

THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL

OFFICAL PUBLICATION OF SCOTTISH RITE BODIES OF THE
ORIENT OF MISSISSIPPI



Vol 1, Issue 5

Nov/Dec/Jan

COMMANDER'S QUOTE



"In Freemasonry we've always talked about 'waiting a time with patience' at critical junctures in our path. If we don't do that in our daily walk, we're going lose the benefit of understanding, self-analysis and personal decision making."

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

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
W.R. "Bill" Fortenberry, 32° (Meridian).....(601) 616-5964

THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

A MESSAGE FROM

**Ill. Billy W.
Sloan, 33°
SGIG**



**THE
REASON
FOR THE
SEASON**

We have just finished celebrating Thanksgiving and we are now moving into the Christmas season of celebration. Thanksgiving has its beginnings back to 1621 when the European settlers and the Native Indians of the Wampanoag Tribe celebrated with a feast lasting three days. The Natives provided deer and the settlers, wild fowl. Both provided the side dishes. Interestingly though, Turkey was not included.

Today, we gather and give thanks for all of the blessings of health, happiness, a great country and the opportunities that we have here in our great country. It also begins the commercialization of the Christmas season and billions of dollars spent on various things.

I would like for all of us to contemplate the real meaning of this “season” at this time and the manner in which it has naturally come to be. I believe that the great Architect of the Universe has truly blessed this country. We complete

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 Feb-Apr 2025 newsletter must be received no later than mid March 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

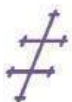
our crops and harvest them in the fall. We then give thanks by celebrating Thanksgiving through many different avenues. My brother, have you thought about what actually follows this event? The greatest gift of all that we as Christians have received. The greatest gift was the birth of Jesus who came into this world as a babe and left this earth thirty-three years later as the King of Jews and our Savior. He died a terrible death, but in so doing, he later arose defeated the tomb of death and provided eternal life for all believers. That was many years ago before the birth of the United States. Our country was established with God as a guide and many of our forefathers understood this.

We have grown as a country through many trials and tribulations and in many ways improved many things. We have usually had great crops, industry and true patriots who continue to see that we keep focused on the right things. Imagine if we could not openly worship our God, meet in our Lodges, share our ideas without fear of being persecuted. I know that we would not like it. Our Freedoms are very precious and I am proud that we have people who will stand up and fight to the end to keep our core values sacred.

Thanks to all of you for your dedication and support of our great country, our fraternities and being a brother. I hope you will remember your obligations that we all gave at the altar, Our Lord who allows us these opportunities to enjoy one another and the blessings we each receive. Without you, some great things may take longer or may not be accomplished at all. Keep each other in your prayers. Love your families and support them and celebrate the great gift of all and give thanks for what it truly means to each of us.

Thanks for being a Scottish Rite Mason and supporting our goals.

P.S. Remember our Scholarship fundraising. Our children will benefit as well as our fraternity because they are our future! Donate now if you can.

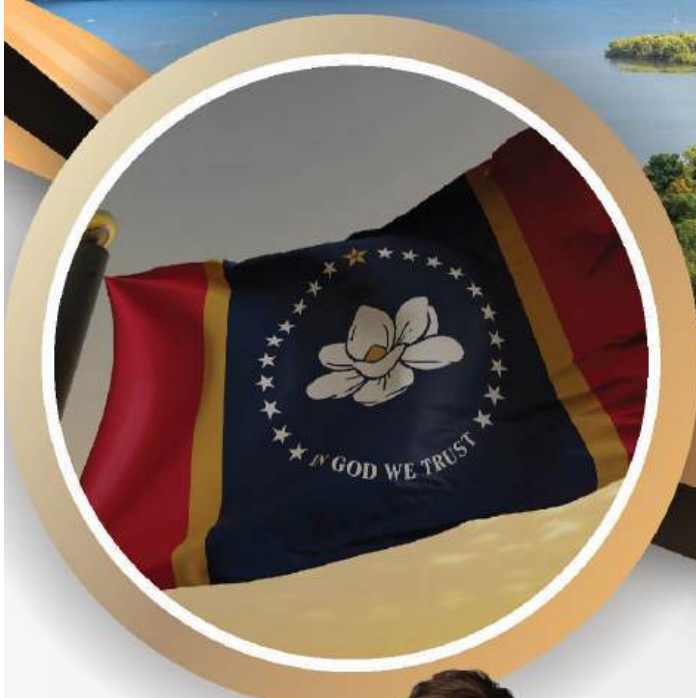


Ill. Billy W. Sloan, 33°

Sovereign Grand Inspector General
in the Orient of Mississippi



THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSIPPI



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THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

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Scottish Rite Valley (If Applicable)

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☐ \$50.00 ☐ \$75.00 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1,000
☐ Other Amount: _____

Example of how to write your check:

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One-thousand and zero cents DOLLARS

MEMO **Orient Scholarship** **John Doe**

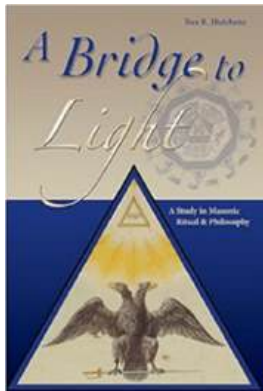
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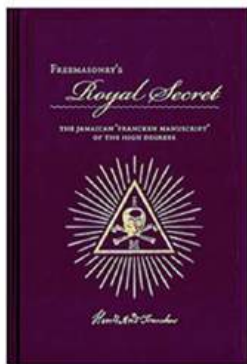
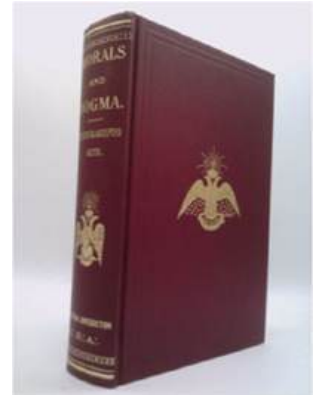
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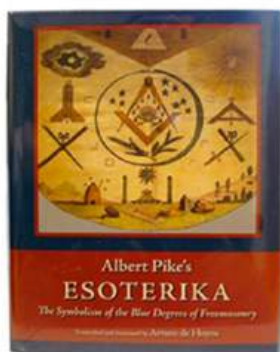
Books Every Scottish Rite Mason Should Have



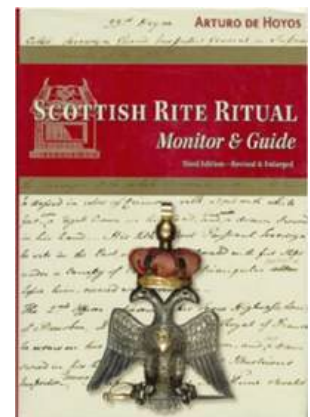
1. *A Bridge to Light* by Dr. Rex R. Hutchens
2. *Morals and Dogma (Annotated Edition)* by Albert Pike and annotated by Arturo de Hoyos



3. *Freemasonry's Royal Secret: the Jamaican "Francken Manuscript" of the High Degrees* by Arturo De Hoyos
4. *The 1783 Francken Manuscript* by Henry Andrew Francken with introductory essays by Allan Foulds, Aimee Newell, and Jeffrey Croteau.



5. *Albert Pike's Esoterika* edited by Arturo De Hoyos
6. *Scottish Rite Ritual Monitor & Guide* by Arturo De Hoyos



Important manuscripts for further research:

- The Regius Poem / Halliwell Manuscript* (c. 1390)
- Matthew Cooke Manuscript* (c. 1450)
- Trinity College, Dublin, Manuscript* (c. 1711)
- The Graham Manuscript* (c. 1726)
- Copiale Manuscript* (c. 1730s)
- Richard Rawlinson's Manuscript / Elias Ashmole's diary entires* (c. 1734)
- Baylot Manuscript* (c. 1750-1760)
- Francken Manuscript* (c. 1764)

THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSIPPI

EVENT CALENDAR

Fri Dec 20 - Valley of Gulfport Stated
Sat Dec 21 - St. Leonard RC
Wed Dec 25 - Christmas Day

Fri Dec 27 - Feast of St. John
Tue Dec 31 - New Year's Eve

Wed Jan 1 - New Year's Day
Thu Jan 2 - Valley of Meridian Stated
Fri Jan 3 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated
Sat Jan 4 - Valley of Gulfport Breakfast
Tue Jan 7 - Valley of Jackson Stated

Thu Jan 9 - Valley of Corinth Stated
Fri Jan 17 - Valley of Gulfport Stated
Mon Jan 20 - MLK/REL Day
Wed Jan 22 - Feast of Kadosh

Sat Feb 1 - Valley of Gulfport Breakfast
Tue Feb 4 - Valley of Jackson Stated
Thu Feb 6 - Valley of Meridian Stated
Fri Feb 7 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated

Thu Feb 13 - Valley of Corinth Stated
Mon Feb 17 - Presidents Day
Fri Feb 21 - Valley of Gulfport Stated

Sat Mar 1 - Valley of Gulfport Breakfast
Tue Mar 4 - Valley of Jackson Stated
Tue Mar 4 - Valley of Clarksdale Stated
Thu Mar 6 - Valley of Meridian Stated
Fri Mar 7 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated

Sun Mar 9 - Daylight Savings Begins
Thu Mar 13* - Valley of Corinth Stated
Thu/Fri/Sat Mar 13-15 - Miss. Grand Lodge
Annual Communication
Fri Mar 21 - Valley of Gulfport Stated

Tue Apr 1 - Valley of Jackson Stated
Tue Apr 1 - Valley of Clarksdale Stated
Thu Apr 3 - Valley of Meridian Stated
Fri Apr 4 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated
Sat Apr 5 - Gulfport Spring Reunion
Thu Apr 10 - Valley of Corinth Stated
Sat Apr 12 - Passover Begins

Sun Apr 13 - Palm Sunday
Thu Apr 17 - Maundy Thursday
Fri Apr 18 - Valley of Gulfport Stated
Sat Apr 19 - Meridian Spring Reunion
Fri/Sat Apr 25-26 - Corinth Spring Reunion
Mon Apr 28 - Confederate Memorial Day

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE
2025 BIENNIAL SESSION
August 17-19, 2025 • Washington, D.C.

THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

M.: W.: Lawrence N. Greenleaf (1838-1922), PGM Grand Lodge of Colorado, has been called "poet laureate of Freemasonry."



"The Temple of Living Stones "

The temple made of wood and stone may crumble and decay,
But there's a viewless Fabric which shall never fade away;

Age after age the Masons strive to consummate the Plan,
But still the work's unfinished which th' immortal Three began;

None but immortal eyes may view, complete in all its parts,
The Temple formed of Living Stones - the structure made of hearts.

'Neath every form of government, in every age and clime;
Amid the world's convulsions and the ghastly wrecks of time, -

While empires rise in splendor, and are conquered and o'erthrown,
And cities crumble into dust, their very sites unknown, -

Beneath the sunny smiles of peace, the threatening frown of strife,
Freemasonry has stood unmoved, with age renewed her life.

She claims her votaries in all climes, for none are under ban
Who place implicit trust in God, and love their fellow man;

The heart that shares another's woe beats just as warm and true
Within the breast of Christian, Mohammedan or Jew;

She levels all distinctions from the highest to the least, -
The King must yield obedience to the Peasant in the East.

What honored names on history's page, o'er whose brave deeds we pore,
Have knelt before our sacred shrine and trod our checkered floor!

Kings, princes, statesmen, heroes, bards who square their actions true,
Between the Pillars of the Porch now pass in long review;

O, Brothers, what a glorious thought for us to dwell upon, -
The mystic tie that binds our hearts bound that of Washington!

Although our past achievements we with honest pride review,
As long as there's Rough Ashlars there is work for us to do;

We must shape the Living Stones with instruments of love
For that eternal mansion in the Paradise above;

Toil as we've toiled in ages past to carry out the plan, -
'Tis this; - the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man!

THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

Plato's Allegory of the Cave and its Parallels to Masonic Education

Hon. Michael Baker, 32° KCCH, Valley of Hattiesburg

Plato's Allegory of the Cave, found in *The Republic*, is a powerful metaphor about human perception, knowledge, and enlightenment. It describes prisoners who have been chained inside a dark cave since birth, unable to move or see anything except the wall in front of them. Behind the prisoners is a fire, and between the fire and the prisoners, people and objects pass whose shadows are cast onto the wall in front of the prisoners. The prisoners take these shadows to be the only reality, as they know nothing else.

One day, a prisoner escapes the cave. At first, he is blinded by the sunlight and confused, struggling to comprehend this new environment. Gradually, his eyes adjust, and he begins to see the world as it truly is—filled with colors, forms, and sunlight. He realizes that the shadows on the wall were mere illusions, a limited and distorted view of reality. The freed prisoner understands that true knowledge comes from seeing things directly, rather than only their shadows or reflections.

When he returns to the cave to share his enlightenment with the other prisoners, they reject his revelations. They are unable to comprehend his descriptions of the outside world and cling to the shadows they have always known. Some even become hostile, believing that the freed prisoner has been harmed or corrupted by leaving the cave.

Many Masons may find themselves in an "intellectual cave," relying on rote memorization of rituals and symbols without context or understanding their deeper meanings. If we do not actively promote education beyond the performance (and practice) of the degrees, members may see only "shadows" of Masonry without having ever made progress in their journey toward self-improvement.

This journey is not always easy and rarely a fast process. Just as the prisoner freed from the cave struggled through the difficult process of unlearning shadows to gain understanding, a Mason might face similar challenges in discovering deeper truths hidden within our rituals and symbols. High quality Masonic education can help us move from the superficial toward the profound, improving our character and becoming the better men to which we profess to aspire. . . .

Masonic education should be an inclusive exercise, inviting others to share and participate in the journey. I would challenge each of us who endeavor to present a topic on Masonic education to emphasize the personal benefit and deeper understanding we gain. Ideally, we should be able to relate the insights we learn to our daily lives and a real-world application of Masonic virtues.

THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

VALLEY OF CLARKSDALE

VALLEY OF CORINTH



SGIG Bill Sloan 33° presents a 50 year cap to Bro. Robert Strickland.

Below, the Valley of Corinth's Scottish Rite Mason of the Year, Bro. Will Scott Jr. 32°, accepting his award.



We'll leave the reader to compose his own caption for this photo the Christmas Party on the left.

THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSIPPI

VALLEY OF CORINTH



2024 Fall Reunion was a resounding success. Congratulations to the new Masters of the Royal Secret!

VALLEY OF GULFPORT

It's that time again. The time of the year when we reflect on the past year, and make our plans for the new one ahead of us.

This past year, working jointly with our sister Valley of Hattiesburg, we had two successful reunions and welcomed several new Brothers into the Scottish Rite. It's always a pleasure to work and fellowship with our Brothers from Hattiesburg. Unfortunately we had several of our Brothers lay down their working tools and enter the Celestial Lodge above. Our thoughts honor their memories and our Prayers are with their families. Let us always remember that we are mortal, and let us cherish the gift of each day of life we are granted.

Looking ahead, in all our Masonic bodies our new officers are busy planning and preparing for this new year and we wish them well. Let's encourage them give them our full support. It won't be long and it will be time for Grand Lodge and our spring reunions. In the Scottish Rite we are always ready to welcome new Brothers to join us. Let's keep a few of those pocket petitions with us and use them to invite a good

Brother to join us.

May the Supreme Grand Master of the Universe bless each of you and your families in this new year.

Fraternally,

Bruce D. Baker 33°

Personal Rep. Valley of Gulfport

BIENNIAL HONORS WEEKEND ORIENT OF MISSISSIPPI

September 13, 2025
Tupelo, Mississippi



THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

VALLEY OF GULFPORT (CONT'D)



2024 Gulfport Valley Fall Reunion at the Gulf Coast Masonic Center

Back row: (l-r) Michael Hession 32°, Cameron Mayers 32°, Kevin M. Byrd 32°, Nathan Hoda 32°; Center row: (l-r) David Baker 32°, David Sucharsky 32°, William Suthoff Jr. 32°, Kevin R. Byrd 32°; Front row: (l-r) Larry Robinson 32° KCCH, Lane Dossett 33°, SGIG Bill Sloan 33°, Bruce Baker 33°, James Case 33°, and Wilson Windham 33°



SGIG Bill Sloan awards Bro. Wilbur Nations his 50-year cap at his home in Vicksburg. SGC Cole also invested Bro. Nations with KCCH. He is a World War II veteran and 102 years young.

THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

VALLEY OF HATTIESBURG

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VALLEY

PETAL
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ALL MASTER MASONS WELCOME

OCT | 19 | 2024

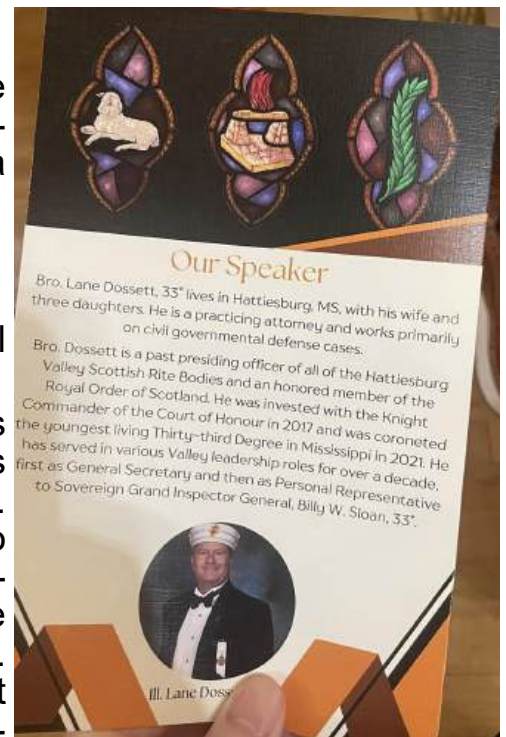
Lunch 12:00 p.m.
Degree 1:30 p.m.
80 Cameron Street Petal, MS

HattiesburgScottishRite@gmail.com



Along with Petal Lodge #516, the Valley of Hattiesburg hosted Germania Lodge No. 46 F&AM from Louisiana and their wonderful exemplification of the Scottish Rite Master Mason Degree.

On September 10, Ill. Lane Dossett Albert was the guest speaker for the Feast of Tishri at the Pike Memorial Temple in Little Rock, Arkansas. At right is a small souvenir from the event.



An excerpt from Bro. Gerald Essary's eulogy of Meal of Honor recipient Jack Lucas:

"Like many veterans, Jack did not think of his actions as heroism. His thoughts were for the safety of his buddies that he was on patrol with that fateful day. There is not much that we as veterans will not do to protect those we call buddies, friends, brothers, or sisters; especially those we have served in the trenches with. They become more than just battle buddies and often become closer than family. . . .



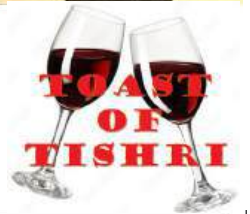
You see Jack was committed to service. He believed in service to his country and believed that he could always do more, most veterans do. So, as you go through this day, Veteran's Day, take the chance to thank those who took up the call to serve our Nation. They will never ask for it, but they will appreciate of your recognition. . . ."

THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

VALLEY OF JACKSON



THE TWO-HUNDRED FORTY-FOURTH REUNION SCOTTISH RITE BODIES OF JACKSON ILL. DANIEL (DANNY) HEYWARD STILL, 33° MEMORIAL CLASS – NOVEMBER 2, 2024



Selfishness vs. Masonic Altruism

JOSHUA DANIEL WELCH, 32°, Valley of Jackson, Mississippi

The contrast between selfishness and altruism is never far from our minds and hearts in the current holiday season, for it is the contrast between the miserly impulses of the unrepentant Ebenezer Scrooge and the generosity of his clerk Bob Cratchit. Like Charles Dickens in his seminal holiday work *A Christmas Carol*, philosophers and religious leaders have long cautioned against the deleterious effects of selfishness on individuals and on society as a whole.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle, for example, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* wrote: "Now the man destitute of self-control desires either all pleasant things indiscriminately or those which are specially pleasant, and

he is impelled by his desire to choose these things in preference to all others..." (D.P. Chase, *trans.*) In the Christian tradition, Jesus says, "Whosoever will come after [follow] me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Mark 8:34-35). This passage emphasizes the importance of self-denial and putting the needs of others above one's own desires.

In more recent times, Carl Jung, the Swiss pioneer in psychoanalysis, delved into the psychological roots of selfishness. Jung believed that selfishness arises from the ego's desire to assert itself over others, leading to feelings of isolation and disconnection. By contrast, he wrote in *The Red Book*: "Sacrifice is not destruction; sacrifice is the foundation stone of what is to come."

Throughout history, selfishness has, in fact, been a pervasive force that has hindered human progress in various ways. From individual greed to societal injustice, the ramifications of selfish behavior are far-reaching and profound.

Masonic altruism, on the opposite end of the moral spectrum, is a concept that embodies the idea of selfless giving and kindness towards others. As the Masonic philosopher and Scottish Rite leader Albert Pike once famously stated: "What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for others and the world remains and is immortal."

In a world that often overvalues extreme individualism and self-interest, the principles of Freemasonry promote a sense of duty to help and support those in need. Through various charitable initiatives and community service projects, Masons demonstrate their commitment to making a positive impact on society. By putting the needs of others before their own, they embody the values of selflessness and compassion, setting an example for others to follow.

In order to combat selfishness and promote human progress, it is essential to cultivate a sense of empathy, compassion, and unity among individuals. As we each work towards creating a more compassionate and interconnected world where altruism, not selfishness, is the norm. It is only through selflessness and empathy that we can truly achieve our full potential and contribute to the betterment of humanity as a whole. •



The Ghost of Christmas Present (1.) seeks to turn the miser Scrooge's heart away from selfishness towards altruism in Charles Dickens's holiday classic *A Christmas Carol*. John Leech, "Scrooge's Third Visitor." 1843 book illustration. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Congratulations to Bro. Daniel McKellar Welch 32° on publication of his article and podcast, "Selfishness vs. Masonic Altruism," in the Nov/Dec issue of the Scottish Rite Journal. Nice work!

On the right, the cover of the Valley's new 18-page brochure for general information and new candidates.

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THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI

VALLEY OF MERIDIAN



The Valley of Meridian's October 19 Reunion initiated three new Masters of the Royal Secret [Tyler Dearman 32°, Chris Hines 32°, and Chris Denn 32°, on the far end] pictured with Personal Representative Terry Lewis 33°, SGIG Bill Sloan 33°, and General Secretary Micky McMahan 33°.



The "Pancake Day" breakfast raised money towards its local dyslexia programs at Illuminations Center and Trinity Education Center.



Unable to attend due to prior military obligations, Bro. Tyler Dearman 32° received his cap and ring at the Valley's stated meeting from V.:M.: Randy Rich 32° KCCH.



McMahan won the Crazy Sock contest with full chicken legs.

THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL OF MISSISSISSIPPI



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James A. Birdsong
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Jeffrey S. Guice

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Gulfport
Gulfport
Gulfport

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

Hattiesburg
Jackson
Corinth
Gulfport
Hattiesburg
Jackson
Gulfport
Gulfport
Hattiesburg

*** = 1 renewal; § = 3 renewals**