

THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF SCOTTISH RITE BODIES OF THE
ORIENT OF MISSISSIPPI



Vol 2, Issue 2

May/Jun/Jul

COMMANDER'S QUOTE



"The sun can teach us a valuable lesson--we must be patient in dealing with a cold attitude. It takes waiting a time with patience for the light and warmth to penetrate beyond what might be an icy exterior."

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.

2025 Lodge of Perfection Meetings

Clarksdale, 1st Tuesday of each month

Mar 4, Apr 1, May 6, Jun 3, Jul 1, Aug 5, Sep 2,
Oct 7, Nov 4

Corinth, 2nd Thursday of each month

Jan 9, Feb 13, Mar 13*, Apr 10, May 8, Jun 12,
Jul 10, Aug 14, Sep 11, Oct 9, Nov 13, Dec 11

Gulfport, 3rd Friday of each month

Jan 17, Feb 21, Mar 21, Apr 18, May 16, Jun 20,
Jul 18, Aug 15, Sep 19, Oct 17, Nov 21, Dec 18

Hattiesburg, 1st Friday of each month

Jan 3, Feb 7, Mar 7, Apr 4, May 2, Jun 6,
Jul 4*, Aug 1, Sep 5, Oct 3, Nov 7, Dec 5

Jackson, 1st Tuesday of each month

Jan 7, Feb 4, Mar 4, Apr 1, May 6, Jun 3,
Jul 1, Aug 5, Sep 2, Oct 7, Nov 4, Dec 2

Meridian, 1st Thursday 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

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° (Meridian).....(601) 616-5964

THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSIPPI

A MESSAGE FROM

**Ill. Billy W.
Sloan, 33°
SGIG**



**REUNIONS
DEVELOP
AND
DELIVER**

Brethren,

Our spring reunions have come and gone, and we have placed in our archives the names of seventeen new Masters of the Royal Secret within our Orient. It was a pleasure for me to visit the four Valleys that held these reunions and visit with old friends, meet new friends, and share stories and experiences.

What defines a Reunion is an instance of two or more people coming together again after a period of separation,” or “a social gathering attended by members of a certain group of people who have not seen each other for some time” or “the act or process of being brought together again as a unified whole”.

I am sure that each of us can define what a reunion means to each one independently. What does it mean to your Valley? Are you part of the Valley family who enjoys getting together and performing the ritual or observing

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 Aug-Oct 2025 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.

THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

the performance. Do you enjoy setting up the props or cooking the meals? Whatever part you play, it is important to your Valley. The relationships you establish and maintain are also important to your Valley and the Scottish Rite Family.

In the days gone by, there were days of long separation between meetings and Reunions. People could not travel long distances very quickly and the gathering meant a lot to people in catching up. Today, we have many things competing for our time and effort—and it shows. Sometimes I long for the days when my father would take my brother and me to visit the neighbors and sit on the porch talking. Many subjects were discussed while we played within ear-shot. As a young boy, I was introduced to many different things which helped in my development and understanding of how the world moved in my community and the country.

Our Reunions offer the same sort of development. I am able to see the different things that matter in each Valley by the different members and how it impacts the local atmosphere compared to across the State. More importantly, it gives me the insight I need to represent you as a member of the Supreme Council.

The Biennial Sessions of the Supreme Council is another Reunion and accomplishes much the same. Our Council is like one family, and we catch up on things happening in each other's Orients and families. Although a lot of work performed during this period, many ties are strengthened and friendships grow stronger. I hope that you feel the same way about your Reunions. I also hope that our newest members are welcomed and feel invited to return and become "a part of the family".

I am looking forward to the Session in DC this year and hope that you consider attending. The registration is now open for any member of the Scottish Rite to attend. It is an opportunity to visit YOUR house of the Temple and see firsthand the great things we are doing. I hope to see you there. If not, then at a stated meeting or the next Reunion. Let's get to know one another!!



Ill. Billy W. Sloan, 33°

Sovereign Grand Inspector General
in the Orient of Mississippi



THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSIPPI



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The Headless Chicken and Masonry

In Judaism, there is a Talmudic expression, "Psik Reisha" (פסיק רישא). "Psik" means "cut" and "Reisha" means "head." Taken together, it means "to cut off the head." The expression signifies that an action, while not inherently forbidden, will inevitably result in a prohibited consequence.

According to the story, as told by Rambam (Hilkhos Shabbat 1:6), a father needs a ball or toy for his child to play. Being on the sabbath, this is a perfectly acceptable activity. There being no toy that can be found, he cuts the head off of a chicken to give to the boy. He did not mean for the chicken to die (slaughtering is prohibited on the sabbath), but rather he only wanted to supply a toy for his child. The death of the chicken was an unintended consequence. Maimonides notes that, although his desire was pure, the man knew that "it [was] obvious that it is impossible for the head of a living being to be cut off and for that being to survive." Therefore, the man was found to be liable for the unintentional consequences of his actions, even though his intentions were laudable.

Within Masonry, we too have obligations and codes of conduct to follow, and our fellowship is not dissimilar from the ritualistic holy sabbath practices of Judaism. The Grand Master and Worshipful Master each have one overriding directive: to preserve harmony and brotherly love. Period. All other laws and regulations are secondary. Many jurisdictions within our fraternity have forgotten this principle, which has led to unintended consequences, namely very bad, very public, petulant squabbles. This has been seen most recently in the Grand Encampment with the Grand Master being removed before the end of



THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

his term in office; in Texas, with line officers being rejected; and in Arkansas with the Grand Master's findings being summarily stricken. Florida, stay tuned...

In a lot of ways, Masonry today has had to adopt a *Psik Reisha* mindset, which I learned in the York Rite Past Master's Degree. This Degree teaches that the right thing done the wrong way will still cause chaos. My Grand Cross Masonic mentor phrases it the "Cowboy way." After watching Masonic politics play out years ago, his simple explanation of the "Cowboy way" made perfect sense. As with the Star Wars Force, you either understand it at a core level or you do not. There is the Cowboy way (which we were able to witness in Hattiesburg by the exemplification of the NMJ 19th Degree), and then there's the way of all others.

Within the context of Masonic nomenclature, we find knights, swords, commanders, and everything necessary for a fanciful adventurous quest of testosterone infused violence. However, genuine Masonry, which one Grand Master reminded me was a "Genteel Craft," is not truly such a brute beast. Rather, the wars we rage are against ourselves, not each other.

We will soon be gathering again for Honors Weekend, and it is worth noting that the Knight Commander Court of Honour is invested with the *Zennar* or Sacred Thread "without a sword." This ritual reminds us that Masonic Knights are men of Honorable Peace (with Peace being capitalized within the ritual, presumably for emphasis).

As our new officers take their seat within the Grand Lodge and our local officers find their foothold, let us remember to be men of Honorable Peace. Let us remember that even if we do the right thing, there may be unintended consequences for which we are still, nonetheless, responsible. Rather than an outer war with unintentional consequences, may we fight an inner war with the intentional consequence of peace and prosperity, lest we become a headless chicken.

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



THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

EVENT CALENDAR

Sun May 11 - Mothers Day
Fri May 16 - Valley of Gulfport Stated
Fri-Sat May 16-17 - Grand YR Bodies
Assembly

Mon May 26 - Memorial Day
Thu May 29 - Ascension
Fri May 30 - Feast of the Consistory

Mon June 2 - Shavuot
Tue Jun 3 - Valley of Clarksdale Stated
Tue Jun 3 - Valley of Jackson Stated
Thu Jun 5 - Valley of Meridian Stated
Fri Jun 6 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated
Sat Jun 7 - Valley of Gulfport Breakfast
Sun Jun 8 - Pentecost
Thu-Sat June 12-14 - YR SE Conference
Thu Jun 12 - Valley of Corinth Stated

Sat Jun 14 - Corinth KSA Blood Drive
Sat Jun 14 - Flag Day
Sun Jun 15 - Fathers Day
Thu Jun 19 - Juneteenth
Fri Jun 20 - Valley of Gulfport Stated
Sat Jun 21 - Meridian YR Festival
Tue Jun 24 - St John the Baptist Feast
Sat Jun 28 - Congressional School -
Greenville #206

Tue Jul 1 - Valley of Clarksdale Stated
Tue Jul 1 - Valley of Jackson Stated
Thu Jul 3 - Valley of Meridian Stated
Fri Jul 4* - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated/
Gordian Knot
Fri Jul 4 - Independence Day

Sat Jul 5 - Valley of Gulfport Breakfast
Thu Jul 10 - Valley of Corinth Stated
Sat Jul 12 - YR College/ St. Leonard RC
Fri Jul 18 - Valley of Gulfport Stated
Sat Jul 26 - Congressional School -
E J Knox King Solomon #130

Fri Aug 1 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated/
Feast of Manifesto
Sat Aug 2 - Congressional School -
McLeod Lodge #424
Sat Aug 2 - Valley of Gulfport Breakfast
Sun Aug 3 - Tisha B'Av

Tue Aug 5 - Valley of Clarksdale Stated
Tue Aug 5 - Valley of Jackson Stated
Thu Aug 7 - Valley of Meridian Stated
Thu Aug 14 - Valley of Corinth Stated
Fri Aug 15 - Valley of Gulfport Stated

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE
2025 BIENNIAL SESSION
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ONLINE REGISTRATION OPENS MAY 1.

THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

VALLEY OF CLARKSDALE

VALLEY OF CORINTH

The Valley of Corinth is thankful for all the help from our members in making such a successful reunion weekend. The Valley conferred 13 new Masters of the Royal Secret! The KSA, the cooking crew, the sound room, the stage crew, wardrobe and the degree teams played a major part in our success. Special thank you to our SGIG Bill Sloan and Lady Karen and also Lady Bonnie Thomas for making it so attractive. The KSA will hold a blood drive on June 14 at the Masonic Center in Corinth.

It is with a sad heart that we mourn the passing of our beloved brothers: Bro. Dale Martin 32° and Hon. Carleton Love 32° KCCH.

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Knights of St. Andrew Blood Drive
Saturday, June 14, 2025
10:30 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.
Bloodmobile @ Masonic Center
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To schedule an appointment, scan the QR Code or
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The Supreme Council's Master Craftsman College has a new, free course for candidates and newly-made Masters 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

BIENNIAL HONORS WEEKEND
ORIENT OF MISSISSIPPI
OCTOBER 4, 2025
Tupelo, Mississippi



THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSIPPI

VALLEY OF JACKSON



The Valley of Jackson was stunned by the sudden call of Ill. John Diamond Daughtry 33° to the Celestial Lodge above. John served as Valley Secretary for many years and was faithful member—missed by all.

This year, the Valley furnished ten JROTC awards and attended four presentations AT Metro area high schools. For Hon. Bryan Wiley 32° KCCH, this marks his fifth year presenting awards at Madison Central High School. For the family of Bro. Philip Cap 32°, the Germantown High School Marine Corps program holds a personal, intimate significance.

On May 3, three new Masters of the Royal Secret were initiated: Brothers John Miksa, Duane Mitchell, and Ray Herrington. The Valley was also proud to contribute \$5,000 to the Magnolia Speech School. At our May stated meeting, Venerable Master Lamar Hamil 32° KCCH conferred honors during the Valley's Capping ceremony.

THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

VALLEY OF GULFPORT



After the Valley Cap & Ring Ceremony, the Valley transformed the Lodge for Maundy Thursday Ceremony of Remembrance. General Secretary III. James Case 33° read the list of members passed to the Celestial Lodge above.

VALLEY OF HATTIESBURG



THE SECRET SYMBOL OF THE KEY IN MASONRY, LITERATURE, AND IVORY

ARTHUR PATRICK, 32° KCCH, Valleys of Hattiesburg and Gulfport, Mississippi

In his *Historical Landmarks and Other Evidences of Freemasonry* (1846), the venerable Masonic scholar George Oliver writes:

The key is one of the most important symbols of Freemasonry. It bears the appearance of a common metal instrument, confined to the performance of one simple act. [Yet in Freemasonry] it is a most expressive symbol of silence and refers to that system of secrecy [...] which teaches [Masons] to keep a tongue of good report, and



Clavis ad mysterium, or "key to the mysteries."

This passage encourages us to wonder if "secrecy's golden key," had it remained locked, could have shielded Oedipus from his tragic fate.

We also meet with another "golden key" in one of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*—the fairy tales—of the Brothers Grimm. This very short tale, "The Golden Key," reads in its complete form:

In the winter time, when deep within the recesses of the snow lay on the ground, a poor boy was forced to go out on a sledge to fetch wood. When he had gathered it together, and packed it, he

Congratulations to Hon. Arthur Patrick, 32° KCCH, on publication of his article, "The Secret Symbol of the Key in Masonry, Literature, and Ivory," in the May/June issue of the *Scottish Rite Journal*. A member of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge and Scottish Rite Research Society, Brother Patrick has been active in the Master Craftsman On-Line College. He most recently enrolled in "*The Porch & The Middle Chamber: A Ritual of the Scottish Rite Blue Degrees*."

THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

VALLEY OF MERIDIAN



On April 19, the Valley of Meridian initiated five new Masters of the Royal Secret with the Ill. George Larry Woodward 33° Memorial Class: Brothers Jamie Crout, Scott Kohrs, Nicky Nowell, Frederick Poole, and Robert Smith.

On May 1, the Valley held its Cap and Ring ceremony with a special guest in attendance, Ill. Mitchell Hensley 33°, Donor Officer (South) for the Supreme Council and Executive Director of the Arkansas Scottish Rite Foundation.

General Secretary W. R. "Bill" Fortenberry, General Secretary won our crazy sock contest. Micky McMahan felt cheated.



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* = 1 renewal; \$ = 3 renewals