

The North Carolina Mason

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Construction Thrives In Masonic Community

The last week in October was a big time for new lodge facilities in North Carolina as three emergent communications of the Grand Lodge were called.

First was a trip to Advance for the cornerstone laying for the new temple of Advance 710. A box placed within the cornerstone contained several pieces of memorabilia, among them a roster of members, charter members, and past masters, a copy of the ground breaking ceremony, and copies of *The North Carolina Mason*, *Davie County Enterprise Record*, and *Winston-Salem Journal*.

Next on the Grand Lodge agenda was another cornerstone laying. This one was for the new temple of Oconee 427 in Bryson City.

The last was, finally, for a completed building. They ventured to Weaverville for the dedication of the new home of Blackmer 170.

By the second week in November another new lodge hall had been opened. St. Patrick's 617 in Princeton dedicated their facility during yet another emergent communication of the Grand Lodge.

All this construction should be as pleasing to operative as to speculative Masons.



Roll Call On The Hall

Oxford — There's little hint of barracks in this boys' room in the Dunn Building at Oxford Orphanage. You may be more familiar with this hall as the Baby Cottage. We wouldn't, however, advise using that term with the young men you see pictured here. We wish we could show you the bright colors of the beds and tropical fish bedspreads here. Sorry, you'll have to go look for yourself. There are lots of squeezable stuffed friends here, too. Don't let that fool you into thinking they have enough, though. There's no such thing as too many close friends in this old world. Any one of these kids would happily trade a couple of these regulars for a hug from a real person. Carry them one. You'll find yourself the one richer for it.

Masons Continue to be Scam Victims

Take Care With Your Charity

Each Mason remembers a striking lesson in charity toward a Brother Mason in need. It's one of the more eye-opening of the lessons marked in our ritual.

Beware! Several Masons around the country have gotten an even more striking lesson on the same subject. The Grand Lodge of North Carolina recently heard about a scam from Benny Webb, past master of Yadkin 162 in Yadkinville.

Most con games are run on the principle that people are greedy and will go for the possibility of something for nothing. The crime reported by Webb preys on the opposite tendencies. It victimizes the people who would help those in need.

The details shared by Brother Webb are typical of the way this crime has been committed elsewhere. And it has been reported on numerous occasions around the country. We'll use general terms to describe what might be expected.

A Mason receives a phone call from a person identifying himself as the secretary of an out-of-state lodge. The name and number of the lodge are usually valid. His story is that a young man and his family (a wife and up to three kids) are in the area and have a problem. Usually a car problem, or family emergency, or both are cited. They are waiting at a local business or pay phone.

The "mark" is asked to assist in getting them back on their way by delivering some cash, usually about \$100. The "secretary" claims to be writing a check right then for the requested amount and urges that the Mason get a receipt from the "stranded" person.

The name of the person is often the same: Leroy or Larry Wilkenson, Wilkerson, or Wilkinson. George or John Manning is also used on occasion. The victim will likely meet the family when delivering the money. He will be offered a written receipt for the money.

They sometimes get the names of local Masons from funeral homes. They seem to strike most often near Interstate Highways. They are knowledgeable of Masonry.

Upon returning a call to the named lodge, it is discovered that there is no knowledge of the person stranded or the story given. That's why the requests are usually made at a time that is not convenient for checking on membership or validity.

How can you defend yourself?

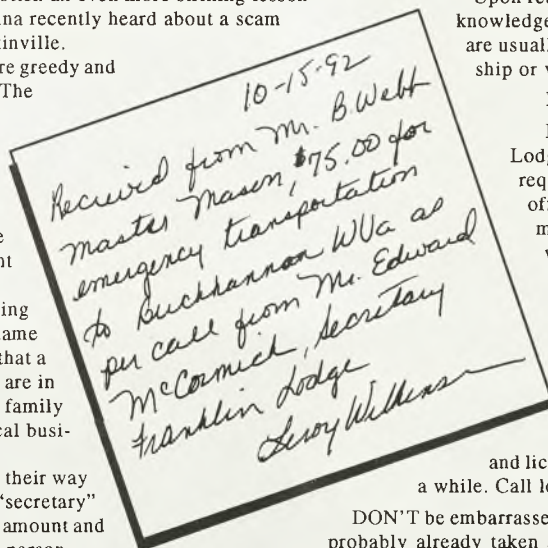
DON'T provide cash to anyone without inquiry through the Grand Lodge. The staff at the Grand Lodge is happy to check on any such requests. At times when there is no opportunity to check with the office (after hours or weekends), demand a dues card as proof of membership. You might also suggest that referral in conjunction with the local police department would be a good idea in light of recent scams. You'll likely find a Brother Mason or two at your local police department. Anyone in real need will likely not object to such scrutiny, but appreciate your care.

DO offer goods or services rather than cash. These will be appreciated by those in actual distress and avoided by those trying to steal from you.

DO get details if you are approached. Car descriptions and license numbers might be just the thing to get these guys stopped for a while. Call local law enforcement people immediately.

DON'T be embarrassed if you are victimized. Let others know what happened. They've probably already taken smarter, more careful folk than you. The same game has been reported from coast to coast. The same scam has been run in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, South Dakota, Texas, Louisiana, and other states.

Speaking up might be the final blow that causes the end to this. Benny Webb has done his part to protect you. Now, it's up to you.



A Message From the Grand Master

Caring and Preparing For Our Future

A state-wide "Open House" program has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 30, 1993. The Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Public Relations is at work in promoting participation of the 391 lodges in the 65 districts of this grand jurisdiction. The Committee will be most pleased to assist each lodge and district in their preparation of a great opportunity to share the story of Freemasonry throughout our state. This is an opportunity to make each community more aware of the many valuable contributions of our great fraternity.

The program has excelled this year. Several lodges will experience an increase in membership because of the positive and professional example witnessed by the non-Masons attending open houses. The program has been so successful that this could be the year that the decline in membership reverses itself. We can accomplish great things. Let's go to work in preparation for the future.

I strongly recommend the "Open House" program and charge each lodge and district, 67,000 Master Masons, to roll up their sleeves and make March 30, 1993 a day of

Ray Norris
Grand Master

record breaking positive results and an event to be long remembered. I wish each and every lodge the best. I am sure you will rejoice in your service to your community and mankind.

The Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Research and Development has spent many constructive and diligent hours in preparation for the seminars scheduled to be held at 16 area meetings on the following Saturdays: January 16, 23, 30, and February 6, 1993. A full schedule of locations appeared in the last issue of *The Mason*. Your committee's research and planning have given great consideration to the subjects, speakers, locations, and schedule of these seminars. Their objective is to better inform the 67,000 Masons of North Carolina. To fully accomplish this challenge, it is necessary for the total membership to be in attendance. The subject matter will be especially helpful to the officers in executing their respective responsibilities to and demands of the Craft. All officers and committee members should be in attendance.

Brethren, I urge you to put on your calendar the date of the meeting most convenient to you. Attend and participate in the discussions. The sessions will be very informal