



**Grand Commandery
Knights Templar
of Maryland**

State News for November 2021

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Sir Knights of Maryland.

I want to use this first message to give thanks to Our Lord for the blessings that I and my family have received. I wish to thank all of you for your confidence in me and making me your Grand Commander for the coming Templar year (or two). Your officers of the Grand Commandery of Maryland will be doing our utmost to make your Knights Templar experience as gratifying and uplifting as we can. There will be much to do as the Covid experience hopefully fades into a memory. You can plan on seeing us in your conclaves and in Knight training schools as well as at events throughout the Maryland Masonic world. Your Officers are all active and avid Masons and Christians. You can expect much of us as we move Templary forward.

It is with great admiration that I thank (Past) Grand Commander Charles E. Warns II for his astounding efforts on behalf of Maryland Templary during the past very challenging 2 years. You cannot all know how thoroughly Chuck kept his duties in mind on a daily basis and did all in his power to keep focused on Templary and you Sir Knights. We spoke on a regular basis and his encouragement to the Grand Officers, his attention to the job at hand despite the ruinous climate of sickness and despondency, was indeed a testament to his Christian faith and selfless outlook on life. Without his leadership the trying days of the last 2 years would have been dull and lifeless. His is an ever-optimistic outlook, which he shared with his officers and you Sir Knights in a successful effort to create an atmosphere of possibilities even as we were nearly ground to a halt by the threat of spreading the Virus.

Our use of electronic social media in the form of Zoom meetings, many personal interactions with his officers to keep on track for the 150th anniversary planning, and regular discussion of how to assist our members were his constant concerns. By using the assets of communication and also our available finance opportunities and impact was made, on not only you Sir Knights of Maryland Templary, but also Communities throughout the State. I will comment more on this at a future writing.

I can report that the 68th Triennial held in Minneapolis was a joy to attend. You may be able to comprehend that because of the threat of ongoing Virus the attendance was not as usual, the Great Drill competition which I first witnessed 3 years ago in Indianapolis was cancelled and that left scores if not hundreds of participants off the list of attendees. Nonetheless, there were hundreds of men and women able to partake of the 4 days of meetings that my wife Kandi and I attended. Before I go further allow me to introduce you all to the love of my life Kandi Austin, who has always supported me and attended along with me all of the events she could at the Triennial. A great benefit to myself and to Masonry and Templary as she has always been willing to help with events, and offer her services as a healer by her practice of Yoga and Reiki.

Congratulations to our own Past Grand Commander Art Hebbeler who wrapped up his 3 years as Grand Prelate of the Grand Encampment. Art did a needed and useful job during his entire Grand Encampment time. He created the 40 mile project which is to help Sir Knight in need. He created opportunities to use social media for a substitute for the Easter Sunrise service when we were not able to meet in person in Alexandria Virginia for the first time in decades. At the Triennial he concluded his term with many episodes of using his pulpit to invoke the blessings of our Lord and Savior at critical moments. The Grand Encampment honored Sir Knight Art at the Triennial by awarding him the highest tribute in Templary when Grand Master Nelson and his line presented him with The Grand Cross of Templary. Please join me by offering up your personal congratulations when you run into Art.

I have many persons to thank in my Templar career. SK Tommy Marraffa, my erstwhile travel companion and Masonic Brother was with me in my journey through the York Rite and many other Masonic bodies. EPC Charles Phillips (RIP) gave me a boost in Commandery by taking the helm at Montgomery Commandery when the 3 of us were selected to move forward Montgomery York Rite in Montgomery County Md. Charles also introduced me to Columbia Commandery #2 in Washington DC where I was to become Eminent Commander there for my first taste of Templar leadership. Those men, among them, REPGC Charles 'Buddy' Wagner, REPGC Michael Kastle, EPC David Buffalo and Current Grand Commander of Washington DC Robb Mitchell assisted in my education as a Knights Templar. In Maryland REPGC Kenneth Wyville, REPGC Sprydon Treklas and REPGC Art Hebbeler each assisted in putting me in positions of responsibility which furthered my knowledge and usefulness to the Craft. Final tribute to Lou Bandell who about a dozen years ago showed me the way to join York Rite masonry in Maryland and acted as a mentor a guide to me and many others of you in Maryland Masonry.

Yours in Christian Masonry,
John Austin,
Grand Commander
Knights Templar of Maryland

