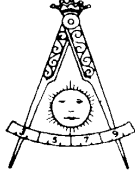
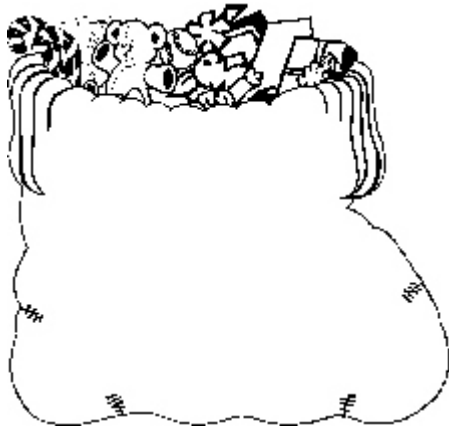


Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite - Valley of Grand Rapids

32° Masonic News



2004
Winter



**It's Time for Getting Together To Celebrate the
Holiday Season and to help Fill Santa's Bag!**

**On behalf of the Officers and Board of Trustees, the
Valley of Grand Rapids invites you and your guests to our
Annual Holiday Dinner Dance Party.**

**The Annual Party will be held on December 14th in the
Grand Rapids Masonic Center, 3rd Floor Ballroom.**

**Social Hour with Appetizers at 6:30 p.m.
with a Buffet Dinner at 7:00 p.m. to be followed with Dancing!**

**The Cost for the evening is \$30.00 per person
plus one toy for Toys For Tots.**

Our special Guest will be a representative from the US Marine Corps!

**Reservations are required and can be made by
calling the Scottish Rite Office by Monday, December 6th!**

Come help us fill Santa's Bag this year!

**If you can't make it to our Annual Party, please help make this a special Holiday for a
boy or girl in your area by contributing to your
local Toys For Tots!**

**On behalf of the Officers and the Valley Staff, we would like to wish
you and yours a very Happy Holiday Season!**

The 32° Masonic News
MASONIC TEMPLE
233 EAST FULTON STREET
GRAND RAPIDS MI 49503

(616) 454-9497 *** 1 800 340-4060
 FAX - (616) 454 -8309

The Official newspaper of the Valley of Grand Rapids, Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction. Contributions and manuscripts should be sent to the above address.

ALLEGIANCE

The bodies of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry in the Valley of Grand Rapids acknowledge and yield allegiance to the Supreme Council of Sovereign Grand Inspectors General of the Thirty-Third and last Degree of Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry for the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the United States of America whose Grand East is Lexington Massachusetts and of which the Ill. Walter E. Webber, 33° is Sovereign Grand Commander.

Active Members for Michigan

Ill. Erwin W. O'Dell, 33°, MSA
 Deputy for Michigan

Ill. Robert N. Osborne, 33°, MSA
 Active for Michigan

Ill. Gerald F. Thorp, 33°
 Active for Michigan

Ill. Robert H. Sale, 33°, MSA
 Active Emeritus

Ill. Sidney R. Baxter, 33°
 Active Emeritus

Ill. William N. Boutell, 33°
 Active Emeritus

Ill. Thomas F. Hamlin, 33°
 Deputy's Representative

CO-ORDINATE BODY HEADS :

Willis L. Crothers
 Thrice Potent Master
 Moriah Lodge of Perfection

Stanley O. Simons, 33°
 Sovereign Prince
 Cyrus Council Princes of Jerusalem

Walter G. Morris, Jr.
 Most Wise Master
 Robinson Chapter, Rose Croix

Ill. Thomas F. Hamlin, 33°
 Commander-in-Chief
 DeWitt Clinton Consistory

ALL BODIES

Ill. Gerald E. Millar, 33° - Executive Secretary

Ill. Thomas W. Cardwell, 33°
 Executive Treasurer

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor - Dick Burrows, MSA
 Contributing Editor/Photographer
 Jim Creech

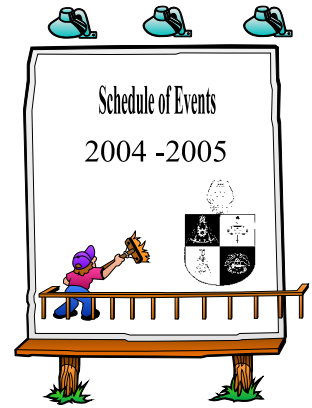
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 Photographer Emeritus

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Ill. Gerald E. Millar, 33°, Executive Secretary
 Robyn A. Young, Administrative Assistant



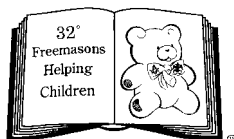
Dec:	14	Board of Trustees Christmas Party, Grand Rapids Masonic Center
	24	Office closed
	31	Office closed
Jan:	18	Executive Committee Board of Trustees Board of Governors
	22	Scottish Rite MM° team at Coloma
Feb:	01	Reunion Committee Meeting, Club Car Restaurant
	05	Executive Committee President's Day Celebration
	19	Valley of Bay City Social Reunion
Mar:	12	Degree Directors Seminar
	15	Executive Committee Board of Trustees
Apr:	16	Valley of Traverse City Reunion
	20	Feast of the Paschal Lamb
	23	Valley of Detroit Reunion
	30	33°/MSA Reunion
May	6-7	Valley of Grand Rapids Reunion
	13	Valley of Bay City Reunion
	17	Executive Meeting Board of Trustees annual Meeting
	24-25	Grand Lodge of Michigan, F&AM, Traverse City
Jun.	11	Michigan Council of Deliberation, Bay City

Spring 2005 issue deadline
March 1, 2005

New Grand Rapids Scottish Rite Web Page:
grandrapidsscottishrite.com

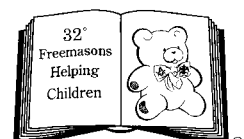
Editor phone 269 637-3203
 fax 269 637-9413
 email srnews@btc-bci.com

DONATIONS ARE ALWAYS BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE CHILDREN'S LEARNING CENTER. SEND ALL DONATIONS TO THE VALLEY OF GRAND RAPIDS, A.A.S.R. 233 EAST FULTON STREET, GRAND RAPIDS MI 49503-3270. MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO CHILDREN'S LEARNING CENTER



Child Learning Center
Nina Gorak, Director

Phone 616 776-6840
 Fax 616 776-6875



email tutorone@iserv.net



LOCAL MASONIC LEADERS ARE HONORED

Local area Freemasons were among a group of 129 elected to receive the Thirty-third Degree, the highest honor of Scottish Rite Freemasonry. The ceremony took place recently in Milwaukee during the annual meeting of the Scottish Rite Supreme Council. The degree is awarded for outstanding service to Freemasonry or for significant contributions to humanity that reflect credit upon the fraternity. The 2004 recipients were chosen from 15 northeastern and midwestern states that comprise the 250,000-member Northern Jurisdiction of the United States. Those from Michigan were (left to right):

(Front row)

David W. Skiendziel, 8971 Highland Drive, Freeland, Retired Automotive Manufacturing Supervisor; John R. Hegenauer, 303 N. Henry Street, Bay City, Electrician.

(Back row)

Richard W. Graves Jr., 2065 22nd Street,

Wyandotte, Computer Programmer/Analyst; Dean A. Barr, 3122 Toepfer Road, Warren, Michigan, State Building Construction Superintendent; Paul R. Goosmann, 1061 Buckingham Street SW, Wyoming, Remodeling Contractor; Thomas M. Ryan, 800 Deer Lake Road, Ishpeming, Manager, Federal Aviation Administration.

LEXINGTON, MA. A group of more than 1,700 33rd degree Masons and their wives heard an update on Masonic charitable endeavors during the recent meeting of the Supreme Council for the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction.

The charities are supported by voluntary contributions from the 250,000 32nd degree Masons throughout the jurisdiction. The National Heritage Museum in Lexington, Mass., was built in 1975 through their efforts to provide changing exhibits on American history.

Learning Centers for dyslexic students have been providing free one-on-one tutoring at 40 locations. Within the next few years, the number of centers will increase to 59. Other charities include scholarships for college students and fellowships for schizophrenia research.

During the course of the meeting, which was held this year in Milwaukee, three new members were elected to the governing board of the Supreme Council. They are Donald G. Hicks Jr., of Leominster, Massachusetts; William L. McCarrier, of Butler, Pennsylvania; and Frank R. Preble of Auburn, Maine. New Deputies include Charles E. Ridlon for Maine and Stephen E. Carpenter for Rhode Island. Retiring Deputy for Rhode Island, Gardner C. Sconyers Jr., was elected Grand Secretary General replacing Philip L. Hall of Nashua, New Hampshire. Chester G. Burton of Cincinnati, Ohio, is Grand Keeper of the Archives and Lee B. Lockwood of Lena, Illinois, is Grand Sword Bearer.

In addition to Hall, others retiring as Active Members are Richard G. Hawk of Scranton, Pennsylvania; C. William Lakso of Lunenburg, Massachusetts; Gary A. Henningsen of Monroe Township, New Jersey and Richard H. Winship Jr. of Orrington, Maine.

Each of the 15 Grand Lodges within the Northern Jurisdiction was represented. Also attending were officers from allied Masonic organizations across the country as well as representatives from 17 Scottish Rite Supreme Councils around the world. Five visiting international leaders were named Emeriti Members of Honor of the Northern Jurisdiction. They are Ronald A. Seale of the Southern Jurisdiction, USA; Algie S. Oldham Jr., Prince Hall Freemasonry USA.; Pierre Marchal of Belgium; Cesar A. Garcia of the Dominican Republic; and Henk E. Koning of the Netherlands.

The week-long meeting concluded with the conferral of the 33rd degree upon 129 members who were selected for dedicated service to Scottish Rite Freemasonry or service reflecting credit upon the fraternity

The names of 245 nominees were announced to receive the 33rd degree at next year's meeting in Grand Rapids on August 30, 2005. Recipients from the Valley of Grand Rapids are: W. Don Baugher, 7852 Pear, Coloma, Past Grand Master/Past Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Michigan, retired from the Whirlpool Corporation and present Executive Director of the National Masonic Foundation for Children; David H. Eddy, 111 Minges Circle, Battle Creek, Radio Announcer; George A. Helms, 1666 Stuart Road, Arcadia, Maintenance Business; Charles L. Royce, 252 Pearl St. NW, Grand Rapids, Owner, Royce Roll Ringer Company.



Jeanette Minch

The Ladies Lounge

From Where I Sit
Jeanette Minch

Shopping Woes

I recently purchased a new front-loading washing machine. After it was installed I learned that I had to buy a new

type of washing detergent. It had to be HE or high efficiency. So no problem, right! Not right. There are only two or three brands of HE detergent. Then when I looked for detergent for delicate and/or cold water cycle washes there just aren't any with the HE insignia. I don't know why someone didn't tell me this when I was purchasing the machine.

I have purchased items at the grocery store, used them, liked them and then later on the label appeared "New and Improved" and guess what, I didn't like it anymore. Or have you purchased items such as a cake mix or meringue mix and all of a sudden it was no longer available. What ever happened to chiffon cake mix or pineapple pie filling?

Many years ago I always used Lavoris mouthwash on a regular basis. Bill started to use it too. Then, you guessed it, it was "improved" and we couldn't stand the strong taste. I think I ended up pouring most of that bottle out.

I have a pantsuit that I purchased several years ago and I like to wear it but I simply can't press it ahead of time. It has to be pressed and then put on immediately. I have some other clothes like that too. If I press them even an hour ahead they develop creases from just hanging. Very aggravating.

Bill has used Gleam toothpaste all of our married life and all of a sudden I was not able to find it on the store shelves. I found four tubes in a Wal-Mart and bought all four and gave him warning that it looked like it was being discontinued. Sure enough, Gleam is no longer available.

I read quite a few magazines and so I think that I am "informed" but there doesn't seem to be any information warning shoppers of changes or discontinuations of items. Doesn't it seem to you that a label on garments should indicate it needs frequent

pressing — or that shoppers should be informed of changes or discontinuations of items they are used to buying? A sign in the store near the shelf of the item being discontinued could also warn shoppers.

I'm sure that you too have had experiences with items that you cannot purchase anymore or items that have not performed as expected even after having used them in the past with success. I'd like to complain to somebody but I don't know who to complain to and perhaps it wouldn't do any good anyway. Oh, well, I guess we just have to learn to live with it.

Jeanette

Notes from Maggie:

I want to thank all of the ladies who worked together to make the October Reunion such a success. The tour of the Meijers Gardens and luncheon was a great time. The tram ride was cold and rainy, but we had fun anyway. As is always the case during the October Reunions, we had the Craft Auction for the benefit of the Learning Center. Our favorite auctioneer, Carl Wall Sr., (granddad of the first graduate from the Learning Center), did his best to entertain and sell the nice things that were donated. The final tally was \$624.50 and the Learning Center can surely use the money for the great things they do for dyslexic kids. The hospitality party at the Comfort Inn, on Friday night gave us a chance to just sit and talk and renew friendships and make new ones.

For the ladies whose husbands have recently joined the Scottish Rite, we invite you to participate with us while the men do their "secret" stuff. For the ladies whose husbands haven't invited them to come to the Reunions, why don't you come along and join with us in the many good times we have together. For you men who don't share this 32° Masonic News with your wife, maybe it would be nice if you let her read the Ladies Lounge page and she might even want to share in the fun?

See you all in May.

Maggie

*The World's Finest Crystal is now
teamed up with our World Class
Learning Centers*



**SWAROVSKI'S
CRYSTAL
TEDDY BEAR
TACK PIN**

\$30 each

A wonder little treasure to show support for the
Learning Centers

They make great gifts and the holidays are just
around the corner

HAPPY HAPPY BIRTHDAY



* OVER 100

JANUARY

Lavern W. Hazard
Earl C. Mead
T. J. Segerlind*
Claude Hendrie
Douglas H. Cumberworth
James G. Moore
Harold Koomdyk, Sr.
Robert Ruff
James H. Glotta
Colin Kennedy

Anton C. Sibilsky
Edward H. Brooks
W. Arthur Hunter
John B. Shuman

MARCH

Theodore Patterson
Preston Sanders
Ralph Morgan
Everett C. Rollins
Louis L. Smoyer
Lloyd A. Koyl
Robert P. Smith
John E. Knowles

FEBRUARY

Melvin L. McHenry
Gerald Shepard

From the TPM

During the presentation of the 14° in the October Reunion , I came to the understand why I had spent the past eleven and a half years working through the chairs in the Lodge of Perfection. It is the camaraderie that develops when eight men focus that much energy on doing the very best job they can to imprint the lessons of the 14th degree on the minds of the candidates. We have a tradition of excellence and our directors will not accept anything less. It is not pride that drives us, but rather the commitment to the candidates that makes the effort worthwhile. I know that the Lodge is not different from the Council, Chapter, or Consistory in that regard, but it is where I have spent most of my time and energy.

For those brothers who enjoy participating rather than watching; find an opportunity to get into one of the four coordinate bodies. I can tell you that the friendships and fraternal love that develops from that task will last a lifetime. Be sure you learn what the total responsibilities will be, before you take that first step. It is work, but for a few good men it is darn well worth the effort. In my own life, the work has become a true labor of love, and although that sounds trite, it is absolutely the proper description. I know dozens of my fellow officers who feel exactly the same way. It is very rewarding and I hope some of you will step up to the bar.

I want to thank all of my officers for the great job they did in the October Reunion, but most particularly I need to point out four who exemplified the thoughts I talked about here: Norm Ferwerda, who took his "usual" place as Acolyte although he is having a bit of a problem with some recent surgery and was having a hard time getting around the floor. Thanks Norm. From the Valley of Traverse City, Dick Hopkins took the part of Moses, and I guarantee that the candidates will forever remember the 10 Commandments as he presented them. Thanks Dick. I need to recognize my friend and brother, Past TPM Dick Meretsky, 33°, who invited me to get into the Lodge line. Thanks Dick. But most of all, I need to thank a brother who exemplifies all of the things I spoke about earlier in this article. Past TPM Matt Weldon filled in as Deputy Master and did a superb job. Matt, I cannot thank you enough!

Bill Crothers

Thrice Potent Master of the Lodge of Perfection




Norman J. Bays, MSA
 Joseph L. Borden
 Norman J. Bowman
 Walter F. Brown
 N L Case
 Ralph A. Duckett
 Leo F. Frey
 John M. Kirk
 Seymour Lurie
 Mason C. Meyer
 Charles L. Nobles
 Lawrence W. Nyblade
 William R. Pergande
 John D. Rose
 Donald C. Scbripsema
 Donald W. Stafford
 Rhodell L. Thoman

LOST IN THE VALLEY

The following Brothers' mail has been returned to the Valley Office. Do you know where they are????

Bela E. Kennedy
 Clare A. Ray, Jr.
 James D. Sandborn
 Fred S. Waddell, Sr.

Where There's Smoke **New** There's BBQ
Sports Lounge
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 LINDA PELAK SAT 10 AM - 1:00 PM
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 WYOMING, MICH. 49509 616-532-5060

Scholarship

Brothers, once again it is time to get scholarship applications. They are due in mid February. The cost of College is tremendous and every little bit of financial help lessens the burden. Parents and grandparents who have loved ones going to college may also send for an application. They may be picked up at the Scottish Rite office or you may have them sent to you. The address is: Masonic Center, 5th floor , 233 E. Fulton St. Grand Rapids , MI.49503-3270. Please take advantage of this opportunity.

John W. Moore, 33°, Scholarship Chair

Candidates for the Board of Trustees

Those Brothers wishing to have their name listed on the May ballot for the four open seats on the Board of Trustees should have their names, with a short bio, in the Scottish Rite Office by February 15, 2005.

The names will be listed in the March-April Issue of the 32° Masonic News.

This is for a two year term beginning in May of 2005 For any questions call the Chairmen of the Nominating Committee, Todd Binsz at 616 437-1783 or the Scottish Rite Office at 1 800 340-4060.

YES

The Family picnic at Binder Park was a success. If you missed it, you missed a great time. There have been requests and suggestion to have another next year. A big thanks goes to those who attended and to the committee.

THERE WILL BE ONE NEXT SUMMER



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It is with much pleasure that I briefly tell you about our new 33° Mason



Paul Rebecca Jan

Ill.: Brother Paul R. Goosmann, 33°

Paul lives in Wyoming, MI with his wife Jan and daughter Rebecca. He also has two step daughters Beth and Kelsi. He is a family man and enjoys spending time with his daughter Rebecca at school activities, at Job Daughters functions and also taking her fishing. Daughter Rebecca will be installed as Honor Queen of Bethel 10 in January, where Paul is also serving as Associate Guardian. He looks forward to "Deer Camp" in the fall and he loves to cook, especially breakfast. Whatever else he does besides cook at "Deer Camp" is unknown to all of us. We just know he has fun!

Paul is an independent remodeling contractor who specializes in kitchens and installing "Pella" brand windows. For the Scottish Rite, he has rebuilt our jewelry case and constructed our take apart food booth that is used in our Valley fund-raising ventures and generously donates all his labor and most of the expense.

Paul is very active in the Valley. He is a Past Thrice Potent Master and continues to provide leadership as President of the Grand Rapids Scottish Rite Club. A position he has held for several years. He directs the 23° and has made most of the props for the staging. He also has taken part in several of the other degrees and is an extremely good ritualist.

He is a Past Master of Malta, (now Doric) Lodge and continues to be very active, serving when ever he is asked without hesitation.

Paul was coroneted in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on September 21, 2004. This Illustrious Brother lives up to the Masonic Tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. He is a true Mason. Sincere congratulations to you Brother Paul, from your Valley.



Jim "whispers Good council in the ear of a brother".
Due and timely notice?



Ill.:Erwin W. O'Dell, 33°,MSA. Deputy for Michigan, congratulates Ill.:William F. Goosmann, Jr. 33°, on the progress in Freemasonry of Son Ill.:Paul R. Goosmann,33°.

“Teaching kids to count is fine, but teaching them what counts is best.”

**CHRISTMAS GIFTS
FOR YOUR FAVORITE
SCOTTISH RITE MASON
FROM THE**

GRAND RAPIDS SCOTTISH RITE OFFICE

**CALL 1 800 340-4060 OR STOP IN, LOCATED ON
THE 5TH FLOOR OF THE GRAND RAPIDS
MASONIC CENTER**

- 1) **GOLF STYLE SHIRT:** embroidered Valley of Grand Rapids, 32° Masons and 32° emblem, white with black trim, no pockets. 100% Combed Cotton (Munsingwear) M - L - XL - 2XL **\$37.00**
- 2) **GOLF STYLE SHIRT:** Masonic embroidered emblem, white with black trim, no pockets, 100% Combed Cotton, (Munsingwear) M - L - XL - 2XL **\$35.00**
- 3) **DENIM LONG SLEEVE SHIRTS:** 100% Cotton, embroidered Valley of Grand Rapids, 32° Masons and 32° emblem above pocket (Munsingwear)
- 4) M - L - XL - 2XL **\$30.00**
- 5) **DENIM SHORT SLEEVE SHIRTS:** 100% Cotton, embroidered Masonic Emblem above pocket (Munsingwear) M - L - XL - 2XL **\$28.00**
- 6) **(Limited quantities available for Christmas Delivery) (Any shirt, sweatshirt or jacket may be ordered with a 33° or 32° embroidered emblem in small, medium, large, x-large. Larger sizes may be slightly higher in price.).**
- 7) **BASEBALL HATS:** Royal blue with embroidered Masonic Emblem Navy or Black with embroidered 32° emblem, adjustable: Reg. \$12.00
- 8) **Special \$10.00** for Christmas
- 9) 100% Silk Ties with Children's Learning Center Teddy Bear logo, navy, maroon, red. **\$25.00**
- 10) 100% Silk Ladies oblong scarves with Children's Learning Center Teddy Bear logo, navy, maroon, red. **\$35.00**
- 11) 100% Silk formal Vest and Bow Tie Set with Children's Learning Center Teddy Bear logo, red. **\$150.00 set**

- 12) 100% polyester Masonic & Scottish Rite Ties with double headed eagle, black, maroon, and navy blue. **Special \$12.00** each for Christmas
- 13) Cuff links and stud set for Master Mason, Past Master, Past Patron, 32° Scottish Rite Mason and 33°
- 14) Scottish Rite Mason. **\$49.50 set.**
- 15) We have many more items such as BL drink coolers, masonic wallets, belt buckles, tie bars, tie tacs, auto emblems, lapel pins, and much more.

Limited quantities of the above on hand
Above prices include sales tax.
Shipping additional

DECEMBER'S ROSE

Adapted from a short story, "Rose upon the Alter", (New York Masonic Outlook, December, 1931) by Carl H. Claudy, and a play by the same author. This authorized revision by Theodore E. Torok has been approved for non-Masonic audiences.

The play was performed by the Scottish Rite Players in Ludington on November 6th and again in Grand Ledge on the 12th of November.

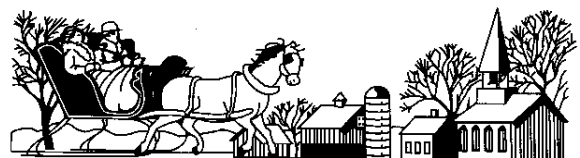
This play is performed in a lodge room before a mixed audience and was very well received.

The cast consisted of:

Prologue	John A. Wallsteadt, 33°
Master Seth Cabot	Russell W. Weigle, 33°
Brother Squire Flack	William R. Minch, 33°
Brother Sammy Brewster	Kenneth E. Cooper
Chaplain, Dr. Wells	Richard A. Burrows, MSA
Past Master Pike	Samuel J. Truax, Jr.
Past Master Fletcher	James Kiefer/Willis L. Crothers
Brother James Lucas	Paul R. Goosmann, 33°
Secretary Slater	Gerald W. Schwartz, MSA
Treasurer Jones	Frederick W. Deady, MSA
Senior Warden Tate	Scotty McGuigan/Jon L. Filliez
Dr. Hartford	Robert B. Doerr
Brother John Vernon	Mark A. Ward
Junior Deacon	Marvin R. Lagerquist, 33°

The play was performed under the very able direction of John A. Wallsteadt, 33°, with the assistance of Colin G. Haward and coordinator Gerald E. Millar, 33°.

Any group who would like to take advantage of this fine play, should contact the office for further details.



WANT LOWER DUES?

HERE'S HOW!

For every petition a brother is the top line signer, he will receive a \$25.00 Voucher from the Scottish Rite Office towards this years or next years dues.

Example of the savings for being a top line signer

petition(s)	reduced	dues
none	0	\$125.00
one	\$25.00	\$100.00
two	\$50.00	\$75.00
three	\$75.00	\$50.00
four	\$100.00	\$25.00
five	\$125.00	0

New member fees for reunions are \$150 plus pro-rated dues
OR

You can use the \$25 voucher to lower your candidates fees to \$125

Brothers consider taking advantage of this unique offer and help yourself and the Valley!



Charles F. Davis, MSA, receives his RED HAT at the hands of wife Iris. Brother Charlie was presented at the Ill.:Ernest Hoffman, Jr. 33°, MSA Saturday evening banquet

Learning Center Walk-a-thon

Stan Simons, Chairman of the Board of Governors for the West Michigan 32° Masonic Learning Center For Children, Inc. offers congratulations to Dave Neff, chairman of the Learning Center Walk-a-thon.

We had 46 walkers, we took in approximately \$7,000. \$5,000 in donations and \$2000 in pledges. Our expenses were around \$1,800 which means we will net about \$5,000 for the Learning Center.

The Learning Center received a Teddy Bear award plaque from headquarters showing that for 2003 we received the Silver Award in achievements. We need to redouble our efforts in fund raising.

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WHAT FREEMASONRY MEANS TO ME

by The Reverend Doctor Norman Vincent Peale, 33°

I recently received a letter in which the writer asked: "Why are you a Freemason?" The question caused me to think and reaffirm my feelings about Freemasonry.

At first, I thought about my own forebears. My grandfather was a Freemason for 50 years, my father for 50 years, and I have been a Freemason for 60 years. This means that my tie with Freemasonry extends back to 1869 when my grandfather joined the Masons.

My feelings on my first entrance into a Masonic Lodge are very clear in memory. I was a young man and it was a great thrill to kneel before the altar of the Lodge to become a Freemason. This must have been the same feeling my father and grandfather experienced before me. And it must also have been identical to the one that many great leaders of America and the world felt as they became Freemasons. Prominent among this select group are George Washington, Harry Truman and 12 other Presidents as well as countless statesmen and benefactors of humanity.

So I found myself thinking: "What does Freemasonry mean to me?" Of course, Freemasons say that Freemasonry actually begins in each individual Mason's heart. I take this to mean a response to Brotherhood and the highest ideals. I recall the story of a man who came to me once and said: "I see that you are a Freemason. So am I." As we talked, he told me of an experience he had years ago. It seems that he joined the Masonic Fraternity shortly after he became 21 years old. When he was stationed in the military, he decided to attend various Lodge meetings. On his first visit to a Lodge in a strange city, he was a bit nervous.

One thought was constantly in his mind; could he pass the examination to show that he was a Freemason? As the committee was carefully examining his credentials, one of the members looked him squarely in the eye and said: "Obviously, you know the Ritual, so you can enter our Lodge as a Brother Mason. But, I have one more question. Where were you made a Freemason?" With that he told the young visitor to think about it because when he knew the answer the examiner would not have to hear it. He would see it in his eyes. My friend told me that after a couple of minutes a big smile came to his face and he looked at the examiner, who said: "That's right, in your heart."

Freemasonry is not a religion though, in my experience, Freemasons have predominantly been religious men and, for the most part, of the Christian faith. Through Freemasonry, however, I have had opportunity to break bread with good men of other than my own Christian faith. Freemasonry does not promote any one religious creed. All Masons believe in the Deity without reservation. However, Freemasonry makes no demands as to how a member thinks of the Great Architect of the Universe. Freemasonry is, for all its members, a supplement to good living which has enhanced the lives of millions who have entered its doors: Though it is not a religion, as such, it supplements faith in God the Creator. It is supporting of morality and virtue.

Freemasonry has no dogma or theology. It offers no sacraments. It teaches that it is important for every man to have a religion of his own choice and to be faithful to it in thought and action. As a result, men of different religions meet in fellowship and Brotherhood under the Fatherhood of God. I think that a good Freemason is made even more faithful to the tenets of his faith by his membership in the Lodge.

Freemasonry is much more than a social organization. Through Masonic teachings, good men practice love and charity. As a Fraternity, they spend millions of dollars to support hospitals, childhood language disorders clinics and research into problems that plague man's physical and mental being.

Whenever I visit a Masonic hospital, of which there are many, my eyes fill with tears as I see a youngster, who could not walk, now able to get from one end of the corridor to the other with the aid of an artificial leg. I am thrilled. For a young person to have the opportunity to become whole and productive is to me exciting and wonderful. And this opportunity is given at no cost to his or her family or the state. Living is beautiful, but sometimes life can be harsh and cruel. Whenever or wherever people are in need Freemasons are there to help. From large undertakings to the smallest of needs, Freemasons are always there, caring and serving.

I have always been interested as to why Freemasons devote so much time to their Fraternity. A good answer to this question came from a Grand Master who once told me that he enjoys his involvement because it gives him another dimension to living. The same answer is echoed by Brethren as they meet in Lodge rooms from one end of our Country to the other and around the world. Many of my best friends, associates and fellow Christians are Freemasons and good churchmen as well.

In my travels at home and abroad a goodly number of Freemasons notice my Masonic ring, which I always wear with pride, they say: "I, too, am a Freemason."

To me, Freemasonry is one form of dedication to God and service to humanity. I too was a Freemason in my heart and so I will remain. I am proud of my involvement. I am proud to walk in fraternal fellowship with my Brethren. Why am I a Freemason? Simply because I am proud to be a man who wants to keep the moral standards of life at high level and leave something behind so others will benefit. Only as I, personally, become better, can I help others to do the same.



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ANCIENT ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE

February 5, 2005
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What a wonderful opportunity to introduce a friend to
Scottish Rite Masonry
3:30 play followed by dinner in the 3rd floor Ball room
Dinner tickets \$10
Reservations by February 1st please

Membership

Operation "Code Blue"



In an effort to increase membership in the Grand Rapids Valley, we are asking that all Scottish Rite Valley members in their perspective Blue Lodges take some time out to reflect and introduce Scottish Rite to new Master Masons.

Brothers, in order for our Valley to grow and maintain its current membership, we need to be proactive. The key to membership is in the Blue Lodges. This is our most important recruiting base to draw from. Membership is the responsibility of each member of the Valley.

To help you in this effort, the Valley has put together new membership information that will soon be available. Thanks to some of our Ohio brothers, for this new and modern up-to-date membership program. This 10-12 minute DVD presentation was created to appeal to younger potential members.


The Valley is now in the process of making available to our membership copies of this valuable membership tool. These DVD's are to be shown to Master Masons whom you would like to offer membership in Scottish Rite. This new membership DVD is titled Monument Builders and is an excellent presentation for potential members. This will be available to our membership to use beginning December 1, 2004. Any member of the Valley may obtain a copy. Just call 1-800-340-4060 and our new membership DVD will be on its way to you. Our goal is for you, a Scottish Rite Mason, to use this DVD to invite your Brothers to learn about Scottish Rite Masonry.

All Scottish Rite Clubs will be receiving copies with an instruction booklet for use by their membership. In the New Year the Scottish Rite office will be mailing invitations, along with a DVD to many newly made Master Masons to join our great Fraternity during our Spring Reunion, Friday and Saturday, May 6-7, 2005. We will be asking several of our members to help us with follow up to these mailings.

Again, brothers, give back to others what Scottish Rite has given you. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (616) 796-9780 or email me at historyace@tds.net

Membership
Chairman
Mark L. Cravens

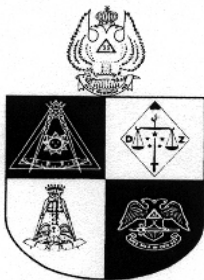




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Believes in the Morals and Values
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The 32° Masonic News
Free and Accepted Masons
ANCIENT ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE
VALLEY OF GRAND RAPIDS
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