



THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL

SCOTTISH RITE BODIES ORIENT OF MISSISSIPPI

Vol 3, Issue 3

Jul/Aug/Sep

COMMANDER'S QUOTE



Masons, like buttons, work best when we are strongly connected to our base. Strong thread, in ample supply, must be used to most effectively connect the button to the base cloth. Every Brother needs to work to strengthen his ties to the Fraternity, but likewise, as an organization, the Fraternity also must strengthen those connections.

The Orient of Mississippi newsletter is published for the members, family and friends of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Orient of Mississippi, and is available electronically to all current Scottish Rite Freemasons in Mississippi's Valleys. The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the Orient of Mississippi or its officers. The official registration and financial information of the organization may be obtained from the Mississippi Secretary of State's office by calling 1-888-236-6167. Registration by the Secretary of State does not imply endorsement.

2026 LODGE OF PERFECTION MEETINGS

Clarksdale, 1st Tuesday of each month
Mar 3, Apr 7, May 5, Jun 2, Jul 7, Aug 4, Sep 1,
Oct 6, Nov 3

Corinth, 2nd Thursday of each month
Jan 13, Feb 10, Mar 10, Apr 14, May 12, Jun 9,
Jul 14, Aug 11, Sep 8, Oct 13, Nov 10, Dec 8

Gulfport, 3rd Friday of each month
Jan 16, Feb 20, Mar 20, Apr 17, May 15, Jun 19*,
Jul 17, Aug 21, Sep 18, Oct 16, Nov 20, Dec 18

Hattiesburg, 1st Friday of each month
Jan 2, Feb 6, Mar 6, Apr 3, May 1, Jun 5,
Jul 3*, Aug 7, Sep 4, Oct 2, Nov 6, Dec 4

Jackson, 1st Tuesday of each month
Jan 6, Feb 3, Mar 3, Apr 7, May 5, Jun 2,
Jul 7, Aug 4, Sep 1, Oct 6, Nov 3, Dec 1

Meridian, 1st Thursday of each month
Jan 1*, Feb 5, Mar 5, Apr 2, May 7, Jun 4,
Jul 2, Aug 6, Sep 3, Oct 1, Nov 5, Dec 3

For more information,
contact the General Secretary in your Valley

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Bill Sellers, 33° IGH (Jackson).....(769) 230-5760
W.R. "Bill" Fortenberry, 32° KCCH (Meridian) (601) 616-5964

THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSIPPI

A MESSAGE FROM

Ill. Billy W. Sloan, 33° SGIG



**SERVICE,
FAITH, AND
THE WORK
THAT REMAINS**

Brethren,

We have just celebrated our Nation's 250th birthday and many locations are continuing to do so. As I have stated before, our Nation has not always been perfect, but it is the best country in which to live by far. In my many travels around the world while serving in the U S Navy, I had the opportunity to see firsthand many different cultures, experience the different laws and participate in developing many areas of many countries. I help with medical teams and hospitals, schools, roads and water well development. Replacing open ditch sewers and other facilities removed areas for potential diseases to grow and develop which impacted several communities. The toughest was building a lab to study a disease that was carried by certain mosquitoes that, when humans were bitten, they died within three days.

Sovereign Grand Commander
Ill. James D. Cole , 33°

S.G.I.G., Mississippi
Ill. Billy W. Sloan, 33°

Personal Representatives

Valley of Clarksdale
Ill. Joseph Lee, 33° IGH

Valley of Hattiesburg
Ill. Lane Dossett, 33° IGH

Valley of Corinth
Ill. C. Dean Thompson, 33° IGH

Valley of Jackson
Ill. Kenny Dawson, 33° IGH

Valley of Gulfport
Ill. Bruce Baker, 33° IGH

Valley of Meridian
Ill. Terry F. Lewis, 33° IGH

Editors

Ill. Ben Jones, 33° IGH

Ill. Lane Dossett, 33° IGH

For submissions or articles, please contact Ben Jones at bejonesii@bellsouth.net or call (601) 927-8479. Whenever possible, please include a high-resolution (300 dpi/PPI) photo with your submission. All submissions should be received at least 45 days before the date of publication. Submissions for the Oct-Nov-Dec newsletter must be received no later than mid November for consideration. Articles are subject to editing and if published, become the property of the Orient of Mississippi. No compensation is given for articles, photographs or other materials submitted or published.

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I am proud of our country—where it stands today and the direction it is moving. It was always good to return home and appreciate the progress and development we often take for granted. Although we have faced many challenges, we continue to improve lives through education and progress. I believe our Lord has blessed our nation over the years, and we should continue to thank Him in our prayers. Let us pray that our country's leaders seek His guidance and wisdom to keep our nation strong and safe. Much work remains to be done.

Our Fall Reunions are approaching, so now is the time to encourage brethren to consider joining the Scottish Rite. When we invite a brother from our Blue Lodge and share the lessons of our degrees, we help him become a better Mason, serving both society and his fellow man. A careful study of our degrees reveals valuable teachings that can guide us in our daily lives and in all our endeavors.

It is also time for our 33rds to really begin considering who is worthy of receiving honors this coming year. Who is ready to join you as a 33rd Inspector General Honorary or become a Knight Commander Court of Honor. These potential candidates must be considered for what they have already accomplished in addition to what they will accomplish.

I hope you all have had the opportunity to see the 225th birthday Session of your Supreme Council and hear some of the history of our founding. I was privileged to be there in Charleston and participate in that Session and to hear some of the great things about our beginning.

I encourage each of you to continue supporting our endowed scholarship program for Mississippi youth. With a \$100 donation, you will receive a lapel pin; for each additional \$100 donation, you will receive a numbered magnolia to add to your pin. Please keep this program in mind when making future donations.

I want to thank you for your prayers for my wife Karen and I as we continue to battle her cancer. It has been very hard on us both. I know that with Prayer and if it is God's will, then her prognosis will be in a positive manner. I look forward to visiting with each of you and your Valley in the not-too-distant future. If anyone has any questions or comments, please contact me. I may not answer right away, but I will get back to you.

Fraternally,



Ill. Billy W. Sloan, 33°
Grand Treasurer General
Sovereign Grand Inspector General
in the Orient of Mississippi



THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

III. R. Lane Dossett, 33°
Personal Representative, Valley of Hattiesburg

Solomon: The OG (Original Grandfather) of Regularity

My father passed away last year, and one of his wishes was for me to receive his retirement clock, a large traditional grandfather clock with the pendulum engraved with the initial of our surname. It memorialized his decades of faithful service as a pipeline tank operator for an oil company in Collins, Mississippi.

My father was proud of that clock and what it represented: a job well done and completed. Despite his pride, he never had any idea how to set the moon phase dial at the top of the clock. While that clock faithfully chimed for thirty years after his retirement, the top was never set correctly.

Upon moving it to my house this summer, I endeavored to figure out the enigmatic dial. I began with the great purveyor of esoteric wisdom, YouTube, which quickly showed me how to set and read the dial. There was always something about the fifteen at the top that was confusing, as I knew the full moon was not on the fifteenth day of every month, and some months have more than 30 days, so obviously it did not signify the middle of the month despite being at the top. The tutorial informed me that the dial was based on the synodic lunar cycle, with the fifteenth day of that cycle always being the full moon. Once set, it correctly followed the waxing and waning of the moon, and it appeared full in alignment with the real moon.

In recent studies, I found in the Zohar a kabbalistic connection between the symbolism of the fifteenth moon-day and King Solomon. Solomon, whose relevance is well-known to the Craft, accomplished that which had not been previously achieved, the construction of a fixed dwelling place for the Most High. We as Freema-



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sons emulate his achievement by seeking to mold ourselves into such a dwelling place and by building our spirits as living stones for that celestial temple not made with hands.

As TikTok influencer Reb Adam Yitchak likes to begin, “according to Kabbalah,” the fifteenth day of every moon cycle is a specific numerical reminder of Solomon’s accomplishment.

Midrashic tradition recounts that Solomon fulfilled his accomplishment in the fifteenth generation of his people, counting from Avraham Avinu (Abraham). In 1 Kings 4:29, we read that “God gave Solomon wisdom surpassing (*terev* - תִּרְבָּ) wisdom of the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt.” The writer(s) of the Zohar interpret “surpassed” (*terev*) as “increased.” With the wisdom of Solomon symbolizing Shekhinah, daughter of Hokhmah (Wisdom), *terev* is analogous to the waxing or increased moon. According to the Midrash, just as the moon does not become full until the fifteenth day, Wisdom/ Shekhinah remained incomplete until the fifteenth generation from Abraham. “When Solomon appeared, the disk of the moon became full,” indicating the fullness of Wisdom and completion of Shekhinah.

Unfortunately, the story does not end there. Following King Solomon, fifteen generations later (symbolized by the fifteen days of the waning moon), King Zedekiah’s reign occurred, along with the destruction of the first temple, circa 586 BCE.

Within the Scottish Rite, our rituals similarly recount the importance of the cyclical reminder provided by the moon’s perceived luminous movement. For instance, in the Twenty-First Degree, the Noachite or Prussian Knight Degree, the Knights of the Order only meet on the nights with a full moon to allow for no other light than



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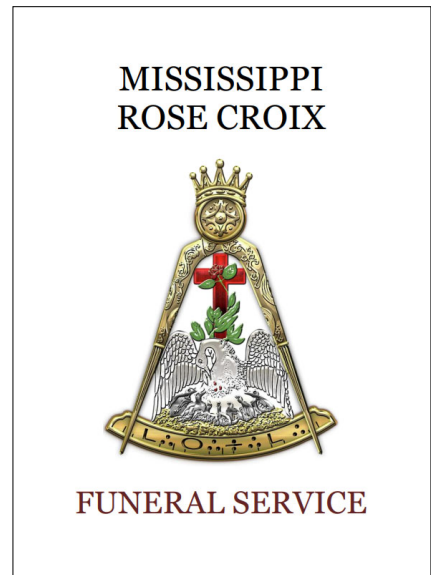
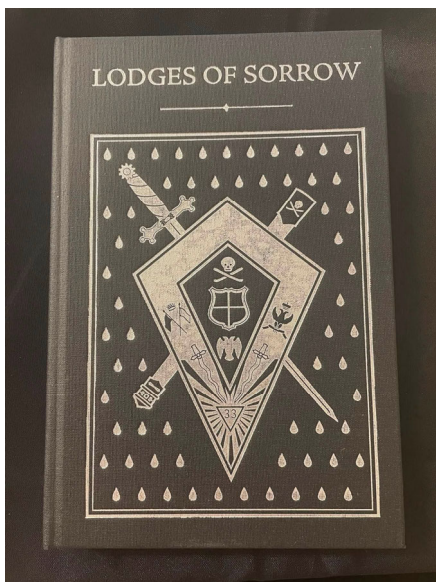
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hers, as a reminder of the mysteries and symbolism of Osiris's murder by Typhon/Set. See *Ritual Monitor and Guide* at 531 and *Annotated Morals and Dogma* at 570.

My father was a Master Mason, making me a Masonic Lewis. In retrospect, learning how to set and read the dial of the grandfather clock made me feel a small bit like how Solomon must have felt, as the culmination or “increase” of ancestral Wisdom; the completion of something that began long before myself. As a 40+ year old, in beginning of the waning years of my own life phase, the clock serves as a reminder of not only the orderliness of creation, but also that as my own light fades, there will always be newness in the primordial, eternal light.

Endnotes

1. *Shemot Rabbah* 15:26 and *Pesikta DeRav Kahana* 5:12
2. The Midrash groups the final kings (Josiah's sons/grandsons) to conclude with Zedekiah as the definitive 15th representative. Athaliah, as a queen and not a son-to-son Davidic king, is not included, as she was a usurper and not heir.



LOOK FOR THESE NEW PUBLICATIONS!

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VALLEY OF GULFPORT

The Gulfport Valley watched the live streaming of the celebration of the 225th anniversary of the Scottish Rite Southern Jurisdiction. The Valley did a short video to celebrate the Anniversary which was a part of the live stream. We recently exemplified The Rose Croix Scottish Rite Funeral Service at our stated meeting. The Valley is standing up a team for Brothers who may wish to have it performed in the future. We have been allowing the Senior and Junior Wardens to preside over the business meetings in preparation of their years as head of the Lodge of Perfection. This will help them be prepared for assuming the position of Venerable Master. We have temporarily stopped our monthly breakfast due to a number of reasons but will be starting something along this line later in the fall. The kitchen crew and other members are working diligently on a plan to improve the breakfast meal by adding some activities and other ways to bring in more members and have family interactions with each other. We had a good Spring Reunion, and it was enjoyed by all. We only had 3 candidates from The Gulfport Valley but a shout out to the Valley of Hattiesburg for their 8 candidates who joined in our joint Reunion. With the two Valley's coming together, we were able to really exemplify the degrees for the Candidates. Looking forward to continuing to improve our Valley.

Al Anderson, VMAP Chairman

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VALLEY OF CLARKSDALE

VALLEY OF CORINTH

VALLEY OF HATTIESBURG

VALLEY OF JACKSON

VALLEY OF MERIDIAN



In addition to their Cap & Ring ceremony on May 7, the Valley of Meridian gave a “shout out” to attendees at the beginning of the 225th Anniversary livestream event.



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MISSISSIPPI SCOTTISH RITE MAGNOLIA

An official program of the Scottish Rite
Foundation of Mississippi

All donations are payable Edwards Jones. You may submit this form and payment to the General Secretary of your Valley or mail to the address at the bottom of this page.



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Mississippi Scottish Rite Foundation

The Billy and Karen Sloan Orient of Mississippi Endowed Scholarship will be offered for the first time in 2026. The first award will be a \$1,000 scholarship with each year after that increasing to \$1,800 annually. The payout will be evaluated as the endowment is added to or grows through positive market returns.

SCOTTISH RITE MISSISSIPPI MAGNOLIA PROGRAM

The Scottish Rite Mississippi Magnolia is an official program of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry in the Orient of Mississippi that supports the newly establish Billy and Karen Sloan Endowed Scholarship. This scholarship will be awarded annually to a Scottish Rite Mason in Mississippi or a family member. For a \$100 contribution through this program, you may choose to honor an individual, Mason or not, by presenting a certificate in their honor or memory. When appropriate, you are encouraged to make these contributions at Valley meetings or public functions to not only honor the individual you have chosen but to raise awareness of this new program. All contributions made through this program are tax-deductible. This program will help us grow our Orient Endowed Scholarship.



\$100 Tax-Deductible Contribution



The magnolia, Mississippi's state flower, symbolizes various positive attributes like nobility, perseverance, and resilience. It represents the beauty and strength found in the state's natural surroundings and is also associated with the elegance and grace often attributed to Southern culture.



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EVENT CALENDAR

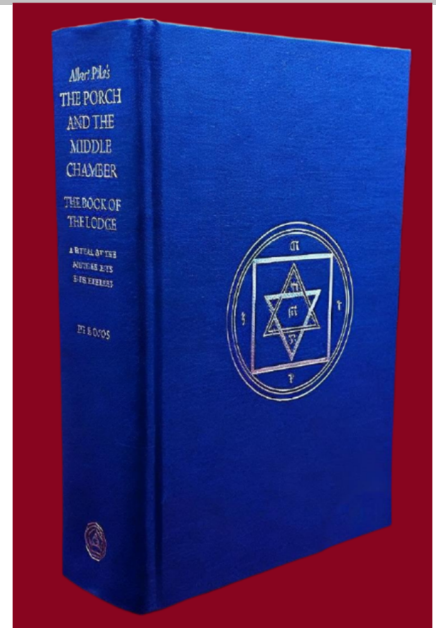
Tue Aug 4 - Valley of Clarksdale Stated	Fri Aug 7 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated
Tue Aug 4 - Valley of Jackson Stated	Tue Aug 11 - Valley of Corinth Stated
Thu Aug 6 - Valley of Meridian Stated	Fri Aug 21 - Valley of Gulfport Stated
Tue Sep 1 - Valley of Clarksdale Stated	Tue Sep 8 - Valley of Corinth Stated
Tue Sep 1 - Valley of Jackson Stated	Fri Sep 11 - Rosh Hashanah
Thu Sep 3 - Valley of Meridian Stated	Fri Sep 18 - Valley of Gulfport Stated
Fri Sep 4 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated	Sun Sep 20 - Yom Kippur
Mon Sep 7 - Labor Day	
Thu Oct 1 - Valley of Meridian Stated	Fri Oct 16 - Valley of Gulfport Stated
Fri Oct 2 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated	Sat Oct 17 - Valley of Meridian Reunion
Tue Oct 6 - Valley of Clarksdale Stated	Fri/Sat Oct 23-24 - Valley of Corinth Reunion
Tue Oct 6 - Valley of Jackson Stated	Sat Oct 31 - Halloween
Mon Oct 12 - Columbus Day	
Tue Oct 13 - Valley of Corinth Stated	
Sun Nov 1 - Daylight Saving Time Ends	Tue Nov 10 - Valley of Corinth Stated
Tue Nov 3 - Valley of Clarksdale Stated	Wed Nov 11 - Veterans Day
Tue Nov 3 - Valley of Jackson Stated	Sat Nov 14 - Joppa & Hamasa Ceremo- nials
Tue Nov 3 - Election Day	Fri Nov 20 - Valley of Gulfport Stated
Thu Nov 5 - Valley of Meridian Stated	Thu Nov 26 - Thanksgiving
Fri Nov 6 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated	
Sat Nov 7 - Valley of Jackson Reunion	
Tue Dec 1 - Valley of Jackson Stated	Fri Dec 18 - Valley of Gulfport Stated
Thu Dec 3 - Valley of Meridian Stated	Fri Dec 25 - Christmas Day
Fri Dec 4 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated	Sun Dec 27 - Feast of St John
Sat Dec 5 - Wahabi Ceremonial	Thu Dec 31 - New Year's Eve
Tue Dec 8 - Valley of Corinth Stated	

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* = 1 renewal; § = 3 renewals