



The Rite Light



Valley of Albany

Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, N.M.J., U.S.A.

Vol. XXVI

Spring, 2005

No.1

Feast of the Paschal Lamb



Spring Reunion - date has changed
Saturday, April 9, 2005

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL OF DELIBERATION

The bodies of the Scottish Rite, sitting in the Valley of Albany, State of New York 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 E. Webber, 33°
Sovereign Grand Commander

Ill.°. Lawrence D. Inglis, 33°
Grand Lieutenant Commander

Ill.°. Norman L. Christensen, 33°
Grand Minister of State

Ill.°. Harold L. Aldrich, 33°
Deputy for New York State

ACTIVE MEMBERS FOR NEW YORK

Ill.°. Gary A. Henningsen, 33°
Ill.°. Frederick D. Greene, 33°
Ill.°. David P. Spencer, 33°
Ill.°. Peter J. Samiec, 33°

ACTIVE EMERITI MEMBERS FOR NEW YORK

Ill.°. James F. Niehoff, 33°
Ill.°. Carlton A. Winchester, 33°
Past Deputy for New York
Ill.°. Bruce Widger, 33°
Past Deputy for New York
Ill.°. Richard H. Welkley, 33°

Spring Reunion

It is now April 9 and the degrees have changed. We will now be presenting the following degrees: 4, 6, 14, 15, 18, 26, 31, 32.

The 4th is now a required degree and the 32nd has been split into two parts. the allegory and prologue are now the new 31st and the ceremonial section remains the 32nd. The 30th degree was withdrawn and the former 31st was adopted as the 30th.

"Did You Get All That Was Coming to You"

This is a story of a man who put up a sign, "Puppies for Sale." He no sooner had the sign up than there was a small boy standing by wanting to know how much the puppies were going to cost. The man told him that since they were pretty good dogs he did not expect to let any of them go for less than twenty-five dollars. With a look of disappointment on his face, the youngster asked if he could see them.

The man called, "Lady," and whistled. Out of the kennel and down the runway came "Lady," with five little balls of fur rolling along behind her; one lagged considerably.

The boy spotted the lagger and asked: "What is wrong with him?" The man said: "Well, the veterinarian has examined him and he says there is no socket in the right hip. The dog will live, but he will never be much of a dog." "That is the one I want to buy," replied the youngster, "I will give you all I have right now, two dollars and eighty-seven cents, and pay you fifty cents a month until I get him paid for."

The man shook his head, "No, we will make a deal all right, but you don't want that dog. He will never be able to run, jump and play with you. You want one of the other dogs."

The youngster very slowly pulled up his little trousers. There was a brace running up both sides of his leg—a leather knee-cap, a badly twisted leg. The youngster said: "You know, I don't run so well myself, and he'll need somebody that understands him."

Well, it's just a boy and a dog, but it's a great idea; the desire to understand, the ability to put one's self in somebody else's position, and to understand and care.

—Masonic Service Association

Do Your Part...

RECRUIT

A NEW MEMBER!





Gerry Irwin, 32nd MSA

Parting Thoughts From the Commander-in-Chief – Spring 2005

Winter is upon us as I write this message – my last as Commander-in-Chief. The two years which started for me in May 2003 have come and gone very quickly. The changes to our Valley of Albany have been startling in that time. Old faces have left us behind and new ones are coming in to take their places. Each Brother who comes and assumes some part of the overall responsibility for this venerable organization enriches it as have those who have come and gone before us.

We have had our share of challenges here in the Valley, and they continue on. We continue to face the ongoing work of developing a program that will involve our membership as it should. This has been made more difficult by some communications issues which we are hopefully in process of solving at this point. I could and should write a column entitled “Did you know?” about the Valley of Albany, because there are a lot of things we have not communicated well, validating the asking of another question, “How come I didn’t know?”

Did you know we had a Fall Reunion on October 16, in which six Scottish Rite Degrees were conferred by very good casts? Our small but enthusiastic class enjoyed the day, as did several visiting Brothers from other Valleys. Did you know that we conferred the Sixth Degree for the first time, as we did the Tenth Degree the time before?

Did you know that the Consistory worked through the 23rd Degree, otherwise known as the “Four Chaplains” Degree? I was privileged to witness this Degree at a State Council of Deliberation Meeting, and it is becoming one of the most popular Degrees, although it has never been portrayed in our Valley in its present form. It carries a message of unselfishness and devotion to one’s Brothers.

Did you know that on September 22, the Valley of Albany was proud to present the Red Hat, the symbol of the Meritorious Service Award, to Brother Ronald H. Noll, 32nd Degree MSA. This presentation was made at the Awards Night Ceremony of Wadsworth Lodge #417, F&AM, marking the first time that a Scottish Rite award was presented as part of a Symbolic Lodge communication. The family of Masonry was well represented that evening.

Did you know that on Sunday, October 17, 2004, the Valleys of Albany, Schenectady, and Troy united to host an event which none of us had ever tried before. The “Capital District Walk for Dyslexia” was held at the Saratoga Battlefield to promote and raise funds for our 32nd Degree Masonic Learning Centers for Children. This has become our best-known charitable endeavor and will continue to be our focus for many years to come. Currently, New York has a functioning Learning Center in Rochester and another coming to fruition at the Eastern Star Home in Oriskany. These centers work with dyslexic children to attempt to eliminate this most disabling (and also far too common) learning disability. The cost per child is approximately \$5000. Our initial effort raised over \$3100 for this charitable work.

Did you know that the Valley of Albany has a beautiful and award-winning Web Site showing off not only our Valley, but also featuring the still-stunning Albany Masonic Temple? Brother Bob Fickies, our Thrice Potent Master, has done a marvelous job building and adding to this informative web site. He will describe it further in his article in this issue.

The main events for the Spring term include of course the **Spring Reunion, now scheduled for April 9th, 2005.** This reunion will feature some changes to our procedures mandated by the Supreme Council. These include the introduction of a new mandatory Fourth Degree, and the splitting of the time-honored 32nd Degree into two Degrees, the 31st and the 32nd, and other changes. Nothing would make me happier than to see a large and involved class witness these Degrees. Please say “yes” when the Degree Directors contact you for assistance.

As always, the Valley needs YOU. The small and dedicated core of Brothers working month in and month out are not going anywhere, but we need to see more old and new faces at our programs. That single-handedly makes our efforts seem worthwhile.

Hope to see you soon at a Valley program.

Gerry Irwin, 32nd MSA
Commander-in-Chief

“A conclusion is a place where you got tired of thinking.”
-Fisher’s Law

From the Grand Lodge of Perfection

www.albany.net/~go/scotrite/

What is this? It's your Internet gateway to more light in Masonry! Yes, in January of this year, the Valley of Albany, AASR became one of only four valleys in New York State to have an Internet web site.

Yes, our Valley, and the historic and beautiful Albany Temple has been receiving "cyber visitors" from around the world. On our web site, you will find a concise history of the Valley of Albany, as well as a history of Scottish Rite Masonry in North America, as the two are very closely linked in history. You'll also find a meeting schedule, and information for those men wanting to become a Mason, or join Scottish Rite. Our web site is also designed to serve as general starting point for all those seeking "more light in Masonry." There are dozens of links to other Masonic sites worldwide, and more are added regularly.

I am very pleased to announce that our web site has recently been certified by *Pietre-Stones Review of Freemasonry* as an "Educational Masonic Site. I invite all my brothers to visit our web site, and make your visit known, by signing our guest book.

I feel extremely honored to be chosen as presiding officer for the *Ineffable & Sublime Grand Lodge of Perfection*, which began its 237th consecutive year in October, as the very first Scottish Rite lodge to be chartered in all of North America. I plan to celebrate the Lodge's unique role as the birthplace of Scottish Rite Masonry in North America this year.

At the opening meeting of our Lodge of Perfection, we welcomed Dr. Stefan Bielinski, director of the Historic Albany program at the *New York State Museum*. Dr. Bielinski has collected a great deal of information on the citizens of Albany at the time when our lodges were founded. His presentation was just excellent, introducing the few brothers in attendance to several of our founding members, and the way they lived their daily lives in colonial Albany.

I would be remiss, if I did not tell you that I, and most of your valley officers, am concerned about the future of our concordant bodies. Most meetings are attended by less than one percent of the valley membership. Those attending are, for the most part, your presiding officers, and other members of the executive board. Hardly any fresh faces come forward to say, "I'll fill a chair", or even, "I'll make it a point to attend a couple of meetings this year". To those who do, I extend a sincere "Thank You, Brother!"

Our Sovereign Grand Commander, Walter E. Webber, 33 recently wrote;

"When the individual member builds a life that resembles a firm foundation stone, our fraternity is strengthened, but more importantly, the community in which he lives is enriched. Just imagine what can happen when those individuals work together as a lodge of a Valley. It can become a monument, even without the bricks and mortar."

You have probably noticed some changes in the meeting schedule this year. Many of our regular meetings will be joint meetings of two concordant bodies. In the spring, all four bodies will host a dinner meeting, which we hope will be well attended. We have also moved most meetings to weekdays when there is little conflict with other Masonic meetings. All this has been done in hopes that YOU will make the effort to attend your Scottish Rite meetings!

Robert Fickies
Thrice Potent Master

Upon leaving the office of Bro. Roger H. Ferger, your editor was handed a folder containing this prayer:

"Slow me down, Lord! Ease the pounding of my heart by the quieting of my mind. Steady my hurried pace with a vision of the eternal reach of time. Give me, amidst the confusion of my day, the calmness of the everlasting hills. Break the tensions of my nerves and muscles with the soothing music of singing streams that live in my memory. Help me to know the magical, restoring power of sleep. Teach me the art of taking minute vacations . . . of slowing down to look at a flower, to chat with a friend, to pat a dog, to read a few lines from a good book.

"Remind me each day of the fable of the hare and the tortoise, that I may know that the race is not always to the swift; that there is more to life than measuring its speed. Let me look upward into the branches of the towering oak and know that it grew great and strong because it grew slowly and well. Slow me down, Lord, and inspire me to send my roots deep into the soil of life's enduring values that I may grow toward the stars of my greater destiny!"



The Grand Council, Princes of Jerusalem

My Brothers,

We are nearing the end of another year in the history of our historic Valley of Albany. The only words appropriate at this time are a heartfelt declaration of 'Thanks' to all those whose efforts have contributed so much to our success. I believe the Valley has begun to turn a corner. The work we are doing now will reap benefits in the years to come.

I hope that you all can join us at the Reunion on April 9, 2005. We owe it to our candidates to present the best possible degrees. Your presence, both onstage and on the sidelines, helps to create the kind of atmosphere that will motivate our new Brothers to come back.

I'll see you then.

**Russell LaGrange, 32nd MSA
Sovereign Prince**



Albany Sovereign Chapter of Rose Croix

Perfect Knights,

I invite you to a couple of interesting programs in the upcoming Months. In addition to the Reunion, I have planned some meetings that should be informative and entertaining. On March 2, 2005 there will be a film presentation with all Bodies attending. March 20 will be the Solemn Ceremonies of the

Feast of the Paschal Lamb. Rose Croix observe this beautiful and symbolic celebration as a memorial service honoring our brethren who have passed to their eternal reward during the preceding year.

Officers for the 2004 - 2005, Albany Sovereign Chapter of Rose Croix 18° - 1824

Most Wise Master - William F. Okesson, Jr.

Senior Warden - Kurt W. Mason

Junior Warden - Alan C. Garrison

Trustee - Richard G. Barrell

Orator - John W. Scott

Master of Ceremonies - Dennis L. DeBell

Every degree teaches us lessons for everyday living. The 23rd degree reminds me of our soldiers fighting for our freedom in Iraq and Iran. The degree is a story that tells about four men of God; a Rabbi, a Catholic Priest, a Methodist Minister and a Pastor of a Reformed Church who gave their lives in WWII so that others might live. Let us keep our soldiers in our prayers. The most important part of reaching a goal is the journey to that goal.

I hope to see you out to support these programs. Also, your current, and future officers, will be most happy to listen to your suggestions for programs in the upcoming year. The Valley of Albany is yours, my Brothers, and we want our meetings and programs to reflect your interests and need.

Report From the Secretary

We completed the first full year with a whole new Administration in August 2004, starting with your Secretary, Treasurer, and Rite Light Editor. It has been a learning experience with a few small bumps in the road, but overall we have come through it pretty well. Many cost cutting measures were taken to reduce expenses, including significant cuts in administration, equipment, and utilities.

The heads of our four bodies worked to present interesting programs to the assembled members. Attendance was disappointing and in some instances, meetings were cancelled due to insufficient numbers in attendance. Your Executive Board has taken steps to address this situation. First, few meetings are being held on a Thursday, the night some Blue Lodges in the Albany District meet, but are being held instead on a Wednesday night. Second, several meetings have been eliminated by combining meetings of two bodies. I call to your attention the schedule of meetings and programs that was mailed to all members in September. Please post it conspicuously for future reference and plan to support your Scottish Rite body. One change worth noting: The Spring Reunion will be held on April 9, 2005.

I will highlight a few cost saving measures we have instituted. We reduced the printing of the Rite Light to bi-annually, reducing printing and postage expenses. In order to partially compensate for the reduced frequency of communication, we will be sharing more information electronically through e-mail. Please let the Secretary know your e-mail address so that you can be included in the electronic distributions. His address is mdderry@yahoo.com. Be assured that no e-mail addresses will be divulged to unauthorized persons and they will be used exclusively for Scottish Rite business.

In other cost cutting measures, we returned the copier and terminated the maintenance agreement. We terminated the contract on the postage meter and DSL phone line, also saving a substantial sum.

There were some successes during the year. The Feast of the Pascal Lamb was performed very proficiently by all participants from memory. We had a good Spring Reunion with six new members and the degrees were performed smoothly but with a few short notice replacements in the casts. We had an equally good Fall Reunion on October 23, 2004 with eight new members, when we performed the 6th, 14th, 16th (Delta Bodies of Troy), 18th, 26th, and 32nd degrees. We did the 6th degree for the first time and we will be performing the 4th degree for the first time in the future, a new Supreme Council mandate.

We have a few new officers joining our ranks this year. John Scott was been appointed Orator and Dennis DeBell was appointed Master of Ceremonies in the Chapter of Rose Croix. John Minozzi was elected to the office of Junior Warden in the Lodge of Perfection and Donald H. Blake was appointed Hospitaler. We welcome them to our ranks.

Michael Derry, Secretary

Another Thought from the Secretary's Desk...

It's a 'Chicken vs. the Egg' Question

What is responsible for generating a resurgence of attendance at meetings? Is it a group of officers who call their fellow Brothers to come out to create a group large enough to support interesting programs or is it a series of interesting programs that encourage Brothers to begin supporting meetings again?

Either way, it depends on the current team of Officers. Calls must be made to encourage attendance. Then Officers must provide interesting programs so that those who do attend are suitably rewarded for their attendance. Of course, it all begins with having members willing to step forward and serve as Officers. Communication, planning, and commitment are the keys to success in any event. Those who have agreed to serve must set the example of good attendance and service to their fraternity.

A guest speaker at Chapter not long ago spoke of the need for us to become well informed as Masons. It occurred to me that we owe it to our fraternity to search for knowledge so that we may present our fraternity to uninformed non-members effectively. We all have varying degrees of knowledge, but sadly, too often it is relatively superficial. We know that we belong to a great fraternity that helps to make good men better, that we are benevolent and charitable, and that we enjoy good fellowship. But what do we know beyond that which sets us apart from social organizations? Perhaps those among us who are best informed could present us with deeper meaning during the program portion of our meetings or instructional sessions at a special meeting. It might encourage greater attendance if the membership knew that they would achieve a more complete understanding of their beloved craft. Another option might be for those who are most informed to provide our Editor with articles for inclusion in the Rite Light, thereby reaching all members. Whatever the means, we should strive to increase our understanding of Masonry.

Help, Aid and Assistance...

With regard to questions being raised by many brethren relative to Tsunami relief, Supreme Council will be making a donation to CARE at this time. We are also investigating various options through our Masonic contacts in the region and will keep all informed as to future assistance. Should any brother wish to make a donation in support of our Supreme Council efforts, please make check payable to Scottish Rite Charities and note "Tsunami Relief" in the memo section of your check and forward to Supreme Council, P.O. Box 519, Lexington, MA. —Michael Derry

Important Dues Notice

At the 2004 Annual Convocation of the New York State Council on Deliberation several items of business were approved that will impact New York Valleys in the future. One of the most significant item concerns dues as follows:

Effective with the 2006 fiscal year, when a member of a Subordinate Body owes one year's dues, such Body shall take appropriate action within the next year ensuing. Such action shall be remission of dues or suspension for non-payment thereof.

We currently allow a member to get behind three years in dues. After August 1, 2005, we will take action to suspend any member who has not paid 2005 dues, since the 2006 fiscal year will have begun on August 1, 2005.

Please don't get behind in your dues payments and then become suspended for non-payment. Your Valley pays your assessments to the Supreme Council and the NYS Council on Deliberation each year that you are a member. That sum is significant.

Each year that you don't pay your dues costs your Valley in assessments. If you become suspended, you will have run up a debt for your Valley that will never be collected! While we don't want to lose you as a member, it is better that you request a demit while you are paid up on our books if you no longer wish to retain your membership.

When you received your 2005 dues notice, you received your dues card in anticipation of your payment of dues. Possession of a 2005 dues card is not evidence of payment of 2005 dues. Only a cancelled check or cash receipt issued by the Secretary is your proof of payment.



DeMolay honors Sovereign Grand Commander of Northern Masonic Jurisdiction and Southern Jurisdiction



This spring hundreds of young men will be recruited to join their friends in a fun-filled organization that has been a part of the Masonic Family since 1919. DeMolay is an organization dedicated to preparing young men to lead successful, happy, and productive lives. Basing its approach on timeless principles and practical, hands-on experience, DeMolay opens doors for young men aged 12 to 21 by developing the civic awareness, personal responsibility and leadership skills so vitally needed in society today. DeMolay combines this serious mission with a fun approach that builds important bonds of friendship among members in more than 1,000 chapters worldwide.

Sovereign Grand Commanders Walter E. Webber and Ronald A. Seale are being honored as Senior DeMolays in the organization's spring membership drive. DeMolay alumni include Walt Disney, John Wayne, Walter Cronkite, football Hall-of-Famer Fran Tarkenton, legendary Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne, news anchor David Goodnow and many others. Each has spoken eloquently of the life-changing benefit gained from their involvement in DeMolay.

All youth members that are first line signers on new petitions this spring will receive the following: "Thank you" letters from the Grand Master, Congress Officers, Executive Director and from the Sovereign Grand Commanders. In addition, an application for membership and CD with a request to continue to pursue new members will be included. For more information about DeMolay go to www.DeMolay.org

Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, N.M.J., U.S.A.
VALLEY OF ALBANY
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Albany, New York 12207-1999

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**Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite
Valley of Albany
Albany Sovereign Chapter Rose Croix**

"And this day shall be unto you for a Memorial and ye shall keep it a Feast to the Lord throughout your generation: ye shall keep it a Feast by an ordinance forever." Exodus 12:14

Perfect Knights:

In accordance with Article II, Section 3 of the Bylaws of this Body all Perfect Knights are obligated to attend to their duties by observing the

Solemn Ceremony of the Feast of the Paschal Lamb

to be held at the Scottish Rite Hall, Albany Masonic Temple, 67 Corning Place, Albany NY

Palm Sunday
March 20, 2005
3:30 PM

during which time we pay tribute to our departed Brother Knights

Our Guest Speaker will be Peter Samiec

Ham Dinner at \$5.00 per person will follow at 5:00PM
Reservations must be made with William F. Okesson, Jr.
518 482-6972. No walk-ins, please.
email: wokesson@nycap.rr.com
Ladies and guests invited

((All participants of ceremony should meet at
3:00 PM for rehearsal.))