

As I write this in early June, with the news headlines dominated by the Corona-19 virus, protests and riots, division, partisanship, and uncertainty, people feel like society has turned one person against another.

How does this relate to Freemasonry?

Simply said, Freemasonry is the antidote to the current strife. Freemasons are supposed to leave aside being Democrats or Republicans at the Lodge door and embrace "that religion in which all men agree." Within the Lodge, the teacher, painter, engineer, banker, lawyer, and the salesman don't see the color of another man's collar, the color of his skin, or the contents of his wallet, and meet in fellowship and brotherhood.

Think about how extraordinary that

Membership



statement is, particularly in light of American history in the past century. In the 19th century, men congregated in groups of their own ethnic, social, or religious backgrounds: Deutsche Turnverein, Česko-Slovenský Podporující Spolek, the Sons of Italy, the Sons of Norway, Ancient Order of Hibernians, B'nai B'rith, etc.

But not Freemasonry. The recently-arrived Jewish immigrant from Russia

found a framework of brotherhood with men whose ancestors fought at Lexington, Concord, Gettysburg, or Shiloh. The shopkeeper from rural Nebraska sat alongside the most prominent man from the biggest city.

So back to current affairs. Should the Scottish Rite or Masonic bodies issue a "corporate policy" in light of current protests? Do we need to have a statement that spells out our commitment to mutual respect and Brotherhood?

Personally, I believe corporate statements are great publicity but are ultimately hollow documents which don't effect any meaningful change beyond a well-meaning public relations stunt.

Grand Commander Albert Pike himself made Freemasonry's position on getting involved in politics quite clear in an 1861 speech:

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Orient Calendar

July 18	
Aug 7-8	Lincoln Summer Reunion (L)
Aug 22	
Sep 16	Fall Outing (O)
Sep 25	
Sep 30	RiteCare Classic (O) REVISED DATE
Oct 27	
Oct 3	Hastings Fall Reunion (H) REVISED DATE
Oct 30-31	
Nov 6	Friends of RiteCare Dinner & Auction (O)
Nov 19-21	
Dec 5	
Jan 23	Robert Burns Celebration (L)

Please check with your Valley for current updates to events and cancellations due to COVID-19 virus

Lodge of Perfection meetings:

Alliance, 4th Friday of each monthJuly-Aug (Dark), Sept 1, Oct 6, Nov 27, Dec 25

Hastings, 1st Tuesday of each month July 7, Aug 4, Sept 1, Oct 6, Nov 3, Dec 2

Lincoln, 3rd Wednesday of each month July 15, Aug 19, Sept 16, Oct 21, Nov 18, Dec 16

Omaha, 3rd Monday of each month July 20, Aug (picnic), Sept 21, Oct 19, Nov 16, Dec 21

For more information contact the General Secretary in your Valley

Gene Gatti (Alliance)(308) 762-4324
Phil Odom (Hastings)(402) 462-5813
Bruce Wood (Lincoln) (402) 435-2144
John Maxell (Omaha)(402) 342-1300



It is odd to think that 100 years ago, Freemasons from across the Panhandle would fill a specially-chartered train from Alliance to Omaha, receive the 29 degrees of the Scottish Rite over the course of at least three days, and travel home. It wasn't until about 1935 that the Alliance Valley received a charter to confer all the degrees through the 32°, and it was about that time when the Alliance Scottish Rite built the theater addition to the building. Even in the midst of the Great Depression, Brethren found Scottish Rite Masonry so important a part of their Masonic experience, they petitioned for a charter for the Consistory, expanded the building, and continued their Masonic journey as Scottish Rite Masons.

Despite our own cars today, the highways, and the relative ease of a Friday evening/Saturday degree work for Scottish Rite Masonry in Alliance, we sometimes struggle to fill a Reunion. Yet, I still think the Scottish Rite has much to offer those on their Masonic journey, regardless of the distance from their home Lodge or the time commitment of Reunions.

- Foremost, our support for RiteCare speech therapy across
 the state is something all Masons should be proud of. Last
 year, Nebraska Scottish Rite Masons provided more than
 \$658,000 in speech therapy to children, without regard to a
 family's ability to pay.
- The network of Masonry that stretches across the state is important. It is easy to find a comfort level attending your Blue Lodge with the same Brethren. But the Scottish Rite extends that network across the Panhandle, across the state, and across the nation with 230,000 Scottish Rite Masons.
- And further light in Masonry is important, too. Building
 on the moral and philosophical allegories of Craft Masonry, the Scottish Rite offers profound lessons for those who
 seek them. Whether through self-study and reflection or
 the Master Craftsman series, there is much wisdom to be
 found in the Scottish Rite degrees.

We are looking forward to a Fall Reunion in October, and I hope you will plan to attend and participate. But more important, I hope you will invite a friend and a Brother to petition and join more than 150,000 Scottish Rite Masons around the nation.

- Gene Gatti, 33° General Secretary gene123@mail.com

Valley of Central Nebraska at Hastings



My attraction to falconry is rooted in many of the same attributes and characteristics that have attracted me to Freemasonry, and there are numerous similarities and comparisons between the two crafts, beginning with the Guild. Falconry licensure is divided between among three levels – Apprentice Class, General Class, and Master Class.

The Apprentice Class Falconry License is where the true learning of the craft begins. Not unlike Freemasonry, it is at the Apprentice level of falconry where I was introduced to the fundamental knowledge and understandings of the craft, much of which stands

Binds of Prey

n any given day between the months of October and March, you will find this practitioner of the craft in a field in central Nebraska practicing the ancient art of falconry. Falconry, which is defined as the taking of wild quarry in its natural state and habitat by means of a trained raptor, is both and an Art and a Sport that has been in existence since approximately 1,000 B.C.E. My introduction to this Art began at the age of thirteen, when my mother purchased me the book A Falconry Manual by Frank Beebe, which fueled a passion within me that has lasted all these years.

As I read the book I came to the realization that falconry was a lifestyle more than anything: months of studying to gain the knowledge to provide medical care and nutrition; daily responsibilities of interacting with the bird, and the fact that only you – and no one else – can provide all of this. It became evident that I would not be able to pursue my goal of becoming a falconer, so I put my passion on hold until 2010 when, upon the graduation of my youngest child, I decided the time was right.

unchanged since the inception of the Art of Falconry in the Mongolian region nearly 3,000 years ago. I was introduced to the vocabulary, which is still used internationally among all falconers today. I was required to secure a sponsor, whom I could call upon for any assistance or inquiry. I was permitted to fly birds of considerably forgivable survivability; most notably the red-tailed hawk. I sought to learn to subdue the passions of my bird, which was created through thousands of years of survivaldriven genetics. As I worked to train my bird to hunt in partnership with me, I strived to become a better falconer tomorrow, than I was today. I was truly an apprentice.

Upon completion of two years as an apprentice level falconer, I received my General Falconry License. I learned to expand my knowledge and hone my skills, as they applied to my birds. I chose to trap a micro-falcon known as an American Kestrel during this time. While Federal and State Regulations permit an Apprentice level falconer to possess a kestrel, most sponsors do not,

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Please note the revised date of October 3rd.

due to their small stature and weight, which places their survivability in a tenuous realm for less experienced falconers. I learned how to manage weight and nutrition in grams, not ounces and, after five years, I received the coveted Master Falconer's license.

The Master Falconer, not unlike a Master Mason, does not imply that I know everything about the art, but instead, that I am experienced enough to utilize critical thinking skills that have come to me as a result of my experiences to care for my birds. The Master Falconer is able to possess multiple birds, with an expanded array of possible species. I currently possess a hybrid "Longwing" (falcon) Peregrine/Gyrfalcon imprint that has a tenuous inclination to work with me on any given day, and regularly willing to remind me she is the boss in our relationship. She is dedicated solely to the taking of grouse in the customary fashion of "Waiting on," where she is released to climb to altitudes in excess of 1,000 feet, where she waits for me and my pointer to flush the grouse, at which time she stoops at over 160 mph to take the grouse in a matter of seconds. She does not always win the encounter, but every flight is a joy to behold. Like a Master Mason, I continue to learn and hone my skills, and help those who are beginning their journey in the craft.

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Valley of Lincoln



THE QUIET MAN

Stop by the Lincoln Scottish Rite for any given event, and you'll usually find Ward and Sandy Shires in the kitchen cooking or setting up. You'll find them afterwards pitching in to clean up. No project is to small or to menial for Ward and Sandy to pitch in.

There's a Brother doing his part, you'll say, and because Ward isn't given to blowing his own trumpet, you might not think twice about the quiet gentleman with his sleeves rolled up and covered with dish soap. But what you didn't know is that Ward boasts a list of military commendations and civil honors longer than your arm!

Warder Shires was born on a farm near Red Oak, Iowa and attended his first six grades in a one room country school. He graduated from Elliott High School in 1949 and enrolled at the University of Nebraska the same year. Ward graduated in January, 1954 with a Bachelors Degree in General Agriculture, but Fate had not planned on Ward growing corn!

Ward received his commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Air Force through the University of Nebraska AF-ROTC. He was called to active duty in March, 1954 to enter the pilot training program. He graduated with his wings in single and multi-engine aircraft at Reese Air Force Base, Texas in April,

1955. He also graduated from single engine jet flight instructors school in June, 1956. Wards career in military aviation included qualifications in several different types and models of aircraft, including single engine, multi engines, reciprocating engines and jet engines.

He served as Aircraft Commander in B-47 Bombers during the Cold War years with Russia, both in the States and at Overseas Reflex Bases. Ward then served for approximately seven years as an Aircraft Maintenance Officer on B-47, B-58, and KC-135 aircraft. During that period of time he also flew C-54s and C-123s Maintenance Support Aircraft. At the height of the Vietnam War in 1966, he was ordered back to full time service in combat aircraft. He attended qualification training in KC-135 Tanker Aircraft and also EC-135 Looking Glass Aircraft. He flew combat missions in KC-135's during Vietnam War in 1968 and again in C-123's during 1971.

He was awarded two Distinguished Flying Crosses and three Air Medals for his involvement in the war effort. Over the course of Ward's long career, he served at Air Force Bases not just across the United States, but overseas in Turkey, Germany, and England as well.

...continued on page 6





The Valley of Lincoln gratefully acknowledges these Brethren for a tax-deductible donation of \$500 to support refinishing a Lodge room bench. If you would like to support this on-going project, please e-mail Bruce Wood, 33° at bwood@lincoln-scottishrite.org.

- Dennis Brydl, 33°
- Micheal (33°) & Maxine Buchardt
- Craftsmen Lodge #314
- Micah Evans, 33°
- Reginald Kuhn, 33°, PGM
- Jack Lorenzen, 33°
- Robert Moninger, 33° PGM
- Pamela Moninger
- William (33°) & Yvonne Nelson
- William Workman, 32° KCCH
- Rodney (32° KCCH) & Leigh Poskochil
- Bob Philipps (32°) & Family
- Bruce (33°) & Linda Wood

Valley of Omaha



The Omaha Scottish Rite leadership has generously made sure the staff stay paid during the quarantine, and in return, the staff have been keeping busy with numerous projects. Christa Hickle has continued to write the Lodge notices, send birthday cards out, and work with our parkers. Barb Coonce has applied for two grants, organized Lodge and Foundation records, and cleaned the storage room. But no one kept more busy than Greg Swinarski, 32° KCCH, Building Manager for the Omaha Scottish Rite, who has been giving the building a deep cleaning, leaving literally no crevice untouched!

Each day, key pads, switches, buttons, stair rails, door handles and faucets are disinfected. The kitchen floor was scrubbed and all kitchen surfaces cleaned. The auditorium had a thorough mopping, not just on the aisles but between each and every seat. The terrazzo floors were mopped and buffed, and the carpets were all steam cleaned. Even things normally not noticed were attended to - the liquid stain on the ceiling of the ballroom (how did that even get there?) and the door of the parking garage were cleaned!

While the staff have generally taken a day each week to come in to answer the phone, get the mail, and handle the daily business of the Scottish Rite, Greg has been in every day, and has made sure no detail has been missed. When you're back in the building, please take a moment to thank Greg for a job well done!



Barb Coonce, Financial Secretary for the Omaha Valley, also handles event rentals, beginning with a warm welcome and tour of the building. Barb has long considered a shortcoming in our rentals the fact that we have no dedicated place for brides to change, lounge, and relax.

To address that deficiency, Barb created a small place in the Wardrobe room on the 4th floor, where brides can change and relax in comfort. Ever budget-conscious, Barb used furniture which wasn't being used elsewhere, and moved items to create a warm, inviting space in the Wardrobe room. Pictures or artwork for the wall will be added to give the space a comfortable feel, which will hopefully add to the attractiveness of the historic Scottish Rite as a venue for rentals.

To further help, Barb and Membership Secretary Christa Hickle created a new Facebook page, "Scottish Rite Rentals" to promote weddings, events, and rentals. This is separate from the Valley Facebook page, and is geared to promote the Scottish Rite as a venue. The overall goal is to raise the profile of the building and increase rental revenue in the face of so many competing rental spaces in Omaha and bring weddings and events to the Scottish Rite.

GARY UNGER JOINS HOUSE OF THE TEMPLE DEVELOPMENT STAFF



Beginning this past March, Gary Unger, 32° KCCH joined the House of the Temple Development staff. Gary will report to Matt Szramoski, 33°, Development Director for the House of the Temple, and is responsible for working with Scottish Rite Valleys in Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Oklahoma, and western Texas. As the Major Donor Officer for the Midwest, Gary will support the financial needs of both the House of the Temple Historic Preservation Foundation, Inc. and the Scottish Rite Foundation, S.J., U.S.A., Inc. while also assisting Orient and Valleys with their philanthropic efforts.

Gary brings a wealth of experience in the field, with a strong background in financial and investment vehicles. He has chaired Tangier Shrine's FSCAN Potentate's Golf outing and served for several years on the Omaha Scottish Rite's RiteCare Classic golf benefit. Gary is a Past Master of Springfield Lodge #112 and currently serves as Secretary, where he won the prestigious Secretary of the Year award in 2017.

He was invested a Knight Commander of the Court of Honour in 2013. Gary served as Eminent Commander for Omaha Consistory in 2016, and served as Potentate of Tangier Shrine in 2015. In addition to the RiteCare Classic, Gary is active as a Culinary Master, a Knight of St. Andrew, and degree work at the Reunions.



Ward Shires, continued from page 4

Ward retired from the Air Force on August 30, 1975 at Offutt AFB. Fortunately he could draw on his college and child-hood experience, and operated a 160 acre farm for several years, which he had previously done on a part-time basis.

Ward earned his Masters of Science Degree in Adult and Secondary Education in 1977. He served as an Extension Educator for the University of Nebraska Cooperative Service in Nemaha and Lancaster Counties, retiring as Professor Emeritus in 2000. Along the way, Ward racked up a number of awards and honors, including the Meritorious Service Citation by the City of Lincoln in 1986.

Still not ready for a rocking chair, Ward flew charter aircraft at the Lincoln Airport for Capital Aviation, and the Corporation Aircraft for Olsson Associates of Lincoln, Nebraska. Ward became a member of the Nebraska Wing of the Civil Air Patrol in 1991, where he held several positions at squadron and wing level. He was involved in emergency services as a flight instructor and as operations officer. Ward served four years as the Wing Commander of the Nebraska Civil Air Patrol Wing, retiring in 2017. He was honored as a member of the University of Nebraska Air Force ROTC Hall of Fame for his services.

As a Mason, Ward has served 66 years as a Master Mason, raised in September, 1953 at Summit Lodge #493 in Elliott, Iowa. He is presently an active member at Nemaha Lodge #4 in Brownville, where he received the Bronze Jordan



Here's the Story...

Many businesses and companies have employees working from home during the quarantine, and our RiteCare clinicians are no exception. Our Speech-Language Pathologists are still working with children remotely. On April 23rd, Nebraska's clinicians in Kearney, Hastings, Lincoln, and Omaha got together via Zoom with John Maxell and Micah Evans for the quarterly RiteCare conference. Led by Dr. Amy Nordness, Director of Nebraska's RiteCare program, the clinicians share successes they have had, talk about their caseloads, and the Scottish Rite events, including the Walks, the RiteCare Classic, and the Friends Dinner. Whether we are working from home or in the Clinics, we continue to get together to keep the business of speech therapy going for our Nebraska children!

medal as the longest-serving member. He joined the Scottish Rite in 1986 and was invested with the Knight Commander of the Court of Honour in 2018.

In official retirement, Ward continues to be active with the Scottish Rite, the Food Net Program, and swimming. Someone once wrote, "Leadership is service, not position." Ward Shires has proven that as a leader, he gives by quietly giving back. You won't find him talking about himself, but you will find him with his sleeves rolled up getting down to work. The Valley of Lincoln is indebted is grateful to Ward and Sandy Shires for a lifetime of true servant-leadership.



Birds of Prey

... Continued from page 3

I have been very blessed to have had the opportunity to bring the realms of Freemasonry and falconry together in my life. Whether it is trapping birds with brother Bob Scott (Lodge 50), speaking of the history, literature, and philosophy of falconry through the ages with Brother Dan Deffenbaugh (Lodge 50), or rabbit hunting with brother Martin Miller (Lodge #317).

The interconnectedness between falconry and Freemasonry is undeniable, and the influence of the sport in our daily lives is evident, if a person knows where to look. Take for instance the term "Hoodwinked," which is a reference to the response a raptor exhibits upon being introduced to the light directly following the removal of their hood.

And the connections continue.

RiteCare Therapy During a Time of

Quarantine

by Korey Stading, M.S., CCC-SLP RiteCare Speech Therapist, kstading@unmc.edu

hese have chalbeen lenging times for all of us! All students have lost the educational services they were receiving, and this has put a huge strain on families. Our Rite Care families have been so grateful that we



were able to seamlessly switch from face to face services to telehealth services practically overnight!

This transition brought challenges and provided us with the opportunities to learn new skills. I think we have risen to the occasion and are able to have fun interacting with the children we serve, even if it is just over a screen. For example, the children are able to practice speech targets by telling us what snacks to eat at our tea party, what food to cook for the monster, or what outfit to put on Daniel Tiger when playing different apps. We are still able to provide services that are helpful to families and help their children develop.

Our families have enjoyed playing more of a role in therapy sessions and have learned skills themselves. They are working on therapy targets outside of therapy more now. And some are even excited about this being an option in the future for those dreaded snowy days!



The Hastings, Omaha, and Lincoln Community Foundation hosted online days of giving on May 7th, May 20th, and May 27th respectively. Over 1,600 non-profit organizations participated in the three communities, including our Valley Scottish Rite Foundations, offering an opportunity for Nebraskans to donate to RiteCare.

Scottish Rite Masons across Nebraska generously answered the call, donating \$3,564 to Hastings, \$2,993 to Omaha, and \$2,536 to Lincoln, supporting the RiteCare Clinics and philanthropies of the Scottish Rite Foundations for each Valley. Numerous grateful RiteCare families also choose to support our mission of providing speech therapy with the largest donation given of \$600 and the average donation of \$100 for all three Valleys.

Overall, Nebraskans made a stupefying 99,799 donations totalling \$15,991,970 for all three events, making a significant impact on non-profits ability to give back during these uncertain times.

Membership, continued

[Freemasonry] is not the apostle of any particular form of government, not the advocate of any peculiar political faith. It is the Apostle, the Preacher, the Advocate of Truth alone, and not as the creed of any man, or party, or multitude of men. It will not descend from the high places on which it sits enthroned, to engage in controversies and polemics, to become the organ of a party, an agent to effect political changes. . .

Albert Pike was correct that Freemasonry as an institution does not "have a policy." Arturo de Hoyos, 33° expanded on this, reminding us that Masonry teaches individual members a code of moral conduct, and we are its representatives, charged to act within the

bounds of the square and the compass in the exercise of our free will. We are charged to do what is right and exercise the square of virtue toward all mankind.

A joint statement of the F.&A.M. and P.H.A. Grand Lodges of Washington, D.C. said it best:

Freemasons do not all think alike. We are formed from different races, different political and social backgrounds, and many different countries. We all act and vote as individuals, and as our respective consciences dictate. But on one principle we are united. Freemasons accept and respect one another regardless of our differences, and the Brotherhood we share is based solely upon the content of a man's character.

Respect and harmony are the fundamental "policy statement" of Freemasonry.

Each man reacts to the current political controversies "as our consciences dictate," but it is our very behavior as Freemasons that put into practice that policy.

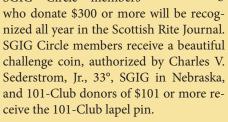
If we truly "meet on the level, act upon the plumb and part by the square," observing mutual acceptance and respect to all mankind, we are the embodiment of our policy statement. As we actively progress from the Rough Ashlar to the Perfect Ashlar in our own way, Masons demonstrate to the world that our gentle Craft is the antidote to many of the problems affecting the nation today.

Giving the Gift of

SGIG Circle and 101-Club Donors Make a Special Gift to RiteCare

Me are all too well aware of the uncertainty COVID-19 has brought to our jobs, our investments, and our daily lives. I certainly don't want to dwell on what the news covers every single day.

Despite this news, I would again ask you to consider supporting our RiteCare services through the Scottish Rite Foundation of Nebraska when you receive the 101-Club/SGIG Circle appeal in the mail in a few weeks. As in the past, SGIG Circle members



Your tax-deductible donation meets immediate needs for our families with children affected by speech and language disorders. The families can continue to work with our Speech-Language Pathologists - even if via tele-therapy - and get services to help children communicate.





The 2019-2021 SGIG Circle challenge coin

distancing.

Particularly now, it may be a lot to ask your continued support for RiteCare, but the Nebraska Scottish Rite is absolutely committed to providing exceptional services for any Nebraska child with a speech deficiency.

positive progress in spite of social

remarkable agility adapt-

ing their practices to social

distancing guidelines while

therapists continue to positively impact childrens'

We continue to receive

appreciative that their chil-

dren can continue to make

lives, despite distancing.

Nebraska rightfully calls itself the Good Life State. Thank you for being a Scottish Rite Mason, and thank you for your extraordinary generosity providing that good life to our RiteCare families across the state!

Micah I. Evans, 33° **Orient Development Director** (402) 342-1300 micah@SRNE.org

SGIG Circle Donors (\$300+) to the Scottish Rite Foundation of Nebraska: July 1, 2019 - Tune 30, 2020

Name Valley		
Adam BaileyOmaha		
Gary BunnellOmaha		
T.J. BrumfieldOmaha		
Thomas BrummettOmaha		
Karel CapekOmaha		
William Cook, Jr Lincoln		
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George WhiteHastings		
Thanks to the generosity of numerous		
Scottish Rite Masons, Nebraska RiteC-		
are children receive all the services they		
need, without regard to a family's ability		
to pay. SGIG Circle donors have pledged		
or donated \$300 or more toward speech		
therapy for the year. Please consider		
a donation or pledge and join these		
Brethren in making a significant im-		
pact on our ability to provide excep-		
tional Speech Therapy for Nebraska		
children.		

Your dues change the light bulbs. Your donations change the world.

The Scottish Rite Journal is published bi-monthly by the Supreme Council, 33°, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, USA. The Orient of Nebraska insert is prepared for members of the Alliance, Hastings, Lincoln, and Omaha Valleys, and is mailed to all current Scottish Rite Freemasons in Nebraska's Valleys. For submissions or articles, please contact Micah Evans at micah@SRNE.org or call (402) 342-1300. Whenever possible, please include a high-resolution photo with your submission. All submissions must be received at least 45 days before the date of publication, which occurs at the beginning of odd-numbered months. (Submissions for the September-October, 2020 Scottish Rite Journal must be received no later than mid-July for consideration.)