



THE RITENEWS

OF NORTH CAROLINA



MARCH–APRIL 2014

DAVID & GOLIATH

by William B. Brunk, 33° SGIG in North Carolina

My wife is reading a book. Actually, listening to a book. On her audio player. And I got to listen to some of it recently while we were traveling in the car. David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants, by Malcolm Gladwell, is a treatise in which the author examines how, for certain people, having what appears to be a flaw or a shortcoming seems to be what drives them to success and greatness – the advantages of disadvantages and the disadvantages of seeming advantages.

The story of David and Goliath is one that each of us is taught at an early age. In ancient times, it was not unusual for conflicts to be decided by one-on-one combat, thus avoiding the heavy bloodshed occasioned by all-out battle. The Philistines, sworn enemies of the Israelites, were intent on capturing the mountain ridge near Bethlehem, thereby splitting King Saul's kingdom in two. Goliath, all six foot nine of him and wearing a bronze helmet and full body armor, challenged the Israelites to send a man to do battle with him. If Goliath prevailed, the Israelites would be slaves to the Philistines, and if he lost, the Philistines would be slaves to the Israelites and serve them.

Only one person was willing to fight for the Israelites—David, a young shepherd boy who had come down from Bethlehem to bring food to his brothers. He adamantly insisted that he had faced much greater foes in guarding his flock, and ran down the hill to meet the giant. We know the rest of the tale.

Stories like this abound (although this is the best), and we always enjoy vicariously experiencing the thrill of the underdog prevailing against overwhelming odds. The Scottish Rite is not facing anything quite as foreboding as Goliath, but we are definitely contending with some very difficult circumstances. We continue to lose members—currently at a rate of attrition of almost five per cent per year. Our buildings, in

too many situations, are deteriorating at an alarming rate. With the financial burden falling on fewer and fewer shoulders, many of our Valleys are feeling a squeeze from which there seems to be no escape.

The real key to our future will be to better engage our members, both new and veteran, such that they remain with us and assist in making our Valleys and Orients viable and strong for many years to come. It is only in this way that our organization will be able to fulfill its mission of assisting Freemasonry in making the world better for all people.

The Supreme Council Regional Workshop, to be held in Williamsburg on April 11th and 12th, will focus on this very task. No big lectures, skits, or drama – just good roundtable discussion in small groups to figure out what is already working and what might help us in the future. If you have an interest in the direction we should be going, make plans to attend the workshop. Or take part in the discussion that follows within your Valley. Maybe, with all of us pulling together, we can put the Philistines on the run!



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 12. Stated meeting to be held at Liberty Lodge No. 714
135 N. Asheboro St., Liberty NC 27298 (G)
- March 28. Grand Opening of New Swan Quarter Clinic
- April 8 Ceremony of Remembrance (G)
- April 19 Easter Program (R)
- April 25-26 Spring Reunion (R)
- April 25-26 Spring Reunion at Greensboro Temple (G) (W-S)
- October 24-25 . . Fall Reunion (R)

LODGE OF PERFECTION MEETINGS

- Asheville**, 2nd Thursday of each month
(Advisory Council 5:00PM, Dinner 6:30PM and Stated Meeting 7:00PM)
- Charlotte**, 1st Wednesday of each month
(Advisory Council 5:30PM, Dinner 6:30PM and Stated Meeting 7:30PM)
- Greensboro**, 2nd Wednesday of each month
(Dinner 6:30PM & Stated Meeting 7:30PM)
- New Bern**, 2nd Monday of each month
(Dinner 6:30PM & Stated Meeting 7:30PM)
- Raleigh**, 2nd Thursday of each month
(Dinner 6:30PM, Advisory Council 7:00PM, and Stated Meeting 7:30PM)
- Wilmington**, 2nd Thursday of each month
(Advisory Council 5:30PM, Dinner 6:30PM, Stated Meeting 7:30PM)
- Winston-Salem**, 2nd Thursday of each month
(Advisory Conference 6:30 PM, Master Craftsman/Refreshments 7PM, Stated 7:30PM)

For more information, call the General Secretary in your Valley

- Rick Patton (Asheville) 828-253-9911
- D. C. Heilman (Charlotte) 704-918-3797
- Donald Kehler (Greensboro) 336-275-3579
- William Dill (New Bern) 252-638-4031
- Luigi Ammons (Raleigh) 919-834-8873
- Ace Everett (Wilmington) 910-762-6452
- Truett Chadwick (Winston-Salem) 336-723-1217
- Michael May (Raleigh), Editor In Chief 919-481-0425

THE VALLEY OF ASHEVILLE

PROFILE OF EXCELLENCE (ILL. CARL RICHARD PATTON, 33°)

by Ill. John M. Burchfield, 33°

SECRETARIUS EXTRAORDINARIUS

In this issue we profile and celebrate our General Secretary, Ill. Bro. Carl Richard 'Rick' Patton 33°.

What is the SECRETARIUS EXTRAORDINARIUS Award? An award of high honor, reward and recognition. To try and explain what the criteria is just for consideration would be an exercise in futility, so I will just give you some of Ill. Brother Patton's accomplishments over the years that set in motion the creation and development of this high award that was recently presented to him by Past Grand Master and Ill. Dewey R. Preslar, Jr. 33°, and Worshipful Brother Henry C. Hilliard Jr. 32°, Master of Black Mountain Masonic Lodge No. 663.

In March of 1982 Brother Patton passed off on his 3rd degree proficiency. He was, at that same meeting appointed to sit as Junior Deacon of Black Mountain lodge for that year. From that time, until November 4th, 2013, Brother Patton has occupied an Officers' chair in his lodge. Not until January 6th, 2014, was Brother Patton able to sit on the sideline of his home lodge. Since having been appointed he has always held an office. That my friends is 31 years of volunteerism at its finest, without a break in service. I personally think this is quite remarkable. After proceeding through the chairs and giving up the gavel as Master in 1989, he served for a couple of years as Lodge Treasurer, and then in December of 1990 he was elected as Secretary of the lodge. I'm sure that he did not know back then that he would be dedicating 22 years of his life as Secretary to a fraternity that he obviously loves so dearly. Brother Patton was honored in 1998 by being presented with the Mason of the Year award from Black Mountain Lodge. As a member of his lodge I can say with great confidence that he could have received it every year and there would not have been any argument. In 2007 he was honored by the Grand Lodge as he was presented the Harris-Dudley Secretary Award from Right Worshipful T. Walton Clapp, Grand Secretary. In 2010 the lodge once again honored him by presenting him with the Secretary of Distinction award. His achievements have continued as he has been honored in other fraternal bodies. The York Rite has honored him with the Order of the Purple Cross and the Knight York Cross of Honor in 2009.

In the Scottish Rite he received the 32° Knight Commander Court of Honor in 2007, and in 2011 he was Coroneted as 33° Inspector General Honorary. Additionally, he serves as District Deputy Grand Master of the 39th Masonic District. These are just a few of his Masonic awards. Before retiring from public service, Brother Patton dedicated his life to the service of others as a volunteer fireman, EMT, and Paramedic with the Buncombe County Emergency Services. He continues to serve as an instructor with the Emergency Services Division at Asheville Buncombe Community College. For those of you who know Brother Patton you know that he is a very modest and humble man, and Mason. While he has demonstrated his dedication and devotion to our great fraternity, his community, and his dedication to the service of others in his professional career, all of the accolades that has been bestowed upon him pale in comparison to that which he celebrates the most; His relationship with his Creator, and the enjoyment of his son Carl. For those of us who can call Brother Patton a friend, we are the fortunate ones, and the Valley of Asheville is extremely fortunate to have Ill. Bro. Carl Richard Patton 33° as their General Secretary. I applaud and 'Thank You' Sir.

Brethren, this is your Scottish Rite, it needs you and our doors are always open. Even if it has been a while please don't let that stop you from attending. Who knows, you might just enjoy the experience. Hope to see each of you soon.



**Black Mountain
Masonic Lodge No. 663
A.F. & A.M.
of North Carolina**
Presents this
Secretarius Extraordinarius
Award in recognition of services rendered to the Brethren, visitors and guests of
Black Mountain Masonic Lodge No. 663, and the Masonic Fraternity for the years
1991-2013
W. B. : Carl Richard Patton
Brother Patton has for the past twenty-two years, demonstrated a willingness to serve, not only his individual lodge, but Masonry in general through his conduct and actions as Lodge Secretary, mentor and advisor.
His dedication and service to this Lodge, and the fraternity in general, has also been acknowledged by his lodge brethren by unanimously making him a Life-Member, and by honoring him as Master Mason of the Year in 1998.
As a testament of Brother Patton's allegiance to his craft, he was formally recognized by the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina by receiving the 2007 Harris-Dudley Grand Secretary's Award, and in 2010 he was presented the Secretary of Distinction Award by Black Mountain Lodge. Brother Patton stands out among his peers as an individual who exemplifies the true definition of that rare individual who strives for excellence and goes above and beyond that which is expected.
Brother Patton's dedication and devotion to the Masonic Fraternity and Black Mountain Lodge is steadfast and unwavering as he constantly promotes the tenets of Friendship, Morality and Brotherly Love.
Thus, we find that Brother Patton is truly deserving of the accolades and high-honors we have chosen to bestow upon him as, "Secretarius Extraordinarius."
Presented to by:
Dewey R. Preslar Jr., Grand Master
Grand Lodge of U.S. A.F. & A.M. of North Carolina

Kenny C. Hilliard Jr., Master
Joseph E. Pappas Jr., Senior Warden
James S. Glavin Jr., Junior Warden



Carl R. Patton

THE VALLEY OF CHARLOTTE
MEETING SCHEDULE

by DC Heilman 32° KCCH - General Secretary

We decided to submit our Valley meeting and activity schedule for members to mark their calendars of upcoming events.

MARCH

Wednesday March 5th

5:30PM – Advisory Conference • 6:30PM – Dinner

Menu:

- Carved Teriyaki Flank Steak
- Grilled Chicken Breast
- Pineapple Fried Rice
- Roasted Hawaiian Root vegetables
- Oriental Tofu w/Fresh Vegetables
- Green Tossed Salad
- Apple Cobbler
- Coffee-Tea-Water

APRIL

Wednesday April 4th

6:30PM - Dinner

Menu:

- Carved Turkey Breast
- Garlic Mashed Potatoes with gravy
- Sautee Mixed Vegetables
- Spinach Casserole
- Roll
- Spring Mix Salad
- Chocolate Cake
- Coffee-Tea-Water
- 7:30PM – Stated Meeting
- Open Lodge of Perfection
- Honor 50 year members of the 1964 Spring Class

Sunday, April 6th – 1:30PM

Degree Practice 4th-18th degrees

Sunday, April 13th – 1:30PM

Degree Practice 19th – 32nd degrees

Thursday, April 17th – 6:30PM

Extinguishing of the lights

Dinner

Relighting of the Lights

Friday, April 25th – Spring Reunion

Saturday, April 26th – Spring Reunion

MAY

Wednesday, May 7th

5:30PM – Advisory Conference

6:30PM – Dinner

Menu:

- Chicken Parmesan
- Butter Noodles
- Sautee Mixed Vegetables
- Garlic Bread
- Caesar Salad
- Cheese Cake
- Coffee – Tea – Water
- 7:30PM Stated Communication
- Open all Bodies
- Sunday, May 11th
- Mother's Day
- Monday, May 26th
- Memorial Day – Office Closed

JUNE

Wednesday, June 4th

6:30PM –Dinner

Menu:

- Fried Chicken
- Mashed Potatoes
- Pot Roast
- Sautee Mixed Vegetables
- Rolls
- Egg Plant Parmesan
- Caesar Salad
- Ice Cream Bars with Toppings
- Coffee – Tea – Water
- 7:30PM – Stated Communication
- Open Lodge of Perfection
- 14° Ring Ceremony for 2014 Spring Reunion Brothers
- Saturday, June 14th
- Flag Day
- Sunday, June 15th
- Father's Day

JULY & AUGUST

Independence Day – Office Closed

Valley Dark

THE VALLEY OF GREENSBORO SPRING IS A TIME OF BEGINNING

by Ben Wallace 32° KCCH

Our ritual reminds us that “spring is a time of beginning, but also of remembrance”. The officers of the Chapter of the Rose Croix are actively preparing for this year’s Ceremony of Remembrance. This ceremony continues to improve and is becoming very popular with the membership. Being one of the few ceremonies we have which is open to the public, our goal is to make sure that it conveys the standard of excellence we have set for all of our endeavors.

The Greensboro Valley is in ascension. You can feel the energy and excitement building within the membership. We

are committed to excellence, and this commitment is paying dividends. But this level of work requires more than just the drive which is being provided by our leadership. It also necessitates laboring in the quarry. We need active participants in all areas of our labor. If you are willing to help in any capacity, your reward will be in knowing that you have made a difference in lives of the people we affect, here in the Greensboro Valley. Contact any officer, and we will find a place where you can help. I promise.



THE VALLEY OF GREENSBORO A REFLECTION OF OUR DEGREE WORK

by A. Gene Cobb, Jr. 33° – Personal Representative of SGIG of North Carolina

In the explanation of the twenty-fifth degree, Knight of the Brazen Serpent, Albert Pike states:

“The mind never rests satisfied with a mere feeling. That feeling ever strives to assume precision and durability as an idea, by some outward delineated of its thought. Even the ideas that are above and beyond the senses, as all ideas of God are, require the aid of the senses for their expression and communication.”

Masons are encouraged early in our Masonic journey to reacquaint ourselves with the five senses of Human Nature: hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, and tasting. Feeling, or touch, can be something physical or emotional. Touch a hot stove and feel the pain of being burned. Touch a heart and feel the joy of being loved.

Minds that never rest are full of thoughts, plans, ideas, visions, dreams, possibilities, and opportunities. The emotive side of human beings is able to express itself with anything from a giggle to a tear. We all have a good sense of such things, maybe even a remembrance or two. Sometimes we have an even better sense of things than we believe possible. Someone shares a story or an experience. We connect and identify. Soon, a feeling

follows.

Past Grand Master Dewey R. Preslar of North Carolina always shares his passion for the fraternity among us and in so doing owns and delivers “his” Masonry. What do we own and deliver? I have come to believe that brotherly love is “above and beyond the senses” because it is an “idea of God.” It is also the first tenet of a Mason’s profession. As such, it requires the aid of the sense of feeling, or touch, for expression and communication.

Even though sometimes difficult for us to understand, Albert Pike was correct. *“Ideas that are above and beyond the senses, as all ideas of God are, require the aid of the senses.”* We are only temporarily satisfied as we learn more and more about the beautiful teachings of Masonry, especially when it touches our hearts so we can own and deliver our masonry. While some require more aid than others, none can rest satisfied with mere feelings because ideas above and beyond the senses, are indeed the ideas of God. So, the friendship, morality, and brotherly love that we first learn about in Blue Lodge continues to be expressed and communicated through the Scottish Rite!



THE VALLEY OF NEW BERN
ONE DAY REUNION

by Steve Burgess 33°

The Valley of New Bern has scheduled the John MacDonald Walston, KCCH (33° Elect) Reunion, a one day reunion on Saturday, March 22nd. Please mark your calendars and plan on attending this rare event. All the obligatory degrees will be conferred and a few of the remaining exciting and dramatic degrees are being selected for inclusion. This is an excellent opportunity for those on a limited time schedule to complete their initiatory requirements

for the Scottish Rite in a single day. What better way to honor Brother John than to round up those busy individuals who have been procrastinating and get them to this one day reunion.



John MacDonald Walston, KCCH (33 Elect)



THE VALLEY OF NEW BERN
CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

by Steve Burgess 33°

The Valley of New Bern celebrated Christmas and conducted its Annual Open House on Monday, December 9th, 2014. This year's event was well attended and everyone had a good time. As usual there were lots of "goodies" available and Miss Lilly Morris (daughter of Brother Aaron Morris 32°KSA) enjoyed meeting Santa for the first time.



*Top right: Her first visit, Miss Lilly meets Santa
 Bottom right: Open House, Renewing the bonds of friendship*



THE VALLEY OF NEW BERN
ANNUAL RITE CARE FUNDRAISER

by Steve Burgess 33°

The Spring fundraiser date has been set for May 9th and will go from 11AM to 2PM. Tickets will go out in the mail in February. Please return the tickets or you donation as quickly as possible. Last year we sold over seven hundred plates and yet we only had a little over three hundred plates committed by the time we had to order the chickens. This is a logistic challenge. If your return is for a donation only, please be sure to mark you ticket stub as such. Your prompt action will help insure the success of this year's event. Brethren, this is our annual fundraiser and we all have a good time while raising much needed money for our charity. Come out and be part of the action!

THE VALLEY OF NEW BERN
CEREMONY OF REMEMBRANCE AND RENEWAL

by Steve Burgess 33°

The Valley of New Bern will conduct a Ceremony of Remembrance and Renewal on April 14th at 6:30PM. This is the first time our Valley will be performing this ceremony. It combines elements of both the Maundy Thursday Observance, and a Remembrance Ceremony. The entire ceremony will take place in the dining room. There will be a brief memorial ceremony, a mystic banquet, and finally the ceremony of extinguishing and relighting the lights. This will be something completely different than anything we have done before and promises to be an enjoyable and memorable evening. Come out and remember our departed Brothers and renew your mystic ties to the fraternity.



THE VALLEY OF RALEIGH

TO BE CORONATED A 33° SCOTTISH RITE MASON

by Johnny Davis 33°

To be coronated a 33° Scottish Rite Mason is an honor of a lifetime. Strangely enough though, it's not the end of a journey, but just the beginning of one. The great lesson impressed upon us all is that there is still work to do. In our Fraternity, we're not honored for what we have done, but what we will continue to do for the Craft.

The value of continuous WORK cannot be overemphasized. In the immortal words of the great Albert Pike from the 22nd Degree: *"From the first to last, Masonry is work. It venerates the grand Architect of the Universe. It commemorates the building of the Temple. Its principal emblems are the working tools of Masons and Artisans. It preserves the name of the first worker in brass and iron as one of its passwords. When Brethren meet together, they are at labor"*.

The Scottish Rites' story and lessons take a lifetime of study and contemplation to understand. And even then, the mysteries of the universe still may be beyond our grasp. But what a scintillating opportunity it is to study and try to incorporate its lessons into our daily lives.

If a Master Mason wants to truly advance in our craft, the Scottish Rite is an absolute necessity. With diligent study, the true foundations of our craft are revealed and even the roots of civiliza-



tion and culture are discovered. And, of course, the basic understanding of the Symbols of All Ages gives us the true meaning of life and our beloved Rite.

When I enter a Symbolic Lodge and put on a plain white apron or enter a Scottish Rite Lodge of Perfection, the Brotherly Love is overwhelming. To have a Brother give you a sincere hug or handshake, to call him "Brother" and for him to call you a "Brother" is an overwhelming feeling.

I have said this many times before, but I'll say it again now: Of all the honors that have been heaped upon me by the Craft, just to be privileged enough to be a member of this wonderful Fraternity, is the Greatest Honor of All!



THE VALLEY OF RALEIGH

HONORED AND HUMBLED TO BE NOMINATED FOR THE KCCH

by Ludwik Wodka 32° KCCH

As Scottish Rite Masons, we are shown during the Eighteenth Degree that motif of black-red-white symbolized a transformative process we undergo as we advance toward Perfection.

There was one time I saw a Scottish Rite degree performed, shortly after I joined the Rite, that became a transformative moment for me. I sat in a beautiful theater, pipe organ music played, and the cast came on stage dressed in tuxedos. The backdrops were beautiful works of art. Not a single script was anywhere to be seen, and the degree was executed perfectly. All of these elements combined to transport me out of the mundane, and out of the here-and-now. Yet, it wasn't simply like watching a theatrical performance. It made me feel like I was a part of something extraordinary. It revealed to me that Freemasonry can be so much more. The degrees showed me that, as an ideal, Masonry revealed mankind (and manhood) at its best. I was a part of something truly dignified and proud. I felt...exalted.

In my Valley, I have focused my efforts on trying to recreate this same sort of experience for the new candidates. We have so much amazing material at our disposal- be it as educational materials, events, or the degrees themselves. However, the only thing missing to create this extraordinary experience is extraordinary



effort. To me, the opportunity to see the best, the most noble and dignified in ourselves is surely ample reward.

I was honored and humbled to be nominated for the KCCH, and was delighted that the Investiture was conferred with all of the proficiency and dignity that made me proud to be a part of it. The ceremony lived up to my hopes and expectations for such an occasion. It reminded me of that personal transformation we should be striving for as Masons. The Investiture has only served to renew my zeal to bring this experience to our new (and old!) members. To hear from a new candidate that the Scottish Rite degrees affected them the way they affected me is perhaps the best reward.



THE VALLEY OF WILMINGTON 2014 BODY HEADS

by Richard W. Knauss, 33°

On January 9 the Valley of Wilmington installed the 2014 officers and the four Body Heads are pictured below

From Left to Right: Master of Kadosh – E.J. Highsmith, 32°, KCCH; Venerable Master – Sean Hughes, 32°, KSA; Wise Master – Gary Stoehr, 32°; Commander - Richard Knauss, 33°



THE VALLEY OF WILMINGTON 2014 EASTER OBSERVANCE

by Richard W. Knauss, 33°

On Saturday April 19th at 5:30PM, a Combined Service Presentation Program of the Maundy Thursday & Easter Sunday Observances will be held at the Temple. Please make reservations for dinner so that we know how many to prepare for.

THE VALLEY OF WILMINGTON 2014 SPRING REUNION

by Richard W. Knauss, 33°

The 2014 Spring Reunion will be named “The Ill James Earl Vann, 33° Memorial Class” and is scheduled for Friday March 7th and Saturday March 8th. Petitions are available at the Temple or on the “Reunion” page of our website <http://www.wilmingtonaas.org> Remember that the initiation fee is \$300.00 per candidate. Petitions will be accepted as late as 7:00AM. the morning of the first day of the reunion. Up-to-date information can be found on our website or by calling the Temple at (910) 762-6452



THE VALLEY OF WILMINGTON ANNUAL FISH FRY

by Richard W. Knauss, 33°



On Wednesday April 30th, the annual Fish Fry will be held at the Temple from 11:00AM to 7:00PM. Tent set-up will begin at 8:00AM. All members are encouraged to attend and help, or just reconnect with friends.

HAVE A HAPPY EASTER



THE VALLEY OF WINSTON-SALEM **CORNERSTONE LAYING CEREMONY**

By Christopher Pearman 32° KCCH

On November 4th, 2013, the Most Worshipful Grand Master of Masons in NC for 2013, Illustrious Brother Dewey Preslar 33°, and the Grand Lodge Officers conducted a cornerstone laying ceremony for the new Winston-Salem Masonic temple. The address for this new building is 4537 Country Club Road, Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27104. This special event was well-attended and marks a very positive future for our Valley. This new building will be host to several Blue Lodges, various Masonic appendant bodies, as well as the Winston-Salem Scottish Rite Valley. Construction is scheduled to be completed in early 2015.



THE VALLEY OF WINSTON-SALEM **UPCOMING EVENTS**

By Christopher Pearman 32° KCCH

Brethren, we have several upcoming events for our Valley. Our fourth annual Scottish Rite Masonic Charity Golf Tournament will be on Friday, June 13th at Meadowlands Golf Club in Winston-Salem. This event is open to everyone. We need sponsors, players, and help on the day of the tournament. This tournament is our Valley's only fundraiser, so let's make it count!

Secondly, we will be having a joint spring reunion with the Valley of Greensboro on April 25th and 26th. The joint reunion will be held at the Greensboro Scottish Rite temple.

A big thank-you to the Valley of Greensboro for their kindness and hospitality. Please join us for this most special reunion.

Also, we will be having the Ceremony of Remembrance and Renewal at the April stated meeting. Please join us.

A reminder that we are having our monthly stated meetings at Clemmons Masonic Lodge while the new building is being completed. We would also like to thank Clemmons Masonic Lodge for their hospitality and kindness for the use of their Lodge building.

THE VALLEY OF WINSTON-SALEM **THE YEAR 2014**

By Joel Black 33° - Personal Representative

As you look forward to the future – the place where you'll spend the rest of your life – it's smart to look back at the immediate past and objectively assess what went well and what didn't in your job, your relationships, your health, and your overall sense of fulfillment. What did you learn that can make your life better?

If you had a bad year, it's possible you were a wholly innocent victim, or maybe your own actions or attitudes contributed to serious grief or unhappiness. Either way, please accept my best wishes and sincere condolences. Please be careful, however, not to wallow in sorrow, sympathy, shame, or self-doubt. Don't allow yesterday's pain to become tomorrow's suffering.

Be accountable, but be fair to yourself.

Start the next stage of your life's journey with optimism and confidence.

Remember, you're the captain of your own ship. Take the wheel, choose your course, and get on your way.

There may be rough seas ahead, but there will also be enough achievement, growth, reconciliation, and true joy to make the journey worth it.

Abe Lincoln pointed out that one of the good things about the future is it always comes one day at a time.

May this year be your best year – so far.