

# THE MASONICARE ANNUAL APPEAL NEWS

BY THE MASONIC CHARITY FOUNDATION OF CONNECTICUT



Fall 2007

*Ridgefield Mason and Long-Time Donor . . .*

## **Jim Robertson Faithfully Supports Work of Masonicare**



**R.W. Bro. Jim Robertson has responded generously to The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut's Annual Appeals for 25 years.**

**G**enerosity is part of Bro. Jim Robertson's nature. Throughout his life, the Ridgefield resident and long-time Mason has given generously to many worthwhile causes.

One example is his faithful support of The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut (MCF), the philanthropic affiliate of Masonicare. For the past 25 years, he has been a major donor to the Annual Appeal and Holiday Appeal.

"When I have money, I try to donate," says Jim, 86. "There's

something about giving that makes me feel good. Masonicare is part of my giving."

A native of Darlington, Missouri, Jim was only nine years old when his father—a school wagon driver—died in 1930. A year later, his mother and grandmother moved the family to Gentryville, a small town in southern Missouri, where his mother went to work as a telephone operator. It was the beginning of The Great Depression, a time when many people did without or struggled to keep what little they had.

As a young man, Jim was named Valedictorian of the Gentryville High School Class of 1938 and went on to earn a degree in international economics from the University of California at Berkeley. He enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II and was called to active duty in 1942. His military service, which spanned the next three decades, took him overseas to Egypt, Iran, Guam, and Japan and to many locations throughout the United States as well.

At the age of 44, Jim retired from the U.S. Air Force, having attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He and his wife, Thelma, and their children moved from New York City to Ridgefield,

Connecticut. In Connecticut, Jim went to work as a contract security investigator for Perkin Elmer, a Wilton optical company that developed the optical system and guidance sensors of the Hubbell Space Telescope. He retired from Perkin Elmer at age 65.

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*—Bro. Jim Robertson  
Ridgefield, CT*

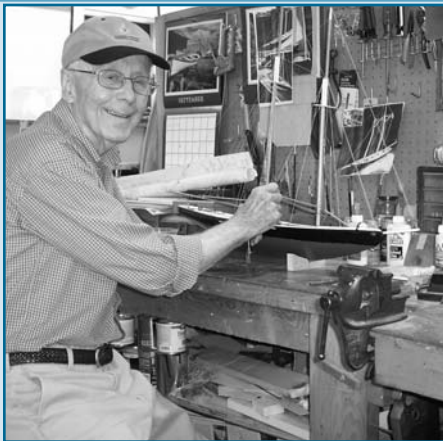
Jim has been a Mason for nearly 55 years and is a past master of Jerusalem Lodge No. 49 in Ridgefield. As Lodge Historian, he is currently writing the history of Jerusalem Lodge, which will celebrate its 200th year anniversary in 2008. Jim is a 32nd Degree Mason and a past district deputy for the first Masonic District. He was awarded the prestigious Pierpont Edwards Award for Distinguished Masonic Service in 2001.

Although he doesn't drive as much these days, Jim tries to remain as independent as possible. A Mets fan whose interest in baseball goes back to the days of Casey Stengel, Jim enjoys

*Robertson--Continued on Page 4*

## Ashlar Village Woodcraft Shop . . .

# Woodworking Repair Service Leads to Charitable Giving



Ashlar Village resident and Mason, Bro. Jack Stearns, chairman of the Masonicare retirement community's Woodcraft Shop, enjoys boat modeling as well as furniture repair.

**W**henver the projects come in, you will find them there, repairing wooden treasures or building new ones.

Seven Ashlar Village (AV) residents—three retired businessmen, three retired engineers and a retired aircraft specialist—comprise the active membership of the Woodcraft Shop, a place where repair work leads to good works.

Over the years, the Ashlar Village Woodcraft Shop has donated generously to The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut (MCF), the philanthropic affiliate of Masonicare, through direct monetary donations and auction items for MCF events. The money helps fund important healthcare programs and services provided by Masonicare and its affiliates.

“It’s the old ‘hat trick,’” says Woodcraft Shop chairman Jack Stearns,

referring to a hockey and soccer term in which a single player scores three goals. “1) The shop furnishes a place for us to challenge our hands and minds; 2) It furnishes a repair service for residents of Ashlar Village; and 3) It furnishes the money we give to The Masonic Charity Foundation,” he says.

“Over the years, we have been able to contribute a few thousand dollars to the Masonicare Annual Appeal,” Bro. Jack adds.

A longtime Fairfield, Connecticut, resident, Jack has been an active member of the Woodcraft Shop since moving to Ashlar Village with his wife, Jean, eight years ago. The origin of the Woodcraft Shop repair service, he says, dates back to the early 1990s.

“The men who were originally involved were retired machinists, woodworkers—there were about five of them,” says Jack, a retired independent insurance agent who hails from Beacon, New York. “They were in here from 9-5; they treated this like their office. This was their clubhouse.”

The current members work on projects as requests come in, with each

member assigned projects according to his interest and skill set. So far this year, they have completed 21 projects, including the repair of a computer desk, plant stand, wooden statue, and wooden legs for assorted tables and chairs.

“When we repair furniture, it’s up to the residents to give what they want to give, as far as contributions,” Jack explains. “We give to MCF, but we also buy wood and paint—and that feeds back to the residents.”

Members tackle projects that come from within the Masonicare community. One such project was a mail sorting bin, a complex endeavor undertaken by current member Ray Moore, who is a retired engineer, and the late Dick Young. “We also make reading stands for the Low Vision Clinic at the Masonic Healthcare Center,” says Jack. In addition, the group makes wooden gavels for Masonic Lodges that request them. “Half of us are Masons,” says Jack, who has been a Mason for seven years and is affiliated with Compass Lodge No. 9 in Wallingford.

The welcome mat, of course, is always out for other AV residents interested in becoming key-card members of the Woodcraft Shop. But would-be members must undergo testing to ensure they can safely operate the



### *Woodcraft Shop--Continued on Page 4*

Active members of the Woodcraft Shop, nestled in the heart of Ashlar Village in Wallingford, include (from left): R.W. Bro. Irving Pease; Bro. Art Goto (seated); Ray Moore; Bob Long; and Bro. Ed Potter (seated). Not pictured: Bro. Lewis Bly.

*Through the Quality of Life Fund. . .*

## Masonicare Annual Appeal Donations Enhance Residents' Lives

Sometimes, it's the little things in life that make it special: Popcorn and a movie, a trip to the beauty salon, or even a newspaper subscription can put a smile on the face of a Masonicare resident in financial need. Sometimes larger purchases such as hearing aids and dentures—or special programs and services—can make all the difference.

Donations to the Masonicare Annual Appeal through The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut (MCF), a Masonicare affiliate, can do just that. Through its Quality of Life Fund, The Foundation can help provide for those types of purchases within the Masonicare continuum when other funding sources are not available.

Thanks to the availability of Quality of Life funds, residents of Masonic Healthcare Center (MHC) were treated August 19th to an afternoon concert featuring the locally renowned Vinnie Carr band.

"The response was wonderful," says

Sharon Louchen, CTRS, Director of Therapeutic Recreation at MHC, who estimated attendance at nearly 300.

"We were thanked many times the next day for providing this concert."

Sharon says the event greatly enhanced the quality of life for residents, as they gathered outside in the sunshine to enjoy popcorn and ice cream and sing along to their favorite songs.

"Residents attended with family members, including children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren," Sharon says. "It gave them an opportunity to visit as well as make a new memory."

Ashlar of Newtown, another Masonicare affiliate, recently used Quality of Life Fund dollars to hire an organist to play at a spiritual service, while Masonicare's Connecticut VNA has used Quality of Life funds to buy needed equipment to better serve its patients. Recent purchases by the Connecticut VNA for qualifying patients have included a shower chair and special

shower heads to facilitate bathing in the home, and a 7" DVD player for a hospice patient to view DVDs from his bed.

A transportation program for long-term care residents is another successful initiative at MHC that, since January of this year, has utilized Quality of Life funds to help underwrite its cost. Through this program, Masonicare's Certified Nursing Assistants escort residents to off-site medical appointments, wait with them, and provide assistance as needed.

"We have a lot of frail elderly people here at MHC," says William Piper, President of MHC. "Families really appreciate the fact that we send a staff member with their loved ones to off-site medical appointments. It really offers residents and their families peace of mind. It's something that sets us apart from other long-term care providers."

The program, he estimates, benefits hundreds of MHC residents each year. "I couldn't picture *not* doing this—it's that successful," he says.



This year, Quality of Life funds have been used towards a transportation program at MHC, in which residents are accompanied to off-site medical appointments by Masonicare staff. At left, Michele Dery, CNA, helps resident, Doris Athoe, board the van. Quality of Life funds also provided a special summer concert on the MHC grounds. Above, long-term care residents, Olga Lebeda, Marge Butler, and Betty Frost, enjoy the afternoon performance.

*If you would prefer not to receive any future fundraising communications from The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut, please write to us at MCF of CT, P.O. Box 70, Wallingford, CT 06492. In order to ensure that we accurately reflect your request, please provide your full name and street address. Please note that it may take six to eight weeks to make your request fully effective.*



## 15th Annual Golf Classic Benefits Masonicare Programs, Services

**M**orning rain gave way to sunshine, as 144 golfers teed up for a competitive day of play at the 15th Annual Masonicare Golf Classic held August 13th at Race Brook Country Club in Orange. The day-long tournament, coordinated by The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut, raised \$223,875 to support the programs and services of Masonicare and its affiliates. Seventy-eight volunteers, including employees and members of the Masonic family, assisted with the event.



### *Robertson—Continued from Page 1*

working on the computer and has been busy researching his family’s genealogy.

Jim is a widower who lives in Ridgefield with his daughter, Gail, and her husband, W.B. Carl Slay—a Jerusalem Lodge member. Jim’s son, Bro. Ken—a 3-year Mason affiliated with Union Lodge No. 5—and his wife, Andrea, reside in Stamford. One day, though, Jim said he may move to Masonicare’s Ashlar of Newtown if he needs assisted living or long-term care. “I like Masonicare,” says Jim. “I think they do a great job of taking care of people. That’s why the Annual Appeal is part of my annual giving.”

### *Woodcraft Shop--Continued from Page 2*

shop equipment. “We are very safety conscious,” Jack explains.

So, why does the Woodcraft Shop give so faithfully to The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut?

“We are all Ashlar Village residents,” says Jack. “In the future, we may need the services provided by Masonicare. It’s good to know MCF is there to help underwrite the cost of healthcare for those in need.”



## The Foundation’s Bequest Language

The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut deeply appreciates gifts of all kinds. Should you wish to remember The Foundation in your Will, we encourage you to provide the following bequest language to your attorney:

*“I give, devise, and bequeath \$\_\_\_\_\_ (sum of money), or \_\_\_\_\_% (percentage) of my estate, or all the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate to The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut, Inc., located in Wallingford, CT.”*

Bequests provide important revenue in support of the mission of Masonicare, enabling us to provide the highest quality healthcare programs and services to our residents and patients regardless of their ability to pay. If you wish to discuss a bequest to The Foundation, please contact Jennifer King, President of The Foundation, at 203-679-5570.