



# Official publication of the Scottish Rite bodies of the Orient of Nebraska

March-April 2014 • Volume IV, Issue 2

## Calendar

Mar 5, 12, 19, 26 ..... Weds Masonic Lunch (H)  
 Mar 6, 13, 20, 27 ..... Thursday Masonic Lunch (L)  
 Mar 8 ..... Hastings Spring Reunion (H)  
 March 17..... Corned Beef and Cabbage (L)  
 Apr 4, 11, and 18 ..... Fish Fry Fridays (O)  
 Apr 10-13 ..... Scottish Rite Leadership Conference  
 Apr 12..... Alliance Spring Reunion (A)  
 Apr 2, 9, 16, 23, 30..... Weds Masonic Lunch (H)  
 Apr 3, 10, 17, 24 ..... Thursday Masonic Lunch (L)  
 Apr 25-26 ..... Lincoln Spring Reunion (L)  
 Apr 26..... Remembrance & Renewal (L)  
 May 1, 2, 3..... Omaha Spring Reunion (O)  
 May 4..... Spaghetti Feed (H)  
 May 7, 14, 21, 28..... Weds Masonic Lunch (H)  
 May 8, 15, 22, 29..... Thursday Masonic Lunch (L)  
 May 17..... Celebrating the Craft (A, H, L, O)  
 May 21..... Spring Outing (O)  
 June 4, 11, 18, 25..... Weds Masonic Lunch (H)  
 June 5, 12, 19, 26..... Thursday Masonic Lunch (L)  
 July 6-10..... Shrine Imperial (Minneapolis, MN)

### Lodge of Perfection meetings:

Alliance, 4th Friday of each month  
 Mar 28, Apr 25, May 23

Hastings, 1st Tuesday of each month  
 Mar 4, Apr 1, May 6

Lincoln, 3rd Wednesday of each month  
 Mar 19, Apr 16, May 21

Omaha, 3rd Monday of each month  
 Mar 24, Apr 21, May 21

### For more information contact the Secretary in your Valley

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 Curt Edic (Omaha) ..... (402) 342-1300

## Membership

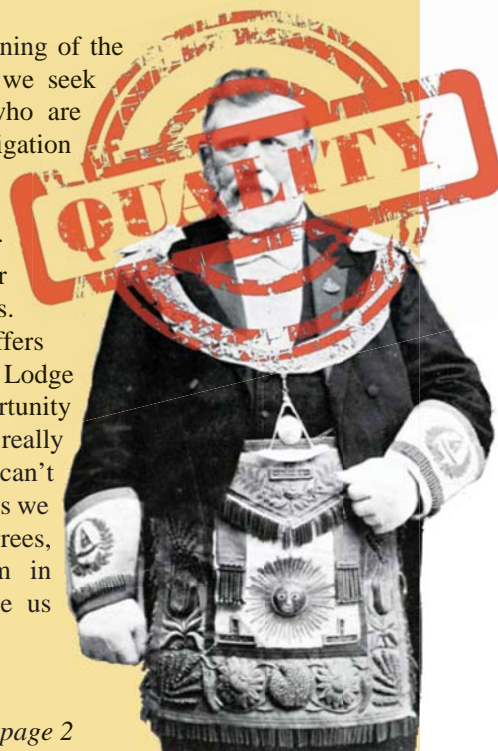
In the January/February insert in the Scottish Rite Journal, I made the case that we ought to cast a wide net for Masons. I wrote that “Quality can never be defined” and that “it doesn’t really matter what kind of man chooses to take his obligation at the altar and become a Mason.”

I should have been clear that I was referring to a man’s status in life. It does not matter if a Brother clips the grass in the public parks or manages the biggest company - I think we can all agree on that point.

But where a Brother took exception to my last article was in the word “Quality.” His point is that not only can we define quality, but we really don’t cast a wide net out to the seas and take any man with a petition flapping in his hand and make him a Mason.

I wrote that we make good men better. And there’s the key words: *good men*. How do we know he was “good” to begin with? After all, we don’t take bad men and make them Masons in order that they might be good afterward. We’re not a reform school for wayward men, nor are we a church that offers to absolve them of their sins.

From the very beginning of the petitioning process, we seek to weed out men who are not good. The investigation committee seeks to winnow out men who want to join for the wrong reasons or should not be Masons. The ballot box offers the brethren of the Lodge an additional opportunity to say that this man really does not fit in. If he can’t uphold the obligations we take in the Craft degrees, we don’t want him in where he may cause us discredit later.



... Continued on page 2

# Valley of Alliance

The Valley of Alliance had the opportunity to recognize two brethren who have distinguished themselves in Masonry, while supporting the American Legion Baseball team. Our Spring Reunion will be on Saturday, April 12.

Please help us by reaching out to good Brethren and inviting them to submit a petition.

Gene Gatti, 32° KCCH,  
General Secretary (gene123@mail.com)



**1st Photo (left):** W.B. Todd Harris is presenting a \$1,000 check to members of the American Legion baseball team in Alliance. His son Jeff (far left) is the coach for the baseball team and a member of Lodge #183.

**2nd Photo (center):** WB Joel Zilmer, 32° KCCH (right) presents the Mason of the Year award to WB Todd Rehder, 32°. Todd is very active in Freemasonry and is the newly elected Senior Warden for Alliance Lodge #183.

**3rd Photo (right):** Wally Seiler, 33° receives his 50-year pin from WM James Karell, 32°. Wally has a long history of working with Order of DeMolay boys, and still takes care of the Scottish Rite student scholarships awarded here.

## Membership, continued

When we do accept a man to receive the degrees of Masonry, he vows to forever keep the secrets of Masonry. Each of us received the white apron of a Mason, reminding us of the "rectitude of conduct" and serving as "a never-ending incentive to nobler deeds." If a man does not come to Masonry with the ability to seek "higher thoughts and greater achievements," then we should not have admitted him in the first place.

When I wrote that there was "no predefined guideline for what constitutes a 'quality man,'" I was reminded that there in fact *are* predefined qualities, and we expect the candidate to possess them when he joins. These qualities are defined right away in the Entered Apprentice obligation: a man must be "moral and upright before God and of good repute to the world." This is the most basic requirement before he takes his first obligation. By definition, you can't learn predefined requirements **AFTER** you've been initiated.

We are making Masons better, wiser, and consequently happier, but we have to start with good material.

In my article, I spoke of bringing in "plenty of Brothers who don't fit a

preconceived notion of 'quality.'" Here again, I was reminded that we *should* seek a preconceived notion of quality - defined as meeting those sterling qualities that bring credit to the Craft rather than as a station in society. Perhaps we really don't want to cast a wide net. Maybe we offer the degrees of Masonry too readily.

*So what is the takeaway from this conversation?*

Certainly, for me, I take a new perspective on our membership. We want to believe that every man to whom we hand a petition or who seeks the degrees of Masonry represents the better angels of our nature. We want to believe that every man we call Brother is striving to move from that symbolic Rough Ashlar to the Perfect Ashlar. Fortunately, most of the time this is true.

But we also need to remember that Masonry should represent the best that we can be. We need to reach out to good men, promote our Craft, and invite them to consider it, but we need to be doubly certain that they are men of character who can achieve the high principles we expect of ourselves and our brethren.



*How do we spot the Quality Man?*



## A Masonic ystery

We may never know whether it was a dark and stormy night when the treasure disappeared.

This mystery does not involve kidnappings or stolen jewels, but it does involve hidden treasure. Or at least, the contents of the cornerstone of the Hastings Masonic Lodge, built in 1886. The whereabouts of the cornerstone had baffled Hastings Masons ever since remodelling work covered the cornerstone in 1913.

Masons looked at old photographs, talked to Old Timers who may have remembered past conversations, and looked for contractors and architect's drawings, which would reveal the cornerstone's location. They even used a metal detector in hopes of locating the cornerstone's sealed copper box inside.

Any good mystery needs clues. The Masons found a document at Grand Lodge listing the cornerstone's contents. Unfortunately, the document gave no indication of the stone's location. It does reveal, however, a wealth of historical artifacts, including a Bible, newspapers, letters from government, Masonic membership cards from charter members, and the original jewels of the lodge.

After a number of years searching, a cornerstone was located in the southeast corner of the building, then Rhoades Men's Wear on May 22, 1976. As part of the Bicentennial celebrations that year, the cornerstone was opened. The first documents were from

the 1880s, but the Lodge historian W.B. Erv Siemoneit read the date of the next document: 1902. Then more documents from the early 1900s. What went wrong? Had time travellers tampered with the cornerstone?

The Lodge found an explanation, tucked into the Bible removed from the cornerstone. The box which had been laid in 1886 with appropriate ceremonies was removed May 12, 1913. The box and contents which were placed in the stone at the time was found to be in a bad state of preservation after a period of about 26 years. A new box was obtained, and a new directory of



*West 2nd Street Masonic Lodge, built in 1886 and occupied by Hastings Lodge #50 until the new building was built in 1930 (Adams County Historical Society).*

Lodge officers and other articles were added, and the new stone was placed in position May 14, 1913.

The stone had been removed during a construction project when the entire



*Historian W.B. Erv Siemoneit reads documents recovered from the cornerstone in 1976. (photo from Hastings Public Library microfiche, Hastings Tribune)*

front of the building was remodeled to accommodate the growing Masonic fraternity. The Hastings Tribune noted that the Senior Warden in 1913, Brother Federick Remer, was still alive at age 100, living in Montana!

Some of the items were given to the Historical Society and others remained with the Lodge. In 1930, Hastings Lodge #50 moved to the new Masonic building on Hastings Avenue. Blue Moon Coffee Company and Prairie Books currently occupy the ground floor of the 1886 lodge building, located on West Second Street. The outside facade of the building is largely unchanged.

As for where the contents of the cornerstone are today, maybe someone from Hastings Lodge #50 can tell us.

*Or maybe it is a new mystery!*

[Source for this column came from the *Hastings Tribune*, June 19 and June 21, 1976.]

## Christmas at the 'Rite

In what Venerable Master-elect Tom Greenlee 32° KCCH hopes will become a tradition in the Lincoln Valley Scottish Rite, 54 Scottish Rite Masons and their wives and guests enjoyed an evening, including a phenomenal dinner and great entertainment.

The Scottish Rite was a festive venue for the dinner, decorated by Bruce and Linda Wood with well over 100 Christmas ornaments around the Great Hall and on each table. After a social time with wine and cocktails, guests enjoyed prime rib and lobster, fully loaded baked potato, Caesar salad, and cheesecake, prepared by Bob Kruse, 32°. Afterward, Knight Sounds, the sophomore select choir from Lincoln Southeast High School, entertained the guests with fantastic choreographed singing, including several Christmas classics.

The evening was hosted by the Scottish Rite line officers. Mark Kinzie, 32° KCCH emceed the evening, and Tom Greenlee looked forward to continuing this tradition, with the next dinner scheduled for December 12, 2014.



*Linda and Craig (32°) Gavin and Shane (32°) and Paula Rhian enjoy a great evening at the Lincoln Christmas party.*



*Musical entertainment was provided by Knight Sounds, the talented young women and men from Lincoln Southeast High School.*



**March 17, 2014**  
Take-Out Plates Available - \$10/plate  
11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

**Scottish Rite Masonic Center**  
332 Centennial Mall South  
Lincoln, NE 68508

*the best in town!*

## Robert Burns Dinner

Scottish Rite Masons celebrated the birthday of Scotland's most-loved national poet, Robert Burns on January 24 with bagpipes, Scotch, and the guest of honor, the haggis – “the Great Chieftan o’ the puddin’-race” - the traditional seasoned pudding simmered in a sheep’s stomach. 85 guests partook of the annual dinner, many wearing kilts and traditional Scottish clothing.

This year, Burns Dinner chairs, Merv (32° KCCH) and Sharon Moeller added a silent auction to the dinner, which raised about \$500 for the Lincoln Scottish Rite Preservation Foundation. Craig Gavin, 32°, Rector of St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church, served as emcee for the evening. Dr. Stuart Westburg entertained guests with several Scottish melodies on the bagpipe, and the Knights of St. Andrew led the procession with the haggis, as Dave Caudy recited Burns’ famous poem “Ode to a Haggis,” and Jim Batten, 32° KCCH ceremoniously stabbed the haggis with a dagger. Stephen Lahey recited several Burns’ poems, and guests closed the evening by singing *Auld Lang Syne*.

For pictures and more about the Lincoln Robert Burns Dinner, visit [www.ScottishRiteLincoln.org](http://www.ScottishRiteLincoln.org) and click on the news story.





# Valley of Omaha

## Scottish Rite Women's Group BY BRENDA COLEMAN

**T**he Omaha Scottish Rite ladies are active again! Over the past year we were very busy. In the spring we had a speaker from the Master Gardener program enlighten us with spring gardening tips. We hosted a luncheon during the Spring Reunion and presented the RiteCare clinic with an iTunes gift card. Throughout the year, we held various bake sales to raise money to assist RiteCare and support other needs within the Scottish Rite. In November, we enjoyed yummy cookies our ladies brought to share as well as an ornament exchange. At the Fall Reunion, we have had the opportunity to meet some new ladies and had a wonderful turnout at the ladies reception prior to the banquet. The ladies had the opportunity to watch the new RiteCare video as well speak to Korey Stading, M.S., one of the RiteCare clinicians. We ended the year with the December holiday party/awards presentation, where the ladies were treated with a very nice gift of Bath and Body Works items from the 2013 Line Officers, Thank you so much! I was also invited to do a podcast and talk about the ladies involvement in the Scottish Rite and our upcoming events.

As we look ahead to 2014, we are planning some special projects, mainly we will be kicking off our "Year of Giving". We have selected local organizations to assist with giving "in-kind" donations. We will be asking those who are able to contribute throughout the year to help our community and to allow the community to know more about the Scottish Rite and the generous people we are. We will begin with the Sienna Francis House. We will be collecting various cleaning products. Donations can be dropped off at the office.

If you would like to assist any of the months with gathering and distributing the items please let us know. We now have Ladies nametags, they are available for \$10.00 in either a magnetic or clip style. Please contact the office if you wish to order a nametag. Ladies, if you have not been down to the Scottish Rite in a while please come out and see what we are doing! Hope to see everyone soon!



from the *Omaha World-Herald*,  
November 16, 1917

The Scottish Rite Women's Club was organized in January, 1915. Beginning with 200 charter members, they boasted a membership of over 1,200 by 1922, the largest women's club in the state. Soon after the Scottish Rite was built, the Womens' Club took over the cooking from the caterer who provided dinners for Lodge events. In return for the same money paid to the caterer, the women cooked for Lodge meetings, cooking for as many as 600 members at a time! The ladies sewed for the YWCA, Red Cross, the Omaha Home for Boys and

the Masonic Home. They hosted card nights, recitals, and lectures. The Womens' Club continued through the 1970s and 1980s with decreased membership, but continued to support the Scottish Rite in social and philanthropic efforts. With the retirement of Irene Hosier as the Scottish Rite's financial secretary and President of the group in 1991, the organization soon ceased to formally operate. In the past two years, the Scottish Rite women have put together backpacks with school supplies for RiteCare kids, assembled care packages for the troops, and are inaugurating a "Year of Giving" in 2014.

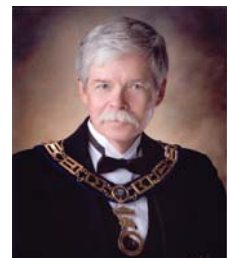
## ALBERT PIKE LODGE Nebraska's newest lodge

**N**ot that many years ago, men in leadership positions came to Masonry, bringing considerable experience to the Craft. We decided to rekindle this tradition by creating a new Lodge, chartered as Albert Pike Lodge. This Lodge will meet on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Omaha Scottish Rite, beginning with a catered lunch, followed by a Lodge meeting. In addition to the Craft degrees, new members will receive the 4° and 14° degree of the Scottish Rite, with the expectation that they return at the

following Reunion to finish the degrees. Albert Pike Lodge seeks to reach out to business managers, and by engaging them in Masonry today, tap back into tradition where Masonic Lodges had the business community's senior leadership, as we had in bygone years. The idea is that today's managers are tomorrow's executive leadership, and their presence in our ranks will serve to recruit and engage their up-and-coming managers, create perpetuating membership. In addition, Pike Lodge will create a social atmosphere during the lunch, offering

networking connections and friendships. Pike Lodge's businessmen membership

are likely to share common interests, and their social pursuits may have more in common with one another. Lodges like Albert Pike used commonplace when we had business leadership among our membership, and we hope to rekindle that tradition.



*M. W. Dean Skokan, 33° will serve as the first Master of Albert Pike Lodge #333 Dean serves as a Cathedral Board member in the Valley of Omaha, and was recently appointed Orient Representative by Ill. Brother Charles V. Sederstrom, 33°. As Orient Representative, Dean will visit Nebraska's Scottish Rite Valleys, representing the SGIG.*

## Christmas Party & Thank-You Gala

In 2013, the Lodge of Perfection was faced with two challenges:

1) how to increase attendance at the annual Christmas party and 2) how to show appreciation to our volunteers. They decided to combine the two goals by moving the annual Christmas party to the same night as the December business meeting and to provide "thank-you awards" to selected members.

Reunion Degree Directors John Maxell and AJ Johnson presented awards for "Best Degree Performance" to Okley Gibbs and "Best Degree" was given to the 14th Degree team, which was chosen by the Fall Reunion class.

Chuck Sederstrom III and Chris Carter took the stage to give out a special "Rubber Chicken" award to "The Bionic Mason" - Curt Edic, the man who lost an altercation with a step ladder. Wade Ridout and Zack Sinsheimer were recognized for their work in the sound booth. Chris Nigro and Jeff Coleman gave out another rubber chicken entitled the "Just One More Thing Award" to Chuck Sohm for

recognized by Curt for their "off the charts" commitment and engagement with our valley since joining less than five years ago. Curt also recognized Brenda Coleman for her hard work on the Ladies programs throughout 2013.

Tom Begley brought home the third Rubber Chicken for "the craziest idea we've ever heard in 2013. . . maybe ever" award. It was Tom who suggested that wives/girlfriends be invited to the twice yearly "guys night out."

The most moving part of the evening was the presentation of the final three awards. Accompanied by much applause and emotion, Brother Jim Wolfe humbly accepted the crystal "thank-you" award for the valuable guidance, coaching and mentorship he has provided to so many individual men for so many years. Likewise, Brother Tom Brummet was recognized for the inspirational leadership he has provided to all men within the Rite, and Brother John Maxell was recognized for being an admired ambassador of Masonry and the Scottish Rite

organization, you should never, ever underestimate the power of a sincere and genuine thank-you.

*Chris (they don't call me Majek for nothing) Carter, 32° KCCH  
majekcarter@mac.com*



*Armel MacDonald presents the Mentoring Award to Jim Wolfe*



*Curt Edic brings home the Rubber Chicken award*



*Chris Carter brings home the coveted Canned Ham Award for his over-the-top performance in the 9th/10th degree*

*"You are all winners because of the time and dedication that you've selflessly given, but tonight we have particular men who have found a place in our hearts and have moved us to single them out for a thank-you." -Armel MacDonald, 32° KCCH*

having "just one more thing" to say at the close of various meetings.

Our Sovereign Grand Inspector General in Nebraska, Chuck Sederstrom, gave out special thank-you award to Armel MacDonald for his volunteering "whether you want him to or not!"

General Secretary Curt Edic presented special thank-you's to two "Engaged, Active Scottish Rite Masons with five years or less tenure." Brothers Chris Nigro and Jeff Coleman were both

throughout the state of Nebraska and around the country as a Grand Lodge officer in the Grand Lodge of Nebraska.

As the evening concluded with the thank-you's distributed and the heartfelt appreciation expressed, a tradition was born. The mission was accomplished. The Christmas party was restored and attendance was sure to climb each year. But most importantly, our volunteers know they are appreciated and valued. Particularly in this holiday season, we remember that in a volunteer

## RiteCare ... *making a difference*



**M**et Cooper Mahoney, a fun-loving and energetic 4 1/2 year old. Cooper can and does everything a typical kid can except.... talk.

Born the fourth of four children, when Cooper turned two and was not talking, it was all too easy to discount it as having older siblings that talked for him. While attempts

at getting him to talk for himself - extra reading and single word flash cards were implemented - his speech really wasn't improving. He had limited words and was unable to put a two-word phrase together; grunting and pointing was his method of communication. Cooper was 2 years and 7 months when we had him evaluated by the Educational Service Unit (ESU) in our area. He had a speech deficit severe enough to qualify for services. He started immediately to receive services once a month.

*Cooper can do everything a typical kid can do. . . except talk*

At Cooper's 3-year check-up, his primary care physician, Dr. Ed Discoe also noted his delay in speech. He promptly ordered speech therapy through Wiggles and Giggles in Columbus, NE and an evaluation for speech to be done by the UNMC Munroe-Meyer Institute. By this time we had started to realize Cooper's speech issue was bigger than we had originally thought, everything was pointing towards something called Apraxia of Speech.

In November 2012, we met Paul Laikko at the RiteCare Speech and Language Clinic for Cooper's evaluation. It was official: Cooper had apraxia. Looking back, it took many months to grasp what exactly apraxia is and how complex it can be. We moved forward with weekly therapy at Wiggles and Giggles for the apraxia, and Cooper started to make some progress. Slowly his words were becoming clearer and we were happy to hear his sweet voice.

In January of 2013 we hit a roadblock, we were going to a different insurance company and to our devastation, they were going to completely deny Cooper for any speech therapy. After an appeal, we got him approved for twenty

speech therapy sessions. Well that would get him through May, but then what? Out of pocket therapy expenses were monumental, we went into panic mode the next few months trying to figure out what to do next. After much frustration, brainstorming, and prayer, we had exhausted every avenue of getting him the therapy we knew he needed, and it was looking bleak. Then I remembered the RiteCare Clinic at the UNMC Munroe-Meyer Institute and how well Cooper had responded to Mr. Laikko. I took a chance and promptly gave them a call to see if there was any kind of program Cooper would be eligible for; to my elation, there was, and there was an opening for him starting in June!

Last May, at his individualized education program (IEP) meeting, we set a goal for Cooper to be able to put 2-3 words together by May 2014. Cooper started working with Mr. Laikko in June through the RiteCare program. We are happy to report that he has not only met that goal, but is starting to exceed it! Every week we see such progress and promise in his speech, we get to see his personality come alive through his words, and it is such a blessing. We do not know what we would do without this opportunity, we are very grateful to the Scottish Rite for making it possible! Thank you, it has been such an answer to prayers.

Amy Mahoney  
RiteCare mom

[amahoneyfamily@gmail.com](mailto:amahoneyfamily@gmail.com)



At the annual Nebraska Speech Language Hearing Association annual business meeting and awards dinner, Dr. Erin Bush (left) and RiteCare Clinician Laura Moody, M.S. (middle) presented the NSLHA Meritorious

Service Award to Ms. Don Linner in recognition of her work as an e-helper in serving telepractice clients through the UNK RiteCare Clinic.

Thanks to Laura Moody and Don Linner, our University of Nebraska at Kearney RiteCare clinic is serving an increasing number of children in western Nebraska and the panhandle counties who may otherwise not receive services.

*Photo and story credit: the Nebraska Speech Language Hearing Association - November, 2013 "Networker" NSLHA newsletter*



# Orient Leadership

Usually, the last page Nebraska's insert in the Scottish Rite Journal includes an article on our Development initiatives. For this edition, SGIG Chuck Sederstrom, 33° suggested that we include the Orient leadership and contact information. These men work for Nebraska's Scottish Rite Masons, regardless of whether you live in-state or out. For Brethren who may not live where their Scottish Rite is located or who may not be active in their Valley, it is easy to forget who our General Secretaries and Personal Representatives are. Please feel free to contact the Orient leadership with your suggestions, concerns, or issues - or simply to introduce yourself. We serve our members, and without an active and engaged membership, we can not have successful Scottish Rite Valleys. Thank you for being a Scottish Rite Mason.



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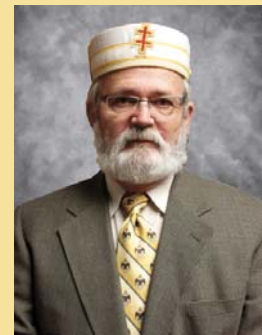
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