



NEWSLETTER OF THE

ORIENT OF VIRGINIA

Volume XVIII, Issue 1

Spring 2025



Scottish Rite Workshop

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Sovereign Grand Inspector General Orient of Virginia

Illustrious Alan W. Adkins, 33° GC Set Your Calendars

My Brethren,

The Scottish Rite Spring Workshop will be held on Saturday, March 29 at Acca Shrine Center. Illustrious Franklin D. "Frankie" Edmondson, Assistant Personal Representative for the Valley of Portsmouth, will be the featured speaker. The Grand Master, Gary W. Huffman, has a schedule conflict and will be unable to attend. He will be represented by another Grand Lodge officer. We will receive reports from the Conference President, the Vice-Presidents and the Scottish Rite Foundation. In addition, the Valley of Portsmouth will be providing details on their plans for the Scottish Rite Conference of Virginia scheduled for September 26-28 at the Holiday Inn in Virginia Beach. Lunch will be provided following the workshop. Please make plans to attend.



Recently, I sent an email to the Orient Personal Representative, Valley Personal Representatives, Assistant Personal Representatives, and Valley General Secretaries advising them of the due date for their Fiduciary Report. More information on the Biennial Session and Honors Selection will be forthcoming in the near future. The Headquarters Hotel for the Biennial Session will be the Washington Hilton.



2025 Spring Reunion at the Valley of Guthrie,
Oklahoma,
on April 4-6, 2025

The Valley of Richmond is pleased to announce GuthrieSpring'25, a unique opportunity to attend the 2025 Spring Reunion at the Valley of Guthrie, Oklahoma, on April 4-6, 2025, where the 4th through the 32nd Degrees are conferred in their entirety. To request further information and receive updates, send an email to guthriespring25@yahoo.com or contact Bill Heltzel, 32° KCCH at 804-363-2602. I plan to attend this once in a lifetime experience and I hope you will too.

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Deadline for next issue:

Summer	May 1
Fall	August 1
Winter	November 1
Spring	February 1

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Set Your Calendars

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The Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction is dedicated to helping victims of natural disasters such as fires, floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes. Through the Scottish Rite Foundation, Southern Jurisdiction the Supreme Council provides direct relief to disaster victims and works with other Masonic groups to provide additional assistance. You are aware of the recent Wildfires in the Orient of California and the impact of Hurricane Helene in the Orients of Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. Three of our Valleys sent a monetary contribution to the Scottish Rite Foundation of Virginia to be forwarded to the Scottish Rite Foundation, Southern Jurisdiction. I thank those members who have contributed monetarily to these natural disasters as well as the many prayers offered on behalf of every person and family impacted.



“Growing up I was deeply involved in organizations such as Best Buddies and Special Olympics as well as a close friend and family member of children and adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. My dream is to work with adolescents with communication disorders in a public school setting.”

The Scottish Rite Foundation of Virginia supports Summer Camps and provides Fellowships and Scholarships at Longwood University, James Madison University, Old Dominion University, Radford University, and the Richmond Childhood Language Center. Here is a synopsis of comments made by four students at Radford University, who were recipients of a Scottish Rite Graduate Fellowship in Language Disorders.

“Growing up I was deeply involved in organizations such as Best Buddies and Special Olympics as well as a close friend and family member of children and adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. My dream is to work with adolescents with communication disorders in a public school setting.”

“I chose to pursue this field out of a combined love for health professions and communication studies. As a graduate assistant, I plan to begin my professional career working with the pediatric population.”

“I have a passion for working with young children, with a special interest in language and literacy skills. As a graduate research assistant, my plan is to pursue a career in early intervention and taking continuing education courses to expand my literacy knowledge.”

“I work part-time at the Teaching Resources Center on campus and provide respite services to an adult with autism off campus. I plan to become a speech-language pathologist and work somewhere along the East Coast.”

Thank you for your continued support of the Foundation as it strives to make a difference in the lives of future clinicians and children with communication disorders.

*“The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change.
The leader adjusts the sails.”*

John Maxwell

A Masonic Way of Thinking

Illustrious Edmund Cohen, 33° Personal Representative of the Deputy in Alexandria



Spoken words are like a bullet shot from a gun; once they are said you can never get them back. In our Lodges and Valleys, political and religious discussion are prohibited, basically to maintain harmony, peace and accord among the Brethren.

We read in the sixth degree that the duty of a Mason is to endeavor to make man think better of his neighbor; to quiet instead of aggravating difficulties; to bring together those who are separated or estranged; to keep friends from becoming foes; and to persuade foes to become friends.

All too often we live in an age of outrage where so many of us exist in a bubble surrounded by like-minded friends, watching only the TV stations and political commentators with whom we agree, and reading only the newspapers and magazines that align with our opinions. We do not listen to opposing views or seek to understand the other side. We do not discuss the issues, and to the extent that we do, it is not a conversation or a dialogue, it is an argument. We do not seek to learn; we seek to win.

One of the problems in our discourse is the lack of nuance. We paint with broad strokes and use a shorthand to describe events in a way that lacks context, and blurs what actually happened. We proceed to indignation based on half-truths and inaccurate recitations of what happened that have gained resonance for being widely broadcast and repeated on social media. As Winston Churchill once remarked "a lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on."

All of this has created a paradox – the level of our discourse has become more coarse and more rude and often just plain cruel; and, at the same time, we seem to be more fragile, more easily upset, and ready to take umbrage at the slightest criticism.

But a respect for those with whom we disagree does not imply that anything goes. Every man has a right to his opinion, but there is no equivalence between arguing a point of view and putting forth false and defamatory statements about someone in order to damage their reputation.

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A Masonic Way of Thinking

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It is hard to bridge the gap and have a genuine discussion. Nevertheless, if our goal is to engage with those who hold different opinions, to encourage a more respectful hearing of our point of view, and to win the support of the uncommitted, we must work to repair the social fabric.

A useful first step is to set the example. We should be civil and lay out our case in an even-handed and logical manner; a dignified and reasoned response will have significantly more influence.

Second, as is noted in several of our Scottish Rite degrees, we all are prone to error and mistake, and should not deny the sincerity of those who hold different opinions. Therefore, a dose of intellectual humility, a pinch of intellectual uncertainty, and a measure of intellectual curiosity would go a long way toward getting us back to an environment where we talk to each other, not talk past each other.

We should make a serious effort to understand where others are coming from. Their life experiences, which may be quite different from ours, color their thinking and inform their judgments. Understanding that context will allow us to converse not only more sympathetically, but also more successfully. In sum, a little empathy goes a long way.

What are the Masonic implications of all of this? We know that it is easy to sit back and ignore what is happening around us or be content to be spectators simply watching the great events of our time; but as Masons, and, indeed, as Scottish Rite Masons, we are called to do more. Rather than concede the field to those who would divide us, we need to stand up for our Masonic values which include a love of truth, a passion for justice, and generosity of spirit. We need to be seen by our neighbors and colleagues, and in the community, as a beacon of reason and civility in an environment where both seem to be in short supply.

But a respect for those with whom we disagree does not imply that anything goes. Every man has a right to his opinion, but there is no equivalence between arguing a point of view and putting forth false and defamatory statements about someone in order to damage their reputation. In the fifth degree we are taught that Masonry requires of us “honesty in contract, sincerity in affirming, simplicity in bargaining, and faithfulness in performing.” We are told: “lie not at all, neither in a little thing nor in a great, neither in substance nor in the circumstance, neither in the work nor deed.

Our charge is to insist on certain standards of conduct and behavior and to raise the level of discourse so that it is mature, evenhanded, and fair. Conduct that we would not tolerate in our homes or in our Lodges is broadcast every day on television and pervasive on social media. We need to champion a more responsible tone in our political debate and in our social interactions and stand up for the values that we as a people can be proud of. This should be easy for us, for these are the Masonic values we have been taught. Courtesy of Valley of Alexandria

Courtesy of Valley of Alexandria

All too often we live in an age of outrage where so many of us exist in a bubble surrounded by like-minded friends, watching only the TV stations and political commentators with whom we agree, and reading only the newspapers and magazines that align with our opinions.

Sound and Mirrors

Illustrious Paul R. Evancoe, 33°

This story begins in early 1916 about two years after the outbreak of WW-1 when a young English-born physicist by the name of William Sansome Tucker enlisted in the British Army as a private. He was almost immediately promoted to 2nd Lieutenant and assigned to the Experimental Sound Ranging Station at Kemmel Hill in Belgium where he researched and perfected 'sound ranging.' It was here that Tucker was key to the development of a passive listening system that was the predecessor of radar.

Tucker's sound ranging system used large concrete parabolic dishes as sound collectors (sound mirrors). The dishes were equipped with microphones for sound amplification that provided the ranging and direction data necessary for mathematical triangulation to determine the position of enemy artillery. Within the first few months, Tucker invented a new style "hot wire" microphone that was sensitive to the pressure wave (gun-wave) generated by the firing of distant artillery. By Fall 1916 Tucker's new microphones had been installed in all of Britain's sound-ranging dishes.

Building upon his successes, in 1917 Tucker developed a system of moveable microphones that were installed inside and around the sound mirrors' apex. This greatly improved accuracy in determining the position of the enemy guns. By the end of the war in 1918, Tucker had refined the detection system enough to determine where an artillery gun was pointing and how large it was. In fact, Tucker had sophisticated the system to the point that it could also be effectively applied to locate incoming enemy aircraft (Zeppelins) from their engine noise.

Here's how it worked. The concrete dish would collect the engine sound and concentrate it at a focal point. As sound waves reached the focal point (apex) in the front center area of the dish structure, movable microphones situated around the apex would pick up the engine noise and transmit it to the headphones of an operator staked out in a nearby bunker. The operator would then report his sound observations to a central operations center for correlation with other reports.

As Tucker continued to refine his system, he installed microphones in the sound-concreted areas in front of the parabolic dishes, as well as switches and lights which were connected to a central control room. This allowed personnel to instantaneously determine which microphone received the strongest signal and provide real-time intelligence on the incoming aircrafts' direction. Once range, altitude and speed had been calculated, the control room passed the position of the aircraft to the air defense command for action.

The most sophisticated of these devices could detect the sounds of aircraft up to 25 miles away, weather permitting. This would typically give the English antiaircraft artillery in the plane's path about 15 minutes early warning to prepare for the oncoming German attack.

With Tucker's reporting system and a consistent detection range of about 20 miles or better, the sound mirror system finally delivered the results the Air Ministry required. Tucker's research had now matured into a huge project consisting of a chain of 45 of the 60-meter mega-mirrors supplemented by 60 of the nine-meter-high mirrors. This mix of large and small sound mirrors was built along the coast from the county of Norfolk above the Thames estuary down to Dorset in the southwest of England. Its purpose was to make it impossible for enemy aircraft to approach the UK from the English Channel undetected.

In the summer of 1932, the Royal Air Force began to formally train personnel in the use of the sound mirror system. This also included staff for the rapid and accurate communications

About now you're probably thinking, nice story - but how do sound mirrors relate to Scottish Rite membership? There are several relationships. Let's think of ourselves as Masonic sound mirrors. We listen to our Brethren, we evaluate the length of their cable tow (their range and vector), and we solicit them (action based upon empirical knowledge) for petitioning membership in the Scottish Rite.

Sound and Mirrors

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required between the listening post, telephone operators and the officers in the control room and at command headquarters linked to the antiaircraft artillery batteries

By the end of January 1935, top Royal Engineer officials ordered a detailed expansion plan from Tucker for the necessary communications systems, mainly telephone lines and exchanges. By June of that year, the Air Ministry employed more than 500 people on the sound mirror project, a figure that revealed the high priority of the early warning system.

But a letter from the Ministry in August 1935 abruptly brought Tucker's system expansion plans to a halt. At first, work was suspended until the end of September, and then cancelled because of the development of an alternative detection method. The new technique was named Radio Detection and Ranging, or RADAR for short. It would go on to play a significant role in the defense of Great Britain during World War II and would become the fundamental component of every modern air defense system. The parabolic sound mirror system had outlived its usefulness. The science was solid, but aircraft kept getting faster and quieter, which made the sound mirror system obsolete.

By the 1938 onset of WWII, the invention of radar gave the Royal Air Force the ability to locate aircraft much more precisely, and Tucker's acoustic mirror program was abandoned. But not forsaken was the British air defense forces' familiarity with Tucker's ranging system that relied on linking multiple stations and triangulating aircraft movement for central command and control of defenses. Tucker's tracking system, with direct application to RADAR, was years later credited as a major factor in Britain's air defense success against Germany's Luftwaffe during the Battle of Britain.

Nonetheless, it wasn't until 1939 that senior officers of the Royal Engineers decided to permanently cancel the sound mirror project and direct that the hundred, or so, sound mirrors dotting Britain's English Channel shores be destroyed. At the same time, Tucker had started his last year as director of the research center.

In February 1940, Tucker's employment ended. For reasons still unknown, the Defense Ministry's plan to destroy the mirrors was never executed. While subject to weathering effects over many decades, most of the sturdy concrete mirrors have remained intact as bizarre relics of an antiquated technology. And though they ceased operation numerous decades ago, the influence of their brilliant design can be seen across modern technology today—from tiny, eavesdropping parabolic microphones used in surveillance, to mammoth radio telescopes used to amplify sounds from outer space.

About now you're probably thinking, nice story - but how do sound mirrors relate to Scottish Rite membership? There are several relationships. Let's think of ourselves as Masonic sound mirrors. We listen to our Brethren, we evaluate the length of their cable tow (their range and vector), and we solicit them (action based upon empirical knowledge) for petitioning membership in the Scottish Rite. But nothing happens without our inquiry and willingness (action) to engage our Blue Lodge Brothers. While our new member recruitment might appear hit or miss, that is not the case if conducted systematically. This past Spring Reunion we brought in 57 new members. Considering that number is three times the number we usually average, it demonstrates we can increase our membership by leaps.

Courtesy of Valley of Alexandria

Here's how it worked. The concrete dish would collect the engine sound and concentrate it at a focal point. As sound waves reached the focal point (apex) in the front center area of the dish structure, movable microphones situated around the apex would pick up the engine noise and transmit it to the headphones of an operator staked out in a nearby bunker. The operator would then report his sound observations to a central operations center for correlation with other reports.

Scottish Rite Virtues

Brother Peak, KCCH 32°

Right Worshipful Brother Benjamin Franklin identified thirteen virtues on which to focus to improve his character. The virtues and precepts that Brother Franklin selected were as follows:

1. TEMPERANCE. Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.
2. SILENCE. Speak not what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.
3. ORDER. Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.
4. RESOLUTION. Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.
5. FRUGALITY. Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e., waste nothing.
6. INDUSTRY. Lose no time; be always employ'd in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.
7. SINCERITY. Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly.
8. JUSTICE. Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.
9. MODERATION. Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.
10. CLEANLINESS. Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes, or habitation.
11. TRANQUILLITY. Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.
12. CHASTITY. Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.
13. HUMILITY. Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

HUMILITY.
Imitate Jesus and
Socrates.

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Scottish Rite Virtues

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I am identifying virtues on which I will focus to improve my character. I am reviewing the oaths, mottoes, and slogans of those organizations of which I was or am currently a member. As part of this process, I perused Illustrious Rex Hutchens book *A Bridge to Light* and identified those virtues that are relevant to us as Southern Jurisdiction Scottish Rite Masons. My list is shown below:

<i>Word and Phrase</i>	<i>Degree</i>
Act the peacemaker	6th
Attainment	4th
Attraction (force of nature)	25th
Beauty	26th
Benevolent, Benevolence	6th, 8th
Charity	8th, 18th, 20th, 29th
Chastity	20th, 28th
Clemency	29th
Confidence in human nature	20th
Constancy (keeping promises)	11th
Constancy	15th
Constant (in prayer)	25th
Courtesy	9th/10th
Defend right from wrong	28th
Devotion / Devotedness (family & friends)	4th, 9th/10th, 20th, 23rd
Disinterestedness	6th, 20th
Duality	27th
Duty	13th
Duty to God	28th
Earnest	11th
Education	9th/10th, 11th
Endurance	4th
Enlightenment	9th/10th, 11th
Equanimity	20th
Equilibrium	32nd
Equity	4th, 16th
Faith / Faithful	18th, 24th, 27th
Fidelity (in performance of duty)	4th, 6th, 11th, 15th, 20th, 28th
Firmness	9th/10th, 11th, 20th
Fitness	24th
Forbearance	20th
Forgiveness, Forgiving	20th, 23rd, 25th
Frankness	9th/10th
Generosity / Generous	9th/10th, 20th, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 28th, 29th

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SILENCE.
Speak not what may
benefit others or
yourself; avoid trifling
conversation.

Scottish Rite Virtues

<i>Word and Phrase</i>	<i>Degree</i>
Gratitude to God	20th
Harmony	27th
Heroism	9th/10th, 20th
Honesty	5th
Honor	13th, 20th, 28th, 29th
Hope	18th
Humility / Humble	21st, 25th, 29th
Impartiality	9th/10th
Independence	4th
Industry	5th
Justice	4th, 7th, 16th, 20th, 26th, 28th, 31s
Kindness	20th
Knowledge	12th
Labor	22nd
Lenity	20th
Liberality	9th/10th, 20th
Liberty (self-control)	24th
Light	19th
Love of Brothers	26th
Love of Mankind	20th
Loyalty	9th/10th, 28th
Matter	27th
Mercy / Merciful	4th, 23rd, 26th
Mobility (force of nature)	25th
Modest	21st
Obedience	4th, 28th
Patience	19th, 29th
Patriotism	9th/10th, 20th
Penitent	25th
Perseverance	15th
Probity	20th
Prudence	20th
Punctuality	20th
Purity of heart	23rd
Reason	24th, 27th
Reliable	11th
Repentance	24th
Retribution	13th
Revelation	27th

Note: The degrees in the Scottish Rite, Northern Jurisdiction, are somewhat different from those in the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction. The 25th Degree, Master of Achievement (Benjamin Franklin Degree) mentions the virtues that Brother Franklin selected to cultivate and is the genesis of my project.

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Scottish Rite Virtues

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<i>Word and Phrase</i>	<i>Degree</i>
Self-denial	9th/10th, 29th
Silence	4th
Sincerity to serve God	23rd
Sobriety	20th
Temperance	20th, 28th
Thankful to God	25th
Toleration / Tolerance / Tolerant	9th/10th, 18th, 20th, 26th
Truthfulness / Truth / True	4th, 11th, 20th, 28th, 29th
Veneration of God	20th
Vitality (force of nature)	25th
Wisdom	12th
Zeal (performance of duty)	6th, 20th, 28th

Brother Franklin embarked on a difficult task and admits that he was not entirely successful in improving himself in every virtue he identified. I believe he was correct in specifying the precept for each virtue. A virtue could have many different precepts.

Your reading may suggest a slightly different list of virtues. I am sure that as I continue to study the degrees, my list will evolve.

Brother Franklin embarked on a difficult task and admits that he was not entirely successful in improving himself in every virtue he identified. I believe he was correct in specifying the precept for each virtue. A virtue could have many different precepts.

If each of us were to select only one virtue and a relevant precept from the above list to seek to improve ourselves, which would it be?

Note: The degrees in the Scottish Rite, Northern Jurisdiction, are somewhat different from those in the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction. The 25th Degree, Master of Achievement (Benjamin Franklin Degree) mentions the virtues that Brother Franklin selected to cultivate and is the genesis of my project.

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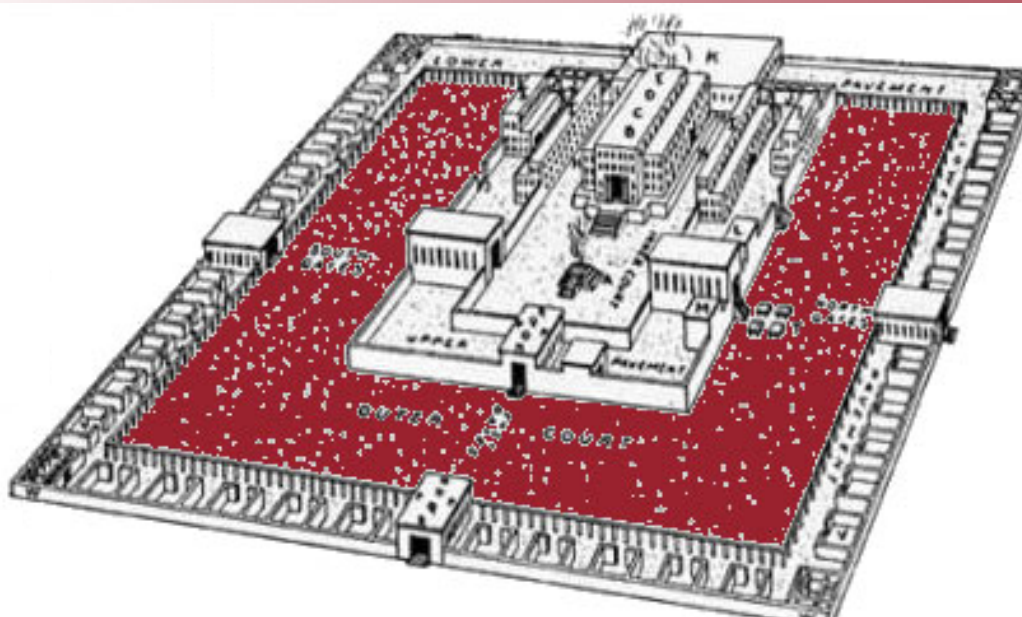
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Courtesy of the Valley of Alexandria

A Chivalric View of the Rite of Destitution

Brother Brian Walaszczky, 32°

Albert Pike, Sovereign Grand Commander 1859-1891, suggests that the “Symbolic Degrees” are but the outer court or portico of the Temple. Part of our symbols are displayed there to the Initiate, but he is not yet prepared to learn the deeper truths. In this context, if we reflect on the Entered Apprentice Degree using the additional lessons taught in the Scottish Rite Council of Kadosh and Consistory degrees, we are able to unveil some interesting symbolism that we may not have otherwise considered.



King Solomon's Temple
(red highlight indicates the outer court of the Temple)

Pike teaches a legend in the 30th degree, Knight Kadosh, that the Knights Kadosh were the successors to the Knights Templar under a veiled name. In fact, Pike goes further and explains that “The Templars, or Poor Fellow-Soldiery of the Holy House of the Temple, took as their models, the Warrior-Masons of Zorobabel, mentioned in the Bible (Nehemiah 4:16 - 4:18), who worked, holding the sword in one hand and the trowel in the other. The Knights Templar made it their life's work to protect weary pilgrims using the sword, while also using the trowel in both an operative sense to build castles and other structures, and in a speculative sense to seek further knowledge and the light. Therefore, it was that the Sword and the Trowel were the insignia of the Templars, who subsequently, as will be seen, concealed themselves under the name of Brethren Masons.”

Illustrious Arturo De Hoyos, 33°, Grand Cross, the Grand Archivist and Grand Historian, Supreme Council, Southern Jurisdiction, has noted that many Masonic historians dismiss this myth as having no basis in historical fact. But whether or not the legend of the Knights Kadosh is true, we can still utilize it to reflect upon the chivalric duties prescribed to these warrior monks and to honor and emulate the chivalric virtues of these noble warriors, most

Using the knowledge and wisdom bestowed upon us by the lessons taught in the Council of Kadosh and Consistory degrees, we gain an additional perspective on the symbols and lessons taught to us in the ancient Craft degrees, and by adapting the chivalric virtues of these noble warriors to the tenets of our Craft, can become more focused on that virtue of charity towards all mankind.

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A Chivalric View of the Rite of Destitution

Continued from page 12.

especially that virtue of charity. We also can use this legend as a key to explore further the powerfully moving Rite of Destitution and events leading to this ceremony.

The Knights Templar took a vow of poverty, donating much of their money and property and dedicating their lives to God. They absolved themselves of their worldly possessions, so they could continue their life through the elevation of their souls to the sphere of heaven laid out by the compass of God above the square of the earth. This symbolic and operative act of selflessness exhibited their devotion to serving God and mankind through charity.

Entered Apprentices do not take a formal oath of poverty but, before knocking on the door of the Lodge to be received for their initiation, agree to be divested of all minerals and metals, neither naked nor clothed. In this state of destitution they enter the Lodge, a symbol of the world stretching as high as the heavens and deep as the center of the earth. As they present themselves for initiation, they symbolically show a willingness to voluntarily separate themselves from their worldly possessions because Freemasonry values the man for his internal moral characteristics, not for his wealth or material possessions. More importantly, as candidates for the degrees in Freemasonry, they are to leave their passions and prejudices behind as they enter the portals of the Lodge. This symbolism is reinforced when they find themselves challenged in their destitute condition and reminded that they should always be willing to relieve those who are in need.

In multiple places in our ritual, we find charity promoted as an important obligation. Consider, for example the catechism of the 26th Degree, Prince of Mercy, or Scottish Trinitarian, whereby it is stated that the seventh great truth in Masonry is that the immutable law of God requires, besides respecting the absolute rights of others, and being merely just, that we should do good, be charitable, and obey the dictates of the generous and noble sentiments of the soul. Charity is a law, because our conscience is not satisfied nor at ease if we have not relieved the suffering, the stressed, and the destitute. To be charitable is obligatory on us. We are instructed to be kind to one another, to act with brotherly love, to relieve the necessities of the needy, and to be generous, liberal, and hospitable. We are to return to no man evil for evil, but to repay injuries with benefits and kindness. We are to live peaceably with all men, rejoice at the good fortune of others, and sympathize with them in their sorrows and reverses. "These are the sublime dictates of the Moral Law, taught from the infancy of the world, by Masonry." (Ill. Arturo De Hoyos, 33°, G.C., 2013) .

Using the knowledge and wisdom bestowed upon us by the lessons taught in the Council of Kadosh and Consistory degrees, we gain an additional perspective on the symbols and lessons taught to us in the ancient Craft degrees, and by adapting the chivalric virtues of these noble warriors to the tenets of our Craft, can become more focused on that virtue of charity towards all mankind.

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Albert Pike suggests that the "Symbolic Degrees" are but the outer court or portico of the Temple. Part of our symbols are displayed there to the Initiate, but he is not yet prepared to learn the deeper truths. In this context, if we reflect on the Entered Apprentice Degree using the additional lessons taught in the Scottish Rite Council of Kadosh and Consistory degrees, we are able to unveil some interesting symbolism that we may not have otherwise considered.

Virginia veteran's Hand Carved Birds Bring Comfort

Erika Craven

Posted 11:24 AM, Nov 30, 2024 and last updated 10:35 AM, Dec 02, 2024
<https://tinyurl.com/273ny7tp>

NORFOLK, Va. — One Hampton Roads Veteran has turned to wood carving to make sure other veterans know they're not alone this holiday season, or any other time of the year.

Retired U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander John Jones sat down with News 3 at the Woodcraft of Virginia Beach/Norfolk shop.

He's been transforming wood into so much more. He started woodworking in his childhood, building models with his dad.



"He was big in woodworking also, but I have never done anything quite like this," said Jones as he pointed to his latest project.

Now he's crafting 'comfort birds' after he was inspired to learn wood carving with a Ukraine-made comfort bird kit.

"[Comfort birds] are kind of like those stones, those worry stones, that people keep in their pockets. It's just kind of nice to have and especially with John's work — he's made them beautifully," said Brooke Shannon, retail associate and instructor at Woodcraft of Virginia Beach/Norfolk.

The objects aren't just beautiful. Those at the Woodcraft shop add a special engraving to each one. It's the 988 crisis number.

"[The birds are] something that's tactile, it kind of distracts people in dark times, and this right here is what really makes it," said Jones as he pointed to the engraving.

That's because he knows how important both comfort and support is.

He's not the only one helping either. The Woodcraft shop has been donating wood and helping with engraving. Jones said others, like Retired Air Force Lt. Col. Mike Davison in Boston, have taken on similar projects.

Seven percent of all veterans will be diagnosed with PTSD at some point in their lives, according to the National Center for PTSD. That number is twenty-nine percent for veterans who served in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. According to the VA's 2023 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Report, as of 2021, an average of seventeen and a half veterans died by suicide each day. That's up from sixteen point four in 2001.

If you or someone you know is struggling or experiencing a mental health crisis, you can call the national crisis hotline at 988.

Jones has made roughly seventy comfort birds so far. He said about a dozen have already flown the coop.

Virginia veteran's Hand Carved Birds Bring Comfort

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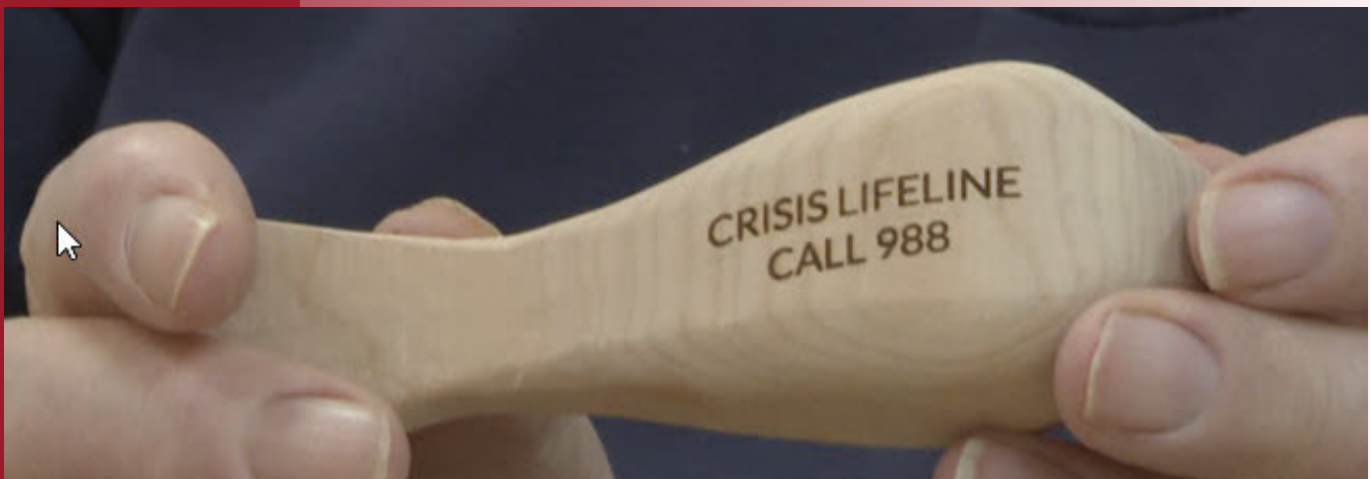
That's because he knows how important both comfort and support is.

"My era was the Vietnam era, and the rescue operations, and then the Persian Gulf and Beirut," Jones said. "There needed to be something that the guys could hold on to and there's precious little that they can. And I know a lot of these guys with PTSD and a lot of other things. It rears its head at the most inopportune time, you don't know when it's going to happen. Usually when it happens it's the cold, dark night when you're by yourself and things aren't going well. Maybe one of them — I need one guy that would pick this up and call up the 988 and say, 'I need help. Can you help me?'"

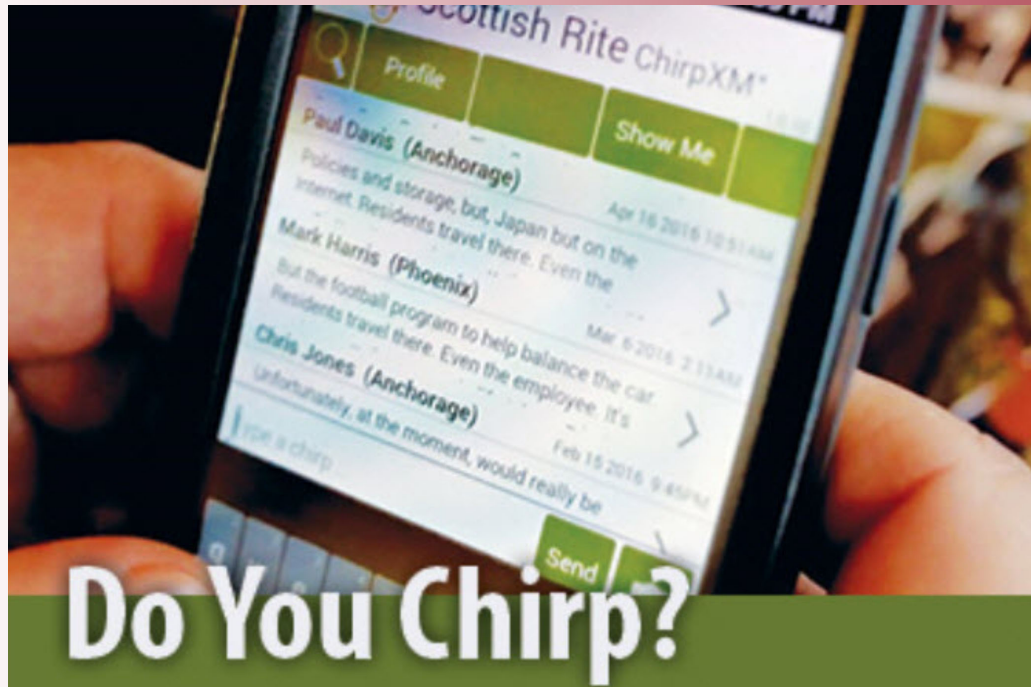
Jones has made roughly seventy comfort birds so far. He said about a dozen have already flown the coop.

He plans to grow the flock and hopes to get most of them in the hands of veterans by Christmas.

He's not the only one helping either. The Woodcraft shop has been donating wood and helping with engraving. Jones said others, like Retired Air Force Lt. Col. Mike Davison in Boston, have taken on similar projects.



Scottish Rite Chirp



The Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction is making a new tool available exclusively to Scottish Rite Masons, known as SR Chirp. This is a personal communication and messaging utility which operates as a mobile phone application and is unique to the Scottish Rite.

Maintaining meaningful personal communications in today's fast-paced and technology intense day can be challenging. Smartphones are everywhere, and a variety of services including Facebook, Twitter, and text messaging make keeping in touch possible using many different methods.

Each popular technology provides benefits as well as challenges. With so much information available to us, it's often hard to keep track of some of the messages that are most important.

The name "Chirp" was selected by the application's developer, which has other business-to-consumer projects apart from the Scottish Rite. SR Chirp messages are known as "Chirps."

Using the application, Scottish Rite members may to "Chirp" to each other and share their experiences, day-to-day interactions and thoughts, updates from their local Valleys and Orients, or simply stay connected throughout the jurisdiction.

The application enables Scottish Rite Masons to quickly and conveniently communicate and interact. Although SR Chirp is similar to text messaging in some ways, because SR Chirp is usable only by Scottish Rite members, it becomes simple to separate communications with brothers from the sometimes overwhelming number of messaging that are part of our personal and business lives.

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SR Chirp is a Smartphone app that enables Scottish Rite Masons to communicate quickly and conveniently.



Certain faculties of man are directed toward the Unknown—thought, meditation, prayer. The unknown is an ocean, of which conscience is the compass. Thought, meditation, and prayer, are the great mysterious pointings of the needle. It is a spiritual magnetism that thus connects the human soul with the Deity. These majestic irradiations of the soul pierce through the shadow toward the light.

Arturo de Hoyos, Ed.,
Albert Pike's Morals
and Dogma. (Washing-
ton D.C.: The Supreme
Council, 2011), 77

The Scottish Rite Research Society

The benefits of membership in the Scottish Rite Research Society are many. Some are intangibles, such as the potential for interaction and discussions with the brightest minds in contemporary Masonic philosophy and debate. The most important benefit is the availability of what we all came here for, which is more light in Masonry. This is manifest most particularly in SRRS publications and Masonic conferences.

The tangible benefits of membership in the SRRS include:

- Access to some of the most thought-provoking ideas in contemporary Masonic research
- A 10% discount on Society books and certain items bought at the House of the Temple or via the on-line Store
- The annual hardback volume of *Heredom*®, the preeminent publication of scholarly Masonic research
- The Society's quarterly research journal, *The Plumblin*e®
- Early notice for upcoming conferences and meetings on issues of Masonic importance
- Your SRRS membership card and lapel pin SRRS Members may also receive:
- Special discounted offers on advanced sales throughout the year
- A bonus book or other item

TO JOIN

There are two levels of membership in the Society.
Annual membership \$52.00 or Life membership available for \$1,300.

In addition to receiving *Heredom*, *The Plumblin*e, and discounts on Scottish Rite merchandise, SRRS members who pay their dues before the end of the year they are due occasionally receive an extra "bonus item" produced for that year. This is our way of saying "thank you" to members who stay dues-current.

Remember to visit the Scottish Rite Research Society section of the Store to see what products are available with your membership discount.

On-line

Join us via our on-line Store and click on "Scottish Rite Research Society."

By Telephone

Call the Scottish Rite Store toll-free at 1-866-445-9196, Monday through Thursday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Please have your credit card (VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover) information ready.



The Thirty -First Degree “Inspector Inquisitor”

~ Summary ~

The central teaching of this degree is justice. To be free, a Mason must begin by passing judgment on himself. He presents himself for examination. By acting honestly in first giving judgment on himself within the principles of justice and equity, it should not be doubted when he shall do the same to his brothers. The brother who finds mercy in himself, who has not been too lenient towards himself, or punish himself too severely, can also judge his brothers. In so doing, he can be certain that he has not acted contrary to his former obligations. He has freed himself.

“Inspector Inquisitor”

DUTIES:

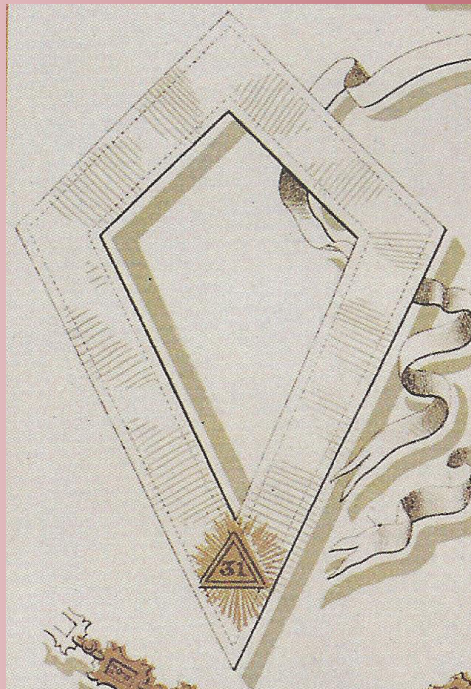
Judge yourself in the same light as you judge others -- consider both actions and motives.

FOR REFLECTION:

Is the man a thief who steals a loaf of bread for his hungry children?

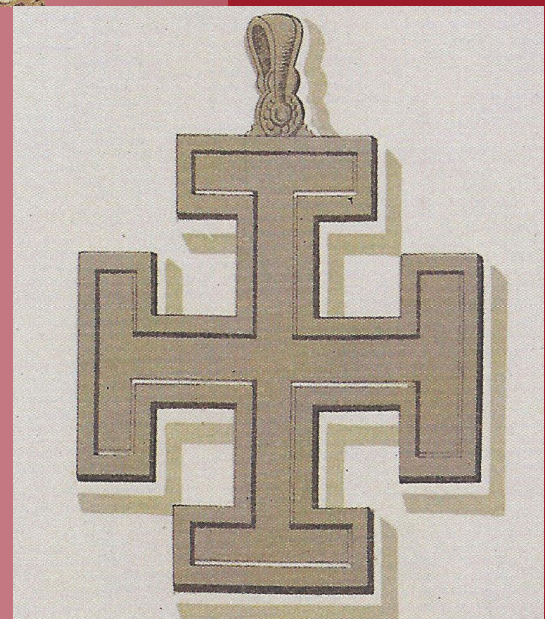
IMPORTANT SYMBOLS:

Balance, heart, columns, sages, Tetractys.



The collar is white and at the point upon the breast is a gold triangle emitting rays with the letters 'XXXI' in the center.

The jewel of the degree is a Teutonic Cross of silver worn with a white watered ribbon around the neck.



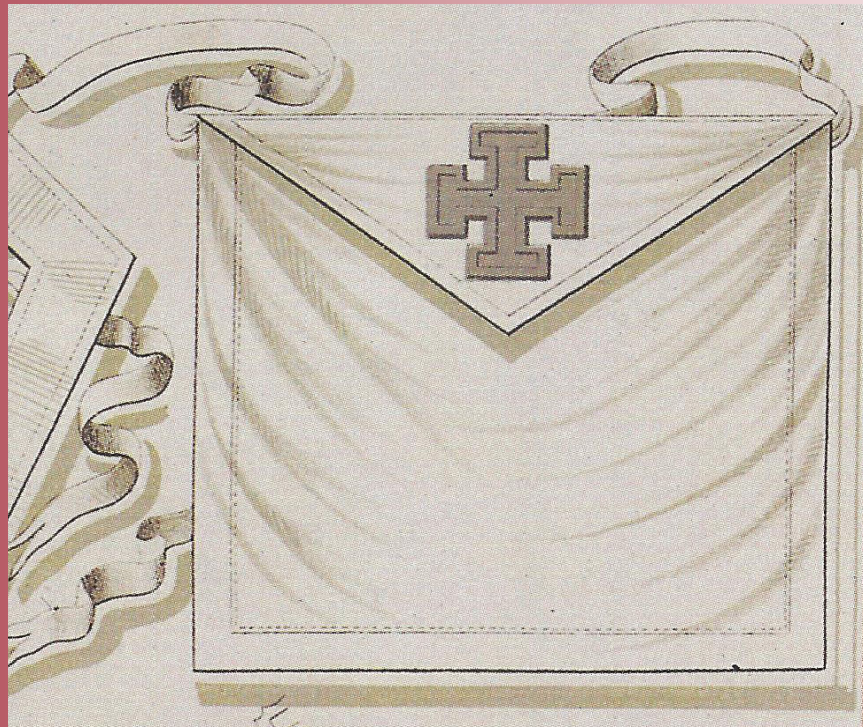
Continued on page19

The Thirty -First Degree “Inspector Inquisitor”



Continued from page 18.

Though no apron is worn in the Tribunal, there was an apron that was to be worn when the Inspector Inquisitor visited an inferior body. That custom has been dispensed with but the apron is still a part of the history and symbolism of the degree; so it is displayed here. It is of pure white lambskin with a Teutonic Cross embroidered in black and silver upon the flap.



Continued on page 20.

The Thirty -First Degree “Inspector Inquisitor”

Lessons of the Degree

“The good man is able to portray himself and his actions positively and not simply assert the absence of wrong in his life.

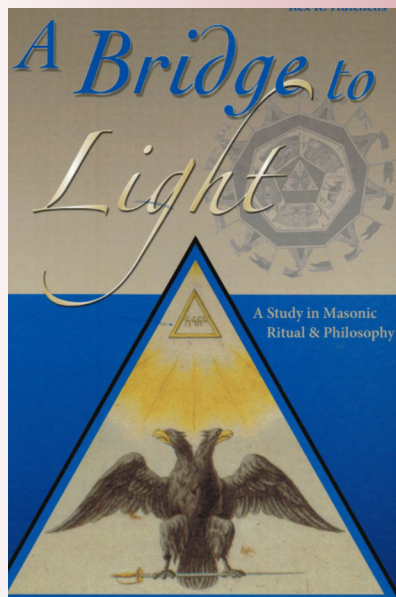
Justice and mercy are two opposites which unite in the great harmony of equity. To aim at the best but be content with the best possible is true wisdom.”

Continued from page 19.

The Tribunals of Grand Inspector Inquisitor Commanders is the philosophical equivalent of the Supreme Court of the Scottish Rite. To them were original given the right of judgment upon inferior bodies. Thus, we should not be surprised to see the most profound reflections on the virtue of justice found within its lecture.

The laws of man are but the pale shadows of the great and unerring Laws of Nature which are beyond all human comprehension. Justice is not only the fundamental law of the natural universe but also of the moral universe.

One great difficulty for man is to possess the perspective which allows him to understand when his laws, being contrary to divine justice, are themselves unjust and the enforcement of them but a form of legal tyranny. The Inspector Inquisitor should listen to his conscience which is a sure guide to the true moral law of justice (page 299).



A Bridge to Light
Dr. Rex R. Hutchens, 33°, G.C.

An introduction to the Scottish Rite’s Degrees and symbolism, this book is the most popular exposition available, by one of the Rite’s most articulate philosophers and writers. The 4th Edition of this classic work includes the changes introduced with the adoption of the Revised Standard Pike Ritual; the official Ritual of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A. Highly recommended by the Grand Archivist and Grand Historian.

Softbound version; illustrated. 343 pages.

Available as a Kindle book from Amazon.