

Spring 2022

riteNOW

THE MAGAZINE OF THE VALLEY OF PITTSBURGH



LESSONS OF THE RITE

valleyofpittsburgh.org

In Memoriam

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Louis G. Zell



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about this issue

Over the last several years, *RiteNow* has looked at the Core Values of the Scottish Rite, both collectively and individually. Being able to recite our Core Values is one thing, but applying them to everyday life can be its own challenge. We are human, after all, and sometimes we

are tempted to take the easy path or make the wrong decision.

In this issue, we delve deeper into the Core Values and what they look like in action. Being the best version of yourself is not a destination; it is a journey. As you read this



issue, we hope you find renewed strength for the challenges you face every day. Journey on, Brothers!

The Active

A message from the Supreme Council Active for Pennsylvania

SUPREME COUNCIL

Learning by Doing

By Paul J. Roup, 33°

Tell me and I forget.

Teach me and I remember.

Involve me and I learn.

Confucious,

Benjamin Franklin, and dozens of others have received writing credit for that aphorism. The internet has also labeled it as a Native American saying and a Chinese proverb. The author and origin may be unknown, but the message is timeless and more than worthy of discussion.

The lessons of the Scottish Rite come to us in a form that is relatively unique



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in Freemasonry—as stage plays. At my first reunion, I was a little perplexed by this. It felt impersonal. I was used to the candidate being the focus of the degree, but the Scottish Rite turned that idea on its head. Not only were they not the focus, but with very few exceptions, they were not even on the stage.

How on earth am I going to get anything out of this, I wondered.

But as the day went on, I found that I was getting quite a bit from it. Stagecraft requires what is sometimes called the suspension of disbelief—the premise that if a reader/listener/audience member can put aside the implausible or impossible within the story unfolding before them, they might get more from the performance. This is a challenging notion on its face, but it becomes even more complicated when the stories are from ages past, contain antique turns of phrase, or the viewer knows the actors in real life. All of these obstacles awaited most of us in the Scottish Rite.

A strange thing happened once I set all of that aside and accepted that I was in the court of King Solomon, a colonial Masonic Lodge, or the court of a medieval king. I suddenly became *involved*. I wasn't involved in the same way I had been when I knelt at the altar for my first three

degrees—there, I was the center of the world. Here, I was involved in the story. I was invested in the characters' lives, struggles, defeats, and triumphs in the strange and unfamiliar worlds that lay before me.

I learned about our Core Values

because I lived them in real-time. I understood the concept of Justice as I watched Benedict Arnold make his plea to the lodge. I appreciated the notion of Integrity during *Brothers of the Trail*, and *Knight of Valor* beautifully illustrated the ideals of Tolerance, Reverence for God,

Devotion to Country, and Service to Humanity.

We learn the lessons of the Rite because we have seen them in action—in both fictional and real-world applications. We were involved in the conflicts and conquests of our heroes. Their struggles are our struggles. If you have not attended a reunion recently, I encourage you to come out in May and try to look at the degrees with fresh eyes. Our class in May will honor our own Jeffrey M. Wonderling, Right Worshipful Grand Master and Past Commander in Chief. You would not only be supporting him, but perhaps you will better learn the lessons of the Rite. □

The lessons of the Scottish Rite come to us in a form that is relatively unique in Freemasonry—as stage plays.



29 DEGREES
+
6 CORE VALUES
=
1 EXTRAORDINARY LIFE

SCOTTISH
RITE

Northern Masonic Jurisdiction
**SCOTTISH
RITE**

Visit. ScottishRiteNMJ.org

JOURNEY **ON**

Join the Valley of Pittsburgh on **Saturday, May 14, 2022**

The Chief

A message from the Commander-in-Chief of the Valley of Pittsburgh

CONSISTORY

Planting Your Tree

By Rodney E. Boyce, 33°



If you guessed the title of this article is a reference to the image on the cover of this issue, you would be Rite (pun intended).

As a past District Deputy Grand Master for the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, I still travel with our district's current Deputy as he makes his "official visits" to the lodges in our district. Often, men will receive their 50-year Grand Lodge Service Emblems on these evenings. This is one of my favorite things in Freemasonry. I so enjoy hearing the stories of how and why these men joined the Fraternity. The reasons can be so different, yet they united men from varied backgrounds to walk the same path that everyone traveled before them.

Their experiences in Freemasonry are just as varied. Some were very active and served as the Worshipful Master of their lodge. Some became key members with roles that supported the lodge for many years. Others might have never been officers but faithfully attended most meetings. And yes, some were never very active and rarely participated.

Yet every single one of them speaks of the difference Freemasonry made in their lives. They speak with great

pride of how special the Craft is—and has been—to them. Almost all wish they had done more or had been more active. But all say Freemasonry changed their lives, made them better men, and held them to a standard higher than average.

I had no idea what I was getting into but, it was a "game-changer" as they say.

That is special. How many other organizations have members that say the same?

A seed was planted when I joined DeMolay—not necessarily by choice—but because my father (a Mason) thought it would be a good thing. I had no idea what I was getting into, but it was a "game-changer" as they say.

It took me a while to join Freemasonry, but once I did, I was off and running again—progressing through the chairs, serving the lodge, and then serving the district and the Grand Lodge. I also joined a few of the appendant bodies—Scottish Rite being one of them.

While serving as District Deputy Grand Master, I was asked to join the Pittsburgh Chapter Rose Croix officer line. Eight years later, I found myself as Most Wise Master. Then thinking my service as an officer of



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the Valley was complete, I was asked to join the Consistory line. And now, six years later, I find myself nearing the end of my service as Commander in Chief of the Valley of Pittsburgh.

There is no doubt my seed has grown. My roots have spread, and I have absorbed the rich nutrients of our great Fraternity. I have grown as a man and a Mason. I have become a stronger leader. I have learned to serve—and I have been enriched by those who grow around—and with me.

Scottish Rite has been the pinnacle of my Masonic career.

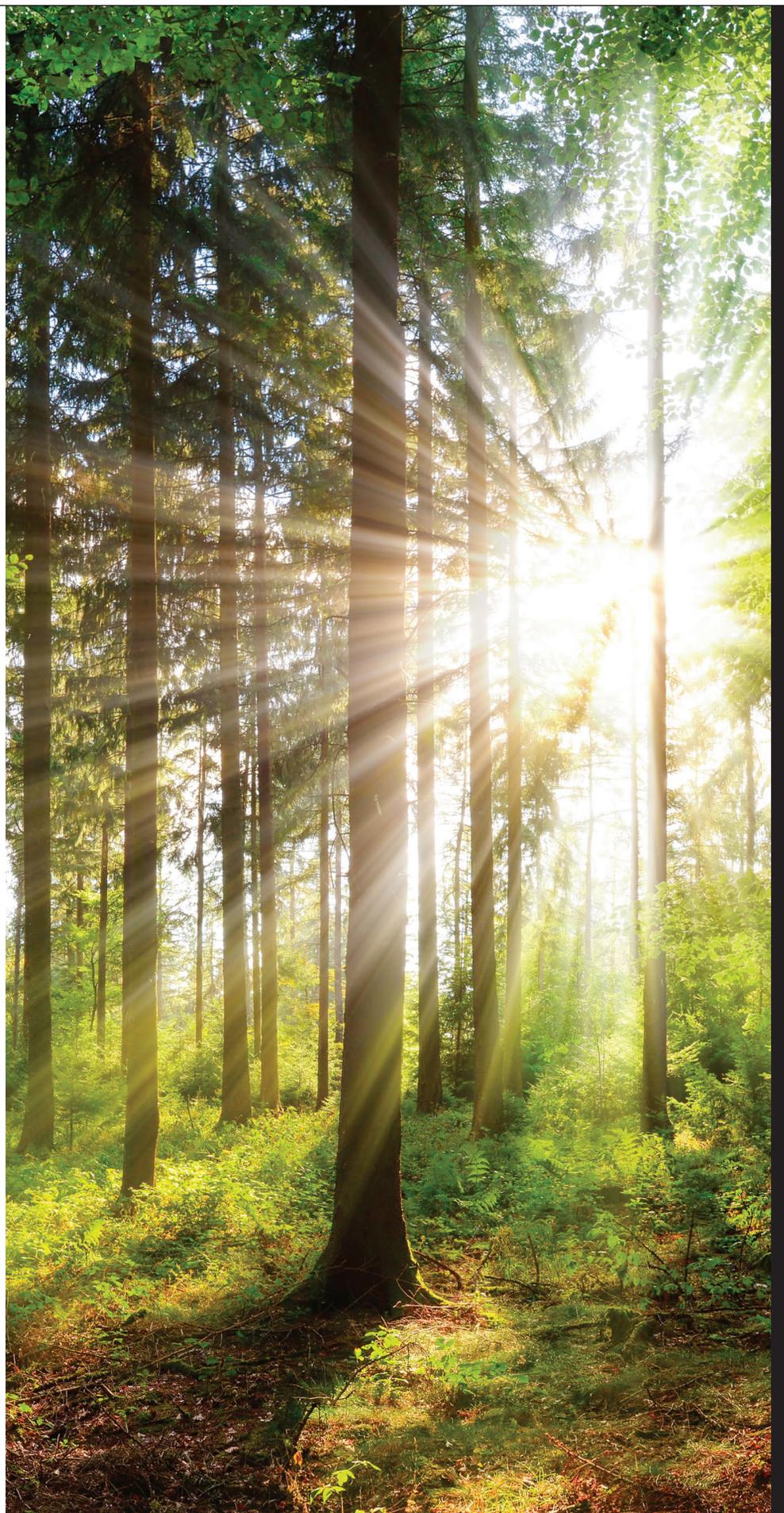
Reflection is good. And as I sit here writing this article and reflecting on my growth, I wonder how many others have enjoyed this Fraternity as much as I have. And if not, why not? Scottish Rite offers all the nutrients for growth. There are life lessons to be found in every degree. They show us the pathway to a better future.

If I receive my 50-year Service Emblem, I wonder what I will say? I wonder how I will sum up what it has meant to live in this forest of great oaks, maples, chestnuts, sycamores, spruces, and pines in just a few words.

I urge you to spread your roots, find your spot on this earth, and grow.

Scottish Rite needs you. Freemasonry needs you. And the world needs you.

together we are one.



TheMD

A message from Richard F. Kucera, MD, 32°

Coronavirus Update

By Richard F. Kucera, MD, 32°

Confused about the COVID vaccine?

What should I do about my COVID vaccine? Every time I look at the news and the most recent recommendations, things seem to change. It can be very confusing as to what's most appropriate based on the present Center for Disease Control recommendations.

The recommendations are available at the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html>.

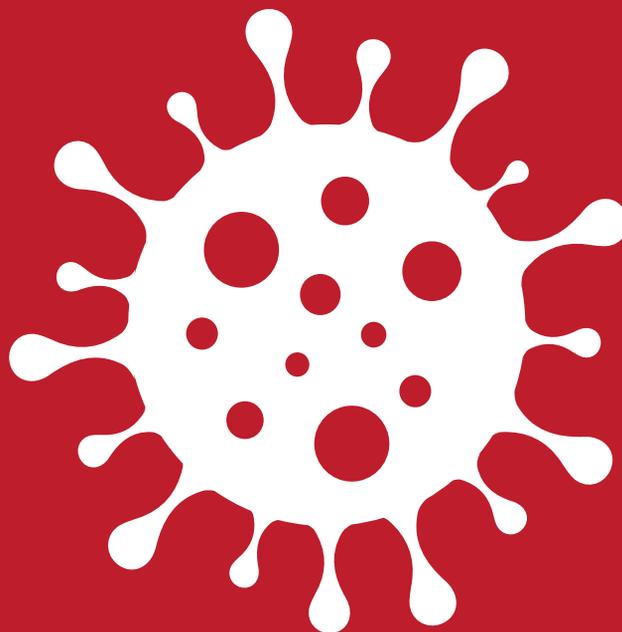
So, you read the recommendations and now are totally confused. Let me break it down. If you're over the age of 75, I would highly recommend getting the second booster now if it's been four months since your first booster. That means a total of four shots.

If you are over 50 but under 75, I would recommend getting the 4th booster soon. Especially if you plan to travel, go to a large event such as a wedding, a large civic function, or funeral. Remember, you're not only protecting yourself, but also your loved ones.

This information is constantly evolving as we learn more about the virus. Continue to visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for the latest information. □



Richard F. Kucera, MD, 32°



The Potent

A message from the Thrice Potent Master of the Gourgas Lodge of Perfection

LODGE OF PERFECTION

A Broader Perspective

By David L. Moore, 33°

Greetings, with winter drawing to a close I hope you all are looking forward to warmer temperatures and longer days. I know the Officers of the Valley are looking forward to the warmer weather. We have some exciting



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things planned for you this summer. From the Grand Master's Class, where we honor our own Jeffrey M. Wonderling, RWGM, to our monthly CigaRite nights as well as a few special fellowship events this is going to be a fun summer.

As you have probably noticed each of our issues has a theme, the theme for this issue is lessons taught in the Scottish Rite beyond the Core Values. I know there are deep philosophical and esoteric lessons that could be talked about at length, but that's not me. When I sat down to write this article that was my initial plan, but then I got to thinking of all the things I have learned at the Valley that I wouldn't have learned elsewhere. By being involved in the reunions and Ghostlight, I have

been exposed to and learned about set building, stage makeup, lighting, learning lines, and stage etiquette. By being on the officer line, I have learned about the finances of the Valley, budgeting, and long-range and short-range planning. I do budgeting and planning in my normal job, but it is very different in healthcare than in any other business. I would never have experienced most of these things were it not for my involvement with the Valley.

Some of the other valuable things learned though the Valley come from the exposure to a broader group of Brothers. For most of us, especially the brothers from the more rural lodges, we have a very homogenous group of members. Most are engaged in whatever the primary business of the area is, most go to the same two or three churches, and many are related to multiple members.

Each new person we meet has something to teach us, be it something from his job, his cultural background, or a hobby.

Exposure through the Valley and its greater geographical area has exposed me to many brothers of varying backgrounds and professions. Each new person we meet has something to teach us, be it something from his job, his cultural background, or a hobby. Each one of us is an expert in something and has valuable knowledge to share.

I believe these types of things are not always something we think of when we think of lessons learned, but we are all a collection of the experiences we have had. Being exposed to more people and learning new things helps to enrich us and make us more well-rounded. I believe this in one of the most valuable things about the Valley and Scottish Rite in general: It allows us to have new experiences and be exposed to people and things we would not normally experience. □

The Sovereign

A message from the Sovereign Prince of the Pennsylvania Council of Princes of Jerusalem

PRINCES OF JERUSALEM

Remembering the Diaspora

By Mitchell D. Goldstein, 32°

The biblical tale woven around the legend of the Princes of Jerusalem is based on legends surrounding the capture and subjugation of the entire nation of Israel in the years we know as the Babylonian Diaspora. The word 'diaspora' comes to us from the Greek words *dia*, meaning across (as in "diameter"), and *speirein*, meaning



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to scatter, as one might scatter seed. It refers to one of several times in the history of the Jewish people that we were taken captive and removed from our homeland. This was the time of the destruction and sacking of that glorious edifice, the Holy Temple of King Solomon.

We receive much information about these times from the Book of Ezra, written by a scribe and priest who was a descendant of the last active High Priest of the Holy Temple in the fourth century BCE. Ezra's name appears to be a contraction of the Hebrew name *Azaryahu* meaning "God helps." He is generally credited as being the originator of the Sanhedrin, the "great assembly" of exiled Rabbis in his time. It was this group that constructed the new daily prayer rituals to replace the usual devotion of animal sacrifice, which continue in much the same form today. He is also referred to in Islam as *Uzer* and is thought to be the author of Nehemiah and Chronicles I and II in addition to his namesake book. It is also believed that Ezra created the final form of what we call the *Torah*, the five books of Moses, and was instrumental in creating the *Talmud*, which was originally an oral tradition of law in Jewish daily life.

In the year 586 BCE Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon overthrew the Kingdom of Judah, capturing the majority of its population and taking all of its stores of wealth to Mesopotamia. Among the treasures

were the solid gold tools used by the Kohanim—the Priests—to offer up various sacrifices to the Lord God, the stores of precious metals and gems that adorned the temple, as well as the Ark of the Covenant itself.

Remember, O God,
what the Edomites did
On the day Jerusalem
fell. "Tear it down!" they
cried, "Tear it down to
its foundations!"

—Psalm 137

What a sad day this must have been! After the temple's celebrated erection by King Solomon, our Ancient Grand Master and the wisest of all Kings of Israel some five hundred years earlier, to see the house of the living spirit of the Lord God stripped bare. How humiliating to see the Ark carried by a victorious invading army through the narrow streets of Jerusalem, to be carried away across the desert. How their feet must have stung as they, in chains of iron, driven like cattle, dragged themselves from beyond the Jordan to Babylon, 1600 miles away. Their lands stolen, their women defiled, their flocks devoured by invaders, their possessions taken away in chests. We have never forgotten their deep sadness.

Among the young captives is a bright young man named Daniel,

meaning “God is my Judge.” He had an unusual skill, much like Joseph, Israel’s most beloved and lost son, in that he had the God-given power to interpret dreams. Traveling with Daniel on his long trek from Jerusalem are three other companions, who are brought before Nebuchadnezzar to be court attendants. Daniel takes the Babylonian name Belteshazzar and his companions are named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their miraculous story unfolds in the tales of Daniel—how Nebuchadnezzar erected a giant statue of himself and ordered all court officials to bow before it, lest they be burned to death.

We are Jews. We don’t do that.

They refused to bow to his image! How enraged must he have been as they were thrown in the “fiery furnace” only to survive, unharmed, due to their great faith and the presence of the Living God. Nebuchadnezzar himself peered into the flames and watched the men walking around, unharmed, despite the tremendous temperature. He also saw a fourth figure there, in the intense flames. Was this an angelic being sent to protect Daniel’s friends? God fulfilled then, as He now still does, His divine promises to the faithful.

Interesting note: modern rabbis are recommending the elimination of much of the traditional bowing done during synagogue prayers as an interpretation that “bowing to idols” is strictly forbidden in the Torah. Reasoning that all bowing is a submissive gesture, many communities are rejecting it as symbolic of capitulation to the physical world of matter.

During the time of this great

diaspora, the Judeans transformed into the Jewish people. Without the beloved temple, they had no instruction on how to worship! For centuries, meat was only available at the temple, having been the result of ritual slaughter. What meat were they to eat? It is believed many became vegetarians during the decades in Babylon as they would not eat hunted meat or meat provided by a butcher.

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept, when we remembered Zion.

—Psalm 137

At this period the greatest of the rabbis among the exiles devised a new way of worshiping: group prayer. Up until this time, the Israelites were attended by hereditary priests, all descendants of Aaron, the elder brother of Moses, from the tribe of Levi. Now that there was no longer a temple and no provable lineage to the priesthood, the Jewish people looked to the rabbis of the diaspora, the most learned among them, to organize this new way of worshiping. It was Ezra and the Great Assembly, during this time in Babylon, who created the *sh’moneh esreh*, the ‘eighteen prayers’ that Jews include in all public daily prayers.

After some years, the brutal King Nebuchadnezzar II was conquered by Cyrus the Great and established the Persian Empire on the ashes of Babylon. In the second year of his reign, Cyrus gave leave to Zerubbabel, a popular provincial governor of great wisdom, to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city. Zerubbabel left Babylon with 42,360 of the exiles to rebuild the Holy Temple.

If building is difficult, how much harder is rebuilding? When our ancient Grand Masters reared the First Holy Temple, the land was at peace. Tributes to King Solomon poured in from every surrounding nation. The greatest craftsmen in the region were selected and given the finest materials and tools. For the new Holy Temple, we know that this was not so.

In a way, Judaism would not be the religion we now know had our people not suffered through decades of exile and sadness. We survived.

The diaspora, although a great and destructive tragedy, was also the origin of Jewish culture as it developed around its newly rebuilt temple. Nonetheless, the impact on the time in Babylon had some long-lasting effects. When we refer to God as “King of Kings”, we use a title that Cyrus and Darius bestowed upon themselves. To this day, the names of the months on the Jewish calendar are not of Hebrew, but of Babylonian origin!

If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand lose its cunning. May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you.

—Psalm 137

In the next issue: Who designed and built the second Holy Temple? How was it different from the first?

□

TheWise

A message from the Most Wise Master of the Pittsburgh Chapter Rose Croix

ROSE CROIX

Shaping Our Future

By Kristin M. Douglas, 32°

I hope this finds each of you and your families well and enjoying the warmer days of spring. This time of year always makes me think of renewal, or shall we say a return or reset to a new beginning. I like to think that hope springs eternal and that with each passing year, we are given the opportunity for a fresh start to try to live up to the ideals we have built up in our minds as to what constitutes a life well-lived. For some, that vision might seem unattainable. Joining Scottish Rite, however, may have been a very important first step in working towards achieving a better you!

When we became Scottish Rite Masons, we joined a tight-knit community of Masons committed to self-improvement, community, and brotherhood through deeper learning of the teachings and philosophies of the Craft. The Core Values of Scottish Rite are Integrity, Justice, Service to Humanity, Tolerance, Reverence for God, and Devotion to Country. Over the past year and a half, we have touched on several of these values in our magazine articles. They unite us in a quest to become better men and better Masons. The goal of all of this, according to the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction website, is to pass on those values to future generations, so our Craft is left

in the hands of other good men. It is this sentiment that I would like to focus my article on today.

It is no secret that our great fraternity is in a state of decline. We are also not an anomaly. Fraternal and civic organizations are bleeding members across the board. The world has changed dramatically from the one of just a generation or two ago.

Today,
we stand at
the precipice
of an
uncertain
future.

The emphasis on giving back to our communities and making each a better place was championed by the Greatest Generation who fought for our freedoms in World War II. They understood what was at stake here at home after witnessing the utter devastation

across Europe, Asia, and the Pacific. The indelible scar that left upon them compelled them for the rest of their lives to play active parts in their communities back home. Our numbers, as a fraternity, soared after World War II and continued to grow up through the late 1960s. This was true of other organizations as well such as Rotary, the Lions, VFW, the American Legion, and others. The enormous impact all these organizations had on our country cannot be counted. The untold millions of dollars that were donated through them to help their fellow man in need is immeasurable. Their importance cannot be overstated.



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What our fraternity has to offer is sorely missing in the world today.

Unfortunately, that generation has slowly dwindled, and since those high-water marks in the late 60s and 70s, there has been a steady decline in membership across the board.

Today, we stand at the precipice of an uncertain future. Will there be a viable “next generation” to pass the Craft to? A lot of that depends upon those reading this article. For too long, most of us have believed that things could continue the way they were indefinitely. For too long we have let others do the work of recruiting new members into the Craft while sitting idly by. Now we have reached a critical inflection point. In the late 60s there were more than 29,000 members in the Valley of Pittsburgh. Today, there are around 3,500. In the next several years, we forecast membership to fall further to around 1,500. As of today, almost a fourth of our membership is over the age of 80. These numbers do not bode well for our future. The number of Blue Lodges merging is increasing at a steady pace as well. No part of the Fraternity is immune from this trend.

The good news is there is still time to do something about it. There has never been a better or more critical time to bring that one good man each of us knows into the Fraternity. As a Scottish Rite Mason, there has never been a better or more critical time than now to bring that one good Blue Lodge Mason into the Valley of Pittsburgh. As of today, less than 20 percent of our Blue Lodge members

are also Scottish Rite Masons. There is plenty of opportunity to introduce many more men to all that our Valley has to offer. With programs like the Rite on the Road and membership

**There is still
time to save
all that we
hold dear
and that
we love about
the Craft.**

incentives, there has never been an easier time to join the Valley. There is still time to save all that we hold dear and that we love about the Craft. It will, however, take an effort from each of us to make it happen.

Start thinking now about that one good neighbor, co-worker, or church member that would make a great addition to our fraternity. Talk to them about the Lodge and what it means to you personally. If they are already a Mason but not a member of the Valley, tell them how they can further their Masonic knowledge by joining the Rite. Tell them of what you have experienced and seen and what it has meant to you. The future of Freemasonry is truly in each of our hands. We can either continue doing what we have always done and face

certain extinction, or each of us can make a concerted effort to look for good men to join our ranks.

We’ve often heard about the doomsday clock and how close we were to nuclear war at any given point. For our fraternity, it is one minute to midnight. Are you willing to do something about that? That is the only way forward—all of us pulling together! My son is 15 years old, and I am looking forward to the day that I can confer his degrees and welcome him into Freemasonry as a brother. I want it to be a healthy and vibrant fraternity that he will also be able to enjoy for his lifetime. I think deep down, all of us feel the same way and yearn to leave the Craft in just a little bit better condition than what we found it.

What our fraternity has to offer is sorely missing in the world today. Good men are thirsty for it. Good men are out there searching for it. It only takes you helping them with that first step and leading them to the light: True Masonic Light! I implore each of you to really think about what I have said and decide what action you will take to save our great Fraternity. The future of Freemasonry is truly in your hands! □



The Center

A message from the Director of the Children's Dyslexia Center—Pittsburgh

VALLEY OF PITTSBURGH

Paying It Back to Move Us Forward

By Patricia Broskey

The Children's Dyslexia Center of Pittsburgh needs more than just tutors and students to fulfill its mission. We also need parents who believe in and provide support for our cause. Amy Liberto did just that by getting creative.

As a mother of one of our students, Liberto has seen first hand what the CDC can do to improve the lives of our students. Liberto was inspired to take on a project to give back, and through her generosity, she is moving us forward. She organized a greeting card sale, and in only a few weeks had raised over \$800. Not only did she provide us with this

substantial donation, but she also donated several series of books from USborne, a British children's book publishing company that publishes excellent young readers' series.

We are humbled by Liberto's selflessness and dedication. She not only sees the value of tutoring and of children's education, but through her efforts, will be contributing to our success and to the success of our students for years to come.

We hold her efforts and her gratitude in our hearts. We are thankful for her and for all who have contributed to our program. □

For more information:
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Featured in the photo are (L to R): Patricia Broskey, Center Director, Amy Liberto, Lucas Liberto, student, and Shannon Miller, tutor.

Builders Council

Benefactors of the Children's Dyslexia Center-Pittsburgh

The ability to read is the foundation of each child's future. It provides the base upon which all learning depends. Membership in the Builders Council means that you have made a commitment to assure that our Children's Dyslexia Center will be able to help children with dyslexia today and for years to come.

Joining the Builders Council is achieved through a commitment of \$10,000 by one of the following methods:

- **Pledging monthly/annual gifts for a period lasting no longer than 10 years**

- **Naming the Children's Dyslexia Center in your will**
- **Making a bequest to the Children's Dyslexia Center**
- **Establishing an annuity or trust**



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Louri Ann West
John & Jerry Williams
Jeffrey & Sharon Wonderling



The Center

A conversation the Chairman of the Children's Dyslexia Center—Pittsburgh

VALLEY OF PITTSBURGH

Meet Our New Chairman

Recently, we had a chance to sit down with Brother Jack Jones, the new Chairman of the Board of Governors at the CDC-Pittsburgh. Jack brings with him a wealth of experience and energy. We wish Jack the best of luck in his term as Chairman.

RiteNow: How did you become involved with the CDC Board of Governors?

Jack Jones: In 2006, an old friend, Jay McElravy, and I were having a cup of coffee, and he had mentioned the CDC and that he was on the Board of Governors. So, being the curious type, I started to question him about dyslexia and the CDC. After a few minutes of discussion, I told Jay if he ever needed help to please give me a call. About a month later he called and asked if I would like to be on the Board of Governors. After explaining exactly what I would be doing, he convinced me to accept the position. I've been here since and enjoyed every moment. Over the years as a board member, I have attended numerous CDC graduation ceremonies. The scholars would explain how the CDC helped them learn how to read.

One graduation will remain with me forever: after the graduation ceremony, one of the mothers came up to our table to thank us. She took my hand started crying saying, "Thank so very much. You have given my son a new chance at life, a chance I thought he would never have. You have been the answer to our prayers. Thank you and God bless all of you." I don't believe there was a dry eye at our table. However, after that moment I knew that I was where I needed to be—on the Board of Governors.

Please contact me if someone would like to make a donation for a great cause.

RN: What is the number one challenge that faces the Pittsburgh CDC?

JJ: I feel the number one challenge is the stigma of dyslexia. This is a condition that affects 15%-20% of the population, but it is not visible. It shows up when a child starts to read – such as when a child starts school. At

first, a child will be thought to "just have a hard time reading." But after professional testing and evaluation the true reason will be learned: dyslexia. Sometimes that diagnosis is rejected with the thought the child just has to try harder.

Trying harder will not work. There needs to be professional intervention which is where the Children's Dyslexia Center (CDC) will work

their talents. I feel that our CDC Director and the Tutors are the best in the profession. They work with these children routinely and make a difference in their lives. They deserve all the credit.

RN: How can members of the Valley of Pittsburgh help/get involved?

JJ: The Valley has always been there for us, and we are very grateful for that support. Without it, the CDC could never exist as it does. Recently they remodeled the entire CDC area. That was fabulous, it looks great, and the children have a nice place in which to learn. The Valley has supported us every step of the way, without question.

When we have fundraisers, we really appreciate how members of the Valley support by buying candy, flowers, etc. Valley members hold several fundraisers every year for the CDC's benefit. Fundraising is a big part of the board's responsibilities. The funds that are raised ensure continued operation of the CDC.

RN: What are your plans for the CDC moving forward?

JJ: The Board of Governors is made of a great group of men and women dedicated to the CDC, each with their own unique skill sets. We have only had one meeting this year, but we have some ideas and plans in the works.

I would like to try to expand the CDC and the number of scholars enrolled at one time. I understand that this is a long complicated process and will take a significant amount of time, but we need to start sometime and take that very important first step.

We will be looking for volunteers to help with our events and the Valleys fund raising events.

Finally, I would like to increase corporate grants to the CDC and identify companies that match donations of employees. Then, identify those employees who may be members of the Valley or other wanting to donate to a great organization. Please contact me if someone would like to make a donation for a great cause.

RN: What would you say to someone thinking about joining the Builders Council?

JJ: I would love to see the Builders Council continue to grow, or maybe even double. It has always been my belief that you have to give back in life, and the Builders Council is a great way for someone give back. Your membership creates a great legacy by helping children when they needed it most.

RN: Any thoughts that you may have that I didn't ask you about.

JJ: I appreciate being elected Chairman of the Board, and I am humbled by the confidence the board has in me. I am confident that we, the Board of Governors, will, as a team, get a lot of great things done for the children at the CDC-Pittsburgh.

□

Would you like to get involved?

Interested in joining the Builders Council?

Does your employer do matching grants?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, call the Valley office. Your commitment of time, talent, or treasure can make a lasting difference in a child's life.



The Office

A message from the Secretary of the Valley of Pittsburgh

VALLEY OF PITTSBURGH

Brotherly Love in Action

By David W. Morgans, 33°

A fraternity that is founded on brotherly love, relief, and truth surely must teach lessons to every Mason throughout their lives. The lessons learned will be unique to each Mason. Some will learn lessons individually based on their own private experiences. Others will learn lessons alongside their Brothers. Some will learn lessons based on their understanding of ritual and Masonic culture. And some will earn lessons, both good and bad, from observing how individual Masons conduct themselves in lodge, at work, in worship, in society, and in their relationships with their family.



David W. Morgans, 33°
secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org

Each Mason will at some point both teach and learn lessons whether they are aware of it or not. The Office staff interacts with many of our members in-person, over the phone, and through email. These interactions offer many opportunities to learn lessons directly through personal experience. It would be unreasonable to think that every interaction is a positive one. Some are rather uncomfortable. However, no matter how a conversation may start, there is always a chance to end it on a positive note when the tenets of brotherly love, relief, and truth are observed. Most interactions, to be sure, are very positive.

We get to see some wonderful things at the office. Brotherly love is constantly on display. Members will ask for contact information so that they can reach out to a Brother who they heard wasn't doing well. We hear reports from members who have visited a Brother to let us know how he is doing. We have Brothers who stop by just to say "hello" and to see how we are doing. And we will have Brothers call in to let us know that another Brother needs some help from the Hospitaler.

Relief is also quite evident in the

office as well since we often are contacted for those in need of Hospitaler assistance. We get to participate with the Hospitalers in equipping our members with a variety of home healthcare items. When the office is contacted by members who are having a hard

time paying their dues, we remit those dues and use Hospitaler funds to offset the assessments for those members. We have the joy of seeing the number of members who send in donations made to the Hospitaler fund. Not only those donations, but also the donations made to the Children's Dyslexia Center that come in with dues or those members who become Builders Council members for the Dyslexia Center. Plus, we receive reports on how many of our

Brothers send in donations to the Blue Envelope appeal letter. Every time we see donations made to our various charities; we see that our members are participating in the relief of others.

Truth shows itself in the office when we are contacted with member information updates like new email addresses, changes of address or phone numbers, and the saddest

Thank you
to every
member
who teaches
the lesson
that
Freemasonry
works
through
your words
and your
actions.

truth of the death of a Brother. We also have the honor of taking part in one of the hardest truths that person must face, a Brother who realizes that he needs to ask for assistance. While that is difficult for many to do, we at the office are prepared to confidentially help where we can.

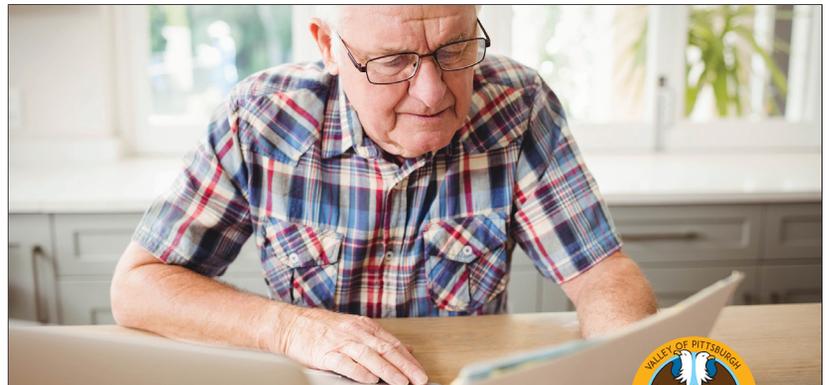
The tenets of brotherly love, relief, and truth are demonstrated routinely in our fraternity. The lesson that this teaches is that Freemasonry works. It works when Brothers behave as Brothers and keep those three tenets in the forefront of their minds as they move throughout this world. Those three tenets are not just for our membership but are to be offered to non-Masons, too. They are taught in the degree work we present each year at our Reunions and at our Rite on the Road events as well as those offered virtually from Lexington at the Thursday Night at the Rite events. The degree work is now more available to every Scottish Rite Mason than ever before and offers each of us a way to reaffirm what we believe and to inspire us to be more than just men but to be Masons. Freemasonry works but only when practiced.

Thank you to every member who teaches the lesson that Freemasonry works through your words and your actions. The world needs to learn this lesson too. Let us always live and act so that the tenets of brotherly love, relief, and truth are always visible to each other and to everyone we meet. □



Need Assistance?

No one likes to find themselves in financial hardship. No one likes to ask for help. However, many Brothers would rather be suspended than ask for the help that we all promised to render to a Brother when we joined the Fraternity. If you need to have your dues remitted this year, please, please, please contact the Office by phone (412-939-3579), by letter (Valley of Pittsburgh, 3579 Masonic Way, Pittsburgh, PA 15237), or by email (secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org). Your request will be kept confidential, and you will continue to be a vital part of our Valley.



Senior Member Status

If you are 80-years old or older or are a 50-year plus member, I would like to remind you that the Scottish Rite does not automatically remit your dues. The Scottish Rite has a program for senior members. The Senior Member Program was implemented to ensure that NO member over the age of 80 (or over 75 with 50 years of membership in the Scottish Rite, NMJ) having financial hardship would be suspended for non-payment. If you qualify for Senior Membership, you will no longer have to pay dues.

If you think you qualify for Senior Member status, please contact the Office by phone (412-939-3579), by letter (Valley of Pittsburgh, 3579 Masonic Way, Pittsburgh, PA 15237), or by email (secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org).

If you are a caregiver for someone who may qualify, please contact us and let us know of the need. We are ready, willing, and able to help but can only do so if we are aware of the need.





Austin R. Shifrin, 33°

Higher Degrees, Deeper Understanding

by Austin Shifrin, 33°

The stated theme of this issue presents us with the challenging task of confronting important questions about what the lessons of Scottish Rite degrees truly are and what value they have to us. I will address two specific points for you: What is the interplay between blue lodge lessons and Scottish Rite lessons? And, what is the value of our staged degree work in conveying the values of the Scottish Rite?

In the Master Mason degree in Pennsylvania blue lodge, the candidate is given a nice succinct description of the central tenet of each degree. I won't repeat it here for the sake of propriety. If you don't recall it right now, please consult a more seasoned brother or a lodge or School of Instruction education officer. Suffice it to say, if you take to heart those lessons and the symbolism of the square, the compasses, and the letter G, as well as the final act of the third degree itself, you get some unambiguous guidance. First, on the proper relationships between the Freemason and his Creator as well as between the Freemason and his fellow man (and his brethren specifically). He is also taught how he ought to reflect and work upon himself.

The Scottish Rite degrees were not preceded by a small set of Core Values and then composed to convey those morals through stories. The Scottish Rite degrees were written by various authors—most of them dating back to the 18th century but extending up through the 21st. Each one has its own unique and somewhat situational moral to convey. In a more recent effort to improve marketing and the ease of communicating the purpose and value of our fraternity, Supreme Council examined these twenty-nine degrees and their lessons and

When we contemplate the interplay between blue lodge lessons, and Scottish Rite values, the synergies should be immediately clear.

identified some common threads running through them, distilling their essence to what we now refer to as the six Core Values: Integrity, Justice, Service to Humanity, Tolerance, Reverence for God, and Devotion to Country. I'm happy to say I believe they succeeded in this distillation. I feel that if you pull out your Scottish Rite passport to cast your mind back over the degrees you have witnessed, or if you keep this perspective in mind as you move forward and see more of them, you too will be able to identify which one or more of the core values are represented in the drama.

When discussing the fact that we have witnessed or participated in these “higher degrees,” we sometimes need to be reminded that this does not elevate us above any other brother. In some ways, this problem is just an artifact of the circumstance that we have numbered the degrees. But other ways to express what we are undertaking is that it is an effort to deepen or broaden our understanding of ethical principles (not with a goal of portraying ourselves as “loftier” somehow). And I think that when we contemplate the interplay between blue lodge lessons, and Scottish Rite values, the synergies should be immediately clear.

integrity

What can the purpose be of taking oaths regarding my future conduct if I don't have *integrity*—a consistency and dependability of my ethical position? If I proclaim that I have chosen a moral code of my own volition, how else can you trust that I mean what I say?

justice

If I am given the authority and the responsibility to look out for my brother's conduct as well, how can I wield this appropriately unless I value *justice*—both in the sense that all actions must have consequences and also in the sense that I must apply empathy and mercy?

service to humanity

Do I understand the responsibility and accountability that blue lodge teaches me ought to exist between members—and ultimately, should extend to the rest of society—represents a calling to *service to humanity*?

tolerance

If I am going to trust pledges that made these men my brothers before we arrived at the Scottish Rite—pledges that were made in the same fashion as mine, by men of other creeds than my own—mustn't I learn *tolerance* for our differences and a greater focus on our common ground?

reverence for God

While it might seem blatantly obvious that all branches of the fraternity have in common *reverence for God*, what can we learn by comparing specifically the relationship to our creator as referenced in the very first degree in blue lodge versus the specific language in our Scottish Rite motto, *Spes Mea In Deo Est* and the drama of the degree in which it is explained?

devotion to country

Blue lodge ritual contains components that demonstrate our patriotism, and this is corroborated by Pennsylvania Grand Lodge's choice of charities; I feel our understanding of this thread is enhanced and supported by ritual in the Scottish Rite, NMJ, which references elements of American history, in encouraging among our members a healthy *devotion to country*.

The content isn't strictly “new” lessons or subject matter but rather an elaboration on the lessons of blue lodge.

In conclusion, while I believe the Scottish Rite affords its candidates an opportunity for a whole new medium in which to view and contemplate our values, the content isn't strictly “new” lessons or subject matter but rather an elaboration on the lessons of blue lodge. While the blue lodge is a forum in which we learn and discuss the principles that should guide us, the Scottish Rite gives us broad and diverse demonstrations of the various states of the human condition in which ethical challenges are confronted and must be resolved through dramatization. I hope that as you continue your Scottish Rite journey, it will deepen and enhance your appreciation of the lessons of your mother lodge.

□

Membership

A message from the Chairman of the Membership Committee of the Valley of Pittsburgh

VALLEY OF PITTSBURGH

In Brief

By Kristin M. Douglas, 32°

The Scottish Rite in the Valley of Pittsburgh will hold a spring class for new members on Saturday, May 14, 2022 at the Greater Pittsburgh Masonic Center. This class honors our own Jeffrey M. Wonderling as the Right Worshipful Grand Master of Masons in Pennsylvania. Be sure to check out the next issue of *RiteNow* for pictures and a recap of the day.

Later in the year, we are planning on holding additional Rite on the Road degrees at several locations throughout our area. The main goal for this program is to offer remote opportunities to

join the Valley without traveling to Pittsburgh. We are still looking for volunteers who would like to help organize or participate in these events.

The initiation fee is an incredibly low \$100!

If you know someone with limited time, difficulty traveling to the Valley, or just wants to join prior to waiting for the next full class, these are the opportunities they are waiting for.

As always, thank you for your efforts in growing our membership in the Valley. The future of which is each of our hands! □



Kristin M. Douglas, 32°
mwm@valleyofpittsburgh.org





Deeds Over Words

By PJ Roup, 33°



PJ Roup, 33°

Americans will put up with anything provided it doesn't block traffic.—DAN RATHER

When I became a Mason nearly a quarter-century ago, I could not have been more excited. I felt as if I were one of the most influential people in the world. I had just joined myself to a Fraternity that included some of the most extraordinary men who ever lived—philosophers, founding fathers, artists, astronauts, and giants of industry. I was over the moon. I purchased a Masonic ring as soon as I received my third degree, and I made up excuses to start wearing a blazer just so I could wear a lapel pin. I will admit that I puffed out my chest ever so slightly when people noticed the pin. I had no idea what to say to them, mind you, but I was proud to be associated with such an esteemed organization.

The next piece of Masonic swag I purchased was a Masonic car emblem—the square and compasses in brilliant gold on a shiny baby blue enamel background. *This. This was how I would tell the world I was a Freemason, I thought.* I ran my 1992 Oldsmobile Eighty-Eight Royale (don't judge me for driving an "old-man car" when I was young) through the car wash, peeled the backing off of the double-sided tape, and affixed it to my trunk. *Perfect,* I thought as I stepped back to admire my handiwork. I was an insurance salesman at the time. Consequently, I put nearly 30,000 miles on the

car annually, so countless people would know of my affiliation with such an august body of men.

Not long after I put the emblem on the car, forever singling me out as a Freemason, my wife and I were traveling the Pennsylvania Turnpike. As is often the case on that road, the left lane (the passing lane for any unaware of its purpose) became clogged with traffic going either the same speed or maybe even a little bit slower than the right lane. I rolled with it for a mile or so. The second and third miles saw my blood pressure increase, and by the fifth mile of going nowhere fast, I found myself becoming enraged.

None of us became Masons because we are perfect. We joined precisely because we are *not* perfect.

For liability purposes, I am not admitting to being an aggressive driver, but I will say that I am *determined*. I saw a small opening at the head of the logjam several cars ahead. I moved to the right lane, **stomped on** eased into the accelerator, and wedged myself in front of the offending driver. Freedom, I rejoiced, as I "saluted" the man in my rearview mirror.



“You know,” Gail began, her fingers still digging into the door handle. “You put that Masonic emblem on the back of the car because you were proud of the organization, then you go and pull a stunt like that.”

She was absolutely right. Here I was doing precisely the opposite of what I should have been doing. I did take her words to heart. I started driving slower and less aggressive, or determined, while I had that emblem on the car. When I tell that story at gatherings, I say that when she called me out, I slowed down, pulled the car over, and pried the sticker off the trunk. While that didn't actually happen, the truth is that after I traded that car in, I have yet to put a Masonic emblem on another. It isn't because I prefer being belligerent on the road; it's just that I am all too aware of my limitations. I try, but I occasionally fail, so I'd rather not have the world judge all of Freemasonry by my choices on the highway. My ashlar isn't perfect, after all.

So why am I telling you this? More importantly, why did I not write this as one of my fictional Dylan and

Henry stories? Both of those are good questions—thanks for asking. I'll take the second one first. I think it's crucial for us all to come to terms with our limitations. None of us became Masons because we are perfect. We joined precisely because we are *not* perfect. We assumed that in the company of and through accountability to other good-but-not-perfect men, we could do and be better. Sure, I could have hidden behind fictional characters and let them work it out, but isn't it better to see that people you know—people you sit in lodge with—struggle in much the same way you do? I think so.

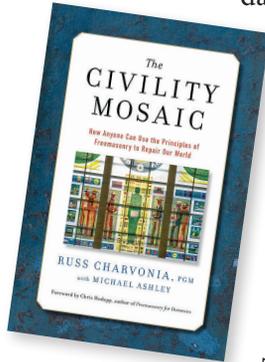
As for why I shared the story, it's simple. We often forget that we (and our actions) are what people have available to judge Freemasonry at any given moment. I was saying all the things that Masons say about being better, but where the rubber met the road (pun intended), my deeds were very different. When we stop to help someone change a tire or shovel a neighbor's driveway, our words and deeds are in alignment. When we cut someone off in traffic, fail to hold a door, or



otherwise act in ways that are counter to our teachings, not so much.

Doing better is the first step to being better.

In the book, *The Civility Mosaic*, Brothers Russ Charvonia, Past Grand Master of California, and Michael Ashley take a hard look at civility—more specifically, the lack of it—in today’s world. The interactive (yes, there are assignments at the end of each chapter) book challenges us to use our Masonic teachings to help restore civility to society. It is a challenging book at times, often tackling topics that could make the reader uncomfortable, but it drives home the point that many of the problems we face as a society would not be nearly as bad (if they existed at all) if all people used the teachings of the Craft as a guide to their actions. At one point in my reading (and this is why I bring it up), I felt convicted as the authors suggested that perhaps the Masonic emblem

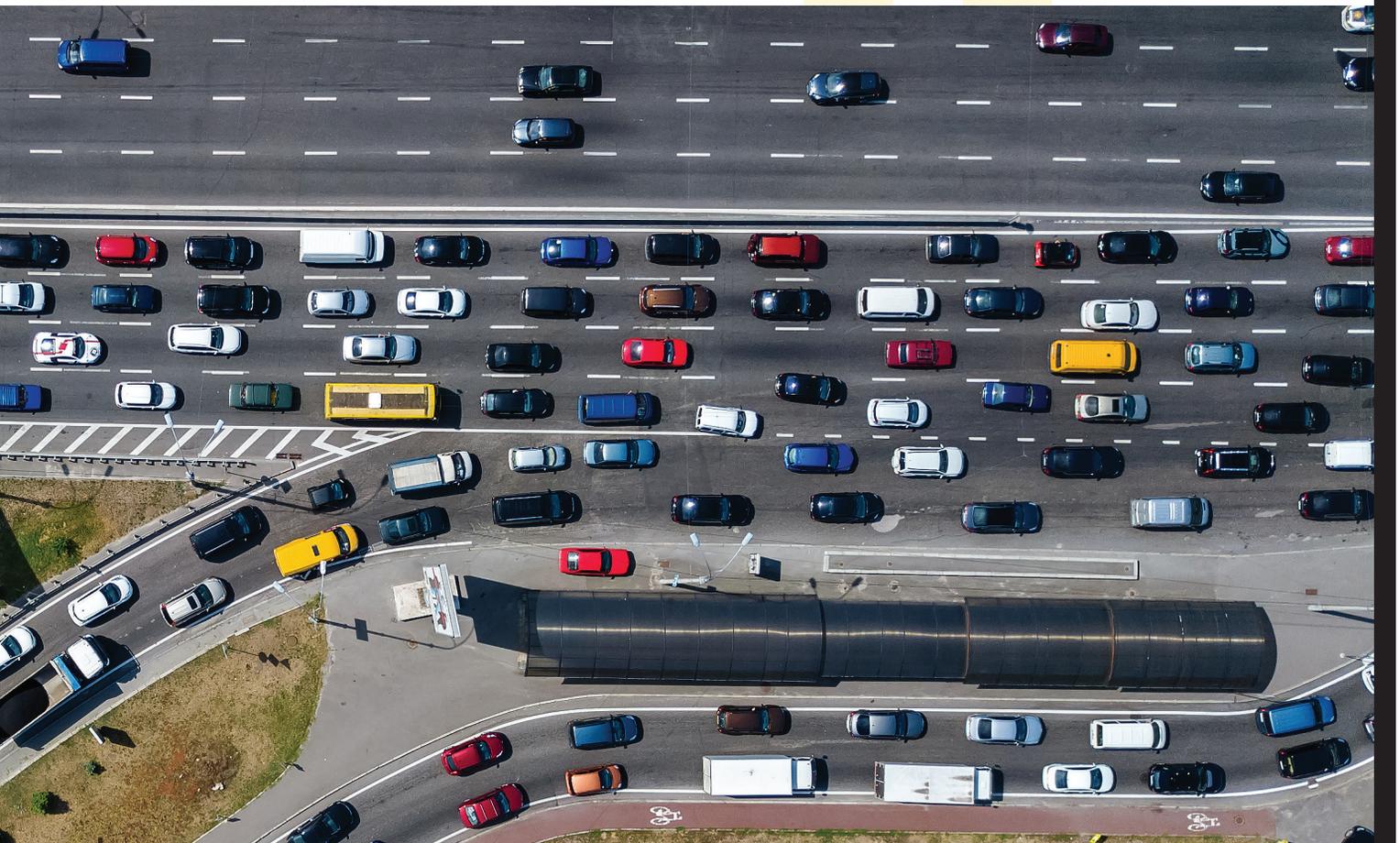


that I talked about earlier would be better placed on the dashboard than the trunk as a reminder of how we should act as we navigate the highways of life.

Modern Vitruvians, we have the tools at our disposal to make ourselves and the world a better place. It doesn’t matter what side of the vaccine debate you are on, what political party you align yourself with, or how you assemble your peanut butter and jelly sandwich. If you use what you learn in the Blue Lodge and let the Scottish Rite Core Values of Integrity, Justice, Tolerance, Reverence for God, Devotion to Country, and Service inform your behavior, you cannot go wrong.

Remember, our deeds—not just our words—set us apart. The lessons we learn and our accountability to one another are crucial components to making the world a better place. Will it happen all at once? No. But doing better is the first step to being better.

I think I’ll take my foot off the gas and let that sink in. □



Spring Golf Fitness/Instruction Plan

By Eric S. Teasdale, 33°

▶ SPRING IS UPON US, and I would like to touch on a topic that can help golfers improve when practice at the range becomes more difficult. The most efficient way to improve your golf game is through range time (i.e. hitting golf balls), but if you can't find the time or a place to hit golf balls, fitness is the next best option. You can also improve your golf game through practice of some basic fundamentals. You do not need to hit golf balls.

When Tiger Woods came onto the golf scene, he led the transformation of the professional game in terms of athleticism. His devotion to fitness and exercise and getting his body into golf shape altered the stigma of golfer fitness, and became

a blueprint for what most professional golfers do now. Fitness and exercise for the amateur golfer should be just as important. Working out to get stronger and more flexible and create greater clubhead speed should be the winter goal of all amateur golfers. As we get older, everyone tends to lose distance due to decreasing flexibility. Becoming more flexible is something all golfers can achieve through proper stretching.

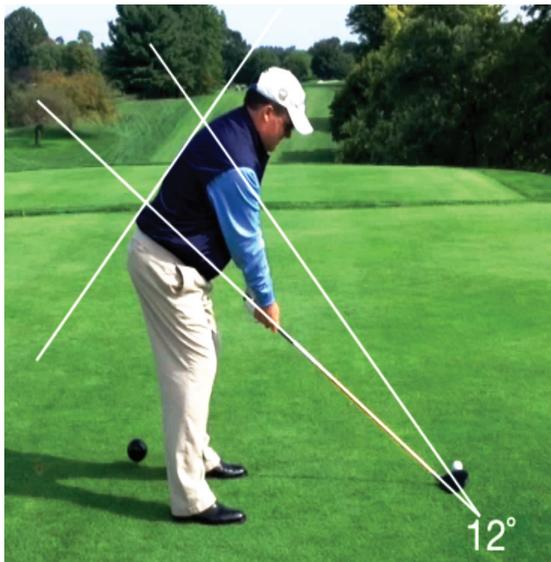
There are golf-specific trainers at fitness clubs all over the Greater Pittsburgh area that can help you develop a plan for an improved 2022 golf season. After you have a developed plan, you need to make a commitment to improving your fitness. When looking for motivation, think

about the long-term benefit for both your health and your golf game.

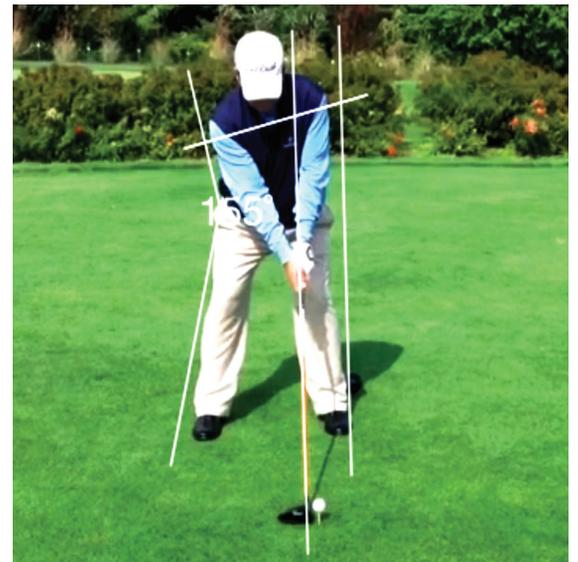
There are a few other ways to improve your golf game in the winter along with a fitness and exercise plan. You can start with reviewing and practicing the fundamentals. There are three fundamentals with the most potential to help average golfers, Athletic Posture, Dynamic Balance, and Core Strength.

1. Athletic Posture

I strongly believe that being in an athletic posture to start is the most important fundamental of all. You need to have a solid foundation before the swing even starts. Achieving an athletic posture is vital in all sports, but many amateurs still



“Down the Line Posture”—Ideally, the shaft of club is at a 90-degree angle to your spine with not much curvature of the spine. A plane angle of between 12 and 15 degrees allows you to achieve a neutral arm hang (arms hanging straight down) and weight on the balls of your feet.



“Face-On Posture”—A firm lead side with your trail shoulder lower than the lead shoulder is the most efficient way to set up. This will create a reverse K position in a right-handed player, which insures that your head is behind the ball at address. This will make it more likely to be behind the ball at impact or “the moment of truth.”



Eric S. Teasdale, 33*

have a weak starting point for their swings. To find your optimal posture, assume the pose of a baseball shortstop, hockey goalie or basketball player on defense. Please refer to the pictures below and the accompanying notes to understand and visualize proper golf posture.

To work on your posture, all you will need is a mirror or a hand held device with a camera. Personally, I use and recommend the V1 Golf app for an iPhone or iPad.

2. Dynamic Balance

To play golf successfully, you need to have athletic movement with both stability and balance. While your body fully rotates, there must be stability in all areas to create torque while you coil. Developing

core strength is key here and should be an important element of your workout routine. Make some practice back swings, focusing on keeping your trail knee bent, (which creates the coil) and turning your lead shoulder under your chin. Finish your practice swing and hold your finish to create dynamic balance.

To work on dynamic balance and stability, all you need to focus on is completing a coiled back swing and balanced finish while you make practice swings.

3. Core Strength

Core Strength can be achieved through a golf-specific workout routine. Remember, you must commit to completing each workout session and practicing the fun-

damentals. By developing core strength during the spring, you can generate and control greater power and club head speed in your swing.

Winter can be a tough time of year for golfers, but you can make the most of the weather by setting some goals, practicing those fundamentals and getting in shape. You'll feel better, and you'll play better, too. Getting off to a healthy and strong start before the 2022 golf season begins can have a profound effect on your life and your scores this year. □

Eric Teasdale the resident PGA Professional at Shannopin Country Club in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



“Coiling”—Maintain the flex in the trail knee on your backswing and turn your lead shoulder under the chin. You will feel tightness in your trail thigh and your rear foot might feel like it wants to twist. If you feel this sensation, you are coiling properly.



“Balanced Finish”—hold your balanced finish with your rear foot up in the air and chest past the target line.

TheWord

Observations from Brother and Reverend John H. Piper, 33°

HAVE PATIENCE

When my oldest son was still a boy, we had a record album called The Music Machine. One song on the album was called “Have Patience.” It went like this in part:

*“There was a snail called Herbert
who was so very slow*

He caused a lot of traffic jams wherever he would go

*The ants were always getting mad and the beetles,
they would fume*

*But Herb would always poke along
and sing this little tune:*

Have patience, have patience

Don’t be in such a hurry

When you get impatient, you only start to worry

Remember, remember that God is patient, too

*And think of all the times when others
have to wait for you.”*

As you can well imagine, there’s a moral to this tale.

*Some of you may find yourselves behind
a creeping snail*

So if you get impatient and you’re easily disturbed

Think about this little song and take a tip from Herb

Have Patience, have patience...”

We all know the adage, “Patience is a virtue.” Patience can help us achieve our goals, maintain a positive attitude in life, and make us less reactive which in turn will make us less prone to bad decisions as humans, as Freemasons.

In the early days of my being a minister, I told my Dad that I was going to preach on patience, to which he commented, “How can you preach on patience when you have none?” Over the years I have developed more patience, though my wife might disagree with that assessment.

—
“How can you preach on patience
when you have none?”
—

The other day I was at an auto garage for some repairs to my car which turned into additional repairs. I was there for hours, but I had a book to read and got to know the service manager (his life, his problems) as I patiently waited. When the car repairs were finished, I went to Chick-fil-A and waited and waited in line in my car and listened to classical music on my car radio until my order was filled. The wait was worth it.

As I am writing this article, it has only been a few days since the Fern Hollow Bridge on Braddock Ave in Regent Square collapsed. This is a bridge that thousands of people and I in the city’s East End use regularly. Penn Avenue is the detour. The only problem is that the Parkway East bridge east of the Squirrel Hill tunnel is scheduled to be torn down and a new bridge constructed to replace it—and Penn Avenue is to be that detour as well! All of this detouring is going to require a lot of patience.

And then there is the Covid-19 Pandemic, now into its third year, which continues to test our patience. Two years plus of shots, masks, social distancing, and Zoom meetings everywhere, including the meetings of the Valley of Pittsburgh, have us at our wit's end. Many of us are working from home or just spending more time at home, and statistics show that for many, this togetherness has not been a pleasant experience.

Issues will come up in life
that will test our patience, but I have learned
to hold on to is this verse of scripture
"All things work together for good."

This year, I had some significant health issues. I had tests and tests which turned up nothing wrong. But I

knew there was. It took a lot of patience to stay positive. I did not lose hope or patience and finally a diagnosis was found, a treatment started, and I am now fine!

Issues will come up in life that will test our patience, but I have learned to hold on to is this verse of scripture "All things work together for good." So far, for me it has proved true. Sometimes it takes a long time to be proven true, but ultimately it is!

So hang in there Brothers. Have patience. Keep going to Lodge and meetings and activities of the Valley. One day we will get a handle on this pandemic and we will meet together without masks or social distancing.

What a glorious day that will be!







Dr. Glenn D. Miller, 33°

Charcot Foot

By Dr. Glenn D. Miller, II, 33°

Charcot foot, also known as neuropathic arthropathy, neuropathic osteoarthropathy, or Charcot joint, is a progressive destructive degeneration of the bones, joints, and soft tissues of the foot and/or ankle. Left untreated, it can lead to fractures, dislocations, and deformities such as collapse of the foot's medial arch which results in the bones of the midfoot dropping to a position lower than the heel and toes. This deformity is referred to as a "rocker bottom" foot and can lead to ulcerations on the bottom of the foot which, in turn, can lead to infections and osteomyelitis which, in turn, can lead to amputation if they do not heal properly. Charcot foot is believed to be a localized uncontrolled inflammatory syndrome that occurs in people with peripheral neuropathies. The most common cause of the underlying peripheral neuropathy is diabetes mellitus. However, there are many other potential causes of peripheral neuropathy including chronic alcohol or drug abuse, Parkinson's disease, cerebral palsy, syphilis, HIV, rheumatoid disease, psoriasis, spinal cord disease or injury, poliomyelitis, leprosy, syringomyelia (fluid filled cavity or cyst within the spinal cord), medications such as steroids/vincristine/indomethacin/phenylbutazone, and infection.

There is no specific cause that results in a person developing Charcot foot. However, certain inciting events have been known to lead to Charcot foot such as foot sores that don't heal, recent foot surgery that is slow to heal, ankle sprains or bone fracture(s) in the ankle and/or foot that don't receive timely treatment, chronic use of corticosteroids as an immunosuppressant which can lead to decreased bone density, and infections that involve the ankle or foot. There are two primary theories that have been advanced to describe the pathogenesis or development

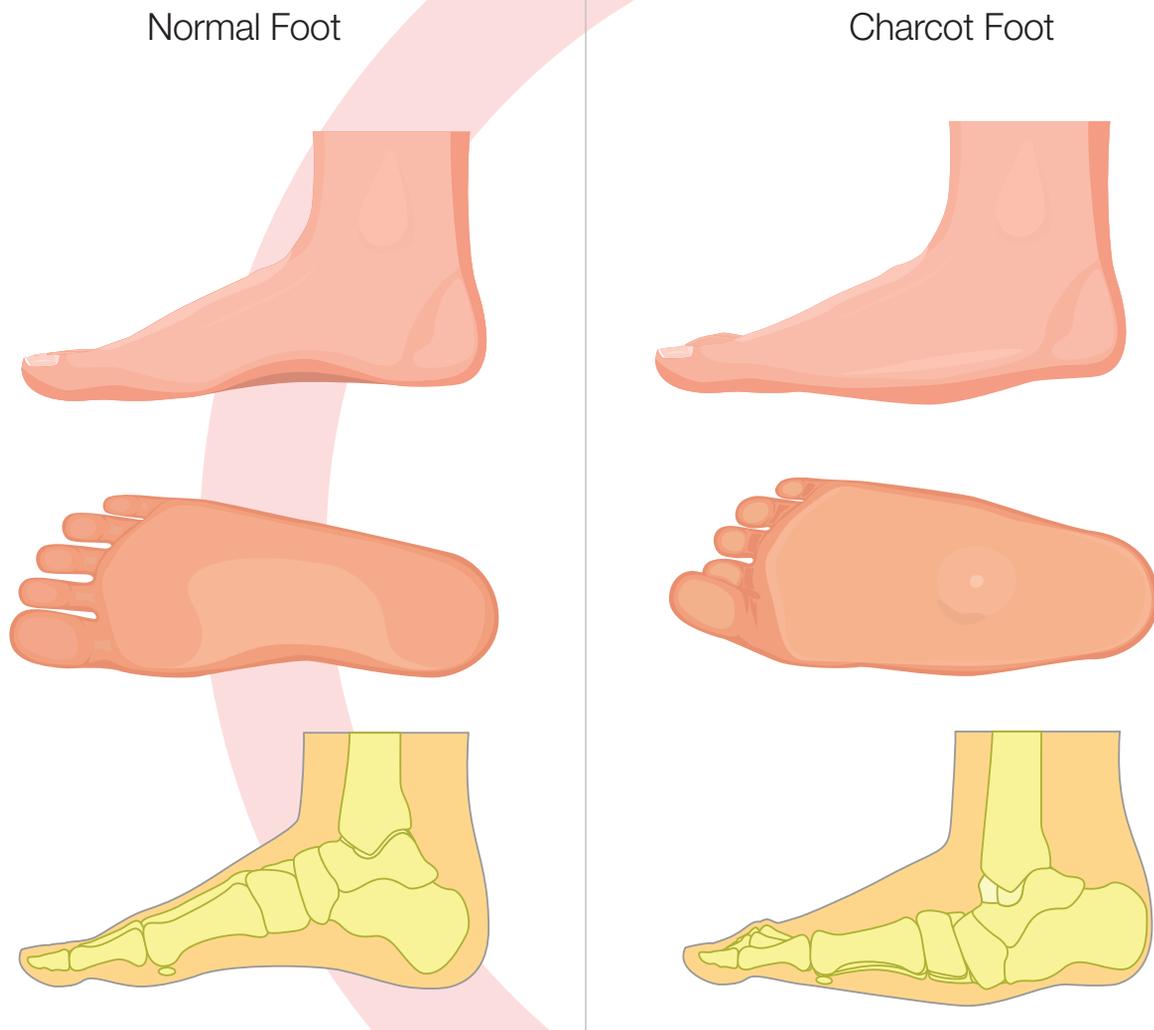
of Charcot foot syndrome. These two theories are the Neurotrauma theory and the Neurovascular theory.

The Neurotrauma theory proposes that the loss of peripheral sensation secondary to underlying neuropathy can lead to repeated microtrauma to the affected bone(s) and joint(s) that goes unnoticed. This repeated microtrauma leads to uncontrolled inflammation which, in turn, leads to resorption of the traumatized bone(s) and subsequent joint(s) destruction.

There is no specific cause that results in a person developing Charcot foot.

The Neurovascular theory proposes that the underlying neuropathy leads to significantly increased blood flow to the affected bone(s) and joint(s). This increased blood flow leads to increased bone demineralization and osteolysis (active bone resorption by osteoclast blood cells) which, in turn, leads to bone(s) and joint(s) destruction. It is likely that both of these mechanisms are involved in the pathogenesis of Charcot foot syndrome.

Charcot neuropathy was first described by Sir William Musgrave of England in 1703, although he believed that syphilis was the primary cause of the syndrome. John Kearsley Mitchell, a Philadelphia physician, documented 12 cases of the syndrome involving patients with spinal cord lesions in 1831. Jean-Martin Charcot, a French neurologist, elucidated a more thorough description of the syndrome in 1868. Sir James Paget, an English surgeon and pathologist, named the condition after Jean-Martin Charcot in 1881. More recently, in 1936, American physician William Reilly Jordan documented that the syndrome



was related to several miscellaneous peripheral neuropathies with diabetes mellitus being the primary causative disease.

Early diagnosis of active Charcot foot syndrome is crucial for successful treatment and is based upon the patient's history and clinical examination. However, radiologic imaging studies should be utilized to help confirm the diagnosis. In some cases, a bone or synovial membrane (tissue lining the joints) biopsy may be required for a definitive diagnosis. Physical findings include erythema (skin redness), edema (swelling), increased temperature, and pain or soreness in the ankle and/or foot. However, these physical findings can also occur in other conditions such as a deep venous thrombosis (DVT), cellulitis, infections, sprains or other injuries, and osteomyelitis. Therefore, the physician needs to have a high index of suspicion

for Charcot foot neuropathy to diagnose the condition accurately. Standard radiography (X-rays) is typically the initial imaging technique performed. These are performed to assess for subtle bone fractures or subluxations (partial dislocations). If the X-rays are inconclusive, further investigation utilizing magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and/or nuclear medicine examinations such as three-phase bone scans can be pursued. As previously stated, some cases may require bone and/or synovial membrane biopsies for a definitive diagnosis.

Treatment of patients with Charcot foot neuropathy consists of both nonsurgical and surgical therapies. In the early stage of Charcot syndrome the foot and ankle are fragile and have to be protected so that the weakened bones have time to heal and so that the foot will not further collapse. Complete immobilization

and non-weight bearing are usually recommended for the first few months. These are the most important treatment recommendations during the acute inflammatory stage for the prevention of further foot and ankle destruction. The patient is usually placed in a cast and has to utilize crutches, a wheelchair, or a knee scooter to get around. After the initial inflammatory phase has resolved, patients are often fitted for a walking boot which permits more mobility while still preventing excessive pressure and stress on the affected foot and ankle (partial-weight bearing).

Further conservative management usually consists of having the patient fitted for custom braces and footwear that has extra shoe depth and a rigid sole in an effort to allow the patient to return to daily activities, while hopefully preventing the recurrence of trauma to the affected foot and ankle with the potential subsequent

Early diagnosis of active Charcot foot syndrome is crucial for successful treatment and is based upon the patient's history and clinical examination.

development of sores or ulcers at pressure points. Surgical intervention has historically been utilized to resect infected bones (osteomyelitis), the excision of bony prominences that were not amenable to treatment with custom footwear or orthotics, and the correction of deformities that could not be accommodated with custom footwear or orthotics. However, there has been a recent trend to earlier surgical intervention with mechanical arthrodesis (joint fusion) of the ankle and/or foot bones, as well as correction of deformities, in an effort to prevent the midfoot bones from collapsing with the subsequent development of “rocker bottom” deformity and ulcers on the bottom of the foot. Early surgical intervention has also been associated with improved plantigrade function (walking on the soles of the feet). However, surgical intervention is usually avoided during the initial active inflammatory phase due to the increased risk of wound infection and failure of the mechanical arthrodesis. Additionally, these surgical interventions require prolonged periods of non-weight bearing and subsequent partial-weight bearing with a walking boot in the post-operative recovery phase just as was required in the acute and post-acute inflammatory phases.

The long-term prognosis for patients with Charcot foot neuropathic arthropathy depends largely upon whether the condition is diagnosed quickly and therapies, both non-surgical and surgical, are instituted prior to the development of the aforementioned “rocker bottom” foot deformity. The presence of this deformity often leads to the formation of ulcers with osteomyelitis (bone infection) on the bottom of the foot which, in turn, often leads to amputation. The “rocker bottom” foot deformity increases the risk of a major lower extremity amputation by 15-40 fold. If the patient also has underlying diabetes mellitus, the 5 year mortality after the amputation ranges from 30-80%. However, if surgical intervention with mechanical arthrodesis (bone fusion) is able to prevent the development of a “rocker bottom” deformity, and the patient’s ankle and foot are stable enough to ambulate with a brace and/or shoes, the overall prognosis can be quite good. It is this hope for an overall good prognosis that I am praying for and counting on. For those of you who are unaware, I developed a methicillin-sensitive *Staphylococcus aureus* (MSSA) infection in my left foot in March 2020. This progressed to full blown sepsis (25-30% mortality) requiring a nearly two week stay in an ICU stepdown unit. This infection led to the development of Charcot foot neuropathic arthropathy in my left midfoot. I was extremely fortunate to have a very intelligent and aggressive young orthopaedic surgeon who diagnosed this condition on my first follow-up visit after I was discharged from the hospital. He made this diagnosis based upon very subtle early arthritic changes in the navicular bone of my left midfoot. The next 8 months were spent either totally non-weight bearing or partial-weight bearing utilizing a walking boot.

After the infection and inflammation resolved, he performed mechanical arthrodesis (bone fusion) of the navicular bone with a combination of a metal rod, plate, 4 screws, and a spacer to prevent me from developing a “rocker bottom” foot. A photograph of my post-op X-ray is shown. By late March 2021, I was finally able to ambulate with tennis shoes after another period of total non-weight bearing and partial-weight bearing with the use of a walking boot. Although my left foot will always remain a little swollen, I am able to wear normal dress and tennis shoes and have no significant activity limitations. For that, I will be eternally grateful to that orthopaedic surgeon and the Grand Architect. □

Margins

by
D. Todd Ballenger, 33*

- saxophone player
- excellent musician
- give you the shirt off his back
- midnight jaunts swimming in fountains
- dodging campus police
- buy you a 7-11 hot dog
- help kidnap a fraternity brother

One of my college roommates (we'll call him "Steve" because, well, that was his name) was a Philosophy major. The remaining three of us were pursuing majors in Music Education, English, and Accounting. With that line-up we were fairly certain that only one of us was going to be successful (the accountant) and the rest of us were going to starve. But Steve, as a Philosophy major, was really going to have a rough go of it.

Still, Steve was one of the finest friends I had. A saxophone player and excellent musician, he would help you up if you fell, give you the shirt off his back, and then take you on a midnight jaunt swimming in every fountain on the grounds of Furman University (dodging campus police along the way), buy you a 7-11 hot dog, and help you kidnap a fraternity brother from right out of his bed, tie him up, throw him in the trunk of a car, drive down to the lake behind the student center, and toss him in said lake because it was his birthday after all (a tradition where I went to school). My point is, Steve was always living life to the fullest. He was a source of great positivity when not in class. He was an EMT and drove an ambulance during the summer months away from school. Heck, the guy even helped me install a stereo system in my car (I can still

see the smile on his face as he ran his fingers down the hack saw blade and said, "Oh, it'll fit. Trust me.").

Fast forward several years to when I run across a Facebook post from my friend Steve:

"I was always amused reading updates from foreign missionaries, especially those who went overseas in the 50s. Because of the high cost of international postage, their updates were written with the smallest possible font covering every millimeter of the page. Metaphorically, I have lived most of my life like that page filling every moment with my career and parenting. I now reflect on how little margins I had for my

He said
"Oh, it'll fit.
Trust me."

God Bless and
Godspeed on life's journey



D. Todd Ballenger, 33*

physical and emotional health and time and caring for my friends and family. Although, I still want to be a successful leader, I am aware of trying to make margins in my life to call, text, cook a meal, show I care, relax, exercise, etc. My encouragement today for you my friends, is to take a look at your life and make sure you have margins. Your best life is lived when you make the time for your career, your health, your family, your friends, and your creator. That is the wellspring of Joy.

God Bless and Godspeed on life's journey."

Understand, this post came from a place of peace and satisfaction. He wasn't hurting or in trouble. You see, the guy who was the life of the party, the one who threw me in the lake on my birthday, the one who tossed me the keys to his Firebird when he needed a designated driver, the one who asked me to sing at his wedding was far from starving.

Steve did what he was best at: helping others. Steve started a non-profit organization that helps other non-profits and he put his whole heart into the venture—hence his comments about margins.

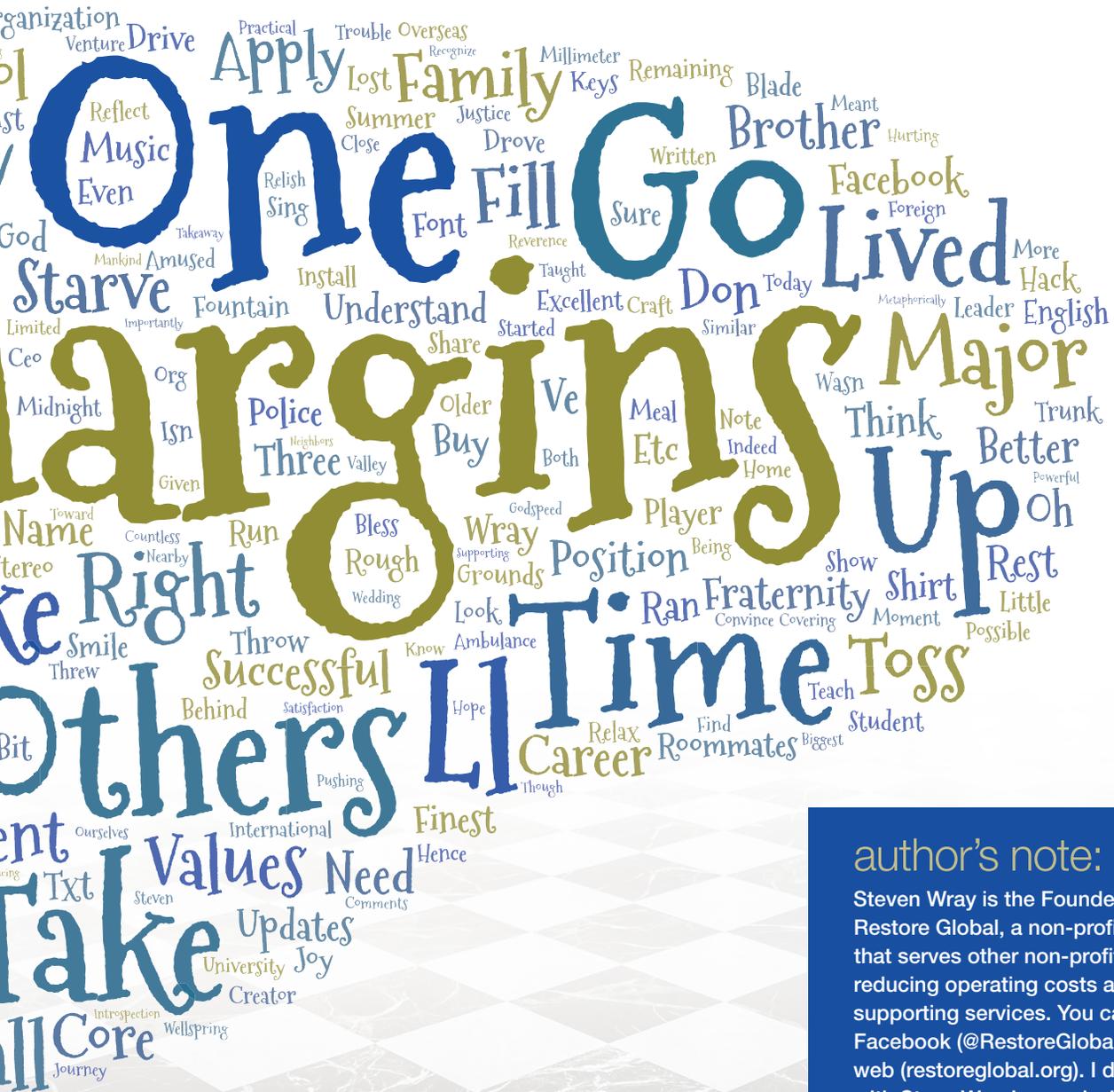
My hope is that we can all recognize this fact, create our own margins, and fill them with the practical effects of these core values.

Now that I'm a bit older (and hopefully wiser), I've come to understand that I share much of Steve's attitude. As Masons we spend countless hours thinking about how we can help others—teach others—about this simple, yet seemingly lost philosophy of goodwill toward mankind. We strive in the Craft, here in Scottish Rite, and indeed throughout the Fraternity to convince others to adopt a similar set of core values—Reverence for God, Integrity, Justice, Tolerance, Love of Country, Service—but often with limited results. Why?

Core Values -
Reverence for God
Integrity
Justice
Tolerance
Love of Country
Service

Firebird keys

continue
on next page



author's note:

Steven Wray is the Founder/CEO of Restore Global, a non-profit organization that serves other non-profit partners by reducing operating costs and providing supporting services. You can find them on Facebook (@RestoreGlobal) and on the web (restoreglobal.org). I did not write this with Steve Wray's permission or approval, though I know he would have happily given both. I just didn't want him to think of me so close to my birthday because I don't relish the thought of another March swim in a nearby lake. Ah, traditions....

UniontownUpdate

A message from the Thrice Potent Master of the Valley of Uniontown

VALLEY OF UNIONTOWN

Learning Our Lessons

By Vic Baronie, 32°

The lessons taught in Freemasonry have their origin in the art of the builder. We, as Masons, are the builders. It is our duty to take the lessons we are taught by the Lodge, the Scottish Rite, and the Volumn of the Sacred Law out into the world and to show how good and great Freemasons are. We have great respect for one another and those around us, no matter what our differences may be. If the world would truly observe how we love one another, the world would be a much better place.

We learn many things through the Scottish Rite. For me, it has expanded my knowledge and built on what I was taught in Blue Lodge. Putting together the lessons learned in Blue Lodge with the lessons learned in Scottish Rite and then adding in my faith and trust in the good Lord

above has made the task of making difficult life decisions an easier one. Though sometimes life's passages may be difficult, the farther we trace them, the easier they will become.

We are the world's greatest fraternity—a band of brothers. No

Though sometimes life's passages may be difficult, the farther we trace them, the easier they will become.

matter what our religion, political stance, or ethnic background, we put all that aside and come together for one common goal—to make good men better so that the world will hopefully see the good in mankind that we someday live in relative peace and harmony. My Brothers, we have all been given the tools to work by, and we have been

taught how to use them. Let us go out into the world and spread the cement of brotherly love and affection and bind the world into a much better place. □



Our Youth

News and information about the Masonic Youth in our Valley

Three Rivers Class

For many years, the Greater Pittsburgh Masonic Center has been the site of many important events for Pennsylvania DeMolay and the DeMolay Chapters of Western Pennsylvania. They have hosted Legion of Honor Conferrals, DeMolay meetings, and even the occasional fun event such as a game night lock-in.

One event that has taken place every year since the early 2000s is the Western DeMolay Induction, commonly referred to as Rose Croix Class. On March 12, 2022, this induction class took place at the same location, but this time with a different name. Since the entire Valley of Pittsburgh supports and sponsors this class, the induction class was renamed the Three Rivers Class.

Members from Pennsylvania DeMolay and the Chapters on the Western part of Pennsylvania put together the degree class for thirteen new initiates into DeMolay.

Do you know of a young man that would be a perfect fit for DeMolay between the ages of 12 and 21? Contact the PA DeMolay office at (800) 266-8424 Ext 8, or at dwberry@pademolay.net, and we will put you in contact with a chapter near you. □



pademolay.org

The Lessons of the Bow

In reviewing the six Core Values of Scottish Rite, it was easy to pair with six of the Core Values of the International Order of the Rainbow for Girls. As a part of the Masonic Family, Rainbow Girls are also taught lessons to prepare and guide them through life. Rainbow equips girls for responsible and purposeful adulthood through character and leadership development, encouraging unselfish service, seeking higher ideals, and promoting teamwork and effective interpersonal communications.

Like Scottish Rite Members, Rainbow Girls are BUSY! They participate in fun events and activities, keeping up with old friends and making new ones. Members experience the excitement and satisfaction of what a productive life has to offer.

Like Scottish Rite Members, Rainbow Girls love a CHALLENGE! From volunteering for different charities, to working to improve public speaking, to mastering the lessons of Rainbow. Members tackle lots of challenging hurdles and ultimately walk away with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

Like Scottish Rite Members, Rainbow Girls are READY FOR LIFE! Rainbow Girls learn that they do accomplish more working together and that they do make a difference. Rainbow strives to give girls the tools, training, and encouragement to let their individual spirits shine bright. The Masonic Family supports members with a safe, fun, caring environment where responsible, older girls can support and mentor the younger girls through Rainbow and life.

Rainbow provides a way of thinking/believing/acting for growing, developing young women that bridges the gap between *What's In It For Me?* and *Is this the Right Thing To Do?*

Ultimately, by encompassing the guiding principles the end result becomes to live a life of "Service to Others." □



parainbowgirls.org

ValleyNews

A collection of recent happenings in the Valley of Pittsburgh

September Stated Meeting

The April Stated Meeting of the Valley of Pittsburgh was a busy one. In addition to the election of officers, new rules and regulations were adopted for the Valley of Pittsburgh. Some of the highlights were a reorganization of the Executive Committee to include the top three officers from each line; extending the term of office for the Secretary and Treasurer to three years; the creation of a Personnel Committee; and establishing a new dues structure for the next five years.

The newly-elected officers will be installed at the June Stated Meeting. See "The Latest" on page 44 for more details.



Ill. Paul J. Roup, 33^o, Active, shares closing remarks during the meeting.



Ill. Vincent Monardo, 33^o, Deputy's Representative, shares closing remarks during the meeting.



(l to r) Ill. James C. Mayes, 33^o, PMWM, and Ill. Robert Mellon, 33^o, PMWM, nominate the Pittsburgh Chapter Rose Croix 2022-23 officers.



(l to r) Ill. Austin Shifrin, 33^o, PTPM; Ill. John Habel, 33^o, PTPM; and Bro. Cab Whitaker, 32^o, PTPM, nominate the Pennsylvania Council Princes of Jerusalem 2022-23 officers.



Bro. Kristin M. Douglas, 32^o, presides over the in-person/Zoom hybrid meeting.



Bro. Jack Jones, 32^o, Chairman of the CDC-Pittsburgh Board of Directors, gives an update on the Center.

The Story of the Crucifixion Returns

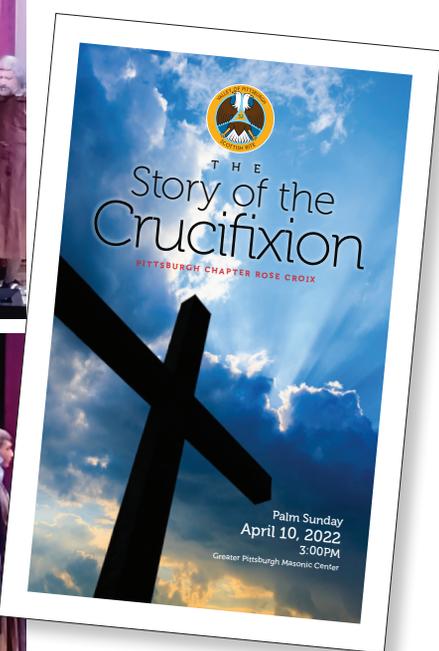
After a three-year hiatus due to the Pandemic, *The Story of the Crucifixion* returned to the Valley of Pittsburgh stage on Palm Sunday, April 10, 2022. The cast, crew, and audience were delighted to have this classic back once more. Following the performance, attendees enjoyed the traditional ham dinner with its usual accompaniments.



The cast rehearses on stage



Members of the cast pose for a photograph backstage



VALLEY OF PITTSBURGH

Spring Class to Honor Right Worshipful Grand Master Ill. Jeffrey M. Wonderling, 33° Saturday, May 14, 2022

Join us as we honor one of our own, Past Commander in Chief, Ill. Jeffrey M. Wonderling, 33°, Right Worshipful Grand Master. This one-day class of new members will be welcomed in his honor. There is no cost for members to attend. Candidates will be required to pay initiation fees. The day begins with coffee & donuts at 8:00 a.m. and concludes with an afterglow at 4:30 p.m.

SCHEDULE

- 8:00AM Coffee & Donuts
- 9:00AM Welcome by Thrice Potent Master, Declaration of Principles, Cover Obligation
- 9:10AM 4th Degree
- 9:30AM 14th Degree
- 11:00AM 6th Degree (Video)
- 11:30AM 15th Degree
- 1:00PM Lunch
- 2:00PM 19th Degree
- 2:30PM 32nd Degree
- 4:00PM Official Reception
- 4:30PM Afterglow



The Latest

Important happenings coming soon to the Valley of Pittsburgh

MAY

14

Reservations are required for Lunch only!

Please contact the Valley Office:
secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org
412-939-3579

Spring Class honoring Jeffrey M. Wonderling, R.W.G.M.

This year's Spring Class will honor the Valley of Pittsburgh's own Jeffrey M. Wonderling, R.W.G.M and Past Commander in Chief. There will be an afterglow following the close of the reunion and all are invited to attend. See page 43 for complete details.

TIME: 8:30AM

LOCATION: GPMC

COST: None for members, initiation fees apply to candidates.

RSVP: May 10

MAY

16

Reservations are required.

Please contact the Valley Office:
secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org
412-939-3579

Children's Dyslexia Center Graduation Picnic

Join the celebration as the Valley of Pittsburgh honors students who have graduated from the CDC this year and their tutors at our annual graduation picnic.

TIME: 5:00PM

LOCATION: GPMC

COST: None

RSVP: May 10

JUN

3

Reservations are requested.

Please contact the Valley Office:
secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org
412-939-3579

CigaRite

Bring your own cigars and adult beverages and join your fellow cigar lovers for an evening of good conversations, snacks, and smokes on the patio at the Greater Pittsburgh Masonic Center. This laid-back evening is the perfect way to relax and refresh yourself. Non-Scottish Rite Masons and nonsmokers are welcome too.

TIME: 6:00PM to 11:00PM

LOCATION: GPMC

COST: Small donation for Pizza, BYOB & Cigars

RSVP: May 31

JUL

10

No reservations are required.

Please contact the Valley Office for more information:
secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org
412-939-3579

Summer Car Cruise

Come out to see some great antique and classic cars. This open to the public free event is a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon. Prizes and refreshments are available. All proceeds benefit the Children's Dyslexia Center.

TIME: 11:00AM to 3:00PM

LOCATION: GPMC

COST: None

RSVP: None required

Fellowship Breakfast

You can't find a better breakfast with better company that supports a better cause. The breakfast is cooked and served by our local DeMolay and Rainbow and the proceeds benefit those organizations.

TIME: 9AM to 10:30AM

LOCATION: GPMC

COST: \$7/person (all you can eat)

RSVP: None required

MAY

28

To have an event listed in future issues, please contact the Valley Office at 412-939-3579, or by email at secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org



Reservations are required for Dinner only!

Please contact the Valley Office:
secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org
412-939-3579

June Stated Meeting

Join us as we say thank you to our current presiding officers and welcome in all the newly elected officers at our open installation ceremony. Friends and family are welcome to attend.

TIME: 6:00PM/Dinner, 7:00PM/Meeting

LOCATION: GPMC

COST: \$15 for Dinner. No charge to attend meeting.

RSVP: May 31



Reservations are required.

Please contact the Valley Office:
secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org
412-939-3579

Annual Valley Golf Outing

Due to a conflict with the Grand Lodge Quarterly Communication, the Golf Outing has been rescheduled for Sunday, October 9, 2022. This gives us all the entire summer to hone our skills and come to the course ready to win! More details will be available on the website and the next issue of *RiteNow*.

TIME: 8:00AM Registration / 9:00AM Shotgun Start

LOCATION: Butler's Golf Course

COST: \$100

RSVP: October 1



Looking Ahead



CigaRite
FRIDAY, JULY 1
7-11PM
GPMC



CigaRite
FRIDAY, AUGUST 5
7-11PM
GPMC



September Stated Meeting
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1
6PM Dinner, 7PM Meeting
GPMC



CigaRite
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2
7-11PM
GPMC



Children's Dyslexia Center Walkathon
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1
8:30AM Registration
10:00AM Walk Begins
GPMC



November Stated Meeting
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3
6PM Dinner, 7PM Meeting
GPMC

Fraternal Services Directory

These listed businesses subscribe to providing high quality customer service, delivered with a sense of warmth, friendliness, individual pride, respect, honesty, and the fraternal spirit.

ACCOUNTING & TAXATION

Richard A. Reynolds, CPA 412-795-4194
www.RichReynoldsCPA.com

ADVERTISING SPECIALITIES

Grimes Advertising 412-921-1325
Eddie Grimes

ATTORNEYS

Henry Miller, III, Esq. 412-566-2565
Wills, Estates, Real Estate millerhiii@aol.com

AUTOMOTIVE

American Classics/Street Rods 814-268-1234
Dennis A. Liegey, 1026 3rd Ave., Brockway, PA

BEARINGS & POWER TRANSMISSION

Gipson Bearing & Supply Co. 412-462-7960
Craig Gipson www.gipsonbearing.com

CATERING

Hudson's Catering 724-438-2025
Richard Hudson www.UniontownCatering.com

Party Line Catering 412-882-7110
Brian Meador www.partylinecatering.net

CHIMNEY REPOINTING & REBUILDING

Coffey Contracting Co. Inc. 412-341-1127
Tom Coffey www.coffeycontracting.com

FINANCIAL PLANNING

Family Wealth Mgmt Group, LLC. 724-743-6170
John T. Daley, ChFC® FamilyWealthGroup.com

FUNERAL SERVICES

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August 1, 2021 - July 31, 2022

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The bodies of the Scottish Rite, sitting in the Valley of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, acknowledge and yield allegiance to the Supreme Council, 33°, Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry for the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the United States of America whose Grand East is in Lexington, Massachusetts, and whose Officers are: Ill.: Peter J. Samiec, 33°, Sovereign Grand Commander, Ill.: Robert J. Bateman, 33°, Deputy for Pennsylvania. Other Active members for Pennsylvania are: Ill.: Stephen Gardner, 33°, Ill.: Thomas R. Labagh, 33°, Ill.: Keith E. Parkinson, 33°, and Ill.: Paul J. Roup, 33°.



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Join Scottish Rite on Saturday, May 14, 2022, at the Valley of Pittsburgh!

Valley of Pittsburgh
Gourgas Lodge of Perfection
Greater Pittsburgh Masonic Center
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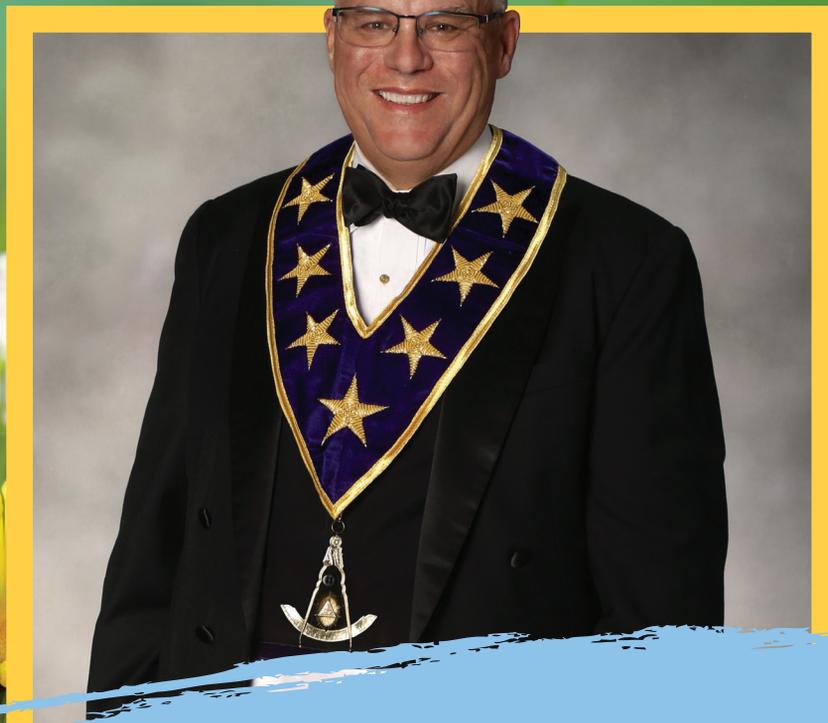


SPRING CLASS

*Honoring Jeffrey M. Wonderling, 33°
Right Worshipful Grand Master*



Saturday, May 14, 2022, 8:30AM
Greater Pittsburgh Masonic Center



No Charge to members. Initiation fees apply to candidates.
Please RSVP to the Valley office by May 10, 2022.