



THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL

SCOTTISH RITE BODIES ORIENT OF MISSISSIPPI

Vol 3, Issue 2

Apr/May/Jun

COMMANDER'S QUOTE



“A leader is one who chooses to aid his team, his constituents, or his brethren in avoiding problems, and he goes out of his way to lead them around potholes in the road. Showing mercy as a leader means overlooking perceived slights, no matter the source.”

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

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A MESSAGE FROM

**Ill. Billy W.
Sloan, 33°
SGIG**



**RENEWED IN
PURPOSE AND
FELLOWSHIP**

As I write this, we have celebrated Easter and the April Showers have brought us the May flowers. Spring is a time of renewal as everything begins to turn dark dreary to beautiful colors. It also signifies the beginning of new and reminds us of the Risen Saviour who through him provides eternal life. The act of Rising after three days and defeating death gives us hope in all things. We just have to believe in him for our rewards that are being laid up for us.

It is also the time for our Spring Reunions which have been accomplished. CONGRATUALIONS to Hattiesburg Valley for their eight candidates this Spring. Every Valley but one has multiple candidates and thus begins a new chapter in their masonic life as well as each Valley. It is now that we celebrate with them the decision to join the Scottish Rite and further their education through our Rituals, online courses, and fel-

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 Dosssett, 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 Dosssett, 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 Jul-Sep newsletter must be received no later than mid August 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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-lowship with well informed Brethern. Let us not allow them to sit on the sideline or become complacent. Let us seek out their talents and desires and find a place to utilize them, to help them to grow and assist our Valleys in our work.

All new candidates are encouraged to complete the Ivory Key course within the first three months for free. You can then share with the Valley what a great course it is. Everyone else can take the course for a fee of \$33. Afterward you will receive a nice ivory key lapel pin to proudly display.

This is our Nation's 250th birth year and we should all be celebrating or planning a celebration to remind everyone of our great country and the progress we have made during these past years in developing as a nation and world power. We have been the beacon for love and peace to the rest of the world for many years. Even though our nation has not been perfect, it has proven to be the model for all human beings in their rights for freedom.

This is also the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite Southern Jurisdiction's 225th birthyear. Your Supreme Council has plans to celebrate it in our birth city of Charleston, South Carolina during the weekend of May 30th. We will live stream our special session and revisit some historical items regarding our Rite. You are all invited to tune in and observe or watch it a later date if you wish.

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 \$5 donation, you will receive a numbered magnolia to add to your pin. Please keep this program in mind when making future donations.

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.

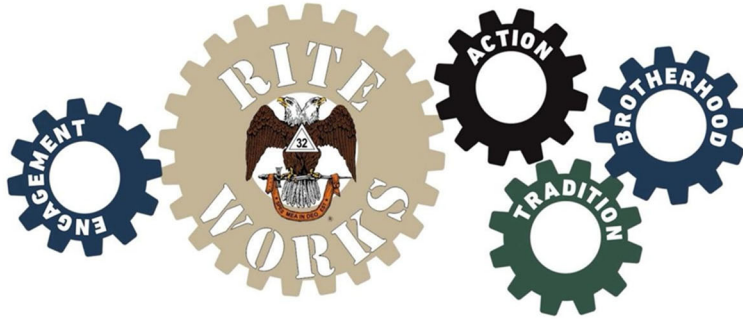
Fraternally,



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



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2026 IN-PERSON CONFERENCES

Las Vegas, NV
March 5th -7th

Dallas, TX
March 26th -28th

Charlotte, NC
April 9th -11th

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

I had an amazing time this spring traveling with our SGIG, Ill. Bill Sloan, to the Scottish Rite Conferences in Las Vegas, Dallas, and Charlotte. Bro. Bill did an outstanding job managing the conferences as the facilitator, and he represented our Orient well.

I had the pleasure and honor of presenting on how Masonic education can be used as a tool for member recruitment and engagement. I learned a lot presenting on this topic and was able to catch up on all the happenings behind the scenes of the Master Craftsman Online College ("MCOC"), a few of which I'd like to share with you.

First, just a reminder, the MCOC is open to all Master Masons, **NOT** just Scottish Rite Masons. This is an excellent tool for Blue Lodge Ambassadors when presenting the Scottish Rite to their local Lodges. Please let me know if you would like a promotional code, and I can send you one so that members of your Lodge can try one of the classes for free. One of the new classes that is designed for Blue Lodge members is the Master's Steps, which covers Blue Lodge History, Ritual, and Symbolism. It is a

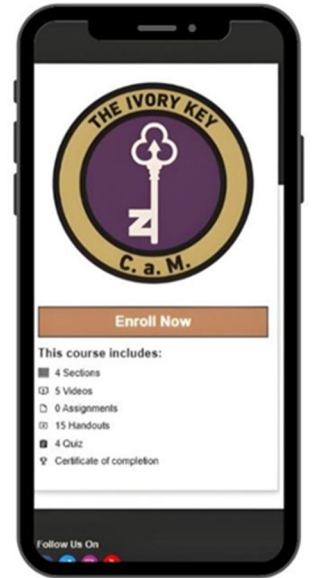


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great course for both the new Master Mason and anyone beginning a journey into online Masonic study.

Another new course is the Ivory Key, which is designed as an introduction for the new Scottish Rite Mason. It can be likened to a Scottish Rite 101 course. The great thing about this course is that it is absolutely free for new Scottish Rite Masters of the Royal Secret for 60 days, which is a \$33 value!



Just in time for the 250th anniversary of our

country, there are five new courses out on Americanism, which cover everything from early Masonic influences in civic offices to the Declaration of Independence. The fifth and final course was released on Sunday, April 5, 2026, and, by the next day, eleven people had already completed all five courses. Those who complete all five courses receive a special commemorative lapel pin. Any of these courses may be of interest to Blue Lodge members. One of the funny easter eggs I learned was that the price of the first 4 courses is \$1, \$7, \$7, and \$6, for the year 1776.

The Supreme Council is working with the George Washington Masonic Memorial to create a course on George Washington, which is expected to be released this summer. Successful completion of this course also comes with a lapel pin.



I accidentally opened my mouth, and now I have been tasked with creating an introductory course on the Kabbalah. I have already received a great deal of help from Bro. Stephen Bush, 32°. I'm looking forward to working on this project, as well as working with some brilliant practicing kabbalists I've recently had the pleasure of meeting.

There will be a special event commemorating the 225th anniversary of the formation of the Supreme Council on May 31, 2026, that will be streamed live online. This event will include a special called opening of the Supreme Council in Charleston, SC. Relatedly, on June 1, 2026, the movie, movie, Eleven Gentle-

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men will be released for purchase from the bookstore, as well as a special commemorative coin.

My wife was able to join me during the Las Vegas conference, and we both had a great time touring the city. I was shocked to be able to get her on a moped, and we went on a guided tour of Red Rock Canyon. It was great seeing old friends at each of these conferences.

There will be a special presentation for the 25th anniversary of 9/11 consisting of the four Supreme Councils in America (Northern, Southern, and Northern and Southern Prince Hall). They have joined together and will present a six-figure donation to the Tunnel to Towers Foundation to aid the families of New York first responders. This organization does amazing things. As just one example, they recently paid off the mortgages for the first three soldiers killed in action during the current Iranian conflict.



SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE SCOTTISH RITE
225TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL SESSION



MOTHER COUNCIL OF THE WORLD
LIVE FROM CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

LIVE STREAM EVENT

 **@SCOTTISHRITEMASONS**

May 31, 2026
BEGINNING AT 1PM EASTERN



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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.

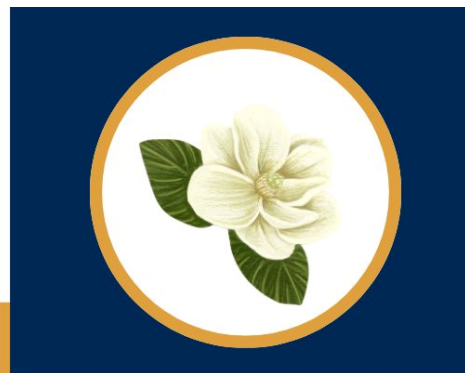


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MISSISSIPPI SCOTTISH RITE MAGNOLIA

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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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE 225TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL, 33°,
A. & A. SCOTTISH RITE OF FREEMASONRY, SOUTHERN JURISDICTION, USA
SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2026, AT 2 P.M. ET, IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA**

THIS APPROXIMATELY TWO-HOUR VIRTUAL EVENT WILL BE LIVE-STREAMED
ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL: [HTTPS://SMS.SCOTTISHRITE.ORG/225LIVE](https://sms.scottishrite.org/225live)



TUNE IN BEGINNING AT 1 P.M. FOR SPECIAL PRE-EVENT CONTENT.

**VALLEYS AND SCOTTISH RITE CLUBS ARE ENCOURAGED TO PLAN
WATCH PARTIES AND JOIN IN THIS CELEBRATION VIRTUALLY.**

For a candidate that joins the Scottish Rite this year and for the Brother that top-line signs his petition, you will receive this commemorative challenge coin that celebrates both the 250th anniversary of our country and the 225th anniversary of the Scottish Rite! Spread the word!



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VALLEY OF CLARKSDALE

VALLEY OF CORINTH



In Corinth, the Knights of St. Andrew were quite busy. From Marid Gras parades in February to Valley Spring Reunion to raising money at Tupelo-Con and holding a raffle for Camp Rising Sun, there efforts yielded \$471 in donations, five blue lodge applications and two Scottish Rite applications. Located near Tupelo, Camp Rising Sun is a Christ-centered non-profit organization that provides a free, one-week summer camp for children ages 6-16 who are currently in or have previously been treated for cancer. Also included here are photos from the Ceremony of Remembrance and Renewal and the Spring Reunion.

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VALLEY OF GULFPORT

Musings of a Masonic Mouse

- You can be the best Ritualist a Lodge has ever seen, having done glorious and wonderful things over and over again but just remember, one act can change it all. “Silly” is forever.
- One Monkey (or Mouse) “don’t” stop No show.
- If at first you don’t succeed, make the leftovers into a casse-
role.



The Gulfport Valley will be working on recruitment, engaging members and retention. We are also going to hold practices on how to open, close, and conduct business in the 14 ° Degree. Work on new ways to keep member involved in Scottish Rite. One event that is helping our Valley is the Breakfast on the first Saturday of each month. Some members have talked about playing cards after breakfast. Pictured here are photos from the Spring Reunion with the Valley of Hattiesburg and the Valley’s April 17 Cap and Ring Ceremony.

MASONIC AMERICA 250
★ **FLAG PROGRAM** ★
FLY A FLAG AT THE HOUSE OF THE TEMPLE



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VALLEY OF HATTIESBURG



With the assistance of Ill. Eddie LeBoeuf III, 33°, the Valley held an exemplification of the Scottish Rite Rose Croix Funeral service at Petal Lodge No. 516 on April 3. On April 11, the Hattiesburg Valley held their Spring Reunion in conjunction with Gulfport Valley. Hattiesburg was extremely proud to have eight candidates at the reunion who became Masters of the Royal Secret.

The members had a great time with several members performing new parts in the degrees for the first time. "Dexter" showed up to the 30th Degree to play the Departed Spirit wearing mismatched socks. He claims he got dressed before daylight in the dark but, as a bachelor, we are uncertain as to why his light switch doesn't work.



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VALLEY OF JACKSON

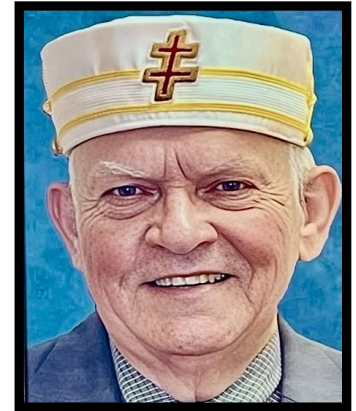


The Valley of Jackson in action: officer installations, Feast of Kadosh and Order of the Double Eagle awards, the Ceremony of Remembrance and Renewal, ten JROTC Awards presentations and the Spring Reunion honoring the late Hon. Tim Martin, 32° KCCH.

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VALLEY OF MERIDIAN

On April 18, 2026, the Meridian Valley hosted its 2026 Spring Reunion, in honor of our late General Secretary, III. Don Robert Wade, 33, who died on February 10, 2026. Three new brothers were initiated into our Valley. Additionally, we presented a 50-year pin and certificate to Hon. Brad Sykes, 32° KCCH. We enjoyed two delicious dinners, a wonderful day, and wonderful company with our brothers. We are quite proud of our new brothers, who are excited to participate in our Valley and learn more about the Scottish Rite.



Terry Lewis 33°, Personal Representative, Doug McLain, Chris Hollingsworth, John A. Hicks, W. R. (Bill) Fortenberry 32° KCCH, Valley General Secretary



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EVENT CALENDAR

May 1 Valley of Hattiesburg Stated
May 3 Valley of Jackson Reunion
May 5 Valley of Clarksdale Stated
May 5 Valley of Jackson Stated

May 7 Valley of Meridian Stated
May 12 Valley of Corinth Stated
May 15 Valley of Gulfport Stated
May 31 Supreme Council 225th Ann

Jun 2 Valley of Clarksdale Stated
Jun 2 Valley of Jackson Stated
Jun 4 Valley of Meridian Stated
Jun 5 Valley of Hattiesburg Stated

Jun 9 Valley of Corinth Stated
Jun 19 Valley of Gulfport Stated
Jun 21 Father's Day
Jun 24 St. John's Feast

Jul 2 Valley of Meridian Stated
Jul 3 Valley of Hattiesburg Stated
Jul 3 Independence Day (observed)
Jul 4 Independence Day

Jul 7 Valley of Clarksdale Stated
Jul 7 Valley of Jackson Stated
Jul 14 Valley of Corinth Stated
Jul 17 Valley of Gulfport Stated

Aug 4 Valley of Clarksdale Stated
Aug 4 Valley of Jackson Stated
Aug 6 Valley of Meridian Stated

Aug 7 Valley of Hattiesburg Stated
Aug 11 Valley of Corinth Stated
Aug 21 Valley of Gulfport Stated

Sep 1 Valley of Clarksdale Stated
Sep 1 Valley of Jackson Stated
Sep 3 Valley of Meridian Stated
Sep 4 Valley of Hattiesburg Stated

Sep 7 Labor Day
Sep 8 Valley of Corinth Stated
Sep 18 Valley of Gulfport Stated

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

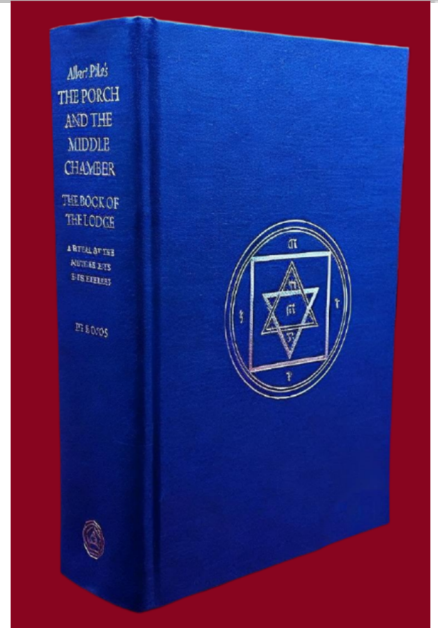


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and master courses

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Online College &
Leadership Academy



ACACIA GUILD

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James A. Birdsong *
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John B. McKelvy *
Billy W. Sloan

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Gulfport
Hattiesburg
Jackson
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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