

Fall 2023

rite now

THE MAGAZINE OF THE VALLEY OF PITTSBURGH



DOING THE RITE THING



In Memoriam

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

**Ill. : Donald H. Coester, 33°
Bro. Donald R. Brandt, 32°, MSA**

Harold Ralford Adrian	Robert W. Harshman	Charles C. Northrup
Lawrence M. Aller	Douglas E. Hauser	William D. Painter
Joseph P. Avant	William F. Heim	Frank A. Patten
William Henry Bach	John E. Hein	Jerome R. Pier
Roger D. Beck	George Ewing Herget	Stoyan Popovich
Leslie H. Bennett	Arch W. Hill	William J. Pugh Jr.
Michael S. Berman	Floyd Albert Hixon	Hilbert W. Pyles
John M. Best	Raymond W. Holmes	Karl A. Randig
Joseph W. Campbell Jr.	Clarence Horner Jr.	John G. Rangos Sr.
George Edward Carr III	Louis J. Horvath	Charles T. Russell
John R. Caughey	James H. Hough Sr.	Arthur G. Saridakis
William Harry Chappell Sr.	Rae Ellsworth Houke	Perry G. Sellman
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Edwin D. Clarke	Norman H. Jacobs	Clifford H. Sharer Jr.
Martin Conflenti	Bruce G. Johnson	William T. Shearer
Jerry L. Corrie	Robert G. Johnston	William E. Shifflette
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Max Gales	Richard R. McCormick	Thomas S. Vasilaros
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Robert Douglas Graham	John J. McLay	Louis D. Weinfurther Jr.
Leonard E. Greenlief II	Edward W. Monroe	Richard J. Wesley
Richard H. Gumto	Harry M. Montgomery Jr.	Harry G. Wilson Jr.
Henry C. Haas	Blaine H. Morrison	Harry Al Wright
Wallace R. Hager	Richard J. Nalepa	Leontios C. Xyftis
George M. Hanes	Howard J. Neleigh	Allan A. Zimmerman
	Andrew Nestor Jr.	



riteNOW

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about this issue

What's your thing?

The cover of this issue of *RiteNow* features snapshots of just a few of the things the Valley has to offer. Whether you like to act, drive antique cars, take

in a show, or be a part of something bigger than yourself, you can find it here.

After you finish this issue, we hope you get reacquainted with your Valley and start *Doing the Rite Thing!*



Meet the your Valley Officers

Gourgas Lodge of Perfection



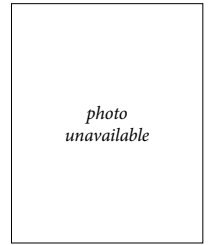
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Thrice Potent Master



Christopher A. McNeal, 32°
Deputy Master



David C. Allison, 32°
Senior Warden



Erich W. Gumto, 33°
Junior Warden

Pennsylvania Council of Princes of Jerusalem



Robert H. Nelson, 32°
Sovereign Prince



B. Scott Allen, 32°
High Priest



Aaron J. Antimary, 32°
Senior Warden



Robert B. McGinnis, 32°
Junior Warden

Pittsburgh Chapter of Rose Croix



Charles F. Zurcher, 32°, MSA
Most Wise Master



Benjamin J. Douglas, 32°
Senior Warden



Robert J. Nichol, 32°
Junior Warden



Michael R. Bahney, 32°
Orator

Pennsylvania Consistory



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Secretary



Vito A. Urso, 33°
Hospitaler



Dennis R. Johnston, 33°
Tiler

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August 1, 2023 - July 31, 2024

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Peter A. Leary, 33°, MSA Thrice Potent Master
 Christopher A. McNeal, 32° Deputy Master
 David C. Allison, 32° Senior Warden
 Erich W. Gumto, 33° Junior Warden
 David E. Thumm Jr., 32° Orator
 Robert W. Lovic, 32° Master of Ceremonies
 Thomas E. Ruch, 32° Guard
 William J. McNeal Jr., 32° Guard
 Guido A. DeAngelis, 33° Guard

Pennsylvania Council, Princes of Jerusalem

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

Pittsburgh Chapter of Rose Croix

Charles F. Zurcher, 32°, MSA Most Wise Master
 Benjamin J. Douglas, 32° Senior Warden
 Robert D. Nichol, 32° Junior Warden
 Michael R. Bahney, 32° Orator

Pennsylvania Consistory

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 William G. Johnston, 33° Peter A. Leary, 33°, MSA
 Robert H. Nelson, 32° Charles F. Zurcher, 32°, MSA

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.: Walter F. Wheeler, 33°, Sovereign Grand Commander, Ill.: Robert J. Bateman, 33°, Deputy for Pennsylvania. Other Active members for Pennsylvania are: Ill.: Stephen Gardner, 33°, Ill.: Mark A. Haines, 33°, Ill.: Thomas R. Labagh, 33°, Ill.: Keith E. Parkinson, 33°, and Ill.: Paul J. Roup, 33°.



David E. Thumm Jr., 32°
Orator



Robert W. Lovic, 32°
Master of Ceremonies

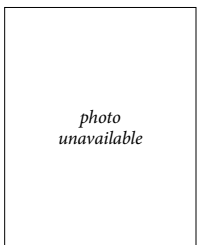
Thomas E. Ruch, 32°
Guard

William J. McNeal Jr., 32°
Guard

Guido A. DeAngelis, 32°
Guard



Thomas J. Anke, 32°
Master of Ceremonies



Kyle Whitaker, 32°
Chancellor



Timothy L. McKiernan, 32°
Master of Ceremonies



Steven R. Seman, 32°
Engineer & Seneschal



Sean M. Tomasic, 32°
Standard Bearer



Scott D. Delval, 32°
Guard



The Active

A message from the Supreme Council Active for Pennsylvania

SUPREME COUNCIL

Attendance Recommended

By Paul J. Roup, 33°

When I was in college (way too long ago, it seems), there were several different types of classes: mandatory attendance, recommended attendance, and optional attendance. I would accordingly plan my daily schedule around those mandatory classes, and on days when the workload was heavy, those classes with recommended and optional attendance policies would sometimes go by the wayside, sacrificed on the altar of looming deadlines.

For most of us, life is still like that. We have those things we *must* do, things we *should* do, and things we would *like* to do if time permits. Maybe you've been to the Valley recently. Perhaps it's in your *must-do* column. If it's in one of the other columns, that's okay, but I would encourage you to give your Valley a chance to advance in the rankings.

This year's officers are already hard at work planning reunions, meetings, entertainment, and activities to meet the needs and wants of you, our members. The amount of work that goes into planning a Scottish Rite

year cannot be understated. There are caterers and entertainers to be booked, meals to plan, and schedules to confirm. The fact that it sometimes seems effortless speaks volumes to both the hard work of those in charge as well as (and most especially) the efficiency of our office staff.

So why am I telling you this?

The amount of work that goes into planning a Scottish Rite year cannot be understated.

Well, for starters, it's membership renewal season. You should have recently received your dues notice asking you to renew your membership at the Valley. Perhaps you already returned it with your payment or logged on to Journey 365 and paid online. If that's the case, thank you. If

you're like most of us, it is probably sitting on your desk, stuck to your refrigerator with a magnet, or you have set a reminder in your phone to pay it eventually. A few of you may even be wondering, *What do I get for my Scottish Rite dues?*

The answer to that last question is: Quite a lot.

If you are looking for fellowship, there is no better place than the Scottish Rite. For starters, there are four governing bodies that provide ample opportunities for those interested in honing their leadership skills. We have clubs for several interest groups; Cigar aficionados,



Paul J. Roup, 33°

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If you are looking for fellowship, there is no better place than the Scottish Rite.

classic car enthusiasts, theater lovers, and more can all find ways to enjoy themselves here. Is there something that interests you that hasn't been listed? Talk to your officers about starting a club. If you want to serve your Brethren, consider joining the Knights of St. Andrew. We are starting a brand new chapter here in Pittsburgh, and an opportunity to serve awaits.

If you haven't
been to a
Valley event
recently, you're
missing out.

Pittsburgh is the central meeting place for Masons from Allegheny, Butler, Beaver, Westmoreland, Fayette, and Greene counties. Our membership is as diverse as the geography we cover.

One thing—really the only thing—you need to do? Attend. If you haven't been to a Valley event

recently, you're missing out. There are baseball games, Monte Carlo nights, dinners, smokers, reunions, and more. I can practically guarantee you will enjoy *something* that the Valley has to offer. More importantly, the officers and members would enjoy having you here. They work hard to make sure your dues money gives you something of value. Come on out and thank them for their hard work. I know they'd appreciate seeing you.

□

Often called the University of Freemasonry, the Scottish Rite allows those with a hunger for further Masonic light to pursue that passion. The Hauts Grades Academy offers the chance to take a deeper dive into our degrees—both current and past—to reflect on how the degrees and their teachings impact our daily lives. You don't have to be a Masonic scholar to get something out of our degrees. The Core Values of the Scottish Rite shine in every degree we present. You just need to come out and see them.

Another benefit of the Rite is that it gathers Masons from a much larger geographic area than just your lodge or district. There is no doubt that Masons are stronger together. The Valley of



The Chief

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

CONSISTORY

32 Flavors

By William G. Johnston, 33°

The Scottish Rite is one of the many appendant bodies you are eligible to join once you have completed your path in Symbolic Masonry. We all have heard the phrase, “There is no higher degree in Masonry than that of Master Mason.”

This statement is, of course, true, but in my opinion, the 32-degree system in the Scottish Rite has always been a bit confusing both outside and within the Craft, especially when we include the 33rd. I have heard several times in conversation when someone learns of my Masonic affiliation that their relative was a 32nd (or sometimes mistakenly stated, 33rd) degree Mason. So, how do we handle this perception, both inside and outside the Fraternity?

Each branch of Masonry has something unique to offer a Blue Lodge Mason who is looking to expand his Masonic journey. Some bodies focus on the continuation of the story beyond Symbolic Masonry through ritualistic degree conferrals. Other bodies focus more on the fellowship and social aspect of Masonry. The Scottish Rite has always maintained a pretty good balance of both. In the 2010s, the Valley traveled

to Blue Lodges all over, presenting the decommissioned 26th degree, commonly known as *The Lincoln Degree*, as a Scottish Rite program. At the conclusion of the drama, we always did a little talk on three aspects of Scottish Rite Masonry: ritual, social, and charitable.

We recently held a United Conferral of Degrees between the York Rite Royal Arch Chapter and the Scottish Rite Valley.

We recently held a United Conferral of Degrees between the York Rite Royal Arch Chapter and the Scottish Rite Valley. The concept was to build relationships between the bodies and to showcase the similarities and differences in the ritual. The degrees were chosen based on

similar lessons and mild crossover concepts but ultimately highlighted the differences in presentation. The Chapter is very much a comfortable and familiar step for a Blue Lodge Mason, as a continuation of the



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ceremonial, “lodge room” style degrees. But the Scottish Rite changes the narrative of the degrees to a stage performance of an allegorical degree. While differences exist, all bodies offer their candidates a personal experience.

The stage presentation of degrees also offers many avenues to get involved in the ritualistic work of the Scottish Rite. There are many moving pieces that need to work together in order for the degrees to be successful. This is where I have enjoyed my Scottish Rite journey most. This aspect has allowed me to work with great brethren in all areas of production: as an actor, director, and occasional stagehand, as well as learning about costuming and make-up. I have even had the opportunity to work on special projects in the Valley—from changing the setting of a traditional degree to participating in stage plays for public viewing. To me, the stage is the most unique aspect of being a Scottish Rite Mason.

The social side of Scottish Rite is not to be denied either. It starts with our stated meetings. There is always a terrific meal provided before and an open invitation for your significant other to accompany you (unless it’s a stag night, stay tuned!). There is always entertainment planned for the ladies while we have our business meeting. I am pleased to see that the group of ladies in

The social side of Scottish Rite is not to be denied either.

attendance seems to be on the upswing! We also have our signature events throughout the year that bring us together, such as the children’s and adult Christmas parties and a presentation of the

Story of the Crucifixion. The officers are also working on different types of events to hold in the months we do not have a meeting. We are calling them Rite Nites, so look for those event notifications for further opportunities to socialize with your Scottish Rite brethren.

What all branches of Masonry share is a charitable aspect, and

the Scottish Rite has several. Locally, we have the Hospitallers who help brethren in need, as well as keep in touch with those who are ill. The Northern Jurisdiction provides Abbot Scholarships every year for continuing education, and the Valley of Pittsburgh also provides additional scholarships. But the most well-known charity is our Dyslexia Center, right here in Pittsburgh at the GPMC. We have many ways we support our Center—annual Walk-a-Thons, golf outings, Monte Carlo nights, etc. Our Dyslexia Center board is always working to keep a strong relationship with the Valley.

So how should we handle the 32 or “higher” degrees question of Masonry? Our messaging should be that we offer more or additional opportunities, not greater ones; that we complement all branches of Masonry, not just an extension of one; that our number, similar to the 31 flavors at Baskin Robbins, offers 32 ways (or more) to get involved, to get enlightened, to “Journey On” in Masonry. What flavor of the Scottish Rite will you choose next? □



The Potent

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

LODGE OF PERFECTION

Showtime!

By Peter A. Leary, 33°, MSA

Let me start my first article with a confession. I don't really enjoy this whole writing thing. I'm very comfortable in front of a sound or light board with hundreds of knobs, sliders, and meters, but not so much in front of a simple keyboard, so please bear with me this year.

Since I joined the fraternity, I have found that not only are we making

good men better, but we are also allowing the Brethren to showcase their skills to help Freemasonry and the Scottish Rite grow. One of the ways we do so is by teaching and training others in areas they might be interested in but would not necessarily have easy access to.

You see,
it takes more
than talented
musicians
on stage to
put on a show.

Let me give you an example: one of my many hobbies is being a live



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Personally, I enjoy walking up to everyone who was involved in a degree or stated meeting and complimenting them for all the great work that they just did.

audio engineer. That's a super nerdy way of saying I work with bands to do sound for live performances. You see, it takes more than talented musicians on stage to put on a show; you also need a great supporting cast of talented individuals to help with staging, multimedia, lighting, and, of course, a great team of sound engineers. It might look to the average spectator like it's just the band, but there's a whole team working to make a show a success.

Now, take this same principle and apply it to AASR Degree work. It

takes an incredible amount of effort to put a degree on stage. We have the robing/makeup/wig department, lighting and sound personnel, the stage crew, the Degree captains, and finally, the cast of the show. So, if you have a desire to help out in any of those areas, we have a place for you. You don't have to be an expert; we will help you.

When I'm doing a show, I love it when someone stops by and compliments the crew for all of their effort after a show (who wouldn't). Now, I am going to flip

that. Personally, I enjoy walking up to everyone who was involved in a degree or stated meeting and complimenting them for all the great work that they just did. This is what makes the Scottish Rite Valley of Pittsburgh so special. We all come from different backgrounds, skill sets, and experiences, but at showtime, when it's our turn in the spotlight (whatever it may be), we all give 100%! □



The Sovereign

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

PRINCES OF JERUSALEM

What a Long, Strange Trip It's Been!

By Robert H. Nelson, 32°

What a long, strange trip it's been, indeed! My road as a Scottish Rite Mason has been filled with exciting turns, incredible straights, and beautiful scenery. While there have also been a few potholes, it's still a trip I wouldn't change for anything. I am thankful for all my fellow officers and members of the Valley of Pittsburgh and am excited to serve alongside three Brothers who are not just dedicated Masons but good friends as well. I can't wait to see what's on the road ahead. The roads one can take in Scottish Rite Masonry are as varied as the lines on a map. There is a road for everyone. You can choose to hit the good ol' Route 66 and leisurely cruise through, enjoying the stops along the way, or you can find that winding road that begs to be driven.

OK, enough metaphors. What I am trying to say is that there is something for everyone. For me, it was being on stage and serving in the Princes of Jerusalem Line. I have tried to fill in other spots as needed, whether backstage or helping reception, but mostly trying to be useful, not in the way. I have seen some fine events in my time as well. Countless car cruises, plays, concerts, and Christmas parties (my favorite

event by far), although getting to enjoy the Clarks up close was great too! What path is right for you? Try a few out. Ask to help; I doubt you'll be turned away!

If you like stage work, give acting a try. Or talk to the stage crew. They would love to put you to work. As you have seen, our productions are top-notch. You will find something

in every aspect of production. Do you prefer helping on the front lines? Ask the Reception Committee or the Hospitalers where they need help. Or take the big leap and inquire about serving as an officer! You'll find something to do. If you're more

the type to just relax and enjoy the scenery, come to a CigaRite event and do just that.

The return on your hard work is limitless. I have deepened my knowledge of our degree work and the principles they teach and tried to apply this knowledge to my other Masonic memberships. I have learned lessons in leadership that I have utilized in my personal and professional life. Best of all, I have also developed countless relationships along the way as well, some of whom are my closest friends and confidants. These are my real "Brothers in Masonry."

The roads one can take in Scottish Rite Masonry are as varied as the lines on a map.



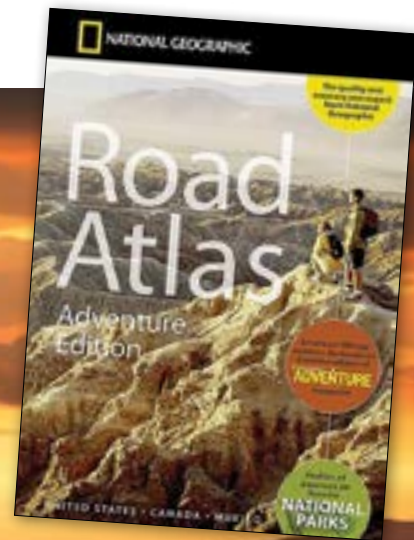
Robert H. Nelson, 32°
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Regardless of your chosen direction, let's get driving!

Where will your road take you?
Will you complete the Black Hat
program? Perhaps you will complete
your Pathfinder field book. I
certainly hope you'll get that gold

passport. You may even choose
that rarely traveled, difficult, long
road leading to the Hauts Grades
Academy! Like the road atlas that
sat on the back seat of my dad's car,

there are plenty of routes to choose
from. Regardless of your chosen
direction, let's get driving! □



TheWise

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

ROSE CROIX

The Seven-Year Plan

By Charles F. Zurcher, 32°, MSA

This is an extraordinary moment and perhaps the summit of what has been an absolutely incredible Masonic journey. It is an honor and a privilege to assume the office of Most Wise Master of the Pittsburgh Chapter of Rose Croix here at the Valley of Pittsburgh for the coming year. I would also, with deep gratitude, like to thank Josh Freeman for showing confidence and appointing me to the Rose Croix line six years ago.

Seven years ago, I proudly became a Master Mason and Scottish Rite Mason the same day.

I asked later in life—perhaps I waited longer than I would have liked to—but the bottom line is that I finally asked to become a Mason. I knew only a handful of people in Freemasonry. This was a brand new and uncharted chapter in my life, and to say the least, I was a bit scared. Actually, I was really scared. I am somewhat of an introvert, and I have never been very comfortable in social situations. Changes would need to be made.

After attending my first Blue Lodge meeting two days earlier, I found myself driving to the Greater Pittsburgh Masonic Center to attend my first Scottish Rite meeting. It would mark the first time I ever set

foot upon the GPMC property. After turning into the parking lot, I saw all these cars, so many of them. I started to get nervous and could feel the mounting tension forming within. I ended up parking rather far from the building entrance.

The trip to the door was one of the longest walks I ever took. I kept walking and walking,

If you follow the light, the sky is truly the limit.



Charles F. Zurcher, 32°, MSA

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If you really want something bad enough, sometimes you can find it deep within yourself to overcome the obstacles and distractions and make it happen.

and it seemed like I was not getting any closer to that building. At one point, I stopped, turned around, and thought about leaving. I was not comfortable and just wasn't sure if I wanted to follow through with this. But I wanted to be a Scottish Rite Mason that bad. I took a deep breath, quit the discouraging thoughts, and forced myself to continue walking toward the entrance.

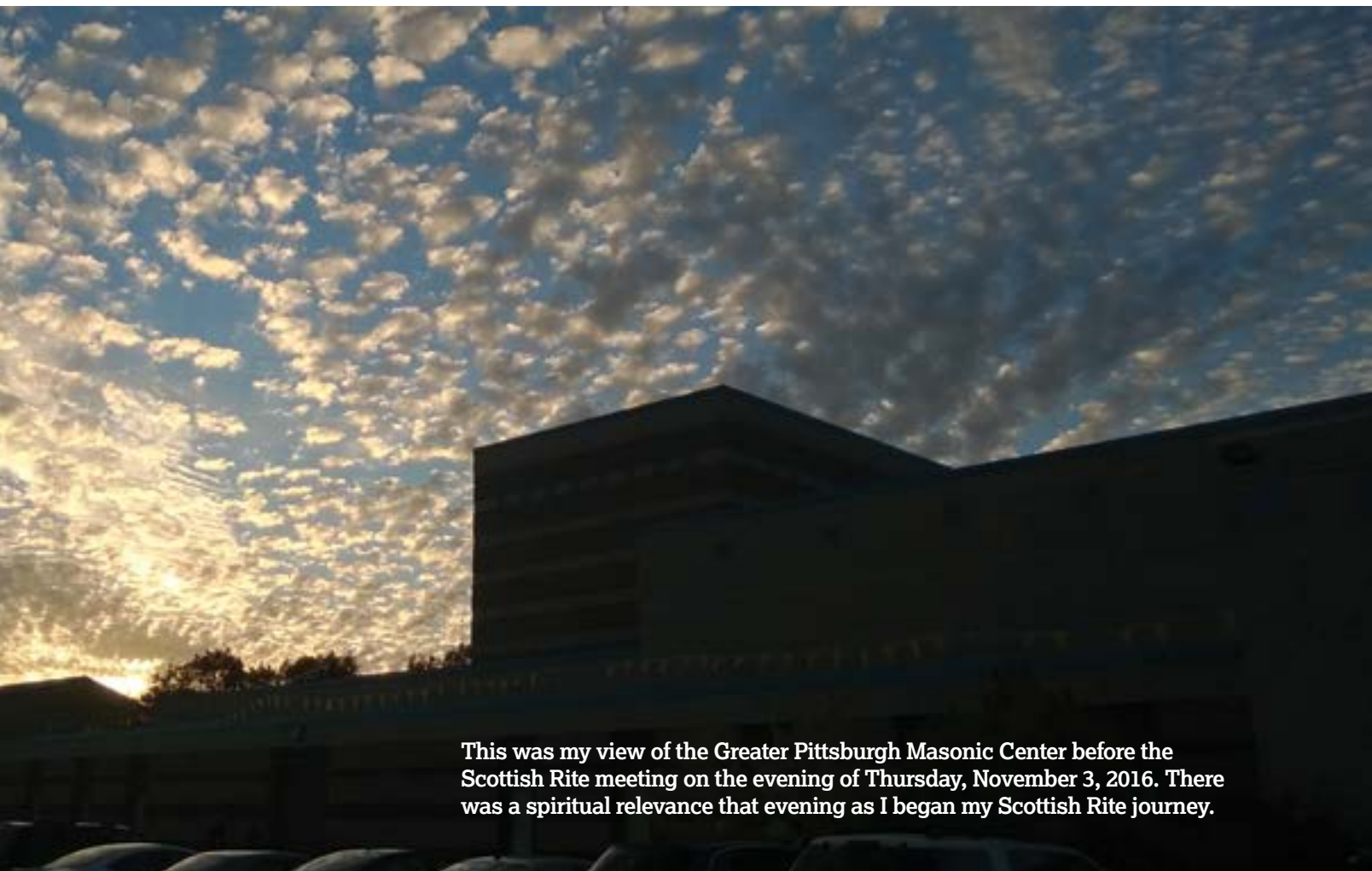
At that moment, Freemasonry taught

me my first lesson, and it was an important one. If you really want something bad enough, sometimes you can find it deep within yourself to overcome the obstacles and distractions and make it happen. You can also discover some things within yourself that you perhaps never knew existed or ever thought were possible.

With much of the fear gone and breathing easier, I noticed the

incredible early evening sky. It was beautiful. I viewed it as symbolic of the great things to come in Scottish Rite Masonry. Luckily, I grabbed my phone and took a couple of pictures.

Though the Masonic Building was a dark silhouette against the twilight sky, it suddenly became inviting, radiating an incredibly positive energy that instantly absorbed me, perhaps at a spiritual level. This was suddenly no longer a fear but



This was my view of the Greater Pittsburgh Masonic Center before the Scottish Rite meeting on the evening of Thursday, November 3, 2016. There was a spiritual relevance that evening as I began my Scottish Rite journey.

rather the beginning of something substantial. I couldn't get into the building fast enough!

After entering the building, I looked around but knew no one. However, I was no longer uncomfortable. I quickly found brothers Bill Bittinger and Bob Ruff, whom I met a couple of nights earlier at the Blue Lodge meeting. Then, I was welcomed by our current Commander in Chief, William G. Johnston, and Cab Whitaker. At this point, I was at ease and actually enjoying the moment. This was the official start of my Scottish Rite journey, where I would grow as a man and a Mason in an exponential way.

Let's stop for a moment here. I ask you to reflect on your first Scottish Rite meeting and what that evening meant to you.

In the years to follow, I would develop hundreds of friendships within the Scottish Rite and enjoy the brotherhood and camaraderie during Scottish Rite Reunions both here at the Valley of Pittsburgh, as well as visiting 12 other Valleys within the

Northern Masonic Jurisdiction. The Gold Passport and Black Hat programs are completed. The Pathfinder program is finished, and I'm midway through the Hauts Grades Academy. I'm also a proud Scottish Rite Ambassador to my Blue Lodge. I'm definitely getting infinite enjoyment out of the Scottish Rite experience, but then came my most recent challenge.

This was a brand new and uncharted chapter in my life, and to say the least, I was a bit scared.

The progress on stage over the years is part of the personal growth aspect. From my beginning as a guard without a speaking part, this has evolved to moderate speaking parts of usually not more than a couple paragraphs. Memorization has been challenging, but I've always found a way to overcome and conquer it. This was a requirement of becoming Worshipful Master of Avalon Lodge No. 657 in Bellevue. To be on stage—and with a speaking part—is quite the progression from that November evening seven years ago when I was almost afraid to enter the building.

Then, the final step came to become Most Wise. The lead role in the 18th Degree is a very challenging one with about 1,650

words to memorize, along with interaction with other characters and the expected choreography. This was not an easy undertaking for me, and I was worried. Early on, I wasn't sure if I could do it. Once again, if you want something bad enough, you can find that inner tenacity, desire, and energy to make it happen. Yes, I made it happen, and here we are!

To tie this all together, I found myself in a situation many others may also experience. This proves that if you want something bad enough, whether in Freemasonry or in everyday life, you can overcome and achieve it if you try hard and want it bad enough. Freemasonry brings out so many positive things; if you follow the light, the sky is truly the limit.

Yes, this can be perceived as your typical Masonic success story, but there is much more to it. To go from trying to muster up enough courage to enter a building full of strangers to working upward and becoming a presiding officer within that organization is quite the accomplishment. It is the attainment of unexpected growth within areas that were never thought to have existed, let alone be possible. That's the breathtaking beauty of Freemasonry and being a Scottish Rite Mason. It is truly doing the Rite thing. □

UniontownUpdate

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

VALLEY OF UNIONTOWN

▶ **Doing Rite Every Day**

By Abram C. Hayes, 32°

Greetings

Brethren, from the valley of Uniontown!

As the new Thrice Potent Master, I would like to start by saying what an honor it is to take on a role for such a great Valley and Fraternity. As I sit here writing this—and believe me, I'm no writer—my mind runs thinking of what to say about *doing the Rite thing*: what that means to each and every Brother and how we can look at it in such different ways.

First, it means to me that every day when we wake up, the choices and decisions we make can affect so many people in different ways—whether it's holding the door for them or simply passing someone you know giving them a smile or wave that makes their day. Similarly, calling someone you haven't talked to in a while just to say hi or reaching out to family members to make sure they are okay can mean the world to someone who feels lonely.

Doing the Rite thing in Masonry can also refer to a Brother's journey into Scottish Rite Masonry in an effort to extend their Masonic knowledge. Whether it be working behind the scenes, acting on stage, or taking on leadership roles, there is something worthwhile for every Mason.

Whether it be working behind the scenes, acting on stage, or taking on leadership roles, there is something worthwhile for every Mason.

Whatever *doing the Rite thing* may be for you, we all have to remember that we as Scottish Rite Masons have to strive every day to better ourselves, no matter what. We must always work to be role models for our community, our friends, and most importantly our family!

Last, I would like to put in a plug for the Valley of Uniontown fall reunion on November 3rd and 4th. The

degrees never disappoint. I would ask all of you, my Brothers from the Valley of Pittsburgh, to *do the Rite thing* by coming out to support our cast members on stage, getting those passports stamped, and most importantly, enjoying the fellowship of friends old and new.

Hope to see you around the Valley!

□



The Office

A message from the Secretary of the Valley of Pittsburgh

VALLEY OF PITTSBURGH

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

By David W. Morgans, 33°

By now, each of you has received the membership renewal reminder (dues notice) for the 2023-2024 Scottish Rite year. If you haven't, please contact the office as soon as possible. This year, your new membership card is included with the renewal notice and is a permanent card. Please remember to replace your expired card with the new card. Remember, it's permanent, so hang on to it. Lexington is working on establishing an electronic card where members can opt-in and carry them on their phone.

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 go to 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. Or you may drop your payment

off at the office where we can take check, cash, or credit card payments.

As always, Brethren, if you are having difficulties paying your dues, please contact the office. We have a Hospitaler fund that can help you with your dues payments, if needed. We recognize how difficult it is

Thank you to all who have paid their dues for this year. For those who have not, please get your payments in soon.

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

Also, Brethren, please remember that the Scottish Rite does not have an automatic remission of dues when you achieve the 50-year membership milestone. There is, however, 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 member, meets



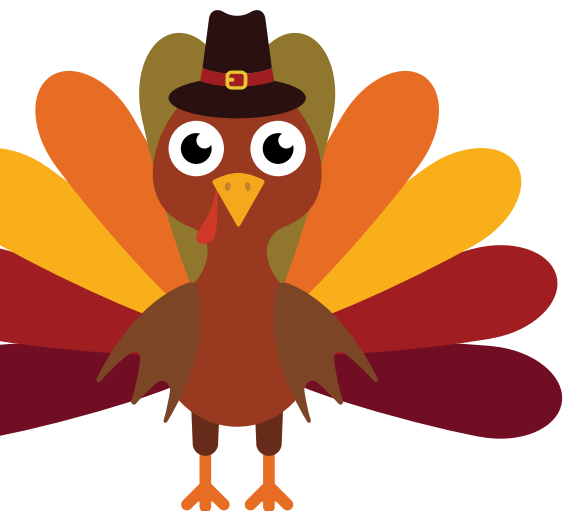
David W. Morgans, 33°
secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org

The Office wishes you and your loved ones a very Happy Thanksgiving!

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

Veteran's Day will soon be upon us. For those members who are serving or have served in the armed forces, thank you. Many of you have provided your military service information for your Scottish Rite records. If you have not done so, please either contact the Valley Office to let us know of your military history or go online to the Member Center of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction website to update your records. Thank you.

The Office wishes you and your loved ones a very Happy Thanksgiving! □



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.

Our Youth

News and information about the Masonic Youth in our Valley

A Grand Assembly

by Helen Snedden, Supreme Inspector in Pennsylvania

From July 12 to July 16, the Pennsylvania Rainbow Girls held their annual convention, called Grand Assembly, at the Jaffa Shrine Center in Altoona. The “Kindness Changes Everything” Session was our 81st Grand Assembly. Sister Natalie Rickert presided as Grand Worthy Advisor. Ms. Jan Maier, Mother Advisor Faith Assembly #150, served as co-chair. Natalie’s symbols were yellow pencils and purple crayons. The Jaffa Shrine was converted into a “classroom” theme of decorations. The sessions included Formal Opening, Balloting, Initiation, Book of Time, Majority Ceremony, and the Installation of officers for 2023-2024. There was also a fun day at DelGrosso Amusement Park and Splash Lagoon Water Park in Tipton with friends old and new and a renewed enthusiasm to grow PA Rainbow.

As we are looking to initiate new members into our beautiful Order, we have planned two statewide Initiations with the Grand Officers doing the ritualistic work. The western Initiation will be on Sunday, November 12, 2023, at the Scottish Rite Cathedral in New Castle. New Castle Assembly #1 will host the meeting with all of the Western Assemblies assisting. If you know of a girl aged 11-20 who you believe would benefit and who is interested in joining Rainbow, please contact Mrs. Helen Snedden (hsnedden@aol.com or 412-953-9455) who will pass along all of the necessary information. If you are interested in attending this Initiation, please contact Mrs. Snedden.

There will be an Eastern Initiation Meeting on the Patton Campus in Elizabethtown in January. The Grand Officers will again perform the ritualistic work. We are all working together to “Grow PA Rainbow.”

The 2023-2024 Grand Officers are led by the newly installed Grand Worthy Advisor, Amanda DeJesus. Amanda is from Aurora Assembly #189, which meets in Waymart, PA. Her theme is “Born To Be,” and the theme is from the “Chronicles of Narnia.” Reepicheep The Mouse is her mascot, and her colors are red and yellow. Amanda

has selected the National Alliance of Mental Health as her charity, emphasizing help for youth and young adults.

As you may know, the Western Rainbow Assemblies are New Castle #1, Martha (Washington) #11, Franklin #19, Butler #25, Irwin #42, Pitcairn #90, Faith (Wexford) #150, Ohio Valley (Coraopolis) #157, and Beaver Valley (Bridgewater) #187. All of these Assemblies need your support, whether it is simply attending their meetings and/or events, asking them to do an informational program, or to offer financial assistance.

Interested? Contact Mrs. Helen Snedden for all of the Assembly information nearest to you. □



parainbowgirls.org

DeMolay Attends KeyMan Conference

by Michael Larkin, Executive Officer, Pennsylvania DeMolay

This summer, Pennsylvania DeMolay hosted the annual KeyMan Conference. This DeMolay Leadership Conference, open to members of all jurisdictions of DeMolay International, has been held continuously for the last 37 years. Seventy-four DeMolays came to Patton Campus Elizabethtown: 45 Pennsylvania DeMolays and 29 DeMolays from Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Virginia DeMolay in attendance. The Steel City Chapter, which meets in Coraopolis, sent nine of its members, and Westmorland Chapter, which meets in Greensburg, sent 5 of its members.

Kenton Green, PA DeMolay State Senior Councilor, said, “This weeklong conference was full of fun, education, and brotherhood, and every DeMolay in attendance left it with knowledge on how to grow and improve their home chapters.”

Westmoreland Chapter’s Past Master Councilor Gary Weyandt, III, and the current State Master Councilor for Pennsylvania DeMolay, attended the Jurisdictional Officer Track and worked with twelve other jurisdictional officers on projects that included jurisdictional event planning, public speaking, mentoring younger members, and assisting advisors in the supervision of several of the activities at the conference. Gary felt that an important skill he learned from KeyMan was how to effectively balance helping his home chapter as well as facilitating events with the jurisdictional officers.

A volunteer staff member of 35 DeMolay Advisors is required to supervise the weeklong conference. Advisors serving on staff for the conference from the southwestern area of Pennsylvania served by the Valley of Pittsburgh included Key Man Assistant Director Steve Ashman (Steel City Chapter); PA Director of Ritual and Deputy Executive Officer Bill Holtzer (Westmoreland Chapter); and Adam Neubauer (Westmoreland Chapter). Because this conference has been happening for so many years, it is not unusual for a staff member to have also been an attendee when they were a young DeMolay. This is the case with Steve Ashman, who first attended in 1998 as a 13-year-old!

All of the DeMolays who attended the 2023 conference benefitted from the generosity of the DeMolay Legion of Honor recipients in Pennsylvania, who donated over \$5,000 in scholarship funds that we used to help those Pennsylvania DeMolays wanting to attend. Many of the Legionnaires are members of the Valley of Pittsburgh, and Pennsylvania DeMolay appreciates the support of these generous Scottish Rite Masons. □

THE
ROAD
BEGINS
HERE



pademolay.org

TheWord

A Message from the Grand Chaplain

VALLEY OF PITTSBURGH

Why Belong?

By David A. Eichelberger, 32°

It seemed an elemental question to be asked, “Why are you a Scottish Rite Mason?” My mind immediately slipped back to the time before I was one, and I remember the discussion I had with myself about whether or not I should join. I was already very active in my Lodge. I joined the various York Rite bodies soon after becoming a Master Mason in Illinois. Many of my Raven Lodge No. 303 Brethren were also members and had recommended the extra degrees to me. They met quite close by where I lived and seemed to naturally complement the degrees I had experienced as a Master Mason.

At that time, no one invited me to join the Scottish Rite. The Valley of Chicago was some distance away from where I lived. I wondered what it was all about but put it off for another day. Now I regret that decision. None of the steps in my Masonic journey have been a waste of time or money. I could have learned a great deal sooner had I jumped right in.

When I moved to Pittsburgh and got connected to a local Lodge, Lodge Ad Lucem, No. 812, I met other Masons who were very active in the Scottish

Rite. They were very happy to invite me to join. I did, and I am so glad I did.

In the Scottish Rite, I have been able to make friends with Brethren from a wider area of our state than I could have had I restricted myself to just my local Lodge. I have learned of the opportunities to learn and study through the Hauts Grades

I continue to find new ideas each time the degrees are presented, even if I have already seen them multiple times.

Program. I have enjoyed the lessons which are taught in the degrees at our Reunions. I continue to find new ideas each time the degrees are presented, even if I have already seen them multiple times. As an avid reader, I am proud of the Children’s Dyslexia Center that our Valley provides to enable students to be able to read at a grade

level appropriate to their age and be successful in school.

As a retired pastor, I am also impressed with the work of Brother Vito Urso, 33°, as our Hospitaler. He and his team demonstrate the fullest expression of charity and compassion for our fellow Masons which we each pledge in our lodge degrees. The great work the local Hospitaler and Supreme Council’s Almoner’s Fund do is so heartwarming, even though much of it is done in confidence to spare the feelings of those involved.



David A. Eichelberger, 32°

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.

I have had a few small parts in a few of the Reunions, but decided my niche would be in the choir. We are a small band that tries our best to keep up the great tradition which sadly is fading away, as fewer younger men seem to sing in choirs. We have good camaraderie and have felt deeply the loss of our Brother Matt Boice, 32°. Through the choir, I was invited to sing with the men who sing for the Valley of Uniontown for their Reunions. I also am invited to offer invocations, benedictions, and prayers for our departed Brethren. I am always happy to assist.

Finally, I enjoy our meals. The meals are excellent and great for the budget. Coming by myself, I never know with whom I will sit, and consequently I get to circulate among the Brethren and guests each dinner. This too gives me the opportunity to meet and make new friends and acquaintances. The Fraternity makes for a small world, and we all have Brethren all over!

So to sum it all up, the A.A.S.R. has enabled me to widen my circle of friends, find new areas of Masonic service, and the opportunity to deepen my understanding of Freemasonry and how I can be a better Mason.

What are your reasons for joining? Have you grown disconnected? There are many ways to return and relight the fire of Scottish Rite Masonry. I know some think dues are getting too high, but compared to some recent dinners out which were not extravagant at all, I think we offer a deal. But even if it is a sacrifice, it is worth it! □

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VALLEY OF PITTSBURGH

Annual Meeting of Supreme Council in Louisville, KY

Louisville, Kentucky hosted this year's Annual Meeting of Supreme Council. Those attending had the chance to take a tour of the Angel's Envy distillery, cruise the Ohio on The Belle of Louisville steamboat, visit the Louisville Slugger museum, and much more.

The following members of the Valleys of Pittsburgh and Uniontown were coroneted Honorary Members of Supreme Council, 33°: Thomas Barlow, 33°; Rich Reynolds, 33°; Josh Freeman, 33°; Rich Kucera, 33°; Vic Baronie, 33°; and Tom Taylor, 33°.

Brother Barlow was unable to attend the banquet, so Brother PJ Roup presented his cap and jewel in the hospitality suite.

At the Valley banquet, the following members were announced as having been elected to Honorary membership: Ronald Plesh, 32°; Jack Jones, 32°; Jonathan Greene, 32° (Uniontown); and Abe Hayes, 32° (Uniontown). They will be coroneted at the Annual Meeting in Indianapolis in 2025. Congratulations to these worthy Brethren! □









Austin R. Shifrin, 33°

The Stuff Freemasonry Is Made Of: Physical Properties of the Old Testament Part 1

by Austin Shifrin, 33°

The Old Testament contains many stories with valuable lessons. When we study it, we tend to focus more on the nature of the interactions between the people in it than on some of the details of the physical setting. As time goes on, we also become more and more distant from the era in which the action may have taken place. Notions of an agrarian lifestyle and other social and cultural details of the background may feel foreign to us. An examination of the physical artifacts and materials of the Old Testament may enhance our appreciation of the overall narrative.

For example, we know that in several passages of interest, the Old Testament mentions the Acacia tree (in Hebrew, Shittah, or plural Shittim). Its wood was used to construct the Tabernacle—the traveling house of worship used by the Hebrews when they fled Egypt (Exodus 35:24), the ark of the covenant—which contained the tablets with the commandments from God (Exodus 37:1), the altar where burnt offerings were made (Exodus 38:1), and other artifacts of great import in addition to its involvement in the narrative

**The Old Testament
mentions the Acacia tree.**

of Masonic ritual. The most common variant in that region of the world is *Acacia* (or *Vachellia*) *seyal*, the red Acacia, and is believed by some to be the biblical Shittim¹; on the other hand, in *Missionary Travels*, David Livingstone wrote that he believed it was more likely *Acacia giraffa*, (“camel-thorn”), because of its beauty and durability². Interestingly, the Acacia is part

of the same family (Fabaceae, bearing long seed pods) as the *Gleditsia triacanthos* or Honeylocust, one of the most common trees growing publicly in New York City^{3,4}.

The high priests wore a breastplate with precious stones in gold settings, representing the 12 tribes of Israel.

Another material referenced routinely in the Old Testament is a particular blue dye for garments. The Torah commands that a Jewish prayer shawl should have threads of this blue color at all four corners. But for a particularly observant Jew, to follow the commandment to the very letter requires that the blue be exactly correct. The blue referenced in the commandment is *techelet* in Hebrew and was supposed to have come from a sea snail, *chilazon*—the exact identity of which had been lost in the fog of antiquity. One theory put forth was that the Murex snail might be the original *chilazon*. There are arguments for (such as proposed by Rabbi Isaac HaLevi Herzog, the first chief Rabbi of the state of Israel⁵, and Menachem Epstein's article in *Hakirah, the Flatbush Journal of Jewish Law and Thought*⁶) and against (such as that of Mendel E. Singer, Ph.D., in the *Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society*⁷).

The high priests wore a breastplate with precious stones in gold settings, representing the 12 tribes of Israel. You may recall the tribes were named for the sons of Jacob, from whom they were each descended. It is a popular bit of imagery, perhaps partly for the colorful assortment of gems, and can be seen depicted and emulated in our York Rite bodies. Although it is established in the text that the stones were arranged in four rows and three columns, it is never made explicit which stones were used to represent which tribe or in what order. This was the layout as envisioned by Rabbi Bachya Ben Asher⁸:



Barekes (Carbuncle) Levi	Pitdah (Prase) Simeon	Odem (Ruby) Reuben
Yahalom (Pearl) Zebulun	Sappir (Sapphire) Issachar	Nofech (Emerald) Judah
Achlamah (Crystal) Gad	Shevo (Turquoise) Naphtali	Leshem (*) Dan
Yashpeh (Jasper) Benjamin	Shoham (Onyx) Joseph	Tarshish (Chrysolite) Asher

The Talmud contains a story that suggests that Moses utilized a mysterious item or animal known as the Shamir to carve the names of the tribes into those gemstones. Purportedly, it was later located and employed by Solomon to manage the spectacular feat of assembling his temple without any tools of iron¹⁰. Several biblical scholars concur that the Shamir had to be a one-of-a-kind worm, capable of boring through incredibly hard substances; however, there is an interesting alternative hypothesis, based in part on the anecdotal detail that the mysterious Shamir was required to be transported in a vessel made of lead; the implication being that perhaps the Shamir was, in fact, a radioactive substance, and its fearsome “glance” was in fact a veiled reference to alpha radiation¹¹.

I hope this brief initial foray has whetted your appetite for more—I will continue this exploration in future writing. In the meantime, always keep your eyes open for opportunities to deepen and broaden your knowledge!

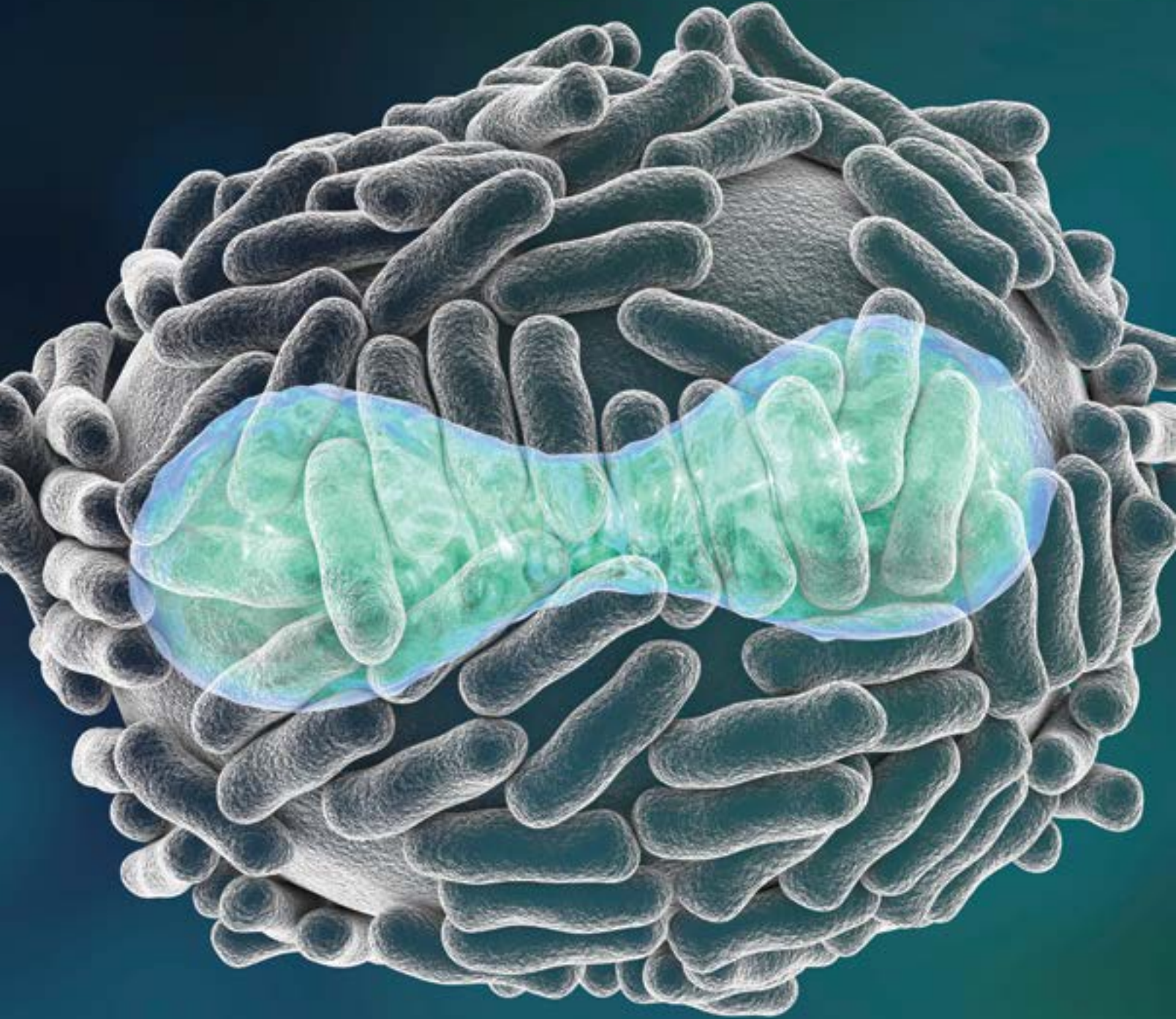
*The identity or translation for Leshem remains unclear and has been suggested to be amber, aventurine, or some member of the zircon family⁹.

- 1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vachellia_seyal#cite_note-BoDD-6
- 2 <http://www.thuto.org/ubh/etext/mtrav/liv06.htm>
- 3 <https://www.nycgovparks.org/learn/trees-and-plants/top-five-most-common-street-trees-in-nyc>
- 4 <https://www.centralparknyc.org/plants/honey-locust>
- 5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HePCXF2wdNg>
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- 10 <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13497-shamir>
- 11 https://www.chabad.org/kabbalah/article_cdo/aid/380303/jewish/Modern-Physics-and-the-Shamir.htm

Smallpox

Part 2

By Dr. Glenn D. Miller, II, MD





Dr. Glenn D. Miller, 33°

The most common complication of smallpox is permanent pockmarks (deep pitted scars) on the skin which are most likely to occur on the face. Approximately 65-80% of smallpox survivors develop these pockmarks. Other common complications of smallpox involve the respiratory system and range from bronchitis to pneumonia which can be fatal. Respiratory complications typically develop in the 7th-10th day time frame from the onset of the disease. Pregnant females are believed to have high risks for complications that can affect both themselves and their unborn babies.

These complications include premature birth, stillbirth, miscarriage, and death of the mother. Maternal death rate is highest in the third trimester while the rates of the other complications are not affected by the trimester of gestation. Rarer complications of smallpox include encephalitis (0.2%), infertility in males, and osteomyelitis variolosa which can affect up to 5% of young children. Osteomyelitis variolosa is an infection involving predominantly the elbow joint but which can also involve the hands, ankles, and feet. This can eventually lead to arthritis, pathologic fractures, and joint instability. Ocular complications occur in roughly 5-10% of cases and are often caused by “autoinoculation” from the patient transferring the virus from pustules on their body to their eyes. These complications can include conjunctivitis, iritis, keratitis with subsequent corneal scarring and/or corneal ulcers, and atrophy of the optic nerve. Rarely, blindness can result from the corneal scarring and/or corneal ulcers.

Routine smallpox vaccination of children in the United States ended in 1971-1972 after smallpox was essentially eradicated in our country and the risk/benefit ratio of vaccination was no longer favorable (approximately 1-2 deaths per 1 million people vaccinated). Routine vaccination had ceased worldwide by 1986 and the United States military stopped vaccinating its members in 1990. However, enough vaccines were stockpiled by the Strategic National Stockpile to vaccinate every person in the United States in case of an emergency. Additionally, research continued on developing effective antiviral therapies. Tecovirimat (TPOXX) became the

first anti-pox viral medication approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of smallpox in July 2018. Tecovirimat has not been studied in humans infected with smallpox but has been demonstrated to stop the growth of the Variola virus in laboratory studies, in addition to being effective in treating animals infected with viruses similar to the Variola virus. Brincidofovir (TEMBEXA) became the second, and last to date, FDA approved anti-pox

Routine smallpox vaccination of children in the United States ended in 1971-1972 after smallpox was essentially eradicated in our country.

viral medication for smallpox in June 2021. As with Tecovirimat, Brincidofovir has not been studied in humans but has been demonstrated to stop the growth of the Variola virus in laboratory studies, as well as being effective in treating animals infected with viruses similar to that of the Variola virus. A third anti-pox viral medication, Cidofovir, has also been demonstrated to stop the growth of the Variola virus in laboratory studies, as well as being effective in treating animals infected with viruses similar to that of the Variola virus. Cidofovir is currently not FDA approved for the treatment of smallpox while it continues to be evaluated for effectiveness and toxicity/side effects. The United States has stockpiled both Tecovirimat and Cidofovir in the Strategic National Stockpile for use in case of a possible public health emergency. Additionally, treatment of patients infected with smallpox could include

vaccination to lessen the severity of the disease (if given within 2-3 days of infection) and generalized supportive care such as wound care, IV fluid replacement, and mechanical ventilation if required.

Science's first attempt to minimize the morbidity and mortality of smallpox, as well as the spread of the disease, was a procedure called inoculation or variolation. This procedure consisted of exposing uninfected individuals to the Variola minor virus by having them nasally inhale ground up scab material from a smallpox patient, scratching this scab material into an arm, or injecting the pustule liquid subcutaneously. These procedures were initiated sometime before the year 1000 in China, India, and possibly Africa after it was observed that people who contracted smallpox were immune to further outbreaks. Variolation typically resulted in a less severe disease if the patient was subsequently infected with Variola major. Risks of variolation included the patient developing a severe smallpox infection as well as the patient being able to infect other people and initiating a smallpox epidemic. Variolation usually resulted in a 2% or less mortality rate as opposed to a 30% mortality rate from infection with Variola major. By the early to mid 1700's variolation had become fairly common in Great Britain and other European countries. One of the first documented uses of variolation in the United States occurred in Boston in 1721 when Reverend Cotton Mather and Dr. Zabdiel Boylston inoculated hundreds of residents. The practice of variolation fell out of favor and died out in the 1800's after British physician Dr. Edward Jenner developed an effective smallpox vaccine in 1796.

The modern procedure of vaccination began when Jenner, a physician in Berkeley, England, observed that people who had suffered a previous cowpox infection would subsequently have either no, or a very mild, reaction to smallpox variolation. Since cowpox infections in humans usually resulted in mild symptoms and were essentially always nonfatal, he subsequently had people undergo trials of being inoculated first with cowpox and then with smallpox a few months later. This inoculation with cowpox turned out to be very effective in preventing the spread of smallpox and became the

first effective smallpox "vaccine". Dr. Jenner coined the terms vaccine and vaccination using the Latin word for cow which was vacca. Of note is the fact that our third President, Thomas Jefferson, was instrumental in promoting widespread vaccination throughout the United States. Sometime during the 1800's the vaccinia virus replaced the cowpox virus as the substrate for the smallpox vaccine. The smallpox vaccine that was used in the eradication program from 1958-1977 utilized live vaccinia virus as opposed to dead vaccinia virus (inactivated vaccine) or weakened vaccinia virus (live-attenuated vaccine). This vaccine (Dryvax) was administered utilizing a two-pronged needle (covered with vaccine) to perforate the skin (typically the upper arm) 15 times over a few seconds. This resulted in the

Science's first attempt to minimize the morbidity and mortality of smallpox, as well as the spread of the disease, was a procedure called inoculation or variolation.

formation of a pustule and subsequent scab during the next 2 weeks. The scab usually fell off approximately 3 weeks after vaccination and left a small permanent scar. The vaccine resulted in a protective antibody response by 10 days post vaccination and was approximately 95% effective in preventing a person from contracting smallpox. However, smallpox immunity began to wane after 3-5 years with a significant reduction in protection after 10 years. Because this vaccine utilized live vaccinia virus, there were potential side effects for people receiving the vaccine. Approximately 1 out of every 1000 people could develop somewhat serious, but non life-threatening reactions. Approximately 14-52 out of 1,000,000 people experienced potential life-threatening complications. This vaccine is no longer in use. Since that time a second generation smallpox vaccine (ACAM2000), derived from a clone of the Dryvax, was developed and was approved for use in the United States by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) in 2007. It is administered utilizing the same technique as the Dryvax vaccine. The ACAM2000 vaccine is produced using modern cell-culture techniques that allow it to be manufactured in large quantities in minimal time in case of a national smallpox emergency. A third

generation vaccine (MVA-BN or JYNNEOS), approved in September 2019, utilizes a highly attenuated strain of the vaccinia virus and is administered subcutaneously in two separate doses at least 28 days apart. No serious side effects have been noted with this vaccine which makes this particular vaccine ideal for people with immunodeficiency disorders such as HIV. A third vaccine (Aventis Pasteur Smallpox Vaccine or APSV), which also uses a live vaccinia virus, is currently considered investigational while awaiting possible FDA approval. However, it may be authorized in case of a smallpox emergency under the Emergency Use Authorization protocol.

Even though the smallpox virus was declared eradicated in 1980, there are two laboratories in the world that are licensed to store the smallpox virus for research purposes.

The eradication of smallpox technically began in 1959 with the passage of a World Health Organization (WHO) resolution to eradicate the disease on a global basis. However, it was not until 1966 that funding was provided to enact an effective eradication effort. Initially, a mass vaccination strategy was employed in an attempt to achieve “herd immunity”. However, this strategy was soon abandoned in part due to insufficient funds, difficulties with storing and delivering the vaccines, and vaccine shortages. A strategy of “ring vaccination” was subsequently employed where vaccination efforts were targeted to local smallpox outbreaks. This strategy successfully addressed the drawbacks of mass vaccination and resulted in the eradication of smallpox. The last endemic case of smallpox occurred in 1977 in Somalia and it was the less severe Variola minor form of the disease. The last two known cases of smallpox occurred in England in 1978 but these cases involved workers in a laboratory that stored the smallpox viruses. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared in 1980 that smallpox had been eradicated.

As all but our youngest members know, the world changed on 9/11/2001. All forms of terrorism appear to now be on the table, including bioterrorism (In

fact, there is historical evidence that the British used smallpox as a biological weapon to wipe out entire communities of Native Americans in 1763-1764 when they purposely gave them blankets impregnated with the Variola virus). Even though the smallpox virus was declared eradicated in 1980, there are two laboratories in the world that are licensed to store the smallpox virus for research purposes. One of these laboratories is located in a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) facility in Atlanta, Georgia. The other facility is located in the Russian State Center for Research on Virology and Biotechnology in the Siberian city of Koltsovo. It is believed by our intelligence agencies that Russia used the smallpox virus in their biological weapons programs during the Cold War. There is also some concern that these biological weapons were shared with some of Russia’s allies and may have ended up in the hands of terrorist organizations as well. Additionally, there are concerns with the general safety of storing the smallpox virus in the two approved sites previously mentioned as well as the potential for samples being stored in, as yet, unknown facilities.

In September 2019 there was a gas explosion at the facility in Russia although the explosion was reported to have occurred in a region of the facility that was far removed from where the smallpox stockpiles were stored. A previous troublesome event occurred in 2014 when six vials of the smallpox virus, two of which contained viable virus, were discovered in an unused storage room at a National Institutes of Health (NIH) facility in Bethesda, Maryland. Exacerbating these concerns are the facts that the vast majority of Americans born after 1972 have not been vaccinated against smallpox and that, even in those people who have been vaccinated, their immunity has waned to the point where they would need to be revaccinated if they were exposed to the virus. Because of these issues, the CDC has stored enough of the previously mentioned vaccines and anti-pox viral medications to treat every person in the United States. In the unfortunate event of a possible act of bioterrorism, the CDC would be the governmental agency in charge of coordinating the delivery and administration of the vaccines and medications from the Strategic National Stockpile to the affected region(s) of the country. Hopefully, this emergency response program will never have to be enacted. □

Whom
virtue
Unites

by PJ Roup, 33rd



PJ Roup, 33°

► Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I'll meet you there.

When the soul lies down in that grass, the world is too full to talk about.

Ideas, Language, even the phrase **each other** doesn't make any sense.

Greetings, Modern Vitruvians. If you have read even a few of my columns over the years, you know my love for the Sufi poet Rumi. I fortuitously learned of his poetry near the beginning of my Masonic speaking career, and I have been ~~stealing from him~~ using him as inspiration ever since. The poem above perfectly encapsulates my feelings about the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite.

Here, by constantly reinforcing our Core Values, we can more readily seek Truth. I am not talking about the little truths that are the all-too-easily-shared political opinions of our friends and family. Nor am I talking about the "truths" you may find plastered all over social media or in the news. When Freemasons speak of Truth, it is with a capital T. It is boldfaced, and it is underlined. It is the absolute, indisputable, and unerring uprightness that God wants for and expects of His people. The Scottish Rite is the confluence of virtues. It is the true north of each of our moral compasses.

What is Virtue?

So, what is virtue? Every softball question like that deserves a dictionary definition as a response, so I will give you just that. Merriam-Webster defines virtue as

conformity to a standard of right; a particular moral excellence; a beneficial quality or power of thing; manly strength or courage; a commendable quality or trait; a capacity to act; and chastity—especially in a woman. That's what it says. I can assure you this article is going nowhere near that final definition, but I'd like to examine a few that do apply to us, namely conformity to a standard of right, a particular moral excellence, and a commendable quality or trait. It's already relatively easy to see how those definitions apply to Freemasonry. In our opening charge, we are admonished to "cultivate the moral virtues and improve in all that is good and amiable."

What exactly are the "moral virtues," though? Your first thought is probably the four cardinal virtues of Temperance, Prudence, Justice, and Fortitude. Those four certainly form the strong foundation of a moral life, and any man regularly practicing them successfully would be considered a paragon of virtue by all.

"We

will strive to be a fraternity that fulfills its Masonic obligation to care for its members."

These days, the words fortitude, temperance, justice, and prudence are used very infrequently. To modernize the whole conversation, let us refer to the Cardinal Virtues as the Principal Virtues. Let us call them courage, restraint, equality, and wisdom.

C.S. Lewis said, "Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point." Perhaps

that is why it is first among the virtues. At every point when your ethics are tested, and you face an easy choice and the right choice, it takes courage above all to see you through. Courage often implies physical bravery, but as a Mason, it refers to doing what is right, not necessarily what is popular. As a Lodge leader, as well as in life, sometimes it is far more appealing to be liked by your peers than to have to make a tough decision.

“We build upon the
FOUR
Cardinal Virtues with the
introduction of the
SIX
Core Values of Reverence
for God, Integrity, Justice,
Devotion to Country, Tolerance,
and Service to Humanity.”

For example, courage may require abandoning a long-running (but slowly dying) program. Or—perish the thought—doing something we’ve never done before. There will be no shortage of people to tell you it’ll never work. It just requires brave leaders to say, “We’re going to try it anyhow.” As leaders and members, we must come together. Unanimity isn’t as important as consensus. You may not agree with everything your Valley tries, but you do irreparable damage if you don’t do all in your power to help it succeed. So, courage in our leaders means making decisions that not everyone agrees with. Courage in our members, then, means stepping up to help even though you may not like what you are helping with. You must set aside your differences and row with the others in the boat, not against them.

That brings us to restraint. Let’s say, for example, that you aren’t fond of the idea of Virtual Reunions or Rite on the Road. You could do several things. Not tell any

of your friends about it—friends who are busy and don’t have the time to leave the house in the evenings. You can refuse to help with it. You *could* do all those things, or you could exercise self-control. You could invite your busy friend and vow to make his experience so good he will make time in his schedule because you did. You could also volunteer to be a mentor and teach them with months of one-on-one dedication what you think it means to be a Scottish Rite Mason. In short, you could be a stepping stone instead of a stumbling block. Realize that there are several paths you can walk from the same starting point and still arrive at the same destination. Always remember to restrain that part of you that wants to build barriers. Build Temples instead.

Justice, or equality, from a Masonic perspective, has less to do with punishing the wicked or rewarding the good than it does with treating every person you contact with fairness. Equality means that regardless of your chosen profession, you are a child of God and entitled to all the dignity and respect one would give to anything of His making. It also means that we, too, as Masons, need to treat everyone that way. We must remind ourselves that we meet *everyone* “on the level” and that our interactions with our fellow man reflect on our character. Knowing that justice should be afforded to all should make acts of kindness not just easy but necessary.

Justice should make us realize that it is our duty to care for those who, by misfortune or age, can no longer care for themselves. There are dozens of stories of how your Scottish Rite has intervened on behalf of our brethren and their families in their darkest hours that would melt the hardest heart. We don’t do it because it’s easy. We do it because it’s right.

The last of the Cardinal Virtues is wisdom. True wisdom comes not only from knowledge but also from experience. Buddha said, “To walk safely through the maze of human life, one needs the light of wisdom and the guidance of virtue.”

If wisdom is the light, then we need fuel. That fuel is education. Education is not just for the young. We can always learn if our minds are open to it. Brother Mark Twain is credited for having said, “When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to

be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years.” Intellectual and emotional enlightenment should always be our aim. And remember, wisdom is a journey, never a destination. A wise man anticipates changes and adapts to them. He meets new challenges head-on and is ever-ready to grow based on new experiences. As our Fraternity faces the challenges of a changing world, we cannot rely on the solutions of years gone by. We must adapt to the needs of the men joining, not the men who founded the organization.

Whom Virtue Unites

Virtus junxit, mors non separabit. Those are the Latin words inscribed inside the ring of the 14th degree: Whom virtue unites, death will not separate. Make no mistake, our unity with virtue and the virtuous began when we knelt at the sacred altar of Freemasonry, if not the moment we sought entry into the Craft.

So, big deal. We are united in virtue and cannot be separated by death. So what?

In the Scottish Rite, we build upon the four Cardinal Virtues with the introduction of the six Core Values of Reverence for God, Integrity, Justice, Devotion to Country, Tolerance, and Service to Humanity. It is easy to see how these Core Values both reflect and amplify the intentions of the Cardinal Virtues.

The vision statement of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction reads as follows: *We will strive to be a fraternity that fulfills its Masonic obligation to care for its members.*

Our vision statement does not obligate us to put money into every outstretched hand pointed in our direction. And care certainly means much more than money. My good friend and Brother, Illustrious John Brian McNaughton, wrote a great piece on the NMJ vision statement for the Spring 2022 issue of *The Northern Light*. In it, he examines three facets of the word *care*: Emotional care he defines as brotherly love or affection. Supportive care addresses the financial assistance we give to our distressed Brothers and their families. Finally, there is nurturing care. Of nurturing care, he notes, “It

is [...] our duty to assume the mantle of teacher and gardener to help our members grow. [...] Nurturing care is equally vital for growth, education, and development in both our personal and organizational journey from rough to perfect ashlar.”

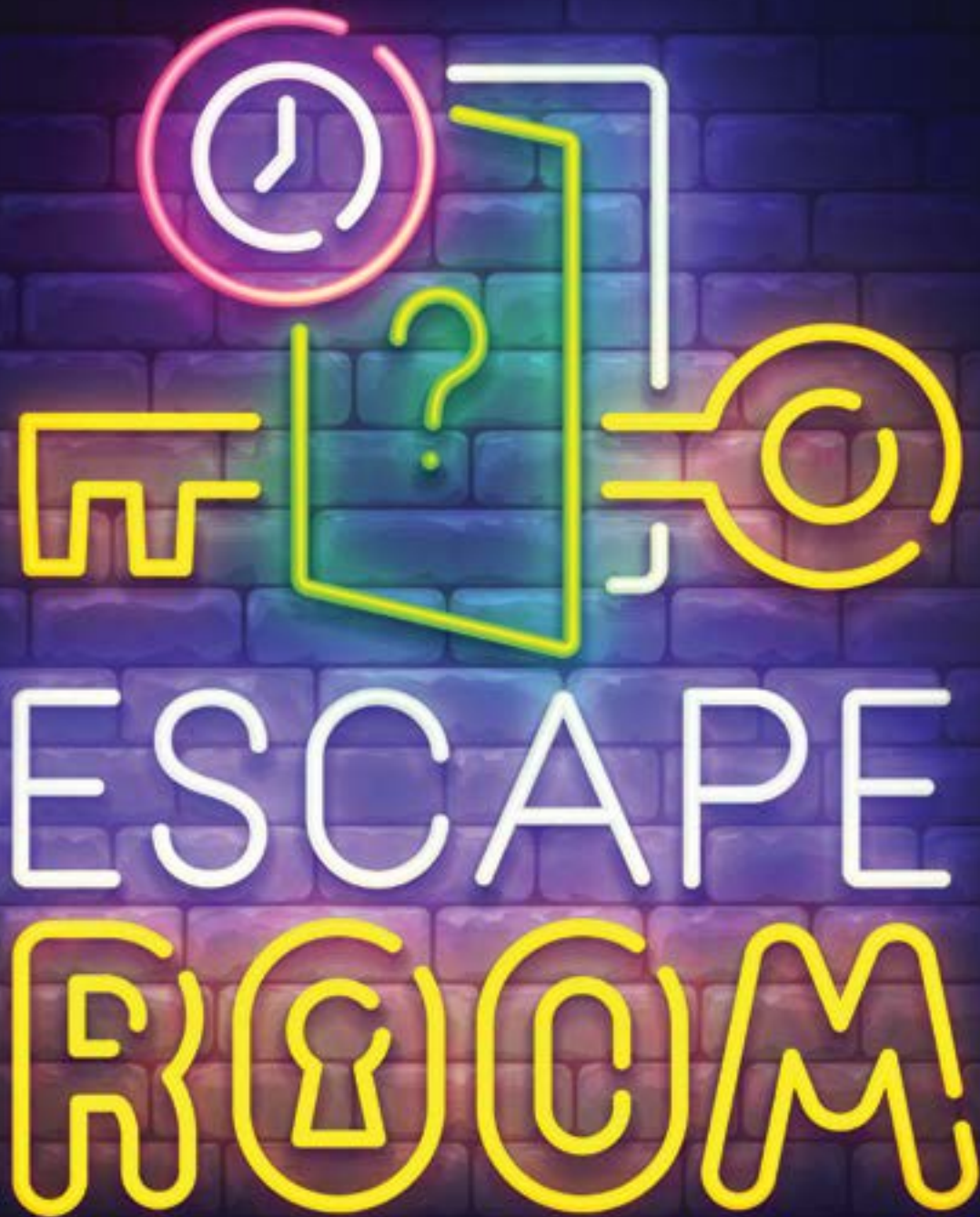
The Scottish Rite was never intended to be a place of indoctrination or groupthink. No worthy man ever knocked on our doors in the hopes of being told, *This is the only answer*. Most, if not all of us, recognized the benefit of being in the company of other men who had the same goals of self-improvement. Unity of purpose. That was our aim.

When we focus on unity of purpose, we have less time to be concerned with the *hows* and *whys* that can easily divide us. Those *hows* and *whys* that were formed by our religious, social, and family upbringing may influence the work we need to do to become our best selves, but they don't change the goal. Every rough ashlar is rough in its own way, after all.

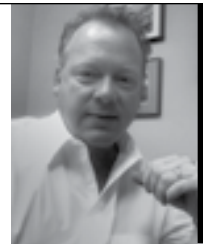
Unity, Modern Vitruvians! There is nothing we cannot accomplish if we strive for it together. We are men of action, of bold action, who can change the world. We are united by virtue that cannot be severed even by death! We have Truth on our side. Now, we must act. Live as Masons. Be just, compassionate, brave, true. Most of all, be steadfast. The Scottish Rite has the Truth that makes men free!

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in unity. □





by D. Todd Ballenger, 33°



D. Todd Ballenger, 33*

I remember going into the room for the very first time. I was blindfolded, restrained, and I could feel the anticipation in the people around me. Then, the blindfold came off, and the adventure began. This was my first escape room experience.

For those who are unfamiliar with the concept, an escape room is an interactive social event where a group of people is locked in a room (typically with an overarching theme or motif) and tasked with solving an interrelated series of puzzles, releasing the key and thereby unlocking the room. Oh, and there is usually a time limit to the fun, after which your group—in conjunction with the original storyline, of course—is blown up, eaten by zombies, or otherwise hastened toward an unpleasant demise in recognition of your failure to escape the room.

I found myself in a room full of wonderful puzzles and challenges. Some were to be addressed alone, some with my new Brothers. Some of the tasks challenged me internally, while others pushed me to speak and act publicly. I found the experience to be exhilarating, bonding, and intensely satisfying. I was very active in the Lodge, taking part in the ritual, learning the Lodge prayers, volunteering for committees, and going through the progressive line. I was a sponge. I absorbed every bit of information I could pry out of people.

Why this comes to mind is that it largely represents my motivations for joining the Scottish Rite (not the zombie-eating, blowing-up part, but I'll explain). Looking back on my time in Blue Lodge and my subsequent exposure to the appendant bodies—primarily to the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite—I have come to understand the way the Craft works, for good or bad, and may be able to offer some direction based on my own experiences.

Whether it was right or wrong, I began to feel like I needed to escape the room.

That's when I was approached about joining the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry. Wow! It sounded fantastic, but what was it?

Becoming a Freemason was a spectacle for me. I was not sure what to expect being introduced to the Fraternity by my father-in-law, but I was willing to try in order to strengthen that family bond. I didn't come from a Masonic family (though I later learned my grandfather was a Mason, but he never told anyone—the "old ways" didn't quite get that one right, in my humble opinion) and decided to join based on the family tie. My father-in-law and both brothers-in-law were Masons, and two of them were Past Masters. It seemed right, though I wasn't certain what it would come to. What I found was much more than I had anticipated.

The Scottish Rite was presented to me as an extension of the Masonic story, the continuing adventures of those heralded characters I had grown so familiar with in Blue Lodge. For me, it was perfect timing. I was serving my Lodge but beginning to feel as if I had solved most of the puzzles in the room. There were people who knew more about the Masonic mysteries just outside, but I had to pass through the portal into the larger world to learn more. Whether it was right or wrong, I began to feel like I needed to escape the room, to break through the walls of my Lodge to let me see the bigger universe of the Craft—

in this case, through the Brethren of the Scottish Rite. So, I took those things I had learned in the Blue Lodge and began to work outside of the four walls that I was accustomed to calling home.

Now, while this story calls up imagery of a child running away from home, I have to clarify that it wasn't anything like that. At the time I joined the Scottish Rite, I was still very active in the Lodge and, in fact, going through the elective line. It's odd talking about escaping the room (Blue Lodge) to discover the wider world of Freemasonry in Scottish Rite, but here's how I see it.

Scottish Rite was my particular solution to the escape room that many Masons never free themselves from.

Escape rooms, as a practical point, serve to teach several fundamental aspects of team-building and leadership. They are actually constructed on a number of psychological aspects and help enlighten the participants in the process. Some of these aspects include pointing out *inattention blindness*, that is, not seeing clues hidden in plain sight. How many times have you been told that many of the secrets of Freemasonry are held within the ritual itself, and yet Brethren still shy away from learning the work that will show them the keys to the door? The practice of *illusory correlation*—forming relationships between totally unrelated elements or making connections where there are none—is something of which we should be aware. These most often take the form of unsupported Masonic history (or, as I call it, the *National Treasure* effect) and lodge-isms, where certain ideas are presented as ritual and regular practice, though such things never really existed. *Hindsight bias* is something else we can learn from escape rooms. This is the thought that you always could have done something better than you did the previous time. Finally, there is an interesting concept known as the *Einstellung Effect*, which, according to Michael Rucker, PhD., “highlights our brain’s tendency to stubbornly cling to familiar solutions at the cost of

forsaking better ones.” Masons experience this every time they hear someone say, “We’ve never done it that way before.”

Craft Masonry should try and teach us the beauty of the Fraternity and the basics upon which to further pursue and build upon that elegance. It teaches us to cooperate and apply certain learned skills that can help us become more productive men and leaders. But it is not without pitfalls. When I began to identify some of these less desirable elements in Lodge, I looked outside to expand my knowledge base with other Brethren and teachings that helped me overcome these things. I found it very similar to working with a team in an escape room. What I found in Scottish Rite was the perfect fit of men and Masons to help me navigate the most challenging part of my service in Blue Lodge, serving as Worshipful Master. With these newfound and expanded ideas, I believe that I was able to bring new puzzles and interesting ideas to my home Lodge, begin to set aside some of the psychological biases that had built up over the years, and become a better leader overall.

Scottish Rite was my particular solution to the escape room that many Masons never free themselves from—the familiarity of a closed room where there is only one answer to each question, and your performance is wonderful because, hey, we’re all family here. Scottish Rite helped me become a better Mason by testing myself in a larger crucible by providing answers to the harder questions and by challenging myself to be better wherever it was that I chose to serve. For me, in order to be better in the room, I needed to first escape the room. For you, I believe it just may be time to take up a new adventure, and it begins by stepping outside of the room. □



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The Center

A message from the Children's Dyslexia Center—Pittsburgh

VALLEY OF PITTSBURGH

Happy fall from the Children's Dyslexia Center-Pittsburgh!

We are experiencing new beginnings this year: long-time tutor, trainer, and director Patty Broskey has retired as Center Director. Patty will continue to support the CDC-Pittsburgh with training, assessments, and as a resource and all-around font of wisdom. Stepping into the directors' position as co-directors are Amy Brazill and Kathy Kirk, both long-time tutors, supervisors, and trainers.

We have started this school year with three new Orton-Gillingham trainees at our Pittsburgh center. Additionally, we have four trainees in Peters Township. This is our second year training elementary and middle

school teachers at Peters Township, and we are proud of this partnership.

Here at the CDC-Pittsburgh, we have 14 Orton-Gillingham certified tutors, including nine who are certified at the advanced level. We are serving 29 students, ranging from 1st through 11th grade. Fall is a busy time with new and returning students, Parent Night, and the return to our rigorous training schedules. As always, we are looking forward to participating in the various fundraising events that make this tutoring possible.

Keep an eye out in future issues of *RiteNow* for fundraisers supporting this great cause. □

For more information:
412-931-3181
pittsburgh@cdcinc.org



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

Builders Council

Benefactors of the Children's Dyslexia Center-Pittsburgh

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

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

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

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

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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 Odd Fellows
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



ValleyNews

A collection of recent happenings in the Valley of Pittsburgh

United Conferral a Success!

On September 9, The Valley of Pittsburgh and Grand Holy Royal Arch Chapter held a United Conferral at the Greater Pittsburgh Masonic Center. Candidates received three degrees, paired because of their similarity, from each of the bodies.

4th Degree
Builder
(*Scottish Rite*)

4th Degree
Mark Master
(*Chapter*)

7th Degree
Provost and Judge
(*Scottish Rite*)

6th Degree
Most Excellent Master
(*Chapter*)

13th Degree
Royal Arch of Enoch
(*Scottish Rite*)

7th Degree
Royal Arch Mason
(*Chapter*)

The Valley of Pittsburgh welcomed eight new Scottish Rite Masons, and the Royal Arch welcomed 30 new Companions.

Congratulations to all involved in this unique event.



Members Recognized in September

At the September stated meeting, the Valley officers recognized our 50-year plus service recipients as well as our newest Meritorious Service Award (MSA) honorees, Brothers Charlie Zurcher, 32°, MSA, and Ray Hess, 32°, MSA.

Also that evening, Brother Robert Nelson, 32°, Sovereign Prince accepted a donation from the Car Cruise, and Brother Eric Teasdale, 33°, received his Past Thrice Potent Master jewel from Brother Peter Leary, 33°, MSA, Thrice Potent Master.



The Latest

Important happenings coming soon to the Valley of Pittsburgh

NOV
2

Reservations are required for Dinner only!
Please contact the Valley Office:
secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org
412-939-3579

Stated Meeting

The officers of Rose Croix will preside and will recognize our current and veteran military servicemen. There will be separate entertainment for the ladies during the meeting.

TIME: 6:00PM Dinner, 7:00PM Meeting
LOCATION: GPMC
COST: \$15.00 for Dinner, no charge to attend meeting
RSVP: October 31

NOV
3

NOV
4

Reservations are requested.
Please contact the Uniontown Valley Office:
uniontownlodgeofperfection@gmail.com
724-833-2659

Uniontown Reunion

Get together with your Brethren at the Valley of Uniontown. See the 4th through 14th degrees performed live as well as the 32nd Degree Ceremonial.

TIME: 6:30PM Friday, 8:30AM Saturday
LOCATION: Uniontown Masonic Temple
COST: None
RSVP: October 27

DEC
9

Reservations are required!
For more information, please contact the Valley Office: secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org
412-939-3579

Children's Santa Party

Bring the special children in your life 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 so the elves can pack the sleigh.

TIME: 10:30AM-1:00PM
LOCATION: GPMC
COST: None
RSVP: December 5

DEC
16

Reservations are required.
Please contact the Childrens Dyslexia Center-Pittsburgh directly at 412-931-3181.

Valley Holiday Luncheon

Looking for a way to get into the holiday spirit? Come to Shannopin Country Club for food, drinks, music, and more. Bob Addleman and Bill Dorfner will again be playing your holiday favorites.

TIME: 11:00AM
LOCATION: Shannopin Country Club
COST: \$50 per person
RSVP: December 8

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

OCT
28

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

NOV
18

Reservations are not required.
Please contact the Valley Office:
secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org
412-939-3579

Fall Reunion

Get together with your Brethren at this year's Fall Reunion. See the 21st degree video and the 25th, 31st, and 32nd degree Allegory performed live on the Valley stage. Brand new candidates will view the 4th degree beginning at 9:00AM.

TIME: 9:00AM

LOCATION: GPMC

COST: None for members, initiation costs for candidates

RSVP: November 14

FEB
1

Reservations are required for Dinner only!
Please contact the Valley Office:
secretary@valleyofpittsburgh.org
412-939-3579

Stated Meeting

The officers of the Lodge of Perfection will preside at the February stated meeting. Join us for a wonderful evening of fellowship. Entertainment will be provided for the ladies. More details will follow.

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

LOCATION: GPMC

COST: \$15.00 for Dinner, no charge to attend meeting

RSVP: January 30

NOV
25

JAN
27

FEB
24

Looking Ahead

MAR
9

CDC Casino Night
SATURDAY, MARCH 9
6PM
GPMC

APR
4

Stated Meeting
THURSDAY, APRIL 4
6PM Dinner, 7PM Meeting
GPMC

APR
20

Spring Class
SATURDAY, APRIL 20
9AM
GPMC

JUN
6

Stated Meeting
THURSDAY, JUNE 6
6PM Dinner, 7PM Meeting
GPMC

Scan this QR code for the most up-to-date information on all Valley events:



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



**WATERSLIDES &
SKYRIDES &
COMEDY SHOWS &
ALL IN THE MIDDLE
OF THE OCEAN.**

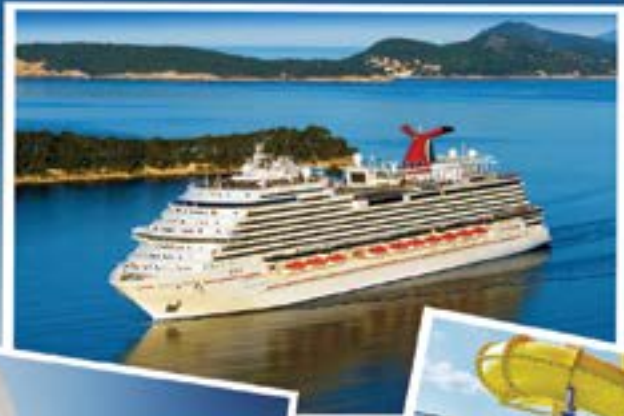
**VALLEY OF PITTSBURGH
8 NIGHT CRUISE
ON CARNIVAL MAGIC**

**FEBRUARY 24 -
MARCH 3, 2024**



**ST. MAARTEN
ST. THOMAS
SAN JUAN
GRAND TURK**

Cruise departs from Miami, Florida



Below pricing includes cruise fare, taxes, port charges, government fees, private cocktail party, and group photo. All prices are per person and based upon two persons per cabin. Triples or other categories of cabins are available upon request. Air transfers are not yet available, but notification will be provided when available. Air options will include travel one-day prior with hotel.

Reservations are based on availability at time of booking. Cabins are limited at the rates listed below.

All persons traveling must have a valid passport. Passport must have at least a six month validity from the date of return travel.

PRICING FROM

\$1243 BALCONY CABINS
PER PERSON

\$819 OUTSIDE CABINS
PER PERSON

DEPOSIT OF \$250 PER PERSON IS REQUIRED.
BALANCE DUE ON NOVEMBER 20, 2023.

ALL RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE THROUGH ALL SEASONS TRAVEL AT:

724-483-7989 OR 800-435-1077