

# AMHERST LODGE #981

## **Masonic Care Community named Business of the Year —excerpt taken from MCC Website**

The Masonic Care Community was named Business of the Year by the Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce in the category of Non-Profit Businesses with more than 50 Employers. MCC shared the honor with The House of Good Shepard in Utica.

Interim Executive Director Robert Raffle accepted the award at the Annual Chamber Luncheon held December 15th.

" We sincerely thank the members of the Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce for this incredible honor. I am proud to represent the Masonic Care Community, an industry leading organization that has made its home right here in the Mohawk Valley since 1893.

In addition to providing the absolute best healthcare available, you may know that the Masonic Care Community supports a number of non-profit organizations by hosting their fundraising events on our campus: from fundraising walks, to the Wonderland of Lights, Boilermaker Health and Fitness expo for the last 15 years, the New York State Fire Academy Graduation was just yesterday, and list goes on.

It is our belief that true growth comes not just from individuals and individual organizations, but instead when we all work together to achieve a common vision of prosperity and well being for our community. By working together, we can be certain that our best days are ahead.

This year we completed at 20M expansion at our independent retirement community, Acacia Village. In the last 15 years we've invested over 100M improving our campus and services to provide, what we believe, is the absolute best healthcare available.

## **From Bill Bierma—Scholarship Committee**

President Lincoln in Nov. of 1863 looked out over a crowd of people he had been invited to say a few appropriate remarks to. He had been invited almost as an after thought. The main speaker had spoken for over 2 hours, what could he possibly add. His 2 plus minutes went down in history as one of the greatest if not the fewest words ever spoken. Lincoln himself considered it a failure but the truth and passion behind those words could not be denied.

I would like the members of our Lodge to consider a few of his words. He began by asking for a new birth of freedom. With the new year we should look ahead for a new passion for the lodge we belong to.

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Newsletter

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## From the Trustees:

Dear Brothers, On behalf of the Trustees of Amherst Lodge # 981 , I wish you to have the very best Holiday Season this year ! Your Trustees have been hard at work for you this past year .

Our Masonic Hall is looking great ! If you haven't been to Lodge lately you should definitely come and see the

new renovations to the Lodge room. We also have just completed work on a new roof on the rear of our building which has been long over due. Prior to that roof a new flat roof has been installed in the front of our building . Four years ago we purchased a new heating system ( that has been saving us money each year ) and I'm told very soon our new AC unit will be up and running ! We are very fortunate to have a facility such as ours ! It is taylor-made to our needs and we don't owe a dime on it. It allows us not only a place to meet and socialize but gives us great visibility in the Town of Amherst and Village of Williamsville community. It is a large part of our identity.

Our Scholarship Program, Hot Dog Stand at Old Home Days and Blood Drive are but a few of the wonderful things we do and will continue to do , with your help of course ! Lastly, I would be remiss if I didn't mention with much gratitude how the Master and his officers have helped out the Trustees this past year. God Bless you ...

Fraternally, Worshipful Dennis John Matthew Hoban , for the Trustees of Amherst Lodge # 981 Free and Accepted Masons in the State of New York.

## From the Fellowcraft Club -

### William Kreutinger

The Fellowcraft club has been around for several months now and has really taken shape. The October elections resulted in the re-election of myself and Steve Donelson as President and Vice President, as well as the creation of the offices of Secretary and Treasurer, filled by W. Myron Deputat and R.W. Tom Pecoraro.

The CSMFC (Named in honor of R.W. Charles "Slim" Matie) has been meeting on the 2nd Thursday of each month for the purpose of helping our newly initiated and passed brothers achieve the rank of Master Mason. We meet at the Lodge at 7, generally order pizza and hit the blue books. The current crop of new Masons is proceeding very well in their degree work, due in very large part to the diligent mentoring of W. Dennis Hoban and other brothers, as well as the functions of the Fellowcraft Club. It has been very rewarding to watch the new brothers develop in Masonry, and to assist them on that journey. If you have any questions about the club just give me a call or shoot me an email at webmaster@amherst981.org. We will also be coordinating the drama of the 3rd degree for the first time this coming February. Brothers who have participated in recent years should expect to be asked to participate again if they haven't already been asked. Any brother interested in participating please let me know.

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## Trestleboard

- 1/4 Regular Communication
- 1/12 Fellowcraft Club Meeting
- 1/18 Brother Bring a Friend
- 1/30 School of Instruction
- 2/1 3rd Degree
- 2/9 Fellowcraft Club Meeting
- 2/15 Ladies Night
- 2/29 Leap Day Fellowship
- 3/7 1st Degree
- 3/8 Fellowcraft Club Meeting

## From Bill Bierma—Scholarship Committee—Cont.

He said that all men were created equal which is where we meet — on the level. He reminds us that we each have a different level of talent and the ability to achieve these things.

One of the most important things he stated was with the words, "it is rather for us the living to be so dedicated ". With those words we need to see that the past is exactly that. We can't change the things that were either good or bad from the past but we can learn from them. We can be sure to learn from our mistakes and carry the good forward. I would ask everyone and every committee, this: Am I doing the best job I can? Am I proud of the work I do here?

He ended with the hope that our nation, for us our lodge, and that the people, our brothers shall not perish from this earth. I feel the only way this or any brotherhood to endure is to encourage each member to do his best knowing that it is the quality of work done today that will add or subtract from what comes after us. It is not the building that makes a lodge but the brothers that work within its walls.

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## Do You See What I See?

### Gary Galbreath, Master

We have a little over 140 members, of which 43 live out of town (depending on the distance you deem too far away to attend lodge). During Erie County's recent elections, I wondered how many paid any attention to our local politics. I suppose if it mattered to you, you paid attention. If it mattered, you know that Chris Collins is being replaced as County Executive. I know, because as a county employee, it matters to me.

Now I am not going to discuss politics—that is unmasonic, but as I contemplated the changes from the change of leadership, I wondered what would happen to the vision that Chris Collins so

succinctly promulgated: Erie County is a place where people want to live, businesses want to locate, and tourists want to visit. It guided his decisions and helped the rest of us understand where he was leading us. When I read it, it makes me feel proud.

Those thoughts caused me to contemplate what guided my leadership decisions regarding

Amherst Lodge. Was there a vision for Amherst Lodge that I inherited?

No. Is there a vision or some ethical framework that guides me and can help my brothers understand where I am trying to lead them/you?

As it turns out, there is:

Amherst Lodge is a place where Brothers and Sisters are welcome to come for self-improvement, introspection, fellowship, acceptance, comfort, and peace.

This vision guides my decisions - not only in the government of the Lodge, but also my private life as well - and to help me differentiate what is Masonic and what is not.

What is Masonic? Everything that assists encourages, and enables that vision to transpire.

What is unmasonic? Everything else. That's how I see it. That's how I try to lead.

Do you see what I see? How about coming to lodge for some fellowship, comfort, and peace and to see how we're doing this year? I'd like to hear what you have to say.

## **Good News—W. Gary Galbreath**

2012 already?! You should have received your dues notice in the mail. Please note that there is no increase for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row (that's the good news). In this economy, it is important to not add unnecessarily to any brother's financial burdens. Virtually every year that dues are increased, some brothers choose to dimit - and we do not want to lose any brothers due to dues (or any other reason - ). Every year, however, lodges such as Amherst are losing more members than they are gaining. Currently Amherst has about 143 members, down from over 200 just recently, so dues income is less every year that dues are not raised. In order to keep dues constant, the 2012 budget adopted in November holds the line on spending and depends on increased revenues from petitions and fund-raising events.

While local members are strongly encouraged to support their blue lodge and attend its communications, out-of-town members depend almost entirely on this bulletin for communication and news f our Lodge. It takes time and costs money to edit, produce, print, fold, stuff, and mail this newsletter. As costs and postage continue to rise, fewer lodges and members put enormous pressures on resources such as the Masonic Service Bureau, so newsletters require an ever increasing portion of the lodge budget, forcing us to cut in other areas.

One area where we are cutting back in 2012 is dinners on Lodge nights. For the past few years, Amherst brothers and their guests have enjoyed good food (and the accompanying fellowship) prior to every lodge communication. Unfortunately, too many brothers seemed to view meals as an entitlement and did not chip in a few dollars to defray the costs. Subsidized meals are unfair to our out of town brethren and another drain on our budget. Another cost saving in 2012 is the elimination of the past master's apron and jewel, since I have served as Master previously.

Lodges are finally coming of age in the cyber world of the internet. This is important for three reasons: First, to attract and appeal to the young men who are our potential petitioners and initiates. Second, to enable the membership to stay up to date in this fast-paced world of ours. Third, to reduce the portion of the budget allocated to communication. Creating a good website requires an initial investment of time and money, but can be quickly updated and maintained at low cost.

Enabling our membership to keep abreast of Lodge happenings is a current issue that is as important (and as difficult to manage) now as it was when I was raised 36 years ago. A website and e-mail will enable the brothers of Amherst Lodge to communicate with one another faster at lower cost. Newsletters and minutes will be instantly available going back a number of years, so we'll have better archives and Lodge history as well as the ability to link with other sites that might be of interest to Masons.

By reducing the portion of our budget devoted to communication, funds will be available for other important work of the Lodge. When you send your check, please return the dues notice with any corrections and your e-mail address. In 2013, it is likely that dues will be higher for brothers who are not "connected" via e-mail or computers. If we do not subsidize meals for our brethren, perhaps we should not subsidize the costs of having to print and mail newsletters. Raising the dues for all members, but providing offsetting discounts to brothers who pay by January 31 (to ease the burden/costs of mailing follow-up notices) and to brothers who have e-mail (to ease the costs of producing/ mailing newsletters) could enable your lodge to provide quicker and faster service at lower costs and free up funds for more noble endeavors.

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### **Masonic Care Community named Business of the Year - cont**

We are supported and operated by the New York State Masonic Fraternity. Because of that relationship, our community is showcased from Buffalo to Ballston Spa, and from Massena and Montauk. Every year, thousands of Masons from throughout the state come to Utica.

We are pleased to share the stage with the House of the Good Shepard, an organization that has made a difference for children since 1872. We also recognize the contributions to the community of the other finalist in this category, Kids Oneida Inc.

On behalf of our incredibly caring staff of over 800, and most importantly our 500 residents, we graciously accept the honor of being named the Business of the Year.

We are proud of our history, we celebrate our present, and together, we can all be excited about our future.