

Fall 2022

# rite now

THE MAGAZINE OF THE VALLEY OF PITTSBURGH

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

[valleyofpittsburgh.org](http://valleyofpittsburgh.org)

# In Memoriam

Since our last issue, the following members of the Valley of Pittsburgh have been called home:

Ill. Richard A. Morledge, 33°  
Robert B. Stayer, MSA

Steven E. Affolder III	Theodore A. Jones
Clare F. Bargerstock	Louis J. Kober
Walter E. Beck	Ronald J. Koerbel
Adolph A. Biss	Ronald H. Langley
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Ronald W. Corman	Eugene S. Ritter
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James M. Hepburn	Richard A. Vogeles
Carl E. Hershberger	Harold E. Walchli
Thomas C. Hildebrand	Thomas A. Wilson
William A. Howell	Ronald R. Wolbert
William J. Hrtyanski	James E. Zanotell
Daniel Jankovich	



# riteNOW

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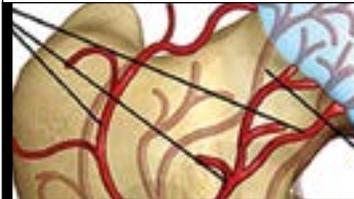
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### about this issue

We each departed from different locations, experienced different journeys, and encountered different obstacles along the way, but we all ended up here at this place we call the Scottish Rite. Masonic lessons come in many forms. Sometimes it's

refreshing to view things from a new perspective.

In this issue of *RiteNow* we invite you to step off the beaten path and experience Freemasonry through the eyes of others.



# Meet the New Valley Officers

## Gourgas Lodge of Perfection



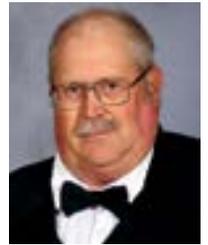
**Eric S. Teasdale, 33°**  
Thrice Potent Master



**Peter A. Leary, 33° MSA**  
Deputy Master



**Christopher A. McNeal, 32°**  
Senior Warden



**David C. Allison, 32°**  
Junior Warden

## Pennsylvania Council of Princes of Jerusalem



**Richard F. Kucera, 32°**  
Sovereign Prince



**Robert H. Nelson, 32°**  
High Priest



**B. Scott Allen, 32°**  
Senior Warden

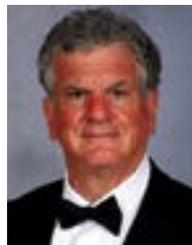


**Aaron J. Antimary, 32°**  
Junior Warden

## Pittsburgh Chapter of Rose Croix



**Jordan L. Frei, 32°**  
Most Wise Master



**Charles F. Zurcher, 32°**  
Senior Warden



**Benjamin J. Douglas, 32°**  
Junior Warden



**Robert J. Nichol, 32°**  
Orator

## Pennsylvania Consistory



**William G. Johnston, 33°**  
Commander-in-Chief



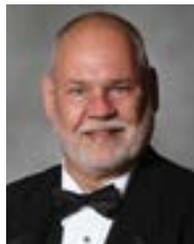
**Joshua S. Freeman, 32°**  
1st Lieutenant Commander



**David L. Moore, 33°**  
2nd Lieutenant Commander



**Edward W. Dietz Jr., 32°**  
Orator



**George W. Polnar, 33°**  
Treasurer



**David W. Morgans, 33°**  
Secretary



**Vito A. Urso, 33°**  
Hospitaler



**Dennis R. Johnston, 33°**  
Tiler

# VALLEY OF PITTSBURGH OFFICERS

August 1, 2022 - July 31, 2023

## Gourgas Lodge of Perfection 14°

Eric S. Teasdale, 33° . . . . . Thrice Potent Master  
 Peter A. Leary, 33°, MSA . . . . . Deputy Master  
 Christopher A. McNeal, 32° . . . . . Senior Warden  
 David C. Allison, 32° . . . . . Junior Warden  
 Erich W. Gumto, 33° . . . . . Orator  
 David E. Thumm Jr., 32° . . . . . Master of Ceremonies  
 Robert W. Lovic, 32° . . . . . Guard

## Pennsylvania Council, Princes of Jerusalem

Richard F. Kucera, 32° . . . . . Sovereign Prince  
 Robert H. Nelson, 32° . . . . . High Priest  
 B. Scott Allen, 32° . . . . . Senior Warden  
 Aaron J. Antimary, 32° . . . . . Junior Warden  
 Robert B. McGinnis, 32° . . . . . Master of Ceremonies  
 Thomas J. Anke, 32° . . . . . Master of Entrances

## Pittsburgh Chapter of Rose Croix 18°

Jordan L. Frei, 32° . . . . . Most Wise Master  
 Charles F. Zurcher, 32° . . . . . Senior Warden  
 Benjamin J. Douglas, 32° . . . . . Junior Warden  
 Robert D. Nichol, 32° . . . . . Orator

## Pennsylvania Consistory 32°

William G. Johnston, 33° . . . . . Commander-in-Chief  
 Joshua S. Freeman, 32° . . . . . 1st Lieutenant Commander  
 David L. Moore, 33° . . . . . 2nd Lieutenant Commander  
 Edward W. Deitz Jr., 32° . . . . . Orator  
 Michael R. Bahney, 32° . . . . . Chancellor  
 Timothy L. McKiernan, 32° . . . . . Master of Ceremonies  
 Steven R. Seman, 32° . . . . . Engineer & Seneschal  
 Thomas E. Ruch, 32° . . . . . Standard Bearer  
 Sean M. Tomasic, 32° . . . . . Guard  
 George W. Polnar, 33° . . . . . Treasurer  
 David W. Morgans, 33° . . . . . Secretary  
 Vito A. Urso, 33° . . . . . Hospitaller  
 Dennis R. Johnston, 33° . . . . . Tiler  
 Robert F. Dunkle, 33° . . . . . MFS Representative  
 Robert B. Ruff, 33° . . . . . MFS Representative  
 Ronald A. Plesh, 32°, MSA . . . . . MFS Representative

## Executive Committee

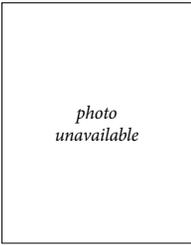
William G. Johnston, 33°, Chairman  
 Joshua S. Freeman, 32° . . . . . David L. Moore, 33°  
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 Jordan L. Frei, 32° . . . . . Peter A. Leary, 33°, MSA  
 Robert H. Nelson, 32° . . . . . Charles F. Zurcher, 32°  
 Christopher A. McNeal, 32° . . . . . B. Scott Allen, 32°  
 Benjamin J. Douglas, 32° . . . . . Paul J. Roup, 33°, Active

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 William G. Johnston, 33° . . . . . Eric S. Teasdale, 33°  
 Richard F. Kucera, 32° . . . . . Jordan L. Frei, 32°

## Allegiance

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°.



**Erich W. Gumto, 33°**  
Orator



**David E. Thumm Jr., 32°**  
Master of Ceremonies



**Robert W. Lovic, 32°**  
Guard



**Robert B. McGinnis, 32°**  
Master of Ceremonies



**Thomas J. Anke, 32°**  
Master of Entrances



**Michael R. Bahney, 32°**  
Chancellor



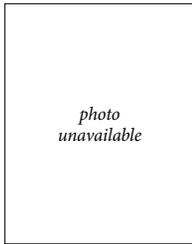
**Timothy L. McKiernan, 32°**  
Master of Ceremonies



**Steven R. Seman, 32°**  
Engineer & Seneschal



**Sean M. Tomasic, 32°**  
Standard Bearer



**Thomas E. Ruch, 32°**  
Guard



# The Active

A message from the Supreme Council Active for Pennsylvania

SUPREME COUNCIL

## All the Difference

By Paul J. Roup, 33°

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood,  
and I—

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made  
all the difference.

—excerpt from “The Road Not Taken”  
by Robert Frost



Paul J. Roup, 33°  
proup@srmnj.org

If you are reading this article, it is likely that you are a Scottish Rite Mason. You already know the difference between Scottish Rite and blue lodge degree conferrals, and you are aware of all (or at least many) of the different historical figures you will meet on your journey. Our degrees don't tell just one story after all. We journey through time as we impart the lessons of our six Core Values (Devotion to God, Love of Country, Integrity, Justice, Tolerance, and Service to Humanity) to our candidates and members.

The path that led you to the Valley of Pittsburgh might be well-worn by those who came before you, but your trail has yet to be blazed. The new Pathfinder program from Supreme Council was designed to help you find your way in the Scottish Rite. It is organized into five distinct waypoints to help you explore areas of Rite life: Organization, Self-Improvement, Valley Life, Enrichment Programs, and Service & Philanthropy. Within each of these categories are 15 to 20 mile markers to chart your progress.

Each of you was mailed a guidebook to encourage you to begin your journey. If you did not receive yours (or you cannot find it because your desk looks like mine), call or visit the office and they will provide a replacement.

As you complete the mile markers you will find that one of the things that sets the Scottish Rite apart from other appendant bodies is that there are so many opportunities to find your niche here. We have clubs, affinity groups, scholarly programs, theater, and more. The deeper you travel, the more you can learn—both about Scottish Rite and yourself.

The deeper  
you travel,  
the more  
you can learn  
—both about  
Scottish Rite  
and yourself.

Each of you is standing at a fork in the trail. I encourage you to journey down the road not taken. You will meet Brothers on their own voyage, learn about the Rite, and discover new things about yourself along the way.

It may make all the difference.  
See you on the trail. □

Scan to visit the Pathfinder website:  
[ScottishRiteNMJ.org/Pathfinder](https://ScottishRiteNMJ.org/Pathfinder)



# ValleyNews

A collection of recent happenings in the Valley of Pittsburgh

## Valley Members Honored

At the September meeting, the presiding officers of the Valley presented awards for 50 or more years of service.



## MSAs Announced

At the Pennsylvania Council of Deliberation on July 9, Brothers Ray Hess and Charles Zurcher were nominated to receive the Meritorious Service Award. The Meritorious Service Award (MSA) may be conferred upon members of the Rite in this Jurisdiction who have attained the 32° and who by reason of meritorious service of a Masonic character are deemed worthy of such recognition. These two very deserving Brothers will receive their award at the Council of Deliberation on July 8, 2023 in Harrisburg, PA. Congratulations!



## Nominees for the 33rd Degree

At the 2022 Annual Session of Supreme Council held in Portland, Maine, the following Brethren were nominated to become Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, 33rd Degree, Honorary Members of Supreme Council.

Richard Frank Kucera

Richard Alan Reynolds

William Victor (Vic) Baronie

Thomas Glen Taylor

They (along with Joshua Smith Freeman and Thomas Ernest Barlow who were nominated earlier) will receive that honor at the upcoming Annual Session of Supreme Council to be held in Louisville, Kentucky in August, 2023.



# The Chief

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

CONSISTORY

## My Journey

By William G. Johnston, 33°



It is truly an honor and a privilege to serve the Valley of Pittsburgh as the Commander in Chief. It is something I have dreamed of doing since I was a young officer on the Lodge of Perfection line and attended my first officer retreat. At that gathering, the Consistory Line structure was changed from the traditional two years per office progression of the past to what we now have today. The bottom six officers would be rotational, serving as a training ground to develop officers to work their way up one of the other three officer lines. The Second Lieutenant Commander would be elected from the past presiding officers of the other lines and then progress on to become the Commander in Chief. It was to be a continuation of service from what you had done in the past and required even more dedication in the years to come. It was an opportunity to lead the Valley in a different capacity and to leave my mark on the Fraternity, and it definitely sparked my interest. Why did serving in this capacity strike a chord within me, you might ask? There are several reasons why I pursued this path. What it has taken for me to get here and what I have received along the way will hopefully give some perspective to what I believe and receive from

Freemasonry in general and the Scottish Rite in particular.

My fascination with the Fraternity started as a very young man, running around the basement of the Ingram Masonic Hall while my mother helped the other wives prepare refreshments for the lodge. I was impressed when the Masons

My fascination with the Fraternity started as a very young man, running around the basement of the Ingram Masonic Hall.

came down from their meeting, dressed in formal attire and always willing to make conversation with me. I remember several members saying, "You'll be upstairs with us someday." I remember an excitement and an impatience for that day to come.

As soon as I was old enough, I got the opportunity to see the inside of that room,

albeit not in the form of a Lodge, but a DeMolay Chapter room. The night I was initiated, I remember being impressed with the fact that there were young men my age working with older, high school-aged members to perform the work. It left such a huge impression on me. I knew this was something different, where age and school grade didn't matter, but the dedication to the principles of the Fraternity united them in a common bond. I looked up to those young men and



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## I am constantly learning, which is, in my opinion, one of those “secrets” of Freemasonry that we all love to talk about.

wanted more than anything to fit in and be a part of such an esteemed organization. I learned many lessons from my time in DeMolay—leadership, ritual skills, and valuable life lessons. I started developing a network in my community, state, and even across the country.

When I turned 18, I again took another step by petitioning a lodge. It was the same lodge that my grandfather belonged to, that my father and uncles belonged

to, and that I would then belong to. I was again amazed by the impressive ceremonies and the dedication of the members who put in so much time and effort into initiating and welcoming me into the Fraternity. I felt the same camaraderie, passion, and excitement in starting this new chapter in

my Masonic career. My experiences in DeMolay probably gave me an unfair advantage coming in, but I was eager to try and apply what I had learned there to the Masonic Lodge setting. It proved to be the perfect training ground for the service I was about to enter into. The principles of brotherhood, self-improvement, and service to humanity are universal between the groups. I was especially happy to find that I had other DeMolay brothers in the lodge, and formed bonds with them, re-telling the stories of our experiences in our youth.

When I joined the Scottish Rite in the spring of 2003, I was again privileged to enter into another group of esteemed Masons. My uncle, who was the conferring officer of the 14th degree at that time, chose me to serve as the exemplar or active candidate for the degree. The personal experience of that degree, as well as all of the others during that class, made me want to get involved with the degree work as soon as possible. That would lead me to yet another opportunity for service—

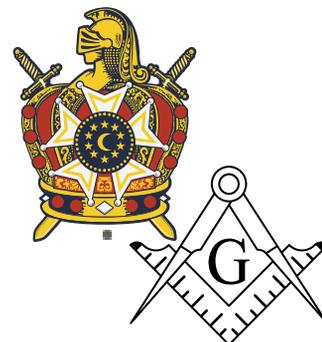
an appointment to an officer line. I would spend several years ascending the chairs, presiding over my officer line, getting involved with the casting and directing of the degree work, and then onto a different officer line to end up where I am today.

I tell you all of this not to list my accomplishments or accolades but to tell you all the opportunities this Fraternity has given me. I cannot tell you exactly why I wanted to join the Fraternity other than a bit of curiosity and the knowledge that the men I would associate with were men of character and integrity. I can say that what I found in this Fraternity is more than I expected, and while I have put much time and effort into it, it cannot compare to all the benefits I have received. I found a place where men, young and old, and of all different backgrounds, can come

together and work in harmony toward a common goal. By getting involved, I have grown in knowledge and developed my character into the man I am today. I have had successes and failures, high and low points, but Freemasonry has provided a great support group around me that has helped me learn and grow from them. And I am constantly learning, which is, in my opinion, one of those “secrets” of Freemasonry that we all love to talk about.

While these are just my experiences of Freemasonry, the experience is different for everyone. Men join for different reasons and receive different value from their membership. So I ask you: Did you get what you expected out of Freemasonry? If your answer to that question is no, have you searched for the answers to why not? Have you tried to get involved or just given up, believing it wasn't what you were looking for? Have you tried to be the change you would like to see in Freemasonry? I encourage you to get involved if you haven't tried already and see if you get the same benefits out of service to your brother man as I have. Will you join me? □

I felt the same camaraderie, passion, and excitement in starting this new chapter in my Masonic career.



# The Potent

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

LODGE OF PERFECTION

## Who Would Have Thought?

By Eric S. Teasdale, 33°

As I write this article for *RiteNow*, it has been less than one month since I assumed the office of Thrice Potent Master of the Lodge of Perfection at the Valley of Pittsburgh. I want to thank the Valley membership for electing me and Past TPM, Shawn Lang, who appointed me to the line eight years ago. My duty as an officer is not to let you down, and I will not. I would also like to thank David Moore, our immediate Past TPM, for guiding the Lodge of Perfection line during the past two challenging years.

For this theme—Off the Beaten Path—I thought I would share an experience I had during my first visit to a lodge outside of Pennsylvania. I traveled to Aiken, South Carolina, in the spring of 2015 to play golf with some members of Shannopin Country Club, who were also Masons, for fellowship and a spring “tune-up.” I was still playing a little competitive golf then and used this trip to practice and prepare for the season.

We got rained out one day, so I was trying to figure out what to do with the extra time. I was sitting as Master of my home lodge that year and

thought that it would be beneficial to visit a lodge in Aiken. I did some research and found a local lodge that was right down the street from where we were staying. This lodge was named Aiken Lodge No. 156 AFM, and coincidentally, their monthly Stated Meeting was that evening. Because I was away golfing, I did not bring a suit, tie, or shirt, so I had to

I was nervous because until that point, every time I visited a lodge, I had someone with me who could vouch for me. I was on my own this time.

go to a local store to make sure that I was presentable for my first visit to a lodge in another state. I contacted the lodge secretary to let him know that I would be visiting, and he told me that he would have a Committee of Inquiry ready for me. I was nervous because until that point, every time I visited a lodge, I had someone with me who could vouch for me. I was on my own this time.

When I arrived at the lodge that evening, I was amazed at how nice the building was and how well the outside was maintained. I saw some members in the parking lot and addressed them all as “Brother” to ensure I fit in. Remember, I am in the rural south, and they immediately noticed by my “accent” that I did not fit in.



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The time had come for me to knock on the lodge door to gain admittance (which, by the way, was locked). I introduced myself and said that I was visiting from a lodge in Pennsylvania. I was presented to their Committee of Inquiry, and they “deposed” me in the corner of the reception hall. My committee was not going very well as they were asking me specific questions that I could not answer since I was not from that jurisdiction. My dues card was not quite good enough to gain admission. I started to get frustrated and was thinking of leaving when one of them asked me for my office and home lodge. I told them I was the Worshipful Master of North Hills Lodge No. 716 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. At that point, a member of their lodge approached the committee on my behalf. He said he was raised in North Hills Lodge and would vouch for me. He was very active in that lodge, so they immediately granted me entrance.

When we sat down for refreshment, that Brother told me that when he retired to the area, he became active in the lodge. Prior to that, his family and vocation made it challenging to be active. He told me that it was never too late to get involved in Masonry, and he was enjoying the challenge.

I have always remembered what he said to me that night. It helps to keep me motivated.

When the lodge meeting started, they treated me like royalty since I was a sitting Master. They gave me an apron to wear that was reserved for “dignitaries,” and I entered with their District Deputy Grand Master. The Lodge did a lot of work that evening, and I enjoyed my time with my new friend as we had a lot of mutual Masonic friends.

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**At that point,  
a member  
of their lodge  
approached  
the committee  
on my behalf.**

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It is amazing to me when you think of how large of a world we live in but how few degrees of separation there actually are in the Masonic world. By chance, I met a Brother from a

different jurisdiction who vouched for me as we were both raised in the same lodge.

Who would have thought...? □



# The Sovereign

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

PRINCES OF JERUSALEM

## The Kindness of a Stranger

By Richard F. Kucera, 32°

Freemasonry provides a bedrock of morality that can be pervasive throughout our community, with many paths leading to a better world.

When I was young, I never realized that I was raised in a very Masonic family. My grandfather was a Mason; my father was a Mason; my uncles were Masons; and so is my son.

My first exposure to Masonry, I will never forget. The first time I witnessed Masonic help in my family was when I traveled to Oakland to see a physician specialist. Back in those days, that was a rather long and anxiety-filled trip. We were not even confident that we were in the correct building. We eventually found our way to the elevator. There was a man on that elevator with us, and my father recognized his Masonic ring. The next thing I remember was my father shaking hands with this stranger; then, suddenly, they were acting like the best of friends. The gentleman assured us that we were in the correct place. He also said that the physician we were about to see was excellent and that we should not worry because he was very good. At the time, I remember being surprised that a complete stranger would be so helpful and kind. That was the

handshake from which a friend appeared. A friend that we could count on. That memory has stayed with me over the years.

Seeing that Masonic encounter shaped my moral expectations and my interactions as I aged. Children learn more from what they see than from what they are told, so it is helpful for them to witness such interactions. From them, they learn

At the time, I remember being surprised that a complete stranger would be so helpful and kind.

to both respect and help people—especially if asked. Hopefully, with time, this can then result in the habit of kindness.

Also, when an individual is able to provide help, it results in an increase in their sense of well-being, better

health, and longer life. This has actually been studied and quantified. Those who receive the aid are given a gift from a stranger who becomes a friend. Hopefully, that gift will be eternally passed along and become contagious.

When somebody lends me a helping hand, I ask them, “Are you a Masonic Brother?” The usual reply is, “No, why do you ask?” followed by further questions about Freemasonry. I explain to them that it was a very Masonic act that they had just performed. Some



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## Like the pebble tossed into the pond, the ripples travel to many shores.

of these interactions (and there have been many) have convinced these individuals to pursue further knowledge about the Craft. Several eventually became brothers.

So, it's not a stretch to say that kind acts such as these may even grow our numbers. Like the pebble tossed into the pond, the ripples travel to many shores.

I'd like to think that Freemasonry leads to a good man becoming better—through simple acts of kindness by many paths. Freemasonry can be that guiding hand that eventually leads to a community where charity, tolerance, compromise, and hope will flourish.

□



# TheWise

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

ROSE CROIX

## Someone May Need ‘Em

By Jordan L. Frei, 32°

Assisting a Brother Master Mason should not be considered a chore. Our third degree tells us so.

In the motorcycling world, there’s a common rule amongst those who travel by two wheels—you simply never ride past a motorcycle on the side of the road without stopping. This is probably why motorcycling and Freemasonry have such a meaningful connection.

For members of the Widows Sons Masonic Motorcycle Association, an international brotherhood of Masons who enjoy riding motorcycles, we don’t only know this—we live it. And above my computer, on a shelf in my home office, I have proof.

How I came about that proof is something that has forever reminded me how to care for my Brothers.

Packing for a road trip on a motorcycle is more like assembling a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle with 1,010 pieces. In most cases, you have to prioritize the needs over the wants and accept that in some scenarios, you may just have to go without.

This was the case in 2015 when I went on a ride to Philadelphia with my chapter, the Mystic Riders. I simply did not have the room to carry a hat, not without sacrificing something else. A small toiletry bag was a must. So was clean underwear.

Our second day was primarily spent off the bike without wearing a helmet. It didn’t seem like a big deal when I was packing, but now, with the sun beating down on my shaved head, I regretted my decision. A sunburned head would lead to a miserable ride home.

As I walked from my bike, wondering if fresh underwear was really that important, a fellow Mystic Rider approached me and offered a red “durag.” If you are unfamiliar, such a headpiece is similar to a large handkerchief or bandana. However, a durag is shaped specifically to be worn in place of a hat and has ties to fasten with a simple knot.

What’s interesting, however, is that I don’t even recall mentioning that I didn’t have a hat with me. I have to assume he just looked over the group, saw my shaved dome, and thought, *That guy needs to cover up.*

Packing for a road trip on a motorcycle is more like assembling a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle with 1,010 pieces.



Jordan L. Frei, 32°

mwm@valleyofpittsburgh.org

## It's the constant lesson that serving others is not an obligation and certainly not a hardship. It's an honor.

Admittedly, I am not a fan of durags. They're popular amongst motorcyclists, but just not my style. But on that July day, having parked the bikes and no longer wearing a helmet, and with the sun beating down, style was not a concern.

This brother already had one on, so he was obviously offering a spare. I thanked him, successfully avoided a sunburn, took it home, and washed it. I returned it to the side bag on my bike, knowing that I would see him again and could return it.

A week or so later, I offered it back to him.

He said, "I never counted how many of those I have, but I'd be surprised if I don't have at least 50. Keep it in your bag, it packs small, and you may need it again someday."

When I asked why he had so many, he said, "Someone may need 'em."

The red durag remained in my side bag for a few years. It was offered to peers on various occasions, washed, and returned to the same place.

This brother—Claw was his road name—has passed and is now with the Great Architect. While alive, he understood our fraternity's core principles. Not just because he gave me a durag, but because he gave of

himself, his time, and his friendship—without being called upon.

During his funeral, I kept the red durag in my pocket. Afterward, I found a place for it—above my workspace in my office, in a glass Widows Sons mug. The gift that Claw gave me is not the durag itself or even

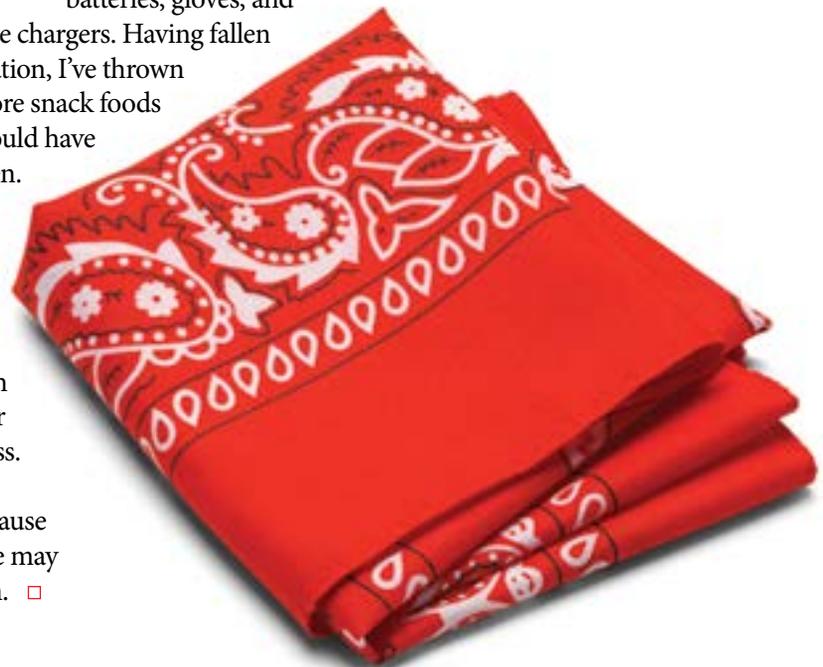
one less sunburn. It's the constant lesson that serving others is not an obligation and certainly not a hardship. It's an honor.

Now, in my side bags, I carry duplicates of just about every essential item—including durags, flashlights, batteries, gloves, and

cellphone chargers. Having fallen to expiration, I've thrown away more snack foods than I could have ever eaten.

But I carry them because I may approach a brother in distress.

And because someone may need 'em. □



# The Office

A message from the Secretary of the Valley of Pittsburgh

VALLEY OF PITTSBURGH

## A Note From the Secretary

By David W. Morgans, 33°

**Greetings** Brethren, by now, each of you has received the membership renewal reminder (Dues Notice) for the 2022-2023 Scottish Rite year. If you haven't, please contact the office as soon as possible. As with last year, the renewal notice includes your new membership card. The Scottish Rite is no longer using a permanent membership card. Please remember to replace your expired card with the new one.

Thank you to all who have paid their dues for this year. For those who have not, please get your payments in soon. There are several ways to get current with your dues.

- You may write a check, detach the return card and mail your payment.
- You may go to the Valley of Pittsburgh website (<https://valleyofpittsburgh.org>) and select Member Center under the Resources tab or visit the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction website (<https://scottishritenmj.org/login>) to pay by credit card online.
- You also may call the Valley office at 412-939-3579 during regular business hours to pay by credit card over the phone.

- You may drop your payment at the office, where we can take checks, cash, or credit card payments.

As always, Brethren, please contact me if you have financial difficulties.

We have a Hospitaller fund that can help you with your dues payments if needed. We recognize how difficult it is to admit a financial hardship. As Masons, we have pledged to help, aid, and assist any Brother who needs relief. Sadly, many of our Brothers would rather be suspended for non-payment of dues than ask for

If you need help, please ask. Your information will be kept confidential.

assistance. If you need help, please ask. Your information will be kept confidential.

Also, please remember that the Scottish Rite does not have an automatic remission of dues when you achieve the 50-year membership plateau. There is a way to have your dues permanently remitted under certain circumstances. Those circumstances are that the member must have reached 75 years of age AND been a Scottish Rite member for at least 50 years **OR** the member must have reached 80 years of age and, in both circumstances, is having financial issues that make paying dues a financial hardship. If you, or your loved one who is a



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

## We are always looking for Brothers who would like to help with our Brother to Brother program.

member, meets these standards, please contact the office so we can pursue Senior Membership status, which will relieve all future dues payments.

Brothers help Brothers. It's what we do. It's what we are honored to do. We are always looking for Brothers who would like to help with our Brother to Brother program. The program is designed to contact our members to see how they are doing. It is NOT a dues collection program. If you have an interest in talking with your fellow Scottish Rite members, if you possess good conversational skills, and if you have some available time to spare, please contact the office, and we will get you a list of brothers to contact.

Our Fraternity works best when our members are in relationship with other members. It is unimaginable to think that good men joined a Fraternity in order to have no contact with their Brothers. Not everyone is able to attend the wonderful events in the Valley of Pittsburgh, but we can be in contact with each other if we work together to live up to and into our obligations as Masons proactively. □



## 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.

# Understanding Medicare

## Part I

By Kristin M. Douglas, MBA, 32°





Kristin M. Douglas, 32°

Given the importance of the topic to many of our members, it was decided to run an update with 2022's facts and figures.

**Reaching** retirement age and looking forward to enjoying the fruits of your life-long labors can be an exciting time. It can also be a time of great uncertainty and apprehension. In no area is this truer than when it comes to signing up for Medicare and choosing the healthcare options that will sustain you through your golden years. The following article previously ran in the December, 2019 issue of *RiteNow*. Given the importance of the topic to many of our members, it was decided to run an updated reprint with 2022's facts and figures.

In this installment, we will go over Medicare basics, including the different parts of Medicare and when to sign up for each. In the next issue, we will dig a little deeper into your options with Original Medicare, Medicare Advantage, and Supplement plans and how each choice impacts prescription drug coverage. Hopefully, the articles will answer some of those questions you may have about Medicare and your options once you become eligible to sign up for it.

### What is Medicare?

Put simply, Medicare is health insurance for three groups of people: those people 65 and older, individuals under 65 with certain disabilities, and last, anyone with end-stage renal disease or kidney failure. The Center for Medicare and

Medicaid Services (CMS) administers the Medicare program. CMS sets forth the rules and guidelines that the industry must follow and ensures ongoing compliance with them.

Medicare consists of four parts. Part A is your hospital insurance, including things such as inpatient hospital, skilled nursing facility, home health, and hospice care. Part B includes your medical insurance and covers doctor's visits, outpatient medical services, clinical lab tests, and preventative services. Part B also covers durable medical equipment, including wheelchairs, diabetic testing supplies, and oxygen supplies. Parts A and B are considered original Medicare. Part C consists of your Medicare Advantage plans. These include Parts A and B and sometimes cover Part D, otherwise known as prescription drug coverage.

### How do I enroll?

Enrollment in Medicare is automatic for those receiving Social Security or Railroad Retirement benefits. You will generally receive your Medicare card around three months before your 65th birthday, or for those under 65 and on disability, the 25th month after those benefits kick in. All others must enroll themselves. Those not electing to receive their Social Security or Railroad Retirement benefits at or before age 65 may sign up for Medicare on their own three months before their 65th birthday. You do not

need to be retired. To sign up on your own, contact Social Security directly at 1-800-772-1213 or apply online.

### What is the Initial Enrollment Period?

Once you sign up for Medicare (Parts A&B) for the first time and are ready to decide on a Supplement or Medicare Advantage plan, you enter what is known as your Initial Enrollment Period. This seven-month period starts three months before your 65th birthday month and continues until three months after.

During this time, you will be able to select a plan that meets your needs. If you sign up in the months before your birthday month, there is no delay in coverage, and your health insurance will take effect on the first day of your birthday month. If you wait and sign up during or after that, there will be a delay in coverage.

It is important to note that if you do not sign up for Part B when required, you may have to pay a penalty once you do. Currently, that stands at 10% of your Part B premium for every 12 months of eligibility that you were not enrolled. You must continue to pay that penalty for as long as you have Part B, and there are few exceptions to the rule. You do not have to sign up for Part B at age 65 if you still have qualifying coverage from an existing employer or union, or if your spouse (or family member if you are disabled) is still working and provides your coverage.

It is always important to check with your employer or union benefits administrator to understand how your insurance works with Medicare. Once your employment ends, you may get a special election period to sign up for Part B without penalty. You may also be able to sign up for COBRA. Please note

that you should not wait until your COBRA coverage expires to elect Part B.

### Is original Medicare good enough for me?

To answer that question, let's dig a little deeper into Parts A and B. For Part A, most people do not pay a premium. However, if you have paid FICA taxes for fewer than ten years, you may have to pay a premium for Part A. In 2022, that could be up to \$499 each month. In most cases, if you choose to pay for Part A, you must also pay for Part B.

As mentioned before, Part A covers your inpatient hospital costs and skilled nursing care. For 2022, if you are hospitalized for up to 60 days, Medicare pays for everything except a \$1,556 deductible. For days 61-150, you would pay an increasing daily rate. After 150 days in the hospital, you are responsible for all costs. Please note that this is cumulative for each calendar year, meaning you could be in the hospital three separate times and exceed 60 days for the year. It's easy to see how illnesses that require more extended hospital stays can quickly add up on original Medicare. Skilled Nursing Care follows a similar pattern. For days 1-20, you pay nothing for your care. Days 21-100 would cost you \$194.50 a day. After 100 days, you pay all costs. A note to keep in mind here is that for Medicare to pick up skilled nursing costs, you need to have been *admitted* to the hospital for three consecutive nights. If they hold you for observation only, the clock never starts ticking, and Medicare will not pay for your skilled nursing care.

Part B premiums for 2022 generally cost between \$170.10 and \$578.30 per month, depending on your income and whether or not you file your taxes

individually or jointly. With original Medicare (Parts A and B), you pay a yearly deductible of \$233 in 2022 and then 20% coinsurance for most services. There may also be programs available to help offset these costs if you have limited income.

### Medicare Decisions

After getting all that background out of the way, now comes the part where it's time to decide on how you wish to get your coverage. Do you want to stick with original Medicare or look at a Medicare Advantage plan? Will you need to add prescription drug or supplemental coverage as well?

These are some tough questions, and what is right for one person can be entirely wrong for the next. There is no cookie-cutter approach to Medicare, so in the next installment, we will examine each of these questions and options in-depth and hopefully make your Medicare health care choices a little clearer going forward. □

It is always important to check with your employer or union benefits administrator to understand how your insurance works with Medicare.





## CHARITY

## Annual Walk for Dyslexia

On Saturday, October 1, we held our annual Walk for the Children's Dyslexic Center. This year it was in memory of Brother Eric Cohen who was Chairman of the walk for years. Eric passed away a few years ago at a young age from cancer. Thanks to the tenacity of Walk Chairman Austin Shifrin, Assistant Chair Whitaker, and Assistant Chairman Neko Salera, this year's walk was quite a success. A huge \$6,470 was raised this year, which is fantastic.

A huge thank you goes out to The Valley of Pittsburgh for permitting the use of their facilities for the walk and their continued support for the Children's Dyslexic Center. We would also like to thank our DJ for keeping us in a great selection of music, the Shriner Clowns for creating balloon art, and EMME for donating and operating a photo booth to allow attendees to take selfies with a very unique background created just for our walk. A special thank you to Robert Nelson for donating back his 50/50 winnings. These, along with all the other volunteers who stepped up to help wherever they could, made the walk a huge success. But the biggest thanks goes to all the walkers who registered, came out, and joined the walk. Without their support, the walk would have not succeeded.

This year's official t-shirt came from a design contest held earlier in the year. The winner was Kelsey who won a \$50 Amazon gift card for her design.

Finally, The Steel City DeMolay joined the Builders Council. I had the honor of accepting a \$2,500 check for their first 25%. They held numerous fundraisers to generate their first payment.

If you missed this year's walk, plan to attend next year. It is scheduled for Saturday, October 7, 2023. □



# Grateful Students, Grateful Staff

On May 16, the Children's Dyslexia Center—Pittsburgh held its annual family picnic and graduation ceremony. We said goodbye to five of our students and celebrated their hard work with certificates and words from their tutors. The Masons of the Valley of Pittsburgh provided and grilled hamburgers and hotdogs, and our grateful families supplied the rest. We want to share some of the thank you notes from our students and families as no one can communicate their gratitude the way they can. We are all so grateful for the work you do! You enable our center to continue to do the important work of helping our students to read.



Thank you so much for helping me  
read and making me feel like  
I belong in school.



Don't feel at all nervous from you  
in class. It makes me feel like  
I belong in the Dyslexia Center.  
With all the help in the program I can  
read and write like a normal kid.  
I really enjoyed it all.



Thank you for teaching me  
how to learn. Please  
I enjoy learning with my  
teacher.

Thank you for your  
support!

-C.W.



Dear Board of Governors,

I would like to express my deepest gratitude for the Children's Center. This program is changing  
here and the future of children. My son graduated from the center last year and the center has made  
such a huge difference in his reading ability and confidence. My grandson has now completed his first  
year in the program and the improvement in his reading ability is profound. I feel like you are saving my  
family and giving these children a chance to be successful in school. Many people don't realize the  
mental impact having a disability like dyslexia can have on a child. My grandson has recently been a  
victim of bullying, even another child said, "oh well I don't go to his, it's never for some help". A  
disability like dyslexia can have a big impact on a child's self-esteem, which can impact them for life and  
put them on a negative path.

Reading impacts everything we do and this program gives them the future that they deserve.  
Please keep doing what you are doing to give our young people a bright future.

Thank you!

Arnette Allen



DEAR MASON'S,  
Thank you for giving me the  
chance to be happy. I have  
learned so much from this  
and I hope has really helped  
them and I hope for a lot of  
love and care for the future.  
Rachel

Thank you so much

MR

Thank you for giving me the  
opportunity to work on my reading  
skills!

From:  
Edamu



Thank you for giving me the  
opportunity to work on my reading!

From  
NRG



Dear Masons,  
Thank you for my tutorage with Mrs. Susan  
I've had times when I was reading like  
I was before. I hope you Center  
helps kids like me.  
Cassandra Kramer



Dear Board of Governors

Thank you for helping  
me learn to read. I  
I have studied I have  
seen myself improve  
reading. I have also  
seen how hard it is  
to learn.

Linda



Dear Masons,

Thank you so much for  
doing this program. My son and  
dad are so happy. They are  
so happy to be here. The staff is great  
they are family and we  
see see my daughter.

Love,  
K.S.





Dear Board of Gov of MD

I would like to  
Thank you so much for  
helping us for me MY  
sisters and family are so  
proud of me for doing  
so much better.

Thank  
Kaitlyn M.



Thank you for my tutoring program.  
It helps me with my reading at school. Before  
tutoring I was really not smart and now I can read  
harder books.

From LUCAS



Thank you for helping me read better  
and for helping me learn to write  
my own story and my help for me  
could be to help me read better  
help you today

Thank you for helping me for the past few years.  
Thank you for always showing up and spending  
your time with me. The program has helped me every  
month by reading and writing has gotten me better  
and I know it will help me in my future to come.  
My family and teachers can see the difference this  
program has made in my future to come.

Jar B



Dear Thank you so much for giving me the  
chance to be a part of this program. I know  
I can read and write my writing is my best.

Sincerely  
Alicia



Dear Board of Governors

I am a 13 year old student with dyslexia from the South Hills in Pittsburgh. Because of  
this condition I struggled with reading and writing at the same time this condition challenged me  
with lack of self confidence. Once I started attending the Children's Dyslexia Center, after the first  
few classes I felt much more confident in myself in my writing and started enjoying reading  
more. I got thankful to thank for giving me the opportunity to learn how to deal with this condition  
by teaching me books that I can apply at school and with my daily activities. I have learned many  
new things about how to organize myself and other ways that have helped me improve my  
writing. I am grateful for Ms Amy as she has helped me deal with this condition, do better at  
school and improve my confidence. I wish that this program continue to help many other  
children like me learn and have as much fun as I did. I hope that other children get to come to  
this center to learn and get the help that they deserve knowing that they're not alone when it  
comes to having dyslexia. I thank Ms Amy and The Children's Dyslexia Center for all the help  
and support they gave me while I attended this program.

Sincerely  
Jana



Dear  
Thank you for giving me the  
chance to be a part of this  
program. I know I can read  
and write my writing is my best  
and very helpful my reading  
has improved and I know it will  
help me in my future to come.

Thank you,

Kaitlyn



Thank you for helping me learn  
to read and spell better. I am  
starting to have an easier  
time reading at school. I really  
appreciate all the help that you  
gave me. Miss Georgia is very  
great at teaching me.

Thank you  
Suzanna



Thank you for the free dyslexia tutoring.  
It has helped me in many ways. It  
helps me spell better and helps me read  
better. I really like all the time  
and every teacher but who teaches  
and helping me find how to feel. Thank  
for helping with me.

B.W., 9th grade, 2022



# 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**



## BUILDERS COUNCIL MEMBERS

30th Masonic District F&AM  
Demo Agoris  
Edward & Joan Aiello  
Robert and Janice Amend  
Emery & Carol Anden  
Avalon Lodge No. 657 F&AM  
David & Carol Bagaley  
Robert & Jacqueline Beatty  
Dr. Jeff A. Biddle  
Mark & Patty Bliler  
Chartiers Lodge No. 297 F&AM  
George H. Cox  
Rick & Renee Cross  
James S. Dean  
Mario & Linda Deblasio  
Bill & Heather Deickey  
Raymond T. Dietz  
Fred & Kathy Donatelli  
Robert L. Eckbreth  
James Ecker  
James R. Flanigan  
Howard and Sharon Flynn  
Franklin / St. Johns / Trinity Lodge No. 221  
Gourgias Lodge of Perfection  
Donald & Debra Green  
Wally and Leah Grossett  
Erich & Raylene Gumto  
Harvey & Carol Gumto  
John A. Habel  
Leland A. Hale Jr.  
Jacque Hauser  
Jeff & Lauren Heiger  
Helen Ruth Henderson  
Raymond Frank Hess  
Hiram's Riders of Valley of Pittsburgh  
Gene Hlavac

Homestead Amity McCandless  
Lodge No. 582  
Infinity Lodge No. 546  
Jim & Lisa Jenkins  
Robert B. Jones  
Paul Kappel  
Paul and Jackie Kauffman  
David & Sandy Kearns  
David S. & Judith Kielman  
John G. Kovac  
Richard & Mary Ruth Kucera  
George & Judith Lewis  
Lodge 45, Pittsburgh, P.A.  
William & Barabara Magnotti Jr.  
Frank R. Mangery  
Jack W. & Edna Marsh  
John McCain  
John F. McCombs  
Roy A. & Sara Jane McCullough  
Julia and Calvin McCutcheon  
Jay E. McElravy  
Joann McElravy  
James A. & Earlene McMahon  
Craig & Amy McVicker  
Mike Melde  
Dr. Glenn & Roberta Miller  
Glenn D. & Mary B. Miller  
Jack & Carol Miller  
Donald M. Murphy  
Jack & Joy Nicklas  
John & Valerie Nicklas  
Oakdale Lodge No. 669  
Pittsburgh Commandery No. 1  
Knights Templar  
Ronald and Karen Plesh  
Raymond R. & Dorothy K. James

D. William Roberts  
Bruce A. Robinson  
Richard & Bette Rodibaugh  
Don & Ginny Sauer  
Joseph A. Schrock Jr.  
James W. Seel  
William P. Shaw  
William Slater  
Samuel & Judith Spanos  
Steel City DeMolay - Coraopolis, PA  
Christian L. Stein  
Thomas Sturgeon  
Kurt R. Tesche  
The Supreme Council Group  
Valley of Pittsburgh  
Gregory Triko  
Unified Lodge #2 I.O.O.F.  
Valley of Pittsburgh Legion of Honor  
Valley of Uniontown  
George T. Vance  
Vintage-Classic Car Club  
S. Timothy Warco  
Washington Lodge No. 164  
Bob & Charlene Wells  
Chester Arthur West Jr.  
Louri Ann West  
John & Jerry Williams  
Jeffrey & Sharon Wonderling







CHARITY

# Charity Golf Outing for the Children's Dyslexia Center-Pittsburgh

Golfers once again teed it up at Butler's Lakeside in Elizabeth, PA to support the Children's Dyslexia Center. More than 50 golfers vied for skill prizes and bragging rights all while supporting our flagship charity. □



# The Farther We Trace It

by PJ Roup, 33°



PJ Roup, 33°

Wisdom seeks the secret shade and the lonely cell designed for contemplation.  
There enthroned, she sits, delivering her sacred oracles.  
There we are to seek her and to pursue the real bliss.  
Though the passage is difficult, the farther we trace it, the easier it will become.

—Excerpt from the Opening Charge

**I have always** been a fan of the opening charge. Its simple distillation of how Freemasons ought to be and act has spoken to me from the very first time I heard it. In particular, the passage above made me want to seek more knowledge. The notion of a hidden glade or a secret room was evocative of Indiana Jones on a quest. I pictured myself then as an explorer looking for something hidden there, perhaps in plain sight but not necessarily visible to everyone.

As a new Mason, I was overwhelmed. I was surrounded by men who had learned the ritual—every word of it—and taken it to heart. I knew nothing. I was sure that I wanted to be a better person, and I knew in my heart that Freemasonry was going to help. But how? The passage was going to be difficult for sure. There would be enemies, stumbling blocks, impassable thickets. I would need to bushwhack, innovate, and perhaps even battle to find that wisdom, understanding, and self-improvement that I so desperately sought.

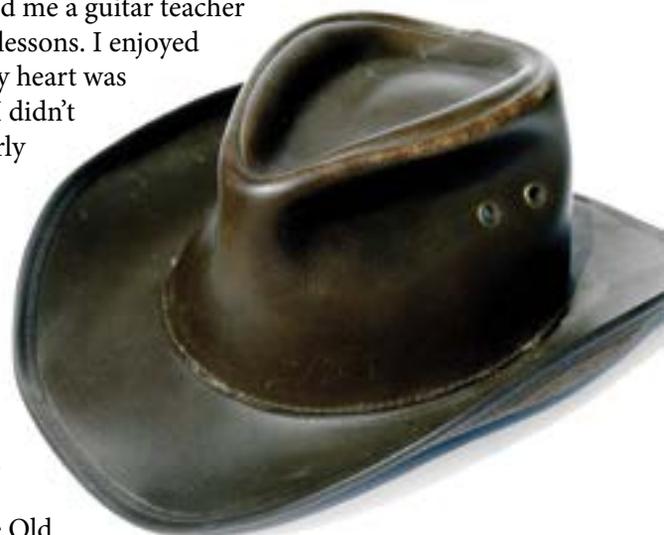
I soon learned something interesting: no matter how far we progress toward our best selves, there is always room for improvement. As we are told in the 14th degree, “It is not given to man to attain perfection. He can but strive for it.” Perfection, therefore, is about the journey, not the destination; and each Brother’s journey is unique to his situation. Each of us has large chunks of our rough ashlar that need to be removed. And while the flaws in others are easily seen (a flaw in its own right), our own occasionally elude us. When we do turn our gaze inward,

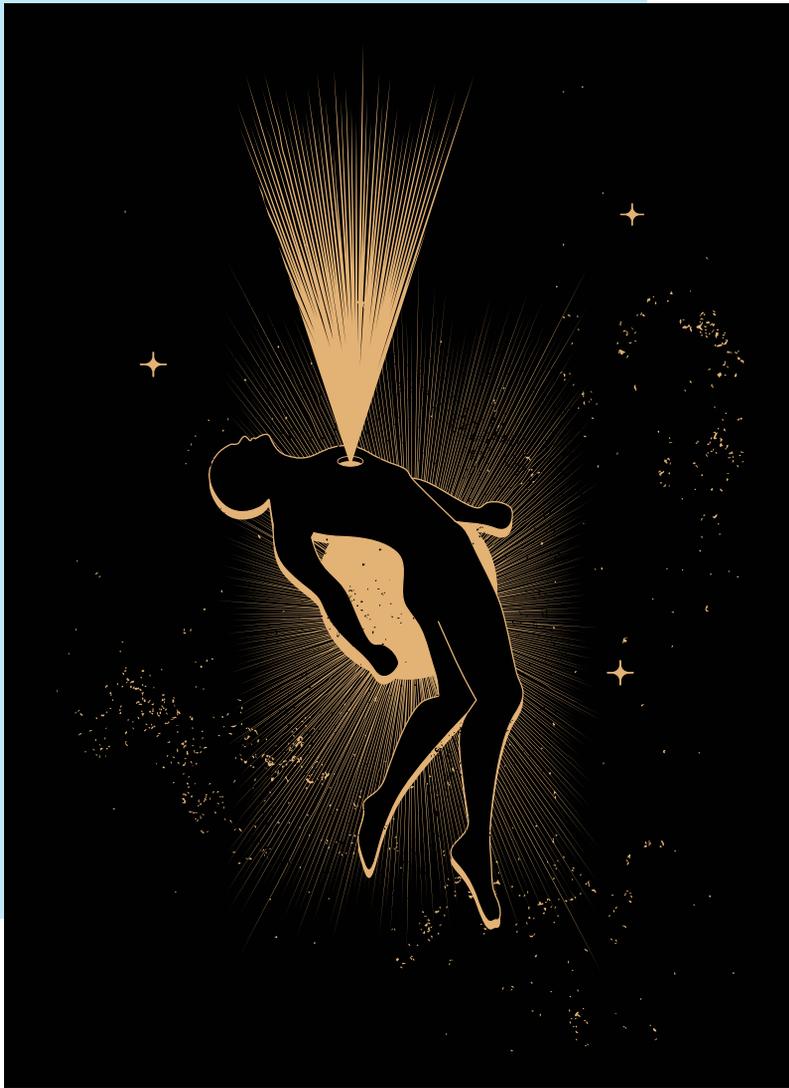
some can be easy to spot and come off without much effort. Others are of the hardest stone (think bias, anger, hubris), come from our upbringing, and require more effort to chisel away. What is important is that you do not judge yourself (either positively or negatively) by the progress of others.

**I was sure that I wanted to be a better person, and I knew in my heart that Freemasonry was going to help. But how?**

When I was about eight years old, I decided I wanted to take music lessons. More specifically, I wanted to learn to play the piano, but we had neither a piano nor space for one in the house. What we did have was a guitar, so my parents found me a guitar teacher and I began lessons. I enjoyed them, but my heart was not in it, so I didn’t practice nearly as much as

I should have. Several months into my lessons, I was still plucking out single notes, playing “The Old Grey Mare” or “Yankee





Doodle” to the raucous applause of my family.

At Christmastime that year, we went to a neighborhood party. Coincidentally, the boy who lived there started guitar lessons not long before me. At his parents’ urging, he got his guitar out to accompany everyone on some Christmas carols. He announced that we would be singing “Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer.” *Ha*, I thought to myself, *I could do that too*. What happened next left me speechless. Instead of putting one finger on one string and strumming it to produce a single note, he contorted his fingers, pressed them against a bunch of strings, and strummed them all—at the same time! A chord!

I was both awestruck and ashamed. He was talented. He had progressed so quickly. I, on the other hand, was a sham. On the walk home, I told my parents how disappointed I was in my ability, not because I had none, but because Matt had so much more.

“You can’t compare yourself to Matt,” my mom told me. “He has been taking piano lessons since he was four. That helped him pick it up more quickly.”

“But I can’t—” I started.

Mom interrupted me. “It doesn’t matter what you can’t do now. You *can* do a lot of things you couldn’t when you started. Don’t compare yourself to anyone else. Compare yourself to the old you.”

In Rumi’s poem “Flightpaths,” a man is searching for Truth:

*I say, Show me the way.  
You say, Put your head  
under your feet.  
That way you rise through the stars  
and see a hundred other ways  
to be with me.  
There are as many as there are  
Flight paths of prayer at dawn.*

The secret shade and the lonely cell will always be there for us. Yours is different than mine, and that’s okay. True inner work can happen in solitude, but it can also occur in the midst of chaos. Wisdom will deliver her sacred oracles to us in her time and in her place. We must be ready, with open minds and open hearts, to receive her teachings.

So, modern Vitruvians, find your secret shade. Seek the wisdom you need. Make the changes that you must. Do not be deterred by the seeming progress of others, and do not be discouraged at the speed with which it happens. Forge ahead. Blaze your trail. Make your path. You’ll be happy that you did. □

# Our Youth

News and information about the Masonic Youth in our Valley

## \$100 for 100

In March of 1919, Bro. Frank S. Land founded the great boy's youth organization, known as DeMolay, in Kansas City, Missouri. In 2019, DeMolay International celebrated its 100th anniversary.

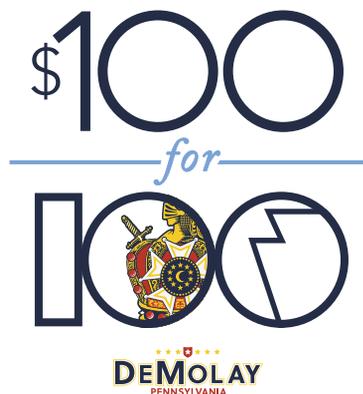
In 2023, Pennsylvania DeMolay will be celebrating its 100th anniversary of DeMolay in our commonwealth. The first DeMolay initiation occurred for Templar Chapter in Pittsburgh on February 12, 1923. For 100 years, the DeMolay program has grown and has provided great leadership and learning experiences for thousands of young men.

PA DeMolay will be celebrating throughout 2023 in many ways. In June, there will be a celebration held in Elizabethtown held alongside the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania's Quarterly Communication. A way you or your lodge can help is through our \$100 for 100 fundraising campaign which is going on right now. The money raised will help support the 100th-anniversary celebration, the commemorative book that donors will receive, and all activities planned in Pennsylvania DeMolay in conjunction with the 100th-anniversary celebration.

Although \$100 is the popular amount because of the centennial, any donation level is accepted and appreciated. Check our website at [pademolay.org/100-for-100](http://pademolay.org/100-for-100) for the donation levels and rewards that go along with it.

Several lodges and Masons have already contributed to this cause. A special thank you to the 30th Masonic District, who contributed to the anniversary celebration through their annual Golf Tournaments. Has your lodge already donated to the \$100 for 100 campaign? If they have, then thank you very much for your contribution. If they have not, don't worry—there is still time to help.

Donations will be accepted through the rest of this year and at least until June, 2023. If you have any questions, contact the Executive Secretary, Dave Berry, at [dwberry@pademolay.net](mailto:dwberry@pademolay.net). □



[pademolay.org](http://pademolay.org)

## Rainbow on the Road ...Again!

From July 13 to 16, Rainbow Girls from across the state traveled to Altoona for their annual convention called Grand Assembly. It was the first, full in-person, Grand Assembly since July 2019. Since the last two conventions had been virtual, the girls were so excited to celebrate together and to be able to do all the “normal” events we had done in the past. During our opening session, we were pleased to hear from the Right Worshipful Grand Master, Jeffrey Wonderling. Ashley Swogger presided as Grand Worthy Advisor over her “Lend A Hand” Session. During an Initiation meeting, three girls joined our beautiful Order. All year long, our Grand Charity, Rachael Hall, oversaw fundraising for our state charity, “My Stuff Bags.” The goal of \$3,000 was reached and there was a “snowball battle” on the grounds of Jaffa Shrine Center. They had so much fun throwing small nylon balls filled with powdered sugar at each other. In the heat, there was “snow”.

At the election meeting, Natalie Rickert of Faith Assembly #150 was elected and installed as the 81st Grand Worthy Advisor of PA Rainbow. Her theme is “Kindness Changes Everything.”

As she travels with Mrs. Snedden to official visits, visiting all 23 PA Rainbow Assemblies, she talks about Rainbow, highlighting the acts of kindness (service hours) our girls are doing in their communities. To support her chosen charity, The American Society for Deaf Children (ASDC), she is selling Rainbow fish pins for \$5 with all the proceeds going to the charity.” □

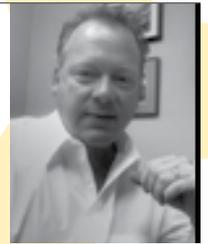


[parainbowgirls.org](http://parainbowgirls.org)

# Rerouted

by D. Todd Ballenger, 33°





D. Todd Ballenger, 33<sup>o</sup>

## Stuck.

**If you've** ever been there, then you know what I mean: put in a situation where your options are very limited and any plans you might have had in serious danger of being completely derailed. That's where I found myself recently—traveling halfway across the country to attend a Masonic event when things began to go sideways, and I found myself stuck in a very large, very chaotic airport.

In New Jersey.

Like I said—stuck.

Due to work and other scheduled commitments, my trip was always running on a tight time frame. Up at 3:30 a.m., left the house by 4:00 a.m., and arrived at the airport to check a bag and stand in a TSA line that stretched easily over the parking garage across the street. Even TSA pre-check reached outside the concourse doors. Seasoned travelers may not get excited at this, and truth be told, I had confidence I'd get through. But the number of people in line kept multiplying, and the larger the crowd got, the more things appeared to slow down. Five in the morning seemed a bit early for this sort of congestion.

Ultimately, I made my gate, boarded the plane, and even switched seats with a passenger who just wanted to sit next to his wife—my good deed for the morning. Nothing to do now but enjoy the ride, make my connection in New Jersey, and settle in for the second leg of the journey on a travel day. We pushed back from the gate and waited. And waited some more. Eventually, the pilot came on a told us there was a mechanical issue they were trying to solve. The couples in front of me and in the seats to my left were getting anxious. Both were on their honeymoon trips and trying to make connecting flights from New Jersey to LAX, and the window was closing rapidly. I was beginning to feel a bit nervous myself when the captain came on again and announced that we were pulling back to the gate and

would need to deplane for the repair.

“Here we go,” I thought with an inward eye roll.

Seeing that the writing was on the wall, I went immediately to the gate agent to see about rerouting my ticket with the assumption that I would now miss my connecting flight. I wasn't the only one with that idea, but I was close to the front of that particular line. The agent was frantic but polite, and certainly accommodating in trying to call up all manner of schedules. She even grabbed a supervisor who looked for a different connection out of New Jersey as well. In the meantime, our plane was re-boarding and ready to try to make it out of Pittsburgh once again. The supervising agent said they would try and make up the time, but even if I missed my connection, I would have a better chance of rerouting in New Jersey, given that it was a hub for the airline I was flying. That was okay by me, so back on the jet I went. Once onboard, the captain apologized and said he and the flight crew would try to make up for some lost time. Fantastic—there was still a chance for things to work out in my favor.

For the entire one-hour and five-minute scheduled flight, my four new friends (the honeymooners) and I strategized as to how to make our connections in the Newark Liberty International Airport. We checked ticketed gate assignments and scanned the back pages of the in-flight magazine to try and calculate how long it might take to sprint to our gates (assuming our arrival gate wasn't going to change, which it did). What we didn't know was that the airline had called ahead to Newark and had our connecting flights held, knowing that we were behind schedule. We also didn't know that our seasoned pilots were pushing the throttle and had us on the ground in New Jersey in about 50 minutes. That was when an announcement came that there were passengers in the rear of the jet trying to make connections, and everyone was asked to kindly allow us to deplane first. Wow—this might actually work!

I missed my connection by three minutes and spent the next thirty-six hours in a very large, very chaotic airport.

In New Jersey.

Like I said before—stuck.

The customer service line to rebook me to a different flight was already two-and-a-half hours long by the time I made it from the gate back into the terminal. Someone from the airline had already seen the writing on the wall because there were snacks and water waiting on a table at about the halfway point of the queue—a thoughtful (and I'm sure almost entirely thankless) gesture. While waiting in line, I was on the phone with an online agent trying to accomplish this rescheduling remotely. Unfortunately, the wireless carrier signal inside the terminal was not entirely stable. I went through three partial phone calls with people trying to assist me before resigning myself to the fact that I was going to make it all the way through this line. Others did not appear to have such resolve, or more accurately, completely lost all manner of self-control when they finally reached a customer service agent who would try to help them. I have never understood the need for anyone (much less an adult with an onlooking family) to berate the very person trying to solve their problem. And yet, I watched that same scenario unfold multiple times before I reached the front. As a Mason, I tend to try and publicly subdue such passions and act upon the square; that is, treat others as I would wish to be treated. There weren't many Masons in line with me that day, I imagine, but there were certainly some potential candidates behind the desk at the customer service counter. When I stepped to the counter and began my conversation by saying, "I'm sorry you're in this position, but I would appreciate anything you could do for me," I saw the agent's face immediately change, and his shoulders relax. Within ten minutes, I was booked on the next available flight to the Midwest and was even handed a stack of food voucher tickets since I was going to be spending the majority of my day in the airport concourse.

Stuck in travel limbo, I spent the day watching people. I was far from the only person impacted by the airline

industry's travel woes. Some handled their situations with patience and grace. Many did not. What interested me were the airport workers, whether they were employees of the airlines or the airport itself. To most, it seemed like this Friday was like any other day. They weren't ambivalent to the traveling masses, and I didn't see a single incident where an employee was rude or unwilling to assist someone with a problem.



As the day stretched into the evening, I began to prepare for my rescheduled flight and found a comfortable spot at my assigned gate (which I confirmed multiple times). If you've ever flown through Chicago, then you know why. About 20 minutes before boarding, we received word that the flight was now delayed. It was the first of four such delays that eventually pushed the departure time past midnight. Shortly thereafter, the flight was canceled, and that was only one of maybe a dozen in that concourse alone. I can only imagine the rest of the airport. I listened to a family decide to put everyone into a rental car (they had two small children) and share the driving through the night. They were trying to get home to Texas and were not about to get stuck in New Jersey. As the lines formed for the customer service desk (again), I laughed inwardly. I had waited for nearly two hours in that line earlier, and when I entered it, I could actually see the counter. This time it was at least six gates away and around a corner at the opposite end of a sea of people. I pulled out my phone and decided to give online booking another shot. Unfortunately, I soon discovered that unless I had "flexible" travel plans (translated: "Do you really have to be at your destination on Saturday?"), then no plane was going to get me where I needed to go from New Jersey, New York, or even Philadelphia. They could not reroute me at this time. The gentleman in front of me in the line was doing the same thing and asked if I had any better luck. I told him no. That's when he came to a similar conclusion as the

Texas family. He told me he thought he might have better luck driving as well. When I asked him where he was from, he smiled at me and said, “Glasgow, Scotland.” We both shared a laugh and went our separate ways. I would like to think that he was a Brother. It seemed appropriate, given the situation.

Eventually, I made the difficult decision to abandon my original plans and reroute myself home to Pittsburgh. Still standing in line, I managed to grab the last available seat on a flight leaving Newark at 11:00 a.m. the following day—that is, as long as the weather held out. Storms were expected to shut everything down again around lunchtime. To pass the time overnight, I decided to try and retrieve my checked bag. So did several hundred other passengers with no pressing overnight plans. Here I witnessed much of the same: irritated and intolerant passengers displeased with their situations and believing such delays to be a personal affront to their sensibilities and stations in life. When I finally took my turn with the baggage agent, he told me that my bag was on the tarmac with a thousand others and that my best option would be to file a claim ticket and have the airline deliver it to me once I returned home. I did as he suggested and resigned myself to taking care of some things once I made it (if I made it) back to Pittsburgh.

As morning broke and the overnight shifts changed for those working the gates, I listened to several recaps of the late-night shift. I was at the same time impressed and appalled at the stories, a few of which I had witnessed. I was appalled at the actions and lack of decorum among the traveling public but again impressed at the patience and consistency of service that the majority of workers were trying to provide in circumstances that were clearly not of their doing. As the hours passed, I camped at the gate with eyes glued to the arrival/departure board, hoping after every refresh of the screen not to see the word *DELAYED* next to my flight home. The plane arrived on time, and I boarded, never having completed my original travel plans. Only when we left the ground en route to Pittsburgh did I firmly believe that I would not find myself rerouted once again.

### **Author's Note:**

This article is dedicated to the gate agent going to great lengths to try and reroute my trip even before leaving Pittsburgh; to the pilots who made the flight 15 minutes faster than scheduled once we were underway; to the flight crew who let several of us deplane from the rear of the jet first to try and make our connections; to the customer service agent who was the epitome of professionalism, even when a passenger was exceptionally rude to her; to the two other agents who came to her aid (she really didn't need it); to my customer service agent who thanked me for noticing when someone was being treated unfairly and how they assisted their own (he gave me a stack of food vouchers to last me through the day in the airport) and then got me on the last flight to my destination (even though it, too, was eventually cancelled) when no one else had been successful; and to the guy at Starbucks who saved me some money on my order “just because it was Friday, it's hot, and [he] wanted to be nice to someone;”—I see you all and thank you for what you do.

Maybe these individuals aren't Masons. Perhaps they're just people trying to do their jobs, which happens to be helping other (often angry) people. But in the midst of unwarranted rudeness and unfounded criticism, these folks were logical in their explanations, forthcoming in their solutions (though some people were still dissatisfied), and held their ground when challenged outright.

I'm not saying that the airlines are a compassionate group of business entities. I don't think history would bear that out. But when people listen attentively to someone with a problem or differing opinion and try to either help them solve an issue or recognize how to avoid it in the future, then they are exhibiting the Masonic principles of open-mindedness and patience. No, they may not be Masons, but I know a few who would make fine additions indeed.

### **Postscript:**

My one piece of checked luggage arrived at my home the next day (Sunday), delivered by a white van driven by an older gentleman with a beard and a friendly disposition. I identified my bag for him, and he took a picture of it with me holding it, as was the airline's policy. As he took the picture, he asked me about the seal on my bag. It was the seal of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania with my name embroidered below as I had checked my garment bag with my tuxedo for the flight. “Well,” he said, “I thought I recognized it. You must have traveled to the East.”

“My Brother,” I replied, “You better believe it.”

He gripped my hand and said, “From a McKeesport Brother, welcome home.” □





Austin R. Shifrin, 33°

# Non-Player Characters

by Austin Shifrin, 33°

► **Today I'm going to embark with you on a flight of fancy that doesn't quite fit the mold of our previous outings. The following musings were inspired by a variety of media that bubbled up in my memory: The 1998 film *Dark City*, with Rufus Sewell, Jennifer Connelly, and Kiefer Sutherland; the 2016 television remake of *Westworld*, with Evan Rachel Wood and Jeffrey Wright; and the YouTube comedy, *Viva La Dirt League*, from New Zealand.**

*Dark City* is a peculiar and surreal film in which a protagonist who is initially suffering from amnesia comes to discover that the entire city where he lives and its inhabitants are being controlled by mysterious men referred to as the Strangers. Every night, these Strangers lull the rest of the citizens to sleep, rearrange their environs, and invest them with new memories and personalities. What are the purposes and intentions behind this manipulation? I will not spoil the experience should you choose to check out the film. I will say for the sake of this article, though, that the through-line that made this one of the media artifacts that came to mind

in this context for me was the notion of the control that these Strangers exerted; the idea that they would pause the world when they saw fit, reset the scene and the players, and then resume the action according to their design.

**What if, in our lodge, we tried to imagine ourselves in the supporting role and the candidate as the protagonist?**

In *Westworld*, a remake of the fairly popular film that came out in 1973 with Yul Brynner, a large number of very believable humanoid robots populate a theme park decked out to resemble the American West during the period of our country's expansion. The automata have fairly simplistic roles to accommodate the wish-fulfillment of the human guests and to play out pre-scripted narratives in which the guests can roleplay however they see fit...until, of course, something goes catastrophically wrong. While I don't remember the original all that well, I have been watching the 2016 remake recently. What drove me to connect to these other media was the idea of the hosts' fundamental purpose being to advance a narrative and to serve the agenda of the guests.

*Viva La Dirt League* write and perform sketch comedy that revisits a couple of settings and recurring characters. Among these is a fictional Massively Multiplayer Online Roleplaying Game. As we watch the backlog of sketches available, we get acquainted with the various Non-Player Characters (the characters presumably controlled by the “game’s” Artificial Intelligence) and the simplistic routines and bits of dialogue they engage in to support and contribute to the experience of the Player Characters (those controlled by gamers). The comedy troupe that has written and performed these even takes a few opportunities to get meta and toy with the notion of what it means to be an NPC: How do these characters feel about their role? If they are aware of their limitations at all—can they feel exasperated? Experience existential crisis? Do they feel fulfilled?

Ultimately, contemplating the combination of these three led me to a new and different perspective on the role that existing Freemasons play in the initiatic experience as well as whatever may follow to retain new members. What if, in an act of genuine selflessness, we engaged in an exercise to invert our solipsistic tendency to always exclusively consider our own perspective as we move through life? What if, in our lodge, we tried to imagine ourselves in the supporting role and the candidate as the protagonist?

In a well-designed online roleplaying game, the NPCs need to be sufficiently convenient to locate (perhaps even in their designated “station”). To the extent that the world in which the player is navigating offers choices about how to proceed—whether the narrative is rigidly linear, and the protagonist somewhat “on a rail,” or it is an open world, a sandbox—the player needs to have opportunities to express their choices. And then the NPCs should always offer some kind of guidance that will help advance the goals of the player—or maybe even offer the invitation to the quest itself.

How well, then, do we design the candidate’s experience? Can he always find the people he needs to get the information and the help that he requires? Are communications engineered such that they can make their priorities and their choices clear to us? And when

the candidate himself may not even know what his quest is, do we help clarify the alternatives? Do we extend the invitation to undertake the quest?

**How well, then, do we design the candidate’s experience? Can he always find the people he needs to get the information and the help that he requires?**

Lest anyone should think I am trivializing our beloved institution by comparing it to games, I would like to direct the reader to the lecture by Alan Watts entitled “The Joker.” In his address, Watts posits that all our endeavors and institutions, even all of life, can be construed as a game, but that need not imply that we do not value and respect these things if we choose to play them sincerely. I think perhaps I do him a disservice by summarizing so glibly. If you wish to hear the lecture or read the transcript, it can be found at <https://www.organism.earth/library/document/the-joker>. I highly recommend it.

Some of the same concepts recur in other movies I’m very fond of, such as the 2006 movie *Stranger Than Fiction* with Will Ferrell and Emma Thompson, or 2008’s *Synecdoche, New York* with Philip Seymour Hoffman. But before I spin too far off into reveries about film and television, let me try to encapsulate what my unifying thought was here: Do we pay enough attention to the design of the experience we are to deliver to our incoming candidates for Freemasonry? Are we willing to subordinate ourselves as supporting roles, as non-player characters, so that we can most effectively support and advance *their* goals, *their* progress? Do we show up where we need to be, say what we need to say, and do what we need to do, so that their journey falls in the spectrum between constrained and open-ended in a balance that suits their needs? Whether you’re a gamer or not, I hope this thought experiment has provided you with an interesting new perspective on our beloved Fraternity and what we can do to help it thrive. □



Dr. Glenn D. Miller, 33°

# Avascular Necrosis **Part 2**

By Dr. Glenn D. Miller, II, 33°

**Treatment** options for avascular necrosis of the femoral head can be differentiated into surgical and nonsurgical therapies. Nonsurgical therapies include nonsteroidal drugs (NSAIDs) to help alleviate pain; hypercholesterolemia medications to help lower cholesterol levels to prevent arterial/arteriole blockages; osteoporosis medications to slow the progression of avascular necrosis; anticoagulation medications (blood thinners) for those patients with clotting disorders to prevent blood clots that can block arteries/arterioles; physical therapy to help maintain and/or improve range of motion in the joint; rest and/or joint offloading with devices such as crutches/canes/scooters/wheelchairs to slow the progression of joint damage; and electrical stimulation therapy to promote new bone growth. However, it should be noted that these therapies are reserved for a small percentage of patients who are diagnosed in the early stages of avascular necrosis. It should also be noted that these therapies only help to alleviate symptoms on a temporary basis and have not been shown to significantly alter the natural progression of the disease.

Surgical procedures are the mainstay of treatments for avascular necrosis and offer the greatest chance of success for the patient to return to a normal active lifestyle. These surgical procedures can be divided into prophylactic measures that retard or prevent the progression of the disease to the point where the femoral head collapses, and reconstructive procedures for those patients that have already progressed to the point of femoral head collapse. Prophylactic surgical procedures include core decompression, bone osteotomy (reshaping), osteochondral (bone and cartilage) grafting, and grafting with a piece of vascularized fibula bone.

Core decompression is a procedure where one large diameter hole, or multiple small diameter holes, are drilled into the femoral neck and head in an effort to relieve pressure and stimulate the production of new bone and vasculature. Bone osteotomy is a procedure where a wedge of necrotic bone is removed in an attempt to shift the patient's weight off of the damaged bone and onto healthy bone. Osteochondral grafting is a procedure in which bone and cartilage are taken from a donor (allograft) or from a different bone in the patient's body (autograft) and then transplanted onto the hip to regenerate healthy bone and cartilage. Osteochondral grafting is often combined with the previously mentioned core decompression procedure. A somewhat newer procedure is the transplantation of a segment of a patient's fibula, along with its arterial and venous blood vessels, into a hole drilled into the femoral neck and head similar to that which is done in core decompression. This procedure can also result in the regeneration of bone and significantly alter the progression of avascular necrosis in patients who are diagnosed early.

**Surgical procedures are the mainstay of treatments for avascular necrosis and offer the greatest chance of success for the patient to return to a normal active lifestyle.**

Another bone-regeneration therapy that is currently being investigated for patients with the early stages of avascular necrosis of the femoral head is the use of stem cells. These stem cells are harvested from the patient's own bone marrow, typically from the pelvis. The stem cells are then implanted into the area(s) of the necrotic femoral head that has been surgically removed.

Currently, this procedure has successfully reduced the need for total hip arthroplasty (hip replacement) in nearly 10% of patients with avascular necrosis of the femoral head. It is hoped that higher success rates will eventually become possible with further advances in the science of stem cell therapy. It is also hoped that long-term success rates of the osteochondral graft and vascularized fibula graft surgical procedures will improve with advances in science and surgical techniques. These procedures are especially important for younger patients so that hip replacement surgery can be postponed for as long as possible in an effort to eliminate the need for a revision surgical procedure later in life.

Reconstructive surgical procedures include femoral resurfacing arthroplasty, hemi-arthroplasty, and total hip arthroplasty. Femoral resurfacing arthroplasty consists of resecting or shaving off a thin layer of the femoral head and the pelvic acetabulum and then attaching a metal cap on the femoral head and a metal cup in the pelvic acetabulum. This procedure is not as extensive as a total hip replacement because the patient's femoral neck and femoral head are preserved. It is a somewhat controversial procedure because it is unlikely to last a typical lifetime, is associated with a 1% risk of subsequent femoral neck fracture, and there is some debate on whether it is associated with metal ion release into the patient's body. Femoral resurfacing arthroplasty is often considered as an option for younger patients so that they don't have to undergo a total hip replacement at an age that would probably require a second revision surgery at some point during their lifetime. This procedure also does not interfere with a patient undergoing a total hip arthroplasty at a later date.

Hemi-arthroplasty is hip replacement surgery that involves removing the patient's femoral neck and head and replacing it with a metal and/or ceramic prosthesis (stem and ball). The acetabulum of the pelvis is not modified with a prosthesis. This type of hip replacement surgery is typically performed on patients who suffer a fracture of the femoral neck. Total hip arthroplasty is hip replacement surgery that involves removing the patient's femoral neck and head and replacing it with a metal prosthesis (stem and ball) as well as placing a metal prosthesis (cup) in the acetabulum of the pelvis. A plastic, ceramic, or metal spacer is placed on the surface of the acetabular prosthesis to

allow for a smooth gliding surface between the two prostheses. Total hip arthroplasty is the most common and most successful treatment for late-stage avascular necrosis of the femoral head. With the advancements in polyethylene utilized for the spacer over the past 15-20 years, it is anticipated that total hip arthroplasties will last for over 20 years. If this estimate proves to be accurate, as many as 75% of patients aged 45-60 years at the time of the initial hip replacement should never have to undergo a revision surgery during their lifetimes. One caveat to these estimates is the fact that patients who engage in vigorous physical activities post-hip replacement will most likely experience greater "wear and tear" and reduced longevity of their hip prosthesis. Therefore, patients who undergo hip

**As many as 75% of patients aged 45-60 years at the time of the initial hip replacement should never have to undergo a revision surgery during their lifetimes.**

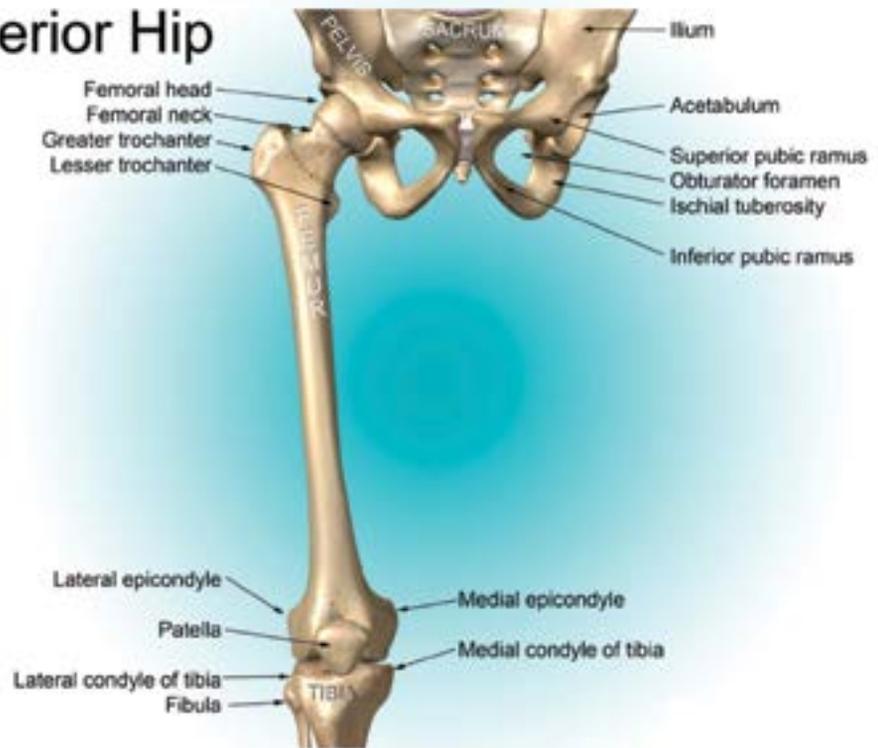
replacement surgery are advised to avoid further "high impact" activities such as jogging, skiing, and other activities or sports that place significant stress on the hips. Another precaution that hip replacement patients need to be aware of is that prosthetic hips are more prone to dislocation compared to native hips. The reasons for this are multifactorial and beyond the scope of this discussion. Suffice it to say that patients with prosthetic hips need to take precautions to avoid falls, crossing the legs with the implant which positions the prosthetic femoral head outward, bending over at the waist more than 90 degrees, and sitting in low chairs that make it difficult to get up.

As some of you are aware, I was diagnosed with avascular necrosis of my left femoral head in the summer of 2010 and subsequently underwent total hip arthroplasty in January 2011. My symptoms started during the fall of 2008 and consisted of hip pain and a limp while I was carrying my 3-year-old son at Penn State football games. The pain and limp generally resolved within one or two days, so I attributed it to just getting older. During the 2009 Penn State football season, I noticed that the pain and limp lasted the entire week. Over the next several months, the limp worsened, and the pain started to radiate into the groin. I finally sought a medical evaluation in the summer

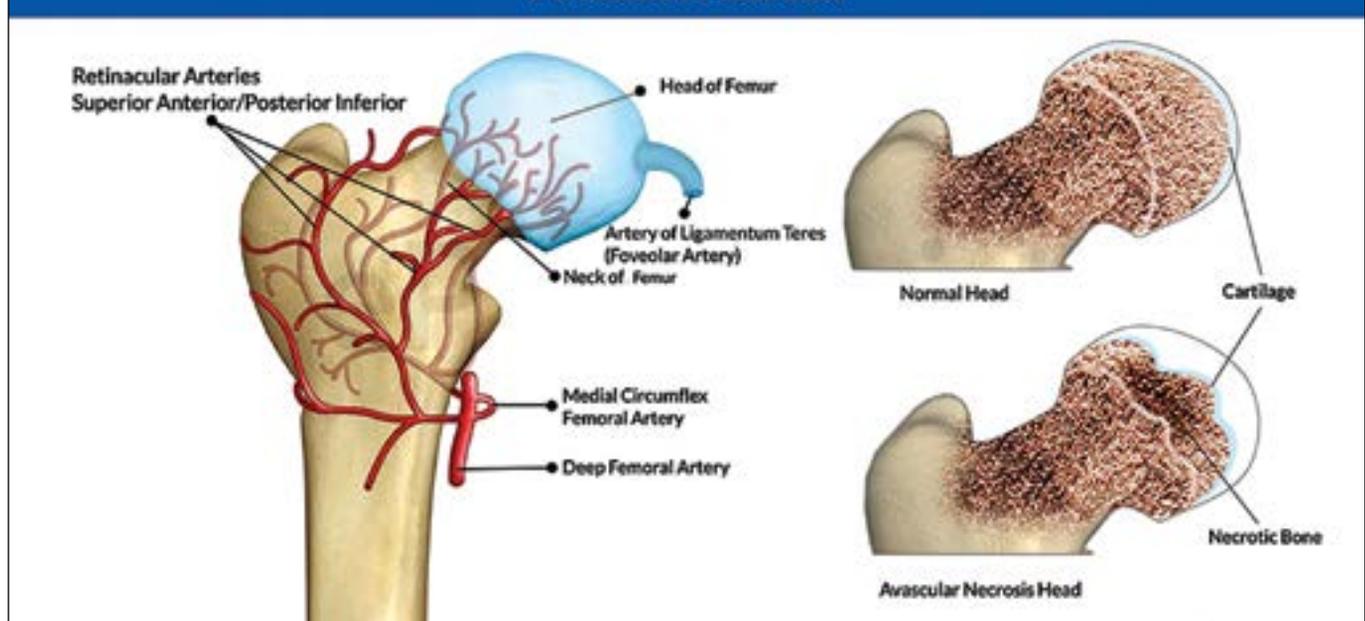
of 2010 after my echocardiography technician politely questioned “my medical intelligence.” By the time I was diagnosed, the damage had progressed to the point that I was no longer a candidate for any therapies other than a total hip arthroplasty. While I was awaiting my surgical date, I experienced a sudden significant increase in hip pain just before Christmas. A few weeks after I underwent the total hip, my orthopaedic surgeon told me that the sudden significant increase in pain that I had experienced was because one-third of my femoral head had collapsed since my pre-operative MRI had been performed. Thankfully, my surgery was successful, and I was able to return to work after four weeks of physical therapy. I am also very grateful that my hip prosthesis contained this

new polyethylene spacer, that my most recent x-rays have not revealed any “wear and tear” of this spacer, and that my orthopaedic surgeon believes that this hip prosthesis will last my lifetime without the need for a revision surgery. □

## Anterior Hip



## Avascular Necrosis



# The Path Yet Traveled

## A brief overview of the Pathfinder Program

by A.J. Antimary, 32°, Pathfinder Advisor—Pennsylvania West

Walt Disney once said, “Curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.”

Every time you join a new appendant body, it is usually due to your curiosity to gain “more light” and to travel down that new and exciting path. Being in the Scottish Rite is no different. I bet you did not know there are ways to enhance your journey as a Scottish Rite Mason besides being active by participating in degree work, becoming an officer, or participating in the many philanthropic events that your Valley has to offer. The Supreme Council has introduced the Pathfinder program to help Brothers become better Scottish Rite Masons and show them the many paths that you can explore.

The Pathfinder program was developed to let Scottish Rite Masons find their own “path” and obtain further knowledge about the history of the Scottish Rite, their Valley, and its members all while having fun doing it. Whether you are a new 32° Scottish Rite Mason, have been around for decades, or are somewhere in between, the Pathfinder program has something for you.

You probably did not even realize it, but you have been standing at the threshold of a new journey waiting for you through the realms of Scottish Rite Freemasonry at this time. Back in April, you received an envelope from the Supreme Council that had information about the Pathfinder program and it also included your Pathfinder Field Book.

This book is about the same size as your degree passport. The purpose of this book is to be able to record your journey. On the inside cover, you will see a QR code. With the camera on any electronic device, you will be able to access the Guidebook, so you can start gathering everything needed to help you along your new and exciting journey.

As you work on forging your new path of enlightenment by way of the program, you will see that the whole experience is broken down into five categories or “Waypoints.” Each of these Waypoints represents a different, but important aspect of our fraternity. The five “Waypoints” of the Pathfinder Program are:

- Organization**
- Self-Improvement**
- Enrichment Programs**
- Service & Philanthropy**
- Valley Life**

Each Waypoint is broken down into various tasks or “Mile Markers.” These can vary from something as simple as building your member profile on the Member Center page at [scottishritenmj.org](http://scottishritenmj.org) to having a walk-on or even a speaking role in a degree, just to name a few. The requirement for the program is to complete 32 different Mile Markers. The 32 Mile Markers must consist of six from each Waypoint and then two additional Mile Markers of your choosing from any Waypoint. I already know what you’re thinking ...32-mile markers—that is a lot and

I do not know if I have time for that.” The beauty of the program is that there is no time limit on how long you take to complete the tasks. It is self-driven. If you are currently active in your Valley the task ahead may not be as daunting. Here is why:

As an officer or a past presiding officer of your Valley, for example, you have many responsibilities that go along with the offices, such as degree work, attending meetings/reunions, participate in planning events, and even going to Council of Deliberation meetings. Did you know, by performing your duties of the office that you have been elected to, you are checking off at least half of the required Mile Markers needed to complete the Pathfinder program? If you are not an Officer, do not fret, because the program is designed for all Scottish Rite Masons. If you are a member of your Valley who is looking for some way to broaden your vast knowledge of our great Fraternity, let the Pathfinder program be that beacon of light to shine on that unfamiliar path forward.

To get credit once you complete your Mile Marker, you will need to upload the information that you gathered in the corresponding Waypoint’s tab within the member profile under the Pathfinder tab. As you complete your Mile Markers, they will be saved to your profile and as you continue to complete them, they will automatically save once they are submitted. After you complete the



A.J. Antimary, 32°

32 required mile markers, you will have completed your first path with the program. Supreme Council will be notified via the Pathfinder tab through the Member's portal and you will receive an award box in the mail signifying the completion of your first path. The beauty of this program is that you can do this many times and take as long as you like to complete it. The Program will always be evolving and updating, with new Mile Markers consistently being added to keep things fresh and exciting for all Scottish Rite Masons. If you find yourself stuck on a Mile Marker, one of the greatest sources are your Brothers. If you are still feeling stuck, have questions, or even suggestions to better the program, please let your Valley Pathfinder representative or your Pathfinder Advisory Board member know. □



## Classifieds

# 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  
richreynolds@MSN.com

### ADVERTISING SPECIALITIES

**Grimes Advertising** 412-921-1325  
Eddie & Sandy Grimes goodadv@comcast.net  
www.good-advertising.com

### 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  
Americanclassics@windstream.net  
1026 3rd Avenue, Brockway, PA 15824-1012

### 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

**Jefferson Memorial Cemetery & Funeral Home**  
Pleasant Hills Harry C. Neel 412-655-4500

**George Irvin Green Funeral Home**  
Munhall Donald Green 412-461-6394

**Warco-Falvo Funeral Home** 724-225-1500  
Washington, PA S. Timothy Warco

**Young Funeral Home Ltd** 724-283-3333  
Butler, PA William F. Young III

### GRAPHIC DESIGN / CREATIVE SERVICES

**Square Peg Design** 724-925-0224  
Rodney E. Boyce www.squarepegdesign.com

### HOME REMODELERS

**Unglo Construction LLC** 412-977-8924  
Bethel Park Paul M. Unglo II

### INSURANCE

**Rodgers Insurance Group** 412-922-1651  
James M. Wehur rodgersgrp.com

**State Farm Insurance** 724-864-9000  
Irwin, PA Brian Winfield

### PLUMBING

**John R. Meyers Plumbing, Inc.** 412-787-2370  
Sturgeon, PA jmeyers161@verizon.net

### REAL ESTATE

**K.W. Keller Williams Realty** 412-884-3800  
Mac McClrath www.mcllrathrealtygroup.com

### ROOFING

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

### SHOE REPAIRS

**Mazza Shoe Repairing** 412-341-7493  
Vincent M. Mazza 618 Brookline Blvd.

### TRUCKING / TARPULIN SYSTEMS

**Merlot Vango** 1-800-443-8277  
Automatic Tarps for Dump Trucks & Flatbeds  
Truck Tarpaulin Systems, Digital Vinyl Sign  
Printing, all sizes, Flatbeds: 8' to 24' Aluminum  
Vince Merlot 50 year member  
10 Plum St., Verona, PA 15147

### VIDEOGRAPHY

**Dreamscape Productions** 412-965-1860  
P.J. Roup pjroup@gmail.com

For advertising rates and information, please contact the Valley Office at 412-939-3579 or by email at secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org

# The Latest

Important happenings coming soon to the Valley of Pittsburgh

NOV

19

**Reservations are requested.**

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

## Joint Scottish Rite/Shrine Ceremonial – 4th Degree, Shriner’s Fall Ceremonial

This is a rare opportunity to join both the Scottish Rite and Shrine in one day! The Scottish Rite will welcome in new members jointly with the Syria Shriners at the Pittsburgh Syria Shriners in Cheswick. The Scottish Rite 4th Degree will be presented to begin the Scottish Rite journey. Following that, the Shrine will conduct its Fall Ceremonial for new members.

TIME: 8:00AM

LOCATION: Syria Shriners Cheswick

DEC

10

**Reservations are required.**

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

## Valley Children’s Holiday Party

Children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews are invited to come along with you for a wonderful event that will include a magician, presents for the children, a pizza lunch for all, and a visit from Santa Claus. Get your reservations in soon!

TIME: 11:00AM

LOCATION: GPMC

COST: None

RSVP: December 6

FEB

2

**Reservations are required for Dinner only!**

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

## Stated Meeting

The February Stated meeting will be a very special event this year. The meeting will start at 6:00 p.m. followed by a murder mystery dinner at 7:00. This will be a great night of fellowship and fun for only \$15.00 per person. This is open to Scottish Rite Masons and their ladies.

TIME: 6:00PM Meeting / 7:00PM Murder Mystery Dinner

LOCATION: GPMC

COST: \$15 per person for Dinner

RSVP: January 31

**PLEASE NOTE MEETING TIME CHANGE**

FEB

25

**Reservations are requested.**

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

## Combined Scottish Rite & York Rite Initiation Class

A unique opportunity to join both the Scottish Rite and the York Rite is coming to the Valley of Pittsburgh. Invite your Master Mason friends to join our Valley. If you’re not already a York Rite Mason, now’s your chance to join!

TIME: TBD

LOCATION: GPMC

COST: None for members, Candidates must submit petitions and pay initiation fees

RSVP: February 21

## 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: \$9/person (all you can eat)

RSVP: None required

NOV

26

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

**DEC**  
**17**

**Reservations are required.**

Please contact the Valley Office:  
[secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org](mailto:secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org)  
412-939-3579

## Valley Holiday Luncheon

There is no better way to jump-start your holidays than this. Join with your Brothers and their families at Shannopin Country Club for holiday fun, refreshments, fellowship, and the music of Bob Addleman and Bill Dorfner.

TIME: 11:00AM

LOCATION: Shannopin Country Club

COST: \$45 per person

RSVP: December 13

**MAR**  
**2**

**Reservations are required.**

Please contact the Valley Office:  
[secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org](mailto:secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org)  
412-939-3579

## Valley Rite Nite

Members of the Valley of Pittsburgh will be going to Topgolf in Bridgeville for a night of fun and fellowship. Whether you are a good golfer or not, all are welcome to come out and enjoy the evening.

TIME: TBD

LOCATION: Topgolf in Bridgeville

COST: TBD

RSVP: February 28

**JAN**  
**28**

**FEB**  
**25**

**MAR**  
**25**

# Looking Ahead

**MAR**  
**11**

## Children's Dyslexia Center Casino Night

SATURDAY, MARCH 11  
GPMC

**APR**  
**2**

## Story of the Crucifixion

SUNDAY, APRIL 2  
3:00PM  
GPMC

**APR**  
**6**

## April Stated Meeting

THURSDAY, APRIL 6  
6PM Dinner, 7PM Meeting  
GPMC

**Valley of Pittsburgh**  
**Gourgas Lodge of Perfection**  
Greater Pittsburgh Masonic Center  
3579 Masonic Way  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237-2700



# THURSDAY NIGHT AT THE RITE



## SEASON IV DEGREES

**20°**

WORLD PREMIERE VIDEO  
January 19, 2023

**28°**

VALLEY OF BRIDGEPORT  
February 2, 2023

**5°**

VALLEY OF PORTLAND  
February 16, 2023

**9°**

VALLEY OF ROCHESTER  
March 2, 2023

**7°**

VALLEY OF BOSTON  
March 16, 2023

**14°**

VALLEY OF MICHIGAN  
March 30, 2023

**21°**

VALLEY OF HARRISBURG  
April 13, 2023

EACH THURSDAY NIGHT AT THE RITE PRESENTATION WILL INCLUDE THE 4°

Dates listed above may be subject to change due to availability and scheduling.