

Scottish Rite Masons hold Grand Lodge session in Winston

The United National Supreme Council, Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite Free Masons of the World, 33rd and Last Degree and Order of Eastern Star Inc. held its annual Grand Lodge session in Winston-Salem the weekend of Nov. 7 at the Ramada Inn University Parkway.

The most pious sovereign grand commander, Illustrious Windell Daniels, 33°, was in attendance representing the United National Supreme Council.

The weekend began with a hospitality room Friday night, hosted by Districts 1

through V. An officers meeting was held Friday night with the grand master of King David Grand Lodge, Ill. James E. Jefferson, 33°, presiding. Also present was Ill. Edward Garriet, 33°, deputy grand master, and Ill. Lynn Brewington, grand secretary.

The Order of Eastern Star meeting was conducted by Grand Matron Sister Gilda Williams. Grand Associate Matron Sister Robbie Garriet and Sister Rose Reid, grand secretary, assisted the grand matron.

Ill. Clayton Watson was the master of ceremonies for the Saturday morning prayer breakfast that was hosted by both the Grand Lodge and the Grand Chapter.

Illustrious Kenneth E. Moore, 33°, delivered the prayer, which was followed by a welcome from District Deputy of District I Cedric Thomas, representing King Solomon's Grand Council and St. Mary's Grand Chapter, who also presented both bodies with a donation from the Grand Council. The breakfast was prepared by the hotel, and the food was

blessed by the Ill. Havis Wilkes, 33°, of Lanis.

The keynote speaker for the occasion was Grand Lecturer of Queen of Sheba Grand Chapter Sister Costella Robinson. After-breakfast remarks were delivered by the Most Ancient Worthy Grand Matron Unique Lady Gwendolyn Evans.

The Illustrious James Farrow, 33°, national grand commander-in-chief representing the National Supreme Council, welcomed King David Grand Lodge and the Grand Chapter to the city.

The weekend continued with the Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter meeting in their respective times followed by a workshop. The event came to a close with a dance Saturday night hosted by the Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter jointly.

A spokesperson for the organization said, "The opportunity for Winston-Salem to host such an event was great for our city; however, the way the brethren and sisters embraced the city is doubly appreciative. Therefore we thank them."



New A&T swim team begins competition

GREENSBORO — North Carolina A&T State University's new swim team, coached by Denise Adams (not shown) began competition this year.

The team, the first ever in A&T's 106-year history, held its first home meet Nov. 17 in A&T's Corbett Sports Arena.

Pictured are (front row) Valerie Mackie of Charlotte, freshman; Channa Jackson of Greensboro, sophomore; Raushanah Maxey of Chicago, sophomore; Jessica Pike of Raleigh, team captain, freshman; Tomekia Hutchins of Goldsboro, sophomore; Shauna Allen of Wilson, sophomore;

(middle row) Cher Walton of Greensboro, senior; Rasha Mohamed of Greensboro, junior; Leti Padilla of Greensboro, senior; Rhonda Jones of Moyock, junior; Na Tell Miller of Greensboro, senior; Anita Towns of Littleton, sophomore; (back row) Mashawnda Dowell of Greensboro, sophomore; Tara Holmes of Greensboro, junior; Diane Rogers of Greensboro, freshman; Rochelle Woodson of Reidsville, team captain, sophomore; Janice Resetar of Hillsborough, freshman; Crystal Wright of Butner, sophomore; and Benita Brown, of Riegelwood, sophomore.

Alabama pastors criticize Lyons about money

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Pastors and deacons of Alabama churches that burned two years ago say the Rev. Henry J. Lyons, president of the National Baptist Convention U.S.A. Inc., betrayed their trust.

A year ago, Lyons accepted a check for \$225,000 from the Anti-Defamation League and the National Urban League. Two weeks later the St. Petersburg minister wrote the Anti-Defamation League, saying six Alabama churches had been given \$35,000 each to help rebuild.

But most of the money was never distributed. After The Tampa Tribune reported the status of the funds two months ago, Lyons returned most of the money to the Anti-Defamation League.

"A liar is a liar," the Rev. John Alexander told The Tribune in a Sunday story. "If you tell one lie, you have to make up another to make it fit. I said to my wife, 'That's the devil's work.'"

Lyons said the letter was mailed by mistake and that all the money wasn't given out because Lyons decided that some of the churches really didn't need the help.

But four of the six churches still need to build or complete improvements. The Tribune reported Sunday.

Investigators with the Alabama Attorney General's Office have questioned the pastors, asking whether they received any money from Lyons, who remains under investigation by federal and Florida officials examining his financial dealings.

While the investigations continue, the tiny congregations of the unfinished churches struggle to raise more money. Any insurance money was spent long ago. Donations that poured in while

the burnings received national focus have long since dried up.

As Lyons paid big money for a waterfront house, a Nevada time share, diamond jewelry and fancy cars, these Alabama churchgoers — many on fixed incomes or earning minimum wage — raised cash through weekly church donations and fried chicken dinner socials.

Lyons, who claims to represent 8.5 million black Baptists in the Nashville, Tenn.-based denomination, has come under criticism lately for alleged misuse of church money and for his dealings with Bernice Edwards, a convicted embezzler with whom he owned a waterfront home. Several ministers orchestrated a failed effort this summer to remove him as head of the Baptist group.

Pastors and church officials agree that the money Lyons said he gave but didn't would have gone a long way toward completing the work.

The congregation of Mount Lebanon Baptist Church, where Alexander is pastor, has spent \$40,000 pouring a new foundation and erecting walls of a new church near Selma. At least another \$40,000 is needed to finish the work, Alexander said.

In Greensboro, John and Mary Hodge plot ways to raise more money to help finish their new church, Rising Star Baptist.

While the exterior of the new brick church is finished, about \$70,000 is needed for landscaping and furniture and to finish interior work that includes lighting, carpeting and plumbing. John Hodge, a church deacon, and his wife oversee the church rebuilding fund that was established after their church burned in a suspicious fire in June 1996.

They received no money from

Lyons despite the \$35,000 mentioned in Lyons' letter to the Anti-Defamation League.

The Hodges don't understand how Lyons could say the burned churches didn't need the money he was to have delivered. They wonder how he could judge who is in need when he has never visited their church.

"I have no more respect for him," said John Hodge, whose church has stopped sending money to support the national convention.

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