



# THE RITENEWS OF NORTH CAROLINA

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SCOTTISH RITE BODIES OF  
THE ORIENT OF NORTH CAROLINA



JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2024

## A NEW DAY BEGINS

by Illustrious A. Gene Cobb, Jr., 33° Sovereign Grand Inspector General

President Ronald Reagan understood our Scottish Rite creed very well. “Human progress is our goal, liberty of thought our supreme wish, freedom of conscience our mission, and the guarantee of equal rights to all people everywhere, our goal.”

A quote attributed to President Reagan, is “Every new day begins with possibilities. It’s up to us to fill it with the things that move us toward progress and peace.”

Progress brings possibilities and peace. Every “today” is a new day. On this new day, what possibilities do we have before us? How will it move us toward progress and peace?

Will this be the year that each Valley has a net gain in membership AND operates in the “black?” I was taught to bring in at least two members in my lifetime. How many have you invited to join Scottish Rite?

Will this be the year that our stated communications, our reunions, our feasts and festivities, our public appearances, our Rite Care and Masonic Youth support, truly strengthens the family of Freemasonry in North Carolina we so often “talk” about? I was deeply moved by a brother in one Valley who got in his car and went way out of his way during Honors Weekend to assist another brother from another Valley.



Illustrious A. Gene Cobb, Jr. 33° Sovereign Grand Inspector General

The answer to those questions lies within each of

our hearts.

In my visits among you, I’ve talked about the importance of North Carolina being “Black and Blue.” Our progress in Scottish Rite Masonry is not now and never will be measured by the number of red, white, or purple caps we have. It can only be measured by growth of the Rite and recognition of those who for fifty years have been faithful and attentive to their membership vows. Please do not misunderstand me. Our Orient, not Valley, Honors are important, but growth of the Rite and recognition of those who have been faithful so long to the Supreme Council and Freemasonry deserves our unwavering attention if progress and peace has a chance. That’s why we opened the Honors Banquet this year by renaming it “Red, White, and Blue.” It has a nice patriotic ring to it as well.



Progress and peace begin with possibilities. If you are reading this, then you see it from your phone, computer, or printer. It isn’t in the Scottish Rite Journal North Carolina Insert anymore. Perhaps you are reading this because a brother cared enough about you seeing it that he printed it and went out of his way to bring it to you. Perhaps a brother chose to visit you because he knew you needed a visit and preferred the page to the screen. Another possibility is that our brother thought it might inspire you to petition a Valley for membership.

Such a brotherly response brings true peace, progress, and possibilities and reminds us that every time “today” rolls around, a new day has begun!□

## Upcoming Event

### March 11-13, 2024

### SGIG and Grand Master Trip to Washington, DC

The Grand Master of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina and the Sovereign Grand Inspector General of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in North Carolina invite you to join us to our nation's capital for a tour of the George Washington National Masonic Memorial and the House of the Temple. We plan to attend a Scottish Rite Ceremony of Remembrance and Renewal hosted by the Valley of Washington, Orient of the District of Columbia.

Anyone interested in joining us for this trip at your own expense can do so now.

Visit

[NCScottishRite.org](http://NCScottishRite.org)  
for more information

# The RiteNews of North Carolina

## Valley News & Upcoming Events

### VALLEY OF ASHEVILLE

#### HONORS DAY

by J David Cashion, 33°

What a fabulous day in Wilmington, NC for Honors Day. Asheville is happy to announce four Knight Commander Cross of Honor men and one 33° Inspector General (Honorary).

Congratulations to Randy Collins, Randy Franklin, Andrew Norton, and Donnie Wallace KCCH and Gene Canter 33°. These men work hard not only for the Valley of Asheville, but the Valley of Franklin also.

This year the Banquet had a name change from Red and White Banquet to Red, White and Blue Banquet, where we also honored those who have labored in the quarries for 50 or more years.

2024 has begun and the new Officers are in place. A large thank you is in order for the 2023 Officers and leaders of the Valley of Asheville for their hard work and dedication.



Gene Canter, 33°



Andrew Norton, Randy Collins, Randy Franklin KCCH.

### VALLEY OF FAYETTEVILLE

#### RINGS FOR ALL

by Thomas Pope, 33°

Calendar year 2023 was jam-packed with “firsts” for the Valley of Fayetteville: Being able to operate under Letters Temporary to get started; its first reunion; acquisition of a Lodge of Perfection charter during the Biennial; an adoption of by-laws and installation of its first slate of officers, its first Feast of Tishri.

The Valley closed out the year December 20th with its Stated meeting, followed by its first ring ceremony for the members who began their Scottish Rite journey.

Those from the Valley who became Masters of the Royal Secret are: Ian Harbison, Woodrow Inman, Larry McPhail, Tony Meyers, Wyman Nichols, Nelson Sanchez, Mark Saults, Jonathan Strange, and James White. Bro. Laurice Williams took degrees 4-14 at our September reunion, and plans to complete the work in degrees 15-32 in 2024 as a member of the Valley of Wilmington.

Two Valley officers, James Pugsley (Secretary) and Lee Short



(Senior Warden), ended terms of service for the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. Pugsley served four years as the District Deputy Grand Master of District 17, and Short put in seven years as District Deputy Grand Lecturer before passing on that role.

The Valley experienced its first loss with the passing of Bro. Steve Bright on October 14th after a series of strokes. Bro. Bright was a US Army retiree, and a large number of brethren attended his memorial service November 18th.

Our next reunion is set for February 17th, and will be the Ill. James Hay Memorial Reunion. He was a Past Master of Fort Bragg Lodge #667, the long-time Secretary of Stedman #730, and a member of virtually every appendant body that exists. Ill. Hay died in August 2020 at age 104, and he was buried with Masonic rites at Sandhills State Veterans Cemetery on Fort Liberty.

### VALLEY OF WILMINGTON

#### VALLEY OF WILMINGTON'S FALL REUNION 2023

by Harry Steele, 32°, KCCH, steeleharry1@gmail.com

November 3rd and 4th, 2023 the Valley of Wilmington held their Fall Reunion which was named in honor of Ill.: Ralph Van Shipton, Sr., 33°. We are happy to welcome three new Masters of the Royal Secret to the Valley. Nine degrees were conferred to a good crowd of Valley Brothers and initiates. Sovereign Grand Inspector General, Ill.: A. Gene Cobb, Jr. 33° as present on Saturday to greet and welcome our new Brothers.

We enjoyed two days of Brotherly fellowship with meals provided under the direction of our own Happy Buffkin, 33° and his wife, Belinda. Thanks to them and all the kitchen staff for their hard work. Also, many thanks to all the degree teams for all of their hard work and hours of practice and preparation. We appreciate you all!



First Row: Ill.: Jim Brandt, 33°, General Secretary, Ill.: E. Earl Wells, 33° and Ill.: Eddie Gaskins, 33°, Director of the Work. Second Row: Ill.: Michael Saviak, 33°, Anthony W. House, 33°, Justin L. Langdon, 32°, Scott B. Kelly, 32°, Michael S Albertson, 32° (received degrees in Greensboro), and Steve Bland, 32°, KCCH

→January 10 & February 14 at 6:30-9:00 pm

Meeting - Scottish Rite Study Club  
[604 Doug Mayes Place Charlotte]

The Valley of Greensboro salutes its 2023 Honourmen:  
Michael Allen Register, 33°  
David Harold Griffith, 32° KCCH  
William Joe Hart, 32° KCCH  
Edward Charles Moore, 32° KCCH  
Charles Shawn Moser, 32° KCCH  
Kevin Clark Otis, 32° KCCH

## VALLEY OF GREENSBORO

### CHANGE OF THE GUARD IN GREENSBORO'S KITCHEN

by Mike Harrelson, 32° KCCH

The pre-meeting and special dinners we enjoy in our beloved valley have been provided by WB Greg Woodard, 32° KCCH and his crew for a number of years. Greg wears a lot of hats in our valley including kitchen manager, property manager, renovations manager and all-around hard worker, to name just a few. This year he decided to retire from the kitchen to spend more time on his other duties, and he has promoted me to kitchen manager with the blessings of Personal Representative Shaun Bradshaw, PGM and General Secretary Gary Handy, 33°. My tenure started at the September meeting.

WB Greg, thank you for a job well done and for your years of hard work and perseverance to bring our meal service to the highest standard. I joined the valley in April 2015, and by September I was working with you in the kitchen. We have come a long way in our efforts to provide a good meal at a reasonable price, and we have succeeded. I am honored that you have chosen me for this role.

Brethren, if you have a passion for cooking and a desire to serve our brother Scottish Rite Masons, contact me through the valley and we will welcome you to our team.



## VALLEY OF GREENSBORO

### A HOMECOMING

by Gary Handy, 33°

Greensboro's stated meeting in September, where we went to work following our summer hiatus, had the feel of a homecoming. What a special evening it was.

We formally received our new Sovereign Grand Inspector General and past Personal Representative, Ill. A. Gene Cobb, 33° PGM, who was elected and crowned SGIG at the biennial session in August. Ours was the first valley in the orient to receive our new SGIG, and members of his home lodge, Blackmer #127, who were present at and took part in his three degrees, served in the honor guard and formed the arch of steel.

We also presented our beloved Bro. Dorsey King with his 50-year blue cap. Bro. King was a member with SGIG Gene Cobb, 33° at Blackmer Lodge prior to his move to WhiteStone.

We were pleased to have three new members from our May 10th spring reunion and two new members from the July 15th orient-wide reunion. Those five new Scottish Rite Masons – Travis Farrar, Walter Harris, Jonathan Remy, Terry Rouch and Aaron Seifer – were presented with patents and caps by SGIG Gene Cobb, 33° and Personal Representative Ill. Shaun Bradshaw, 33° PGM.



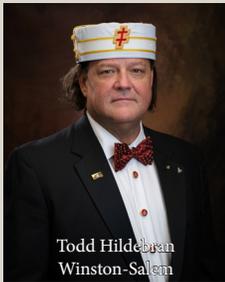
Personal Representative Shaun Bradshaw, 33°; Dorsey King, 32°; and SGIG Gene Cobb, 33°  
PHOTOGRAPH BYLINE: Joseph Roux, 32°



# 2023 Scottish Rite Honourmen



Don Butto  
Raleigh



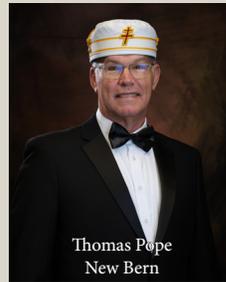
Todd Hildebran  
Winston-Salem



Mike Register  
Greensboro



Russell Rainear  
New Bern



Thomas Pope  
New Bern



Christopher Houser  
Charlotte



Lloyd Buffkin  
Wilmington



Dan Beal  
Charlotte



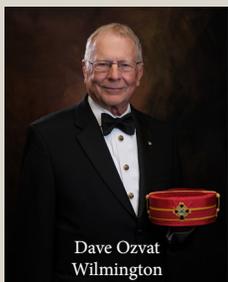
Michael Faulkenbury  
Wilmington



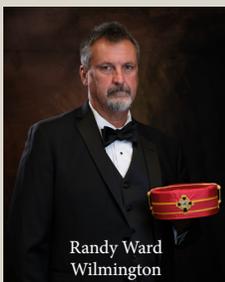
Genes Center  
Asheville



Orient 33° Team  
Orient of North Carolina



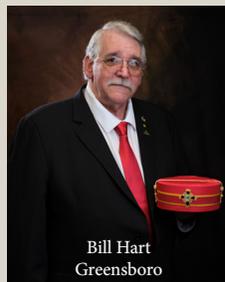
Dave Ozvat  
Wilmington



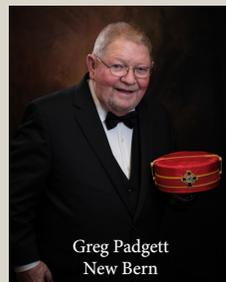
Randy Ward  
Wilmington



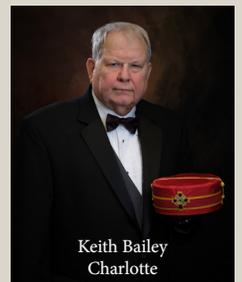
Chuck Moser  
Greensboro



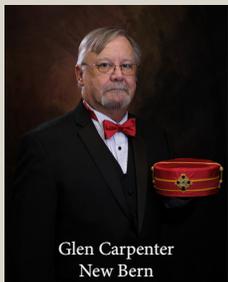
Bill Hart  
Greensboro



Greg Padgett  
New Bern



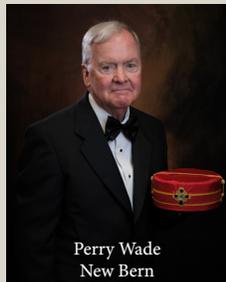
Keith Bailey  
Charlotte



Glen Carpenter  
New Bern



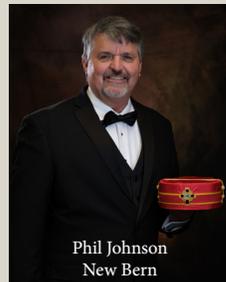
Oswald Chance  
New Bern



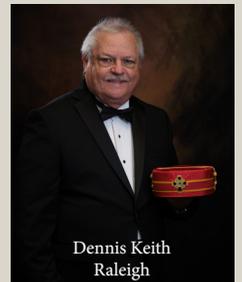
Perry Wade  
New Bern



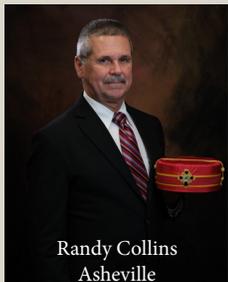
Kevin Otis  
Greensboro



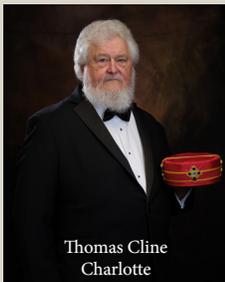
Phil Johnson  
New Bern



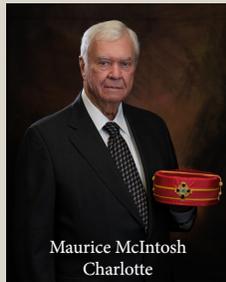
Dennis Keith  
Raleigh



Randy Collins  
Asheville



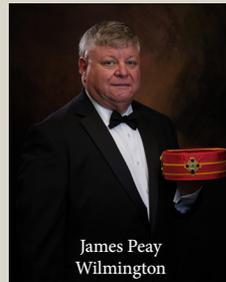
Thomas Cline  
Charlotte



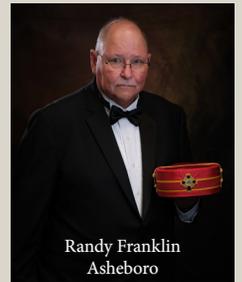
Maurice McIntosh  
Charlotte



Alex Edmisten  
Winston-Salem

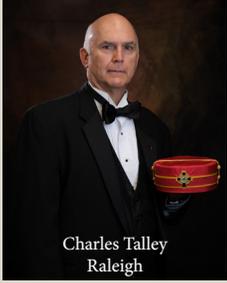


James Peay  
Wilmington

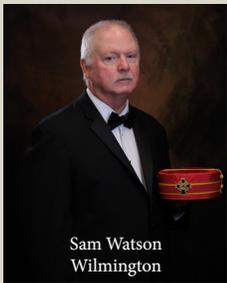


Randy Franklin  
Asheboro

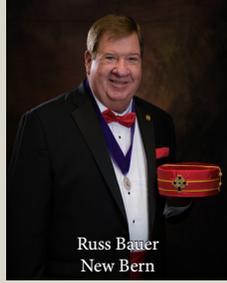
# 2023



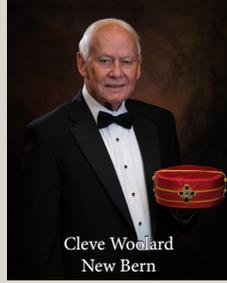
Charles Talley  
Raleigh



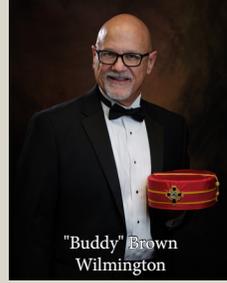
Sam Watson  
Wilmington



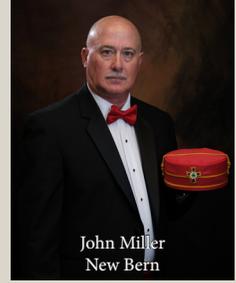
Russ Bauer  
New Bern



Cleve Woolard  
New Bern



"Buddy" Brown  
Wilmington



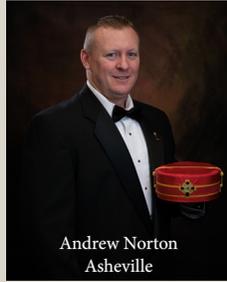
John Miller  
New Bern



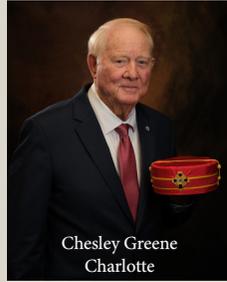
James Johnson, III  
Wilmington



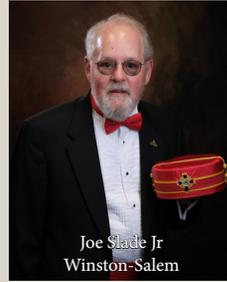
Josh Bristol  
Charlotte



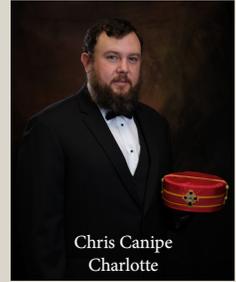
Andrew Norton  
Asheville



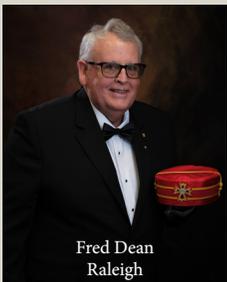
Chesley Greene  
Charlotte



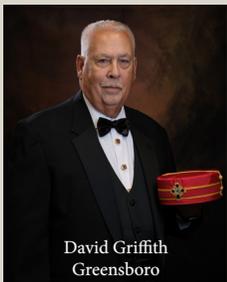
Joe Slade Jr  
Winston-Salem



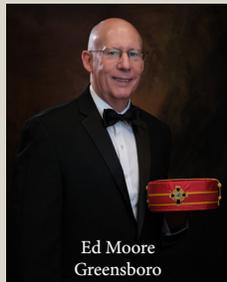
Chris Canipe  
Charlotte



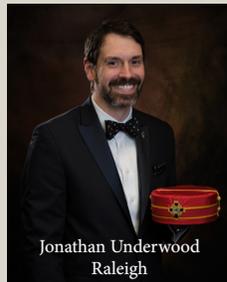
Fred Dean  
Raleigh



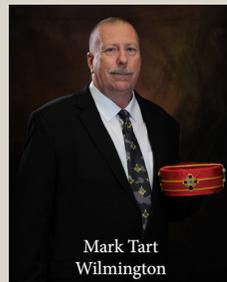
David Griffith  
Greensboro



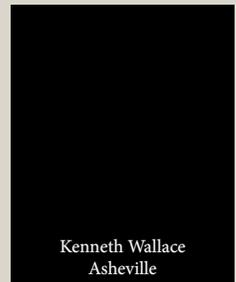
Ed Moore  
Greensboro



Jonathan Underwood  
Raleigh



Mark Tart  
Wilmington

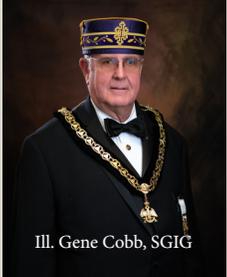


Kenneth Wallace  
Asheville



Jeremy Hicklin  
Charlotte

Invested in TN, courtesy to NC.



Ill. Gene Cobb, SGIG



Orient KCCH Team  
Valley of Wilmington

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# The RiteNews of North Carolina

## Valley News & Upcoming Events

### VALLEY OF NEW BERN

#### 50 YEARS IN THE SCOTTISH RITE

by William Fitzpatrick 32 Degree KCCH

I feel very fortunate to have had a present-day, 50 year Scottish Rite Mason, Rhyne Garris, as my friend and mentor for about as long as I have been in the fraternity. He will soon reach the age of 95, and he has lived a good life, in my view. Enlisting at the age of 16 in 1946, he was eager to serve his country. His starting pay was \$50 per month but soon went up with "overseas" pay. His underage enlistment was eventually discovered, but by then, he was stationed in North China with the 1st Marine Regiment. He had reached the required age by that time, and his sergeant just made him sign form to continue. There is no way he would ever approve of me writing about him, so any questions I needed to ask were on the sly. He has lived



like he knows that life is not about looking good, feeling good, and gathering the goods but about doing good and helping others to do the same. A mutual friend of ours has said that when he moved to the area from Ohio many years ago, "Rhyne was one of the first people I met...he shook my hand and he hasn't yet let go." He and two other men, one who is also currently a 50 year SRM, and the other a deceased brother, were some of the first workers at the Onslow County Ministry Soup Kitchen about forty years ago. At the time, it was in a small building about the size of an average

living room behind one of the downtown churches, and soup and sandwiches were the fare for everyone. The Masons would sit in the back of a camper as it went down the road, making the PB and J sandwiches as fast as they could to hand out at designated spots in the county that were inhabited by less fortunate individuals. Soup was ladled out into cups and containers brought by the patrons to the camper. The soup kitchen now operates out of a refurbished grocery store and serves several hundred meals daily while also distributing thousands of pounds of surplus, donated food every week. Rhyne was always recruiting volunteers, and when one brother tried to escape because he was busy being a passionate barbershop singer, Rhyne just went to the brother's wife who gladly signed him up. While the trappings of wealth have never been associated with him, he has always given away what he had to whoever he thought needed help. No fanfare, but as his friend, I have seen his abundant generosity, often to strangers, over and over with my own eyes. As the founder and operator of his church's food pantry, he annually delivered gift baskets to needy families for Christmas. Once, he had collected turkeys for the baskets, but he needed someone to cook them. He took ten of them to the local Piggly Wiggly, and asked how much it would cost to have them cooked there. The lady told him it would be \$10 per bird, and he agreed. When he went back to get them, the lady who had done the cooking asked about why he needed so much turkey. When he told her, she began yelling at him that he should have told her that before, and she made the new price of \$1 per turkey. Goodness begets goodness, and Rhyne Garris has spent his life sowing seeds of goodness wherever he went, and he had great fun all the while.

### VALLEY OF RALEIGH

#### SCOTTISH RITE SERVICE AWARD

by Ill. Don Butto, 33°

At the Valley of Raleigh's December 2023 stated communication, a memorable and significant event took place. Ill. David Wicker, 33°, PGM, the Personal Representative to the SGIG of North Carolina, commenced the evening with a notable gesture of recognition. He called forth the past recipients of the Service Award who had previously been honored with a certificate but not a wearable medal, and presented them with their medals. This act not only honored their past achievements but also restored a cherished tradition.

The Personal Representative then proudly announced the 2023 award recipient, Brother Michael Orlando, 32° KSA. In a gesture symbolizing recognition and respect, WB Orlando was presented with both his certificate and medal. This moment marked a significant milestone in his Masonic journey and served as an inspira-

tion to all in attendance.

The Scottish Rite Service Award, a symbol of distinction and honor, is bestowed upon members within the Scottish Rite who have reached the 32° and have exemplified exceptional dedication and service. This award is not merely a token of recognition but a testament to the recipient's exemplary contributions to the Rite and their communities. It embodies the core values and principles of the Scottish Rite; celebrating individuals for their unwavering commitment, exemplary Masonic character, and impactful service. The recipients of this award play a pivotal role in inspiring others on their Masonic path and in fortifying the fraternal bonds within our organization.



→ **January 8 & February 12 at 6:30 pm**  
 Meetup - Crabtree Ale House (2nd Monday)  
 Come join us to hang out with our Brothers and their families.  
 [Crabtree Valley Mall • 4601 Crabtree Avenue Raleigh]

→ **January 16 & February 20 at 11:30 am**  
 Meetup - Steak Lovers Tuesday (3rd Tuesday)  
 Bring your own steak  
 [2100-A South Glenburnie Road New Bern]

VALLEY OF WINSTON-SALEM

**CONGRATULATIONS... 50 & 60 YEAR SERVICE AWARDS, SR GRAND STEWARD, GRAND TREASURE, AND ACACIA GUILD**

by Christopher Pearman 33°

**SENIOR GRAND STEWARD**



A big congratulations to Illustrious Brother Joey Transou 33°, on being appointed as the Senior Grand Steward for the Grand Lodge of North Carolina for 2024. This appointment was made by incoming Grand Master Don Kehler. Congratulations Illustrious Brother Transou, and thank-you for all that you do, have done, and continue to do for our Scottish Rite Valley, as well as all of Freemasonry!

**GRAND TREASURER**

Congratulations to Illustrious and Most Worshipful Past Grand Master Lewis Ledford 33°, for being elected as the Treasurer for the Grand Lodge of North Carolina for another term in 2024. Congratulations and thank-you for all that you do for Masonry!



**ACACIA GUILD**

Congratulations to Bro. Todd Hildebran on becoming a member of the Acacia Guild.



**50-YEAR SCOTTISH RITE SERVICE AWARDS**

Brothers Danny Martin and Dean Gordon recently presented Brother Larry Slate his 50-Year Scottish Rite Masonic Service Award.



Brothers Louie Cox and Vic Flow also recently received their 50-Year Scottish Rite Service Award.



**60-YEAR SCOTTISH RITE SERVICE AWARDS**

Congratulations to Brothers William "Bill" Jones and Walter Andy Hill on receiving their 60-Year Scottish Rite Service Awards.



Well-done and thank-you brothers!

VALLEY OF NEW BERN

**LEE COUNTY SCOTTISH RITE CLUB CHRISTMAS DINNER**

by John H. Miller, 32° KCCH

Lee County Scottish Rite Club (LCSRC) and Friendship Lodge #763, jointly held its Combined 2023 Christmas Dinner on Saturday, December 2nd at Swann Station Baptist Church. The Christmas Dinner was catered by Ron's Barn BBQ. Illustrious Brother Garland E. Smith, 33° provided the blessing and Brother Bobby Diggs, 32° brought his popcorn machine and there was popcorn for all! Santa stopped by and talked to all the children and gave them a "Christmas Coin". The dinner was well attended with 48 members and their families enjoying a night of good eating, great fellowship, and of course, Santa! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!





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THE ORIENT OF NORTH CAROLINA



JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2024

Thomas Mann. 75 year Mason.  
Longest running 33rd degree in NC



## LODGE OF PERFECTION MEETINGS

- Asheville**, 2nd Thursday of each month  
(Advisory Council 5:00pm, and Stated Meeting 7:00pm)
- Charlotte**, 3rd Tuesday of each month  
(Advisory Council 5:30pm, Dinner 6:30pm and Stated Meeting 7:30pm)
- Fayetteville**, 3rd Wednesday of each month  
(Stated Meeting 7:30pm)
- Franklin**, 3rd Wednesday of each month  
(Dinner 6:00pm & Stated Meeting 7:00pm)
- Greensboro**, 2nd Wednesday of each month  
(Dinner 6:30pm & Stated Meeting 7:30pm)
- New Bern**, 2nd Monday of each month  
(Dinner 6:00pm & Stated Meeting 7:00pm)
- Raleigh**, 2nd Thursday of each month  
(Dinner 6:30pm, Advisory Council 7:00pm, and Stated Meeting 7:30pm)
- Wilmington**, 2nd Thursday of each month  
(Advisory Council 5:30pm, Dinner 6:30pm, Stated Meeting 7:30pm)
- Winston-Salem**, 2nd Thursday of each month  
(Dinner 6:00pm, Advisory Conference 6:30 pm, Master Craftsman&KSA 7pm, Stated 7:30pm )

For more information, call the General Secretary in your Valley

- Tony Rathbone (Asheville) .....828-550-6097
- D. C. Heilman (Charlotte) ..... 704-918-3797
- James Pugsley (Fayetteville) ..... 910-574-1005
- John Williams, (Franklin) ..... 828-215-6181
- Gary Handy (Greensboro) ..... 336-275-3579
- Johnny Surles (New Bern) ..... 252-638-4130
- Don Butto (Raleigh) ..... 919-834-8873
- James Brandt (Wilmington) .....917-359-0371
- Michael Fischer (Winston-Salem) ..... 336-337-6892

Craig J. Horton, Editor In Chief ..... 919-740-0789  
editor.ncsrjournal@gmail.com

The 2024 Scottish Rite Golf Tournament will be held on  
Saturday, Oct 5 in the New Bern area.

We are planning to make it a weekend to enjoy, not just for golfers,  
but for other Scottish Rite Masons and their family.

• We are seeking sponsors to help us raise money for Rite Care.

Corporate Sponsorships are available for as little as \$200 or up to  
\$5000 (or more). Please reach out to businesses in your area that  
believe in helping children in need. Contact Kirby Matthews, 33° at  
(336) 803-1544 with any questions about sponsor availability.

• We are also seeking Scottish Rite Masons that would be inter-  
ested in serving on the Golf Committee. We need input and help  
from more than just the few that are involved.

Please mark your calendars for the weekend of Oct 5, 2024 and  
come join with your brothers.

Golf Tournament

- Jan 19-20 Orient Winter Leadership Summit
- Feb 3 Brunswick Stew Sale Amran Temple
- Feb 16-21 Conference of Grand Masters (Seattle,WA)
- Feb 22-24 Wilkerson College (Greensboro)
- Feb 17 Franklin and Fayetteville Reunions
- Mar 22-23 Wilkerson College (Oxford)
- Apr 4-7 Leadership Conference (Provo UT)
- Apr 18-21 Leadership Conference (Kansas City, MO)

Become a Scottish Rite Mason  
*Spring Reunion*  
March 2024  
4th-32nd degrees



Asheville•Charlotte•Greensboro  
New Bern•Raleigh•Winston-Salem