



# THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF SCOTTISH RITE BODIES OF THE  
ORIENT OF MISSISSIPPI



Vol 1, Issue 2

Feb/Mar/Apr

## COMMANDER'S QUOTE



**"We can, by working together, rid ourselves of the debris and distractions of life that may cling to us, so that each of us can become a better shining tool of the Supreme Architect ."**

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

## 2024 Lodge of Perfection Meetings

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

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

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

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

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

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

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, 32° KCCH (Hattiesburg).....(601) 603-0139  
Bill Sellers, 33° IGH (Jackson).....(769) 230-5760  
Micky McMahan, 33° IGH (Meridian).....(601) 527-6194



# THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSIPPI

## A MESSAGE FROM

## Ill. Billy W. Sloan, 33° SGIG



## CHANGING TIMES

Another Session and another Honours weekend has occurred and we begin a new chapter for Scottish Rite Masonry throughout our Orient. We were successful in creating eight new 33° Inspector Generals Honorary and sixteen new 32° Knight Commanders of the Court of Honor. Both honors were given by the respective degree teams in Tupelo prior to our Banquet.

This year however is a significant time and a change is happening. After sixteen plus years of performing the 33° Ritual for eight Sessions, our Ritual team is going to be revamped. The Degree Master, Illustrious Brother Steve Wilbur and several of the cast have requested and announced that this was their last and final performance.

The cast has performed this ritual in an exemplary manner comparable to any within the

### 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](mailto:bejonesii@bellsouth.net) or call (601) 927-8479. Whenever possible, please include a high-resolution (300 dpi/PPI) photo with your submission. All submissions must be received at least 45 days before the date of publication. Submissions for the Feb-Apr 2024 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.

## THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSIPPI

Southern Jurisdiction and have received several accolades for their performance. Join me in thanking them for their tireless efforts, complete dedication and commitment to ensure almost flawless execution each and every time. They have poured time, money and personal sacrifice to ensure that their performance was spot on each and every time. WELL DONE MY BRETHREN!!! Thank you all for what you have contributed over the years.

What does that mean for our Orient? Well, it literally means we need to establish a new team with the same dedication and commitment to ensure we can continue to create our own 33° IGHs in the future. That means we are recruiting any 33° IGHs who are willing to work hard and commit themselves to this noble cause to step forward and inform me that they want to be a part of our future that becomes history.

There are 109 eligible members throughout the Orient, but all are not able to perform this service. I will be selecting the team (You old hands are still welcome) and give you the challenge to perform as the previous team has done.

If you believe you want to be a part of the team and are willing to self-sacrifice, work hard and perform, then let me know. Priority will be given to current members and slots remaining will be filled no later than January 2024. The Degree Master will be the Sovereign Grand Commander and will be responsible for team practices, set up and break down of props.

We are also revamping the KCCH ritual to be accomplished in a lodge fashion utilizing the same lodge setup as the IGH lodge. New members will be identified as well. If you are a 32° KCCH and want to participate in that ritual, then let me know as well.

Happy New Year to all and may you be blessed throughout the coming year.

Fraternally yours,



Ill. Billy W. Sloan, 33°

Sovereign Grand Inspector General  
in the Orient of Mississippi

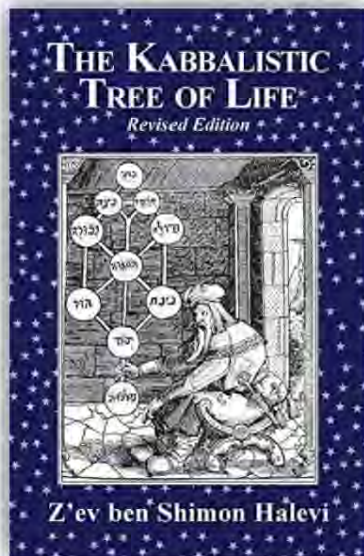




# THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSIPPI

**"Knights of the Bookcase" by Lane Dossett, 33°**  
**From the *Valley of Hattiesburg Communicator*, January 2023**

If you've read a Masonic-related book recently, send us a review! In the Fourth Degree we are introduced to the Kabbalah as a system of mystical thought with a note that its influences may be learned only by study, and that a full understanding of Freemasonry is impossible without familiarity with the Kabbalah. This rings true to me after recently finishing an article for the Tresleboard on the Brazen Pillars. Unfortunately, it's such a large topic that it is almost impenetrable for beginners. I remember many years ago finding it difficult to locate anyone to guide me, but such is not the case today, as educational materials have become more accessible, almost to the point of choice overload. Here is a review of a few books that I've recently read on the subject and my thoughts. When considering Kabbalist texts, it is important to consider that there are three basic types of literature, the theoretical, the meditative, and the magical.



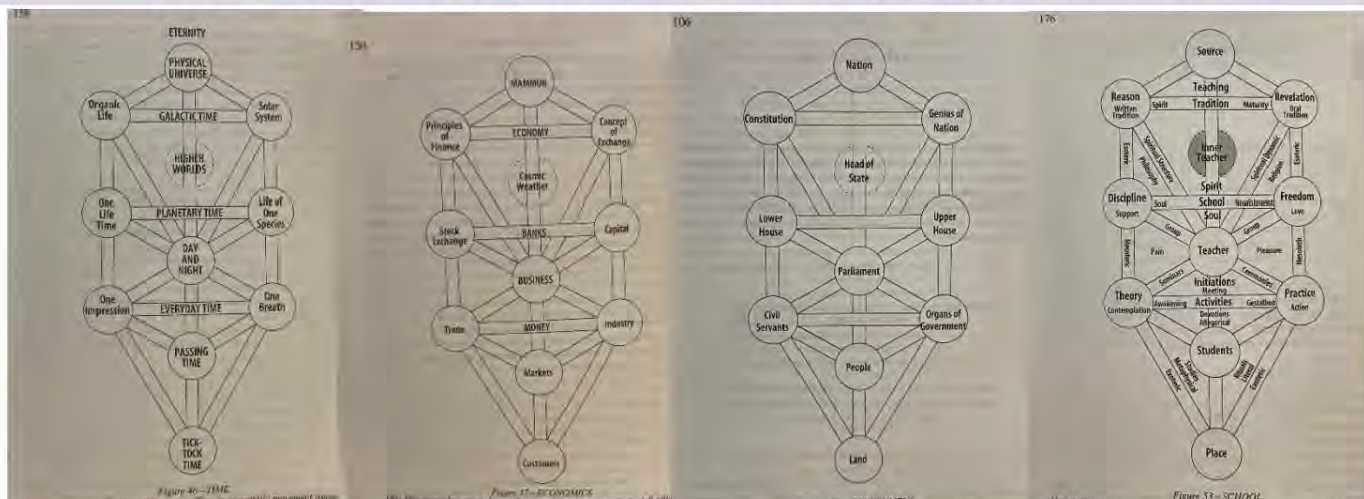
The Kabbalistic Tree of Life by Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi is an excellent place to start for beginners. It is written from a Masonic point of view and considers the wider application of Kabbalistic thought to everyday life. I would award it one thumb up. It begins with a basic overview of the sefirot and their application to man. The book excels, in my view, for its wider application beyond theological concepts, and extends to life in general and the universal application of the Tree of Life, which I believe is the Scottish Rite's general purpose for introducing the Kabbalah. Examples include an explanation of time, economics, forms of government, and schools, just to name a few, as shown by the sample graphs.

The Science of the Kabbalah by Lazare Lenain, translated by Piers A. Vaughn, is a currently trending book in esoteric circles. Originally published in 1823, it has been recently made available in English. It is devoted almost exclusively to magic/magick aspects of the Shem Ha-Mephorash, angelic sigils, and astrology. I would rate this book one thumb down. While the book contains a very detailed description of these items, in my view, it does little if anything to add to a general knowledge of actual Kabbalah, as intended by the Scottish Rite. Approximately 50% of the book consists of tables and graphs related to the Shem.

The Sefer Yetzirah extends back into antiquity, perhaps beyond the written era into oral Hebraic tradition. While there are numerous versions and interpretations of this text,



## THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSIPPI



this version by Kaplan appears to be the current favored edition, as it provides a good, comprehensive analysis of the multiple versions of the text. I would rate it one thumbs up. This book falls into the meditative group, and is principally focused on the symbolism of the Hebrew letters and gematria. This is very much a scholarly book on linguistics, and should be approached only by those interested in the Hebrew language and its mystical significance. I would not consider this a beginner book.

Like the Sefer Yetzirah, there are numerous interpretations of the Zohar, ranging from a single book to a twenty-three volume encyclopedic set. As a foundational Kabbalistic text, I embarked on this journey by first travelling to the University of Southern Mississippi library to compare the various texts. The 12 Volume Stanford University Pritzker Edition immediately stood out as the most recent, comprehensive and easy to work with edition (left to right reading vs. Hebraic right to left, back to front). The Pritzker edition is heavily annotated and oriented for the English reader. The Zohar is considered an early mystic Hebraic commentary on the Torah, and the volumes of this text are accordingly organized in this way. In the Kabbalah, there are considered to be four meanings of biblical texts, which are the literal, allusive, allegorical, and mystical. These books, based on the Old Testament, are anything but a literal commentary. While I have not yet completed the whole set (which can be purchased in individual volumes), it is among the most meaningful books I have ever read. As a lifelong biblical student, this has dramatically increased my appreciation of the Old Testament and the depth of Hebraic mystic thought. I would rate this as two thumbs up, with the caveat that it is a very academic, expensive work for an advanced reader. You can spend weeks on the simple phrase "In the beginning." The first volume will forever change your view of the Masonic initiatic experience of bringing a candidate to Light.





# THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSIPPI

## EVENT CALENDAR

Thu Feb 1 - Valley of Meridian Stated  
Fri Feb 2 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated  
Sat Feb 3 - District School -  
Polar Star #154  
Sat Feb 3 - Valley of Gulfport Breakfast  
Tue Feb 6 - Valley of Jackson Stated  
Thu Feb 8 - Valley of Corinth Stated  
Sat Feb 10 - NE Miss. YR Festival

Fri Feb 16 - Valley of Gulfport Stated  
Sat Feb 17 - Grand Masters Conference of  
North America  
Sat Feb 17 - Super excellent Masters &  
Laurel YR Festival  
Mon Feb 19 - Presidents Day  
Sat Feb 24 - District School - Pontotoc #81

Fri Mar 1 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated  
Sat Mar 2 - District School - Ellisville #161  
Sat Mar 2 - Valley of Gulfport Breakfast  
Tue Mar 5 - Valley of Jackson Stated  
Tue Mar 5 - Valley of Clarksdale Stated  
Thu Mar 7 - Valley of Meridian Stated  
Thu/Fri/Sat Mar 7-9 - Miss. Grand Lodge  
Annual Communication

Sun Mar 10 - Daylight Savings Begins  
Thu Mar 14 - Valley of Corinth Stated  
Fri Mar 15 - Valley of Gulfport Stated  
Sun Mar 24 - Palm Sunday  
Thu Mar 28 - Maundy Thursday  
Sun Mar 31 Easter

Tue Apr 2 - Valley of Jackson Stated  
Tue Apr 2 - Valley of Clarksdale Stated  
Thu Apr 4 - Valley of Meridian Stated  
Fri Apr 5 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated  
Sat Apr 6 - Gulfport Spring Reunion  
Thu Apr 11 - Valley of Corinth Stated  
Sat Apr 13 - St. Boniface Conclave  
Red Cross of Constantine

Sat Apr 13 - Congressional School -  
Plain #22  
Fri Apr 19 - Valley of Gulfport Stated  
Sat Apr 20 - Meridian Spring Reunion  
Mon Apr 22 - Passover Begins  
Fri/Sat Apr 26-27 - Corinth Spring Reunion  
Mon Apr 29 - Confederate Memorial Day

Thu May 2 - Valley of Meridian Stated  
Fri May 3 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated  
Sat May 4 - Jackson Spring Reunion  
Sat May 4 - Valley of Gulfport Breakfast  
Tue May 7 - Valley of Jackson Stated  
Tue May 7 - Valley of Clarksdale Stated  
Thu May 9 - Valley of Corinth Stated

Sat May 11 - Congressional School -  
Hinds #628  
Sun May 12 - Mother's Day  
Fri May 17 - Valley of Gulfport Stated  
Fri/Sat May 17-18 - Grand YR Bodies  
Assembly  
Mon May 27 - Memorial Day  
Fri May 31 - Feast of the Consistory



**Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry  
Southern Jurisdiction of the United States of America**

**Orient of Mississippi**

**Valleys of**

**Clarksdale, Corinth, Gulfport, Hattiesburg, Jackson, Meridian**

**PETITION FOR MEMBERSHIP**

I respectfully petition to receive the degrees from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 32<sup>nd</sup> inclusive, promising always to bear true faith and allegiance to the Supreme Council of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Degree for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States in the Valley of: \_\_\_\_\_.

I am a Master Mason in good standing in \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge No. \_\_\_\_\_ Located at: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Under the Jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of: \_\_\_\_\_

My residence is: \_\_\_\_\_

My mail address is: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (Mobile): \_\_\_\_\_ Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Business: \_\_\_\_\_ Hat size: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name in FULL \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I am a citizen of the State of \_\_\_\_\_, Years resided in State: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you previously applied for the Scottish Rite Degrees? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, when and where? \_\_\_\_\_

The Supreme Council requires acceptance of the following principles:

"The inculcation of patriotism, respect for law and order, undying loyalty to the principles of civil and religious liberty, and the entire separation of church and state as set forth in the Constitution of the United States of America."

I approve of these principles and do not belong to any organization which does not.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommended by: \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

Committee: \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

Fee Received \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Elected: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Notified: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Degrees: \_\_\_\_\_

**TO: Grand Lodge Officers, Past Grand Masters, Honorary Past Grand Masters, Committee Members, D.D.G.L.'s, Ten Year D.D.G.L.'s, and Subordinate Lodge Secretaries:**

Dear Brethren:

Our Most Worshipful Grand Master, Stephen E. Yon, would like to cordially invite all Masons to attend the 206th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge to be held at the Sheraton Flowood Refuge Hotel, located 2200 Refuge Blvd, Flowood, Mississippi on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, **MARCH 7, 8, & 9, 2023.**

**ROOM RESERVATIONS:**

Group names: 2024 Grand Lodge of MS Annual State Conference

Group Code: G24

Rate: \$169.00

Start Date: March 6, 2024

End Date: March 8, 2024

Last Day to Book Room: February 17, 2024, or once the block is full.

**Book by Website:** <https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1699287546986&key=GRP&app=resvlink>

**Book by Phone:** 601 936-4550

**GRAND MASTER'S BANQUET:**

Our Grand Master cordially invites all Masons and their wives to attend the Grand Master's Banquet on Thursday evening, March 7, 2024, at the Sheraton beginning at 7:00 P.M. Attire is 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 Thursday, March 7th. The Deadline to purchase banquet tickets is February 27, 2024.

**SECRETARIES:** Make plans to attend the Secretaries Conference at 3:00 PM on Thursday, March 7, 2024. This is a very important and informative meeting for ALL Lodge Secretaries, new and long-served, young, and old. There is no registration, just show up!

Every Lodge MUST file a 990-N E-Postcard with the IRS every year, no exceptions, or you WILL be hearing from the IRS. The deadline for electronically filing the 990-N is MAY 15, 2020. Be SURE you have remitted for 2020. Email me at [secretary@msgrandlodge.org](mailto:secretary@msgrandlodge.org) and I can forward you information on how to complete this.

If you have not mailed in your 2023 Per Capita Dues to the Grand Lodge Office, this is the last reminder you will receive. They are due on January 10, 2024. If your Lodge Per Capita Dues are NOT paid by the Grand Lodge Annual Communication Meeting, your Lodge will NOT be able to vote.

If you have not done so, enter your Elections in Grand View. Remember you must also INSTALL the officers in Grand View once you hold your installation meeting. If you do not have internet



access, have a member who does enter this information. If you must, send in the paper Special Return. You will need to let the office know when they are installed.

**COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN:** Please start preparing, and be ready to present, your Committee Report at Grand Lodge by having your report already printed when you come to Grand Lodge. Send your Committee Report, typed, in Word format, via email to [manager@msgrandlodge.org](mailto:manager@msgrandlodge.org), as soon as possible and we will be able to copy it directly into the 2024 Grand Master's Address Booklet and the 2024 Grand Lodge Proceedings book. Each Committee Chairman will be receiving individual emails regarding their Report soon.

**SCHOLARSHIPS:** The deadline for submitting 1-year Scholarship Applications is March 15, 2024. No faxed copies accepted. No exceptions! Any applications received after March 15, 2024, will not be considered.

Per our By-Laws, the Annual Meeting of the members of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi Foundation will be held during the 206th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi, F. & A. M.

Sincerely & fraternally,  
Gary B. Jones, Grand Secretary

The following information was left out of the Official Communication of December 12. There will be two (2) menu choices for the Grand Master's Banquet. You may choose Seared Filet Mignon or Grilled Vegetable Stack. On the back of the Banquet Reservation form please indicate which offering prefer. If you are ordering more than one plate, indicate the offering for each person. If you have already mailed in your form, please call, or email the office with your selections.

The Dress requested for the Grand Master's banquet on March 7, 2024, to be revised as formal Men: Tuxedo or Dark Suit if no Tuxedo is available; Women: Long Dress or Palazzo pants and Party Wear Festive Blouse

The Dress requested for the ladies' luncheon on Friday, March 8, 2024, is Church Attire. Also, please bring a Bingo gift valued between \$12.00 and \$15.00.

### **GRAND MASTER'S 2024 BANQUET RESERVATIONS**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

LODGE: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Grand Master's Banquet Ticket(s) \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$60.00 for a total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed.

Wife's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (if attending)

When purchasing tickets for additional people @ \$60.00 each, please list their names on the back of this form, Thank you.

GRAND LODGE OF MISSISSIPPI P.O. BOX 1030 MERIDIAN, MS 39302

## VALLEY OF CLARKSDALE

The best of the Valley of Clarksdale is coming soon. Submit your stories, ideas, news articles, and photos—community or masonic, we celebrate YOU!

## VALLEY OF HATTIESBURG

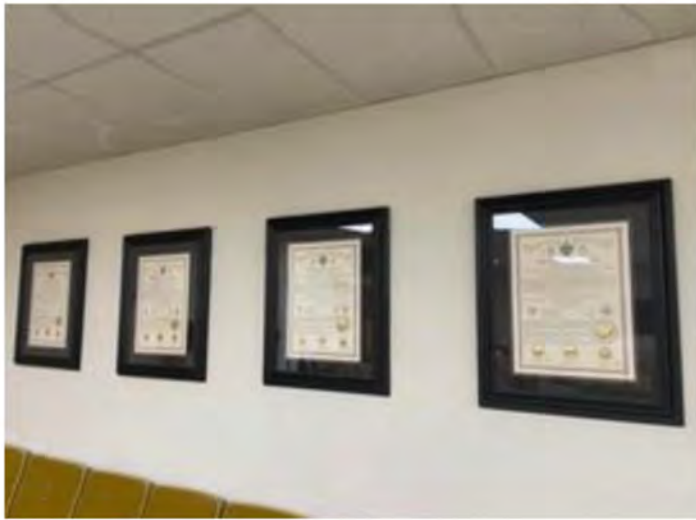


At the December stated, the new Valley officers were installed and new Knight of St. Andrew inducted into the Order. Congratulations to the Knights on their successful toy drive for children at Forrest General Hospital.



Congratulations to Hattiesburg's newest Masters of the Royal Secret!





After three years of due diligence, the Valley of Hattiesburg has all four Scottish Rite Bodies' charters framed and hung.

Brother Scott Mergenschroer, 32°, on receiving his Scottish Rite Patent from Illustrious Brother Lane Dossett, 33°, PR of Hattiesburg





## VALLEY OF CORINTH



Valley of Corinth 2023 Fall Reunion II. Hal Hill 33° Memorial Class (Oct 27-28)



Valley of Corinth Knights of St. Andrew at the Tupelo Christmas Parade (Dec 6)





The Valley of Corinth hosted its Awards Night and Christmas Banquet on Thursday, December 14 at the Masonic Center. Sixty-five were attendance and \$1000 was raised for the Dyslexia Foundation. The Knight of the Double Eagle awards were given to twenty-seven brothers, and patents were presented to the five members of the Fall Reunion class.

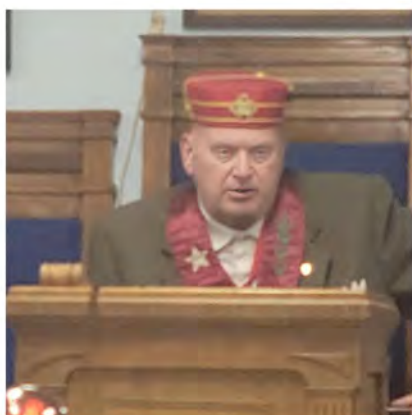
Two brothers were recognized for their contributions. The Valley's Mason of the Year Award went to Brother Joe Ford, 32° KCCH. Brother Ford has held the position of Treasurer and assisted in replacing the Consistory's HVAC equipment and the roof. For the Valley, his leadership and accounting have been crucial. Illustrious Tommy Millsaps, 33° was named Top Fundraiser for leading two major fundraising projects. Through Brother Millsaps' efforts, the Valley has been able to gather the money needed to maintain and repair our building.



## VALLEY OF JACKSON



**THE TWO HUNDRED FORTY-SECOND REUNION  
SCOTTISH RITE BODIES OF JACKSON  
ILL. RONALD BRUCE KILLARY, 33°  
MEMORIAL CLASS – NOVEMBER 4, 2023**



Congratulations to the newly installed officers of the Jackson Valley!



## VALLEY OF GULFPORT

Greetings Brethren from the Valley of Gulfport,

By the time you are reading this the holidays are behind us and we are already into another new year. I trust each of you and your families had a great holiday season and all is well. As we reflect on the past year and look forward to this new year let us all remember how fast the years go by and try to make the best of each and every day.

Congratulations to all of our new Honour Men! The Honours Ceremony in Tupelo was a success. The Valley of Corinth did a great job hosting the event as always. The KCCH and Thirty-third Honors Ceremonies were great. The banquet and fellowship was enjoyed by both the Brothers and our Ladies. We certainly appreciate all the hard work and dedicated Brothers in Corinth that made it all happen. Good job Brothers and thank you.

Following our Fall Reunion the Valley of Hattiesburg hosted the Valley of Gulfport for a joint Cap and Ring Ceremony. The food was good, the fellowship was great, and we certainly enjoyed the Ceremony and the hospitality. Thank you for hosting us and we look forward to continuing to work together with our Brethren in Hattiesburg.

Over the next few months things will be getting busy. Monthly meetings, Grand Lodge, Spring Reunions, Services of Remembrance, Cap and Ring Ceremonies as well as all our other Masonic functions. Our Spring Reunion will be here before we know it so let's start bringing in those petitions. Do each of you have pocket petitions, and keep a few with you? We all know many good Brothers that are not yet Scottish Rite Masons. Let's encourage them to join us and share in our Scottish Rite experience.

Brethren I wish each of you and your families a healthy and prosperous year, and may the Great Architect Of The Universe bless us all in 2024.

Fraternally,

Bruce D. Baker 33°, Personal Representative

## VALLEY OF MERIDIAN

The best of the Valley of Meridian is coming soon. Submit your stories, ideas, news articles, and photos—community or masonic, we celebrate YOU!

# THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSIPPI



Ordo Ab Chao

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## ACACIA GUILD

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NO? ➔ No worries. It's easy!

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SCOTTISH RITE OF FREEMASONRY  
SUPREME COUNCIL, 33° SOUTHERN JURISDICTION, USA

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