



# THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL

SCOTTISH RITE BODIES ORIENT OF MISSISSIPPI

Vol 3, Issue 1

Jan/Feb/Mar

## COMMANDER'S QUOTE



**"Technology is a great tool and should be used to the maximum extent possible to improve our lives. However, like a tool in the hands of a stonemason, it is used most effectively when it does not replace the mind, heart, and experience of the craftsman. Technology must not supplant nor replace the act of living."**

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

Charles Keith, 32° KCCH (Clarksdale).....(662) 902-4019  
John Kelly, 32° KCCH (Corinth).....(773) 587-9923  
James Case, 33° IGH (Gulfport).....(228) 324-4262  
Larry Robinson, 33° IGH (Hattiesburg).....(601) 603-0139  
Bill Sellers, 33° IGH (Jackson).....(769) 230-5760  
W.R. "Bill" Fortenberry, 32° KCCH (Meridian) (601) 616-5964

# THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

A MESSAGE FROM

**Ill. Billy W.  
Sloan, 33°  
SGIG**



**STEPPING  
FORWARD  
TO LIVE OUR  
DEGREES**

We are in the period when the Winter Solstice provides for the shortest day of the year, and our days begin to lengthen again. It is also the time when we celebrate the greatest gift provided to man. The miracle that only God can accomplish. The birth of Jesus through a Virgin Mother and the son of a carpenter through the lineage of King David fulfilling the promise that his would rule his people and the world forever.

Although we have commercialized this period to such an extent that many forget the reason for this celebration, we as Scottish Rite Masons still uphold our true beliefs and celebrate accordingly. This is time for cooler temperatures, more inside activities and time to reflect on the events of the past and make plans for the next year. We often make goals to try to improve our future, but do we commit ourselves to seeing them through? Are we willing to put forth the effort

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 Apr-Jun 2026 newsletter must be received no later than mid April 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.

## THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSIPPI

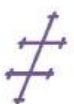
to make a change and carry it out? When was the last time you attended a Reunion and listened or participated in the ritual work of our Scottish Rite Degrees. When did you last review any of them and consider the lessons that can apply to our daily lives at home, work, or anywhere in general?

I want to remind you that several people observe you each day. Your children or grandchildren may want to be like you. What example are you truly providing for them and those around you? Do your actions, speech and consideration for others reflect what our lessons teach us to do? What about the life that God's word instructs us to do? This is the time to start planning to live a better life, planning to attend our meetings and reunions, and rejuvenating our relations with our brethren. Reunions should be about gathering to catch up on old friends, renew our knowledge of our teachings. We strengthen ourselves by being with like-minded people such as our Church family or our brethren.

All Valleys have elected new Officers, who will be installed soon if not already. They should be developing plans to lead according to the installation guidelines and charges. Are you one of these lucky enough to be in that position and will you commit to leading your group and teaching them as charged? Have you studied your parts and worked on memorizing your lines and their meaning to assist you in delivering them with the proper conviction?

I challenge each of you to consider these things and let us work together to make this next year something we can be proud of, both personally and as a Valley. I look forward to seeing you at one of Stated meetings or Reunions.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. May the Blessing of Heaven be upon you, your family, and your friends.



Ill. Billy W. Sloan, 33°

Sovereign Grand Inspector General  
in the Orient of Mississippi





# THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

December 3, 2025

To: Past Masters of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi

Dear Brethren:

Our Most Worshipful Grand Master, Billy Wayne Bunch, would like to cordially invite all Masons to attend the 208th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi F&AM to be held at the HOLLYWOOD CONVENTION CENTER, 1150 CASINO STRIP RESORT BLVD., TUNICA, MISSISSIPPI 38664, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, FEBRUARY 24, 25, & 26, 2026.

## ROOM RESERVATIONS:

Group names: 2026 Grand Lodge of MS Annual Communication

Phone Number: 662-357-7700

Group Code: Code SGL0222 (to book room(s))

Rate: All inclusive Room Rates Include Resort Fees and Tax

SUN	MON-THUR	FRI&SAT	SUN
\$69.28	\$74.78	\$102.28	\$69.28

Start Date: Now Open

Last Day to Book Room: February 14, 2025 or once the block is full.

Book by Phone: 662-357-7700, Choose Option 1, Mention Code SGL0222

## GRAND MASTER'S BANQUET:

Our Grand Master cordially invites all Masons and their wives to attend the Grand Master's Banquet on Tuesday evening, February 23, 2026, at the HOLLYWOOD CONVENTION CENTER, at 7:00 P.M. Attire is Formal or Dark Suit for Men and Sunday Dress for Ladies. Tickets are required. You may order tickets using the enclosed forms (make copies if you or your lodge needs additional copies). Please order and pay for tickets in advance from the Grand Lodge Office, and you can pick them up at the Grand Lodge Registration Desk on Tuesday, February 24, 2026. The Deadline to purchase banquet tickets is February 7, 2026, (in order for the Grand Lodge Office to receive your payment prior to the meeting).

Per our By-Laws, the Annual Meeting of the members of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi Foundation will be held during the 208th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi, F. & A. M.

Sincerely & Fraternally,  
Gary B. Jones  
Grand Secretary

**225TH  
ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATION  
OF THE  
ESTABLISHMENT  
OF THE SUPREME  
COUNCIL,  
33°, SJ, USA**

**MAY 31, 2026**

Virtual Event Live-streamed from Charleston, S.C., via Our YouTube Channel:  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/ScottishRiteMasons>



## Apply for Scottish Rite Grants!

We currently are accepting online applications for **2026 Appendant Bodies Achievement** and **Masonic Youth Performance Grants** offered through the Scottish Rite Foundation, Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A., Inc. To learn more and apply, visit <https://sms.scottishrite.org/2026-srf-grants> or scan the QR code provided.

**The application deadline is February 1, 2026.**





# THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

## VALLEY OF CLARKSDALE

## VALLEY OF CORINTH



The Valley had a great Fall Reunion and an active Christmas season. The KSA participated in Christmas parades in Fulton, Tupelo, and Saltillo. The KSA is also sponsoring a blood drive at the Corinth Consistory on January 31, 2026.

## VALLEY OF GULFPORT

### Spotlight on the Props Team

The Valley Props Team had an eventful and productive year. Our team has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to serve the brethren that participate in each degree. We have installed a camera system and door peep holes to aid in speeding up the conversion time between apartments. We currently have four regular members of the crew: James "Jim" Bergeron aka "Paw Paw;" David "Makes It Happen" Akins; Kevin "Sunshine Band" Carmichael; and Jeff "Do You Need Anything" Guice. If you have ideas, donations, or would like to volunteer, please reach out--we welcome your support and enthusiasm.



### Supreme Council Flag Program

Show your pride in Masonic America by purchasing an American flag flown over the House of the Temple in Washington, D.C. Proceeds from all purchases will go to the Scottish Rite Foundation, S.J., U.S.A., Inc., to support philanthropic efforts such as the RiteCare Scottish Rite Childhood Language Program, grants, scholarships, and national disaster relief.

Purchased flags will come folded and with a certificate of authenticity signed by the Sovereign Grand Commander and Grand Executive Director. Two display options will be available, with or without frame. The details of the program are being finalized. For more information, contact Caitlyn Kent of the Development Office at 202-777-3111 or [ckent@scottishrite.org](mailto:ckent@scottishrite.org).



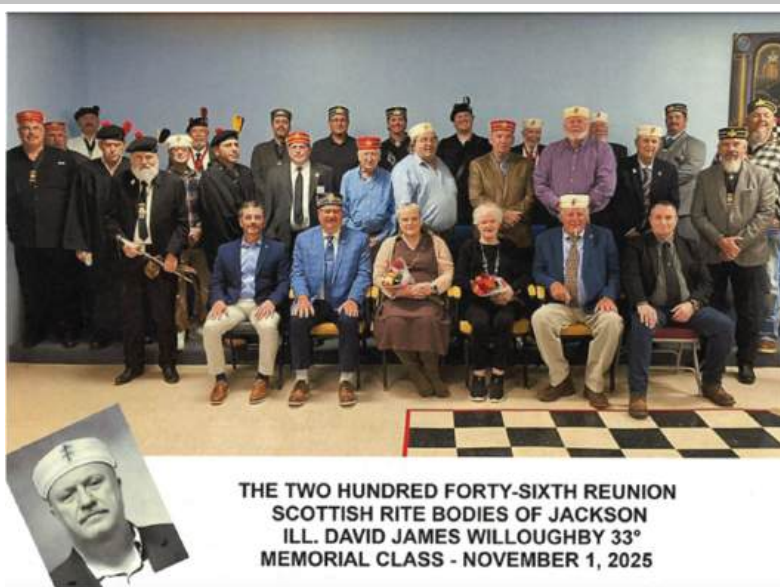
# THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

## VALLEY OF HATTIESBURG

Some of the new elected Valley officers for the 2026 Masonic Year are:

Venerable Master	Lester Ivy, 32° KCCH	Personal Rep.	Lane Dossett, 33°
Wise Master	Chris Rounsaville, 32° KCCH	Personal Rep. Emeritus	Joe Vawters, 33° GC
Commander	Art Patrick, 33°	Treasurer	John Smith, 32°
Master of Kadosh	Rex Hasty, 33°	Secretary	Larry Robinson, 33°
		Almoner	Jason Jefcoat, 32° KCCH

## VALLEY OF JACKSON



## VALLEY OF MERIDIAN



The Valley held its annual Pancake Day fundraiser on December 5, 2025, to support our area Dyslexia programs. Thanks to all that purchased plates and worked that day to ensure that we can continue to support the Dyslexia programs year after year.

# THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

## EVENT CALENDAR

Fri Dec 19 - Valley of Gulfport Stated  
Sat Dec 20 - St. Leonard RC  
Thu Dec 25 - Christmas Day

Sat Dec 27 - Feast of St. John  
Wed Dec 31 - New Year's Eve

Thu Jan 1 - New Year's Day  
Thu Jan 1\* - Valley of Meridian Stated  
Fri Jan 2 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated  
Sat Jan 3 - Valley of Gulfport Breakfast  
Tue Jan 6 - Valley of Jackson Stated

Thu Jan 8 - Valley of Corinth Stated  
Fri Jan 16 - Valley of Gulfport Stated  
Mon Jan 19 - MLK/REL Day  
Wed Jan 21 - Feast of Kadosh

Tue Feb 3 - Valley of Jackson Stated  
Thu Feb 5 - Valley of Meridian Stated  
Fri Feb 6 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated  
Sat Feb 7 - Valley of Gulfport Breakfast  
Thu Feb 12 - Valley of Corinth Stated

Mon Feb 16 - Presidents Day  
Fri Feb 20 - Valley of Gulfport Stated  
Tue/Wed/Thu Feb 24-26 - Miss. Grand  
Lodge Annual Communication

Tue Mar 3 - Valley of Jackson Stated  
Tue Mar 3 - Valley of Clarksdale Stated  
Thu Mar 5 - Valley of Meridian Stated  
Fri Mar 6 - Valley of Hattiesburg  
Sat Mar 7 - Valley of Gulfport Breakfast

Sun Mar 8 Daylight Savings Begins  
Thu Mar 12 - Valley of Corinth Stated  
Fri Mar 20 - Valley of Gulfport Stated  
Sun Mar 29 - Palm Sunday

Wed Apr 1 - Passover Begins  
Thu Apr 2 - Maundy Thursday  
Thu Apr 2 - Valley of Meridian Stated  
Fri Apr 3 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated  
Sun Apr 5 - Easter  
Tue Apr 7 - Valley of Jackson Stated

Tue Apr 7 - Valley of Clarksdale Stated  
Thu Apr 9 - Valley of Corinth Stated  
Fri Apr 17 - Valley of Gulfport Stated  
Sat Apr 18 - Meridian Spring Reunion  
Fri/Sat Apr 24-25 - Corinth Spring Reunion  
Mon Apr 27 - Confederate Memorial Day

The Supreme Council's Master Craftsman College has a new, free course for candidates and newly-made Prince of the Royal Secret. "The Ivory Key" is a short course that will help initiates get the most out of their Scottish Rite Reunion experience. Plus, it is a great refresher course for all. Enroll at [mastercraftsmancollege.org](http://mastercraftsmancollege.org)

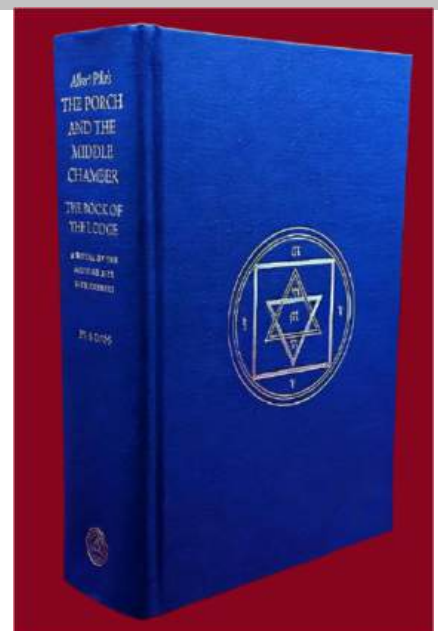


# THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI



We have mini-courses  
and master courses

Master Craftsman®  
Online College &  
Leadership Academy



**ACACIA GUILD**

5 REASONS TO JOIN

- 01 TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION
- 02 SUPPORTS HOUSE OF THE TEMPLE PRESERVATION
- 03 SUPPORTS RITECARE CHILDHOOD LANGUAGE PROGRAM
- 04 INVITED TO LIVE ZOOM DISCUSSIONS WITH GRAND COMMANDER
- 05 BEAUTIFUL STERLING SILVER SERIALLY NUMBERED NECK JEWEL

\$1000 or just \$83.33/month for 12 months - Tax-Deductible Contribution



Rex C. Hasty §\*\*  
Matt B. Mahan §\*  
Arthur L. Patrick §\*  
Chester L. Finley §  
R. Lane Dossett §  
Ben B. Jones II \*\*  
Jude A. Loya \*\*  
Jeffrey S. Guice \*  
John B. McKelvy \*  
Billy W. Sloan  
James A. Birdsong

Hattiesburg  
Meridian  
Hattiesburg  
Gulfport  
Hattiesburg  
Jackson  
Meridian  
Gulfport  
Gulfport  
Gulfport  
Gulfport

James A. Case  
Xerxes Z. Herrington II  
Kyle L. Jordan  
Dillian C. Knight  
Joe W. Vawters  
Frank V. Walker III  
Wilson A. Windham  
Stephen E. Yon  
Freddie C. Zehner

Gulfport  
Hattiesburg  
Jackson  
Corinth  
Hattiesburg  
Jackson  
Gulfport  
Gulfport  
Hattiesburg

\* = 1 renewal; § = 3 renewals