternal order in the world, which has existed in New Hampshire since 1735. We strive, by the use of symbols and allegory, to “enhance and strengthen the character of the individual man by providing opportunities for fellowship, personal enlightenment, leadership, and philanthropy.” It seeks to instill the virtues of brotherly love, relief, and truth and to foster faith, hope, and charity. To these we add the practice of the Christian Religion and virtues. The Masonic fraternity numbers approximately 875,000 in the United States. Among its many charitable and civic endeavors, the best known are the Shriners Hospitals for Children. Particularly dear to us, of course, are the Knights Templar Eye Foundation and the Holy Land Pilgrimage Programs.



An image of the Manchester Masonic Temple. on a postcard, circa 1939. Note the elm tree.



The Manchester Masonic Community Center today.



Speaking at the rededication in the Grand Lodge Hall were, from left to right, Brothers Peter J. Raven, Worshipful Master of Lafayette Bible Lodge No. 41, and William P. Carter, Worshipful Master of Washington Lodge No. 61, in Manchester; the Honorable Sherman A. Packard, Speaker of the House of Representatives; the Honorable Jay P. Ruais, Mayor of the City of Manchester; Brother Scott R. Borthwick, the Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Masons in New Hampshire; and Sir Knight Arthur W. Stauff, K.T.C.H., Right Eminent Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of New Hampshire and President of the Manchester Masonic Community Center.

Speaking of the Grand Commandery Bicentennial, preparations are already under way. The Grand Commandery is assembling an All-Star cast to confer the Order of the Temple for the celebration next year. Several Sir Knights participated in a rehearsal the last weekend of July in Concord. There are many parts yet to be assigned. Anyone interested in joining the team should contact Sir Knight Peter J. Noddin, K.T.C.H. Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander, petef86a@yahoo.com.



The Sir Knights who took part in the first rehearsal of the full-form opening in Concord, Saturday, July 26, in Concord.

The last day of July, a graveside Masonic Funeral Service was held for our departed Frater, Sir Knight Robert L. Sutherland, Jr., K.C.T., Past Right Eminent Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of New Hampshire. Lady Virginia and your editor were privileged to attend, and the size of the assembly testified to the high esteem in which he was held by all whose lives and Templar journeys he touched. The skies were threatening, but God kindly withheld the deluge until the service concluded and all had safely departed. With Sir Knight Sutherland's passing, your editor dons the mantle of Senior Past Grand Commander of New Hampshire. How did that happen? It gives one pause.

This month the Grand Commander's Officers Call will be held online Sunday, August 3, at 8:00 p.m. The monthly Commandery drill session will be Friday, August 15, at 6:30 p.m., in Concord.

Courteously,

Thomas X. Tsirimokos

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