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Orient of Nebraska

May-June 2024

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Membership

The Grand Lodge of Nebraska holds the Annual Communication each year during the first weekend in February in Kearney. I have no guess at how many Masons attend, but Brethren come from around the state, representing about 90% of all the Lodges, as well as visiting dignitaries from other Grand Lodge jurisdictions and the appendant bodies of Freemasonry.

Masons often get frustrated with the mechanics of Freemasonry, arcane procedures and occasional bureaucracy, Brothers who resist change (or are pushing for change). But for me, Annual



Annual Communication at the Younes Conference Center, Kearney, Nebraska

Communication re-charges my Masonic batteries. I saw Brothers and friends from across Nebraska who traveled to Kearney for meetings. I caught up with Brethren from Hastings, Thedford, Superior, Beatrice, Gering whom I have not seen all year. I met Brethren from across the state, who shared the fun things their Lodges do or the struggles their Lodges face. I particularly enjoyed catching up with Brother Rick Emas of Mizpah Lodge #302, whom we have not seen in more than 10 years, and is currently Deputy District Grand Master for the Grand Lodge of Alberta, Canada.

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plan on it!

a RiteCare vision for the future

In 2009, the Scottish Rite Foundation of Nebraska created the 101-Club, with \$101 representing the cost of a single session of speech therapy for a child in Nebraska. In 2017, the Nebraska Foundation created the SGIG Society as part of that fundraiser. SGIG Society members donate \$300 each year for speech therapy. We continue to recognize and honor SGIG Circle donors on page 8 of each Scottish Rite Journal in appreciation for their support for speech therapy.

In total, the 101-Club has raised over \$160,000 over the last

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Orient Calendar

- May 2.....Give Hastings Day (H)
- May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29.....Wednesday Lunches (H)
- May 12.....Mother's Day Organ Concert (O)
- May 15.....Spring Outing (O)
- May 23.....Omaha Stormchasers Tailgate (O)
- May 30.....Give to Lincoln Day (L)
- June 15.....WalkRite for RiteCare (O)
- June 5, 12, 19, 26.....Wednesday Lunches (H)
- June 6, 7, 8.....Omaha Spring Reunion (O)
- June 5, 12, 19, 26.....Wednesday Lunches (H)
- July 17.....Walt Keast Golf Classic (O)
- July 27.....Walk for RiteCare (H)
- Sept 18.....Fall Outing (O)
- Sept 25.....RiteCare Classic Golf Benefit (O)
- Sept 25-28.....National RiteCare Conference (O)
- Oct 5.....Hastings Fall Reunion (H)
- Oct 13.....Spaghetti Feed (H)
- Oct 25.....Friends of RiteCare Dinner & Auction (O)

**Please check with your
Valley for most current updates to
Scottish Rite events**

Lodge of Perfection meetings:

Alliance, 4th Friday of each month
May 24, June 28, July 26, Aug 23, Sept 27
Oct 25, Nov 22, Dec 27, Jan 24, Feb 28

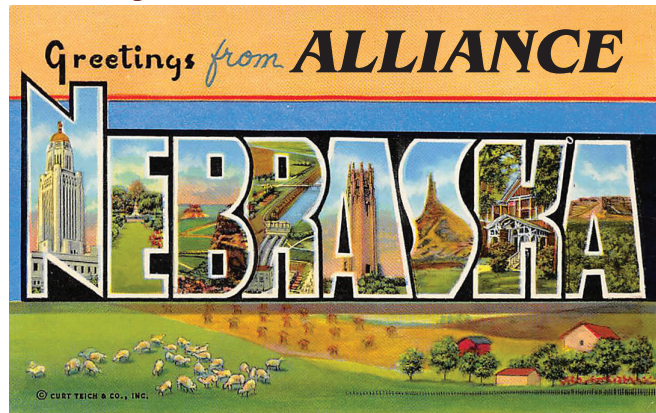
Hastings, 1st Tuesday of each month
May 7, June 4, July 2, Aug 6, Sept 3
Oct 8, Nov 5, Dec 3, Jan 7, Feb 4

Lincoln, 3rd Wednesday of each month
May 22, June 19, July 17, Aug 21, Sept 18
Oct 16, Nov 20, Dec 18, Jan 15, Feb 19

Omaha, 3rd Monday of each month
May 20, June 17, July 15, Aug 19, Sept 16
Oct 21, Nov 18, Dec 16, Jan 20, Feb 17

**For more information,
contact the General Secretary in your Valley**

- Art Stricker, 33° (Alliance) (308) 762-4324
- Phil Odom, 33° (Hastings) (402) 462-5813
- Bruce Wood, 33° (Lincoln)..... (402) 435-2144
- John Maxell, 33° (Omaha)..... (402) 342-1300



Greetings from the Alliance Scottish Rite! After conversation with the Scottish Rite officers and leadership, we have decided that we would bring Brother Chris Spradlin to Omaha for their June Reunion, rather than host one here. In place of a Reunion, we are working on a May 24th banquet, honoring our Veterans. Stay tuned!

I hope to have Candidates for a Fall Reunion, and I'll get the word out when a date has been decided upon. Please make time for Reunions when you can. We always need help with the stage crew and with Degree work. And of course, we need Brethren to sit on the sidelines and help welcome new 32° Scottish Rite Masons. Alliance may be a small Valley, but we have a lot of fun at our Reunions, and I'll stack our members and our Valley as the equal of any other!



I appreciate all the Brethren who pitch in at Reunions and events!

The Alliance Valley is proud to welcome Brother Roger Peister back to the Scottish Rite. Roger joined in 1996, but went inactive several years ago when work took him to Colorado. Roger returned to Scottsbluff after he retired, and is again active at Scotts Bluff Lodge #201. Roger was my top line signer and started me on my Masonic journey, so I'm proud to welcome him back to the Scottish Rite.

Nancy Reiber, longtime director for Community Table in Alliance has retired to spend more time with family. Whitney has stepped in to fill the role, and Community Table continues to feed lunch for 65-95 people Monday through Thursday.

The west wall and foundation project should be well under way, fixing a problem in the basement, and it will be good to get that out of the way. There are always things happening at the Scottish Rite, and we hope to see you at YOUR Valley!

~Art Stricker, 33° General Secretary
artstricker77@gmail.com
(308) 762-4324



Hastings Welcomes Three New 32° Scottish Rite Masons at Spring Reunion

The Valley of Hastings welcomed John Zlomke, David Bruns, Scot Spad (pictured above with Phil Odom, 33° and Dan Wellendorf, 33° as the Valley's newest 32° Scottish Rite Masons during the Fall Reunion on Saturday, March 2, 2024.



Dan Wellendorf welcomes Scot Spad, 32° to the Hastings Scottish Rite.

The Valley exemplified the 5 mandatory Degrees: the 4°, 14°, 18°, 30°, and 32° for the Reunion, with Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh, 33° and Bill Erickson, 33° communicating the intervening Degrees. Dan Wellendorf, 33°, SGIG in Nebraska, came out for the Reunion and sat with the class as Dan and Bill discussed the history and philosophy of the Scottish Rite Degrees.

Dan Wellendorf, 33° congratulated the new 32° Scottish Rite Masons and presented each Brother with their Scottish Rite 32° cap. Dan also took the opportunity to present framed Scottish Rite patents to Brothers from previous Reunions.

Tiny Talkers CLUB

The Hastings RiteCare Clinic has started an innovative program in partnership with the Hastings Public Library. The "Tiny Talkers Club" is a toddler group for children aged 18 months to 3 years old. The groups meet twice a week for 45 minutes, offering children play-based learning, and social play with children in the same age group.

The Tiny Talkers Club will be a unique experience, tailored to community needs. The emphasis will not be on reading or print awareness, but on play time with peers and friends. Children will share experiences with music, speech and language-rich activities, and engaging fun.

Parents are encouraged to attend with their children to learn how to increase these skills in the home environment.

Hastings Speech Pathologist Kris Althouse said, "Children will develop oral language skills and vocabulary development through play with their peers." Research shows that experiencing and engaging in language rich interactions helps children develop communication skills, patience, empathy and other skills so critical to success in school and beyond. The Tiny Talkers Club will also help kids gain peer interactions, a wider range of vocabulary, and increased listening skills.

Pencil Us In

**Give Hastings Day
May 2, 2024**

Give Hastings Day is a day of online giving which supports the RiteCare Clinics and the philanthropies of the Hastings Scottish Rite Valley Foundation

www.givehastings.org/RiteCare

SAVE THE DATE

**Valley of Hastings
REUNION
WEEKEND**

**OCTOBER 5TH
2024**

facebook.com/HastingsScottishRite



ROBERT BURNS DINNER & CELEBRATION



Lincoln is coming!

Give to Lincoln Day
May 2, 2024

[www.givetolincoln.org/
nonprofits/ritecare](http://www.givetolincoln.org/nonprofits/ritecare)

Bruce Wood ... and Bruce Did



Bruce Wood, 33° announced his retirement from the Valley of Lincoln, effective February 29, 2024. He has served as General Secretary for more than 20 years, when then-SGIG Duke Lichty, 33° appointed him in April, 2003.

Over two decades as General Secretary, Bruce brought financial efficiency to the Valley. Bruce took great pride in the Lincoln Scottish Rite building remodel, including a new HVAC system, the John D. VerMaas Lodge Room, the large Lodge room, the ballroom and small dining room, and "Chuck's Place" bar. Bruce has always considered the highlight of each year presenting the Distinguished

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Robert Burns, one of Scotland's most famous poets, died in 1796. The first Burns supper was held just five years later, and Robert Burns dinners have been celebrated around the world ever since.

The Lincoln Scottish Rite hosted the annual Robert Burns dinner on Saturday, January 27th, on what would have been his 265th birthday. Sixty Scottish Rite Masons, their ladies and guests came for a wonderful evening. The evening began with the Selkirk Grace, read by Micah Evans, 33°, followed by the March of the Haggis. John Hibberd, 32° played the bagpipes as the Knights of St. Andrew formed an Arch of Steel. Micah read Burns' immortal poem Ode to the Haggis, and Andy Seachord, 32° KCCH sliced open the hot, gooey innards with his *sgian dubh*.

As guests enjoyed the haggis and an excellent dinner, Josh Hoyer played for guests. Josh has performed internationally, and received critical acclaim for several studio albums he has produced. Guests also enjoyed beautiful music by Kim Meyer, who has played the harp at many Scottish Rite events.

Roger Wells, 32° gave a warm-hearted Toast to the Lassies and his wife Mona gave back as good as she got with a heartfelt - and funny - Reply to the Laddies.

Knight Master Nick Hansen, 32° introduced new Knights of St. Andrew, and emcee Ed Bennett, 32° KCCH welcomed Dan Wellendorf, 33° to the podium to present framed 32° patents to new Brethren who came in during the last Reunion.

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19 Brethren got their 32° Caps and Patents at the February Dinner

Sweetheart's Dinner at the Scottish Rite

The Omaha Scottish Rite had a busy Lodge dinner in February, and the theme for the evening was celebrating our sweethearts. Over 150 Scottish Rite Masons and their ladies were in attendance. Each table was decorated with a Valentine's-themed centerpiece, and the Line Officers presented every lady a beautiful bag with a dreamcatcher and Baker's chocolates.



The evening began with the Knights of St. Andrew exemplifying the 29th Degree so our newest members would be eligible to join the KSA. Drawing on the story of the Knights Templar, the Candidate seeks admission to the Order, only to find he has been arrested by the Inquisition. They demand the names of his Masonic superiors. He refuses to concede that information in spite of their threats. Showing himself steadfast, he learns these were, in fact, the Knights of the Thistle, who admit him as a provisional member, where he learns the lessons of Humility, Patience, Self-denial, Charity, Clemency, and Generosity.



Top: our new Brother James Cope and wife Tina; Bottom: Cheryl presents the raffle basket to Melissa Booker

After the Culinary Masters served a fantastic dinner of chicken cordon bleu, John Hardy, 32° KCCH welcomed each member of the November, 2023 Fall Class with their lady or top-line signer, who presented them with their 32° cap. Dan Wellendorf, 33°, SGIG in Nebraska, and John Maxell, 33° PGM presented each member of the Fall class with their framed 32° patents, and presented Perpetual Membership certificates to 7 Brethren. Dan Wellendorf took the opportunity to make an impromptu presentation of framed prints of the 33° Class photograph to Bill German, 33° and Mike Stuhr, 33°, who received their Scottish Rite honors last August.

Finally, Cheryl Wonder drew the winning raffle ticket and presented Melissa Booker, whose husband Jesse joined in the Fall Reunion, a beautiful basket with coffee and snacks.

The Sweetheart's Dinner is always a busy evening, but a wonderful evening to celebrate our ladies and the accomplishments of the Omaha Valley Scottish Rite.

1914

SOCIETY

DONORS

THROUGH JUNE 30, 2024

- Dan Alati, 32°
- Ed Anderson, 32°
- Kyle Beckner, 32° KCCH
- Tom Brummett, 33°
- Greg Carlson, 32° KCCH
- Scott Christiansen, 32°
- John Crouch, 32°
- the Culinary Masters
- Carl Diamond, 32°
- Micah Evans, 33°
- Wally Farley, 32°
- Alan Gardner, 32°
- Rick Gilmore, 33°
- Okley Gibbs, 33°
- Dr. Harold Huff, 32°
- Ralph Joos, Jr., 33°
- Steve Keast, 32°
- Walt Keast, 33°
- Mo Krishna, 32°
- Don Leu, 32° KCCH
- John Maxell, 33°
- Mel Morton, 32° KCCH
- Terry Nelson, 32°
- John T. Parsons, 33°
- the Pelletier Family
- Michael J. Precella, 32° KCCH
- Tim Peters, 32°
- Matthew Schell, 32°
- Carl Simmons, 32° KCCH
- Wayne Stuberg, 32° KCCH
- Leland Terry, 33°
- Gary (Grip) Williams, 32° KCCH
- John Williamson, 32°
- Steven Zimmerman, 32° KCCH

1914 Society donations of \$250 or more for the 2023-2024 year will be recognized on the Omaha section of the Nebraska Scottish Rite Journal through the May-June, 2024 edition. 1914 Society donations support the upkeep of the historical Scottish Rite through the Building Fund. (Donations can not be considered tax-deductible for tax purposes.)

ROBERT BURNS DINNER

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Dan joked that he didn't have a jacket for the patent presentation, so Ed lent him his, which Dan accepted with a lot of laughter from the guests. Dan then presented patents to Oscar Sinclair, 32°, Kent Cerny, 32°, Richard "Doc" Wyatt, 32°, Terrance Savage, 32°, and Michael Williams, 32°.

Mark your calendars now for January 25, 2025 for next year's Robert Burns Dinner. This is truly an evening not to be missed!



Photos: (Above) - Andrew Beckner shows his appreciation for dessert; (Top right) Dan tries on Ed's coat; (Middle right) Dan Wellendorf presents a patent to Terrance Savage; (Bottom right) Dan presents a patent to Richard "Doc" Wyatt



Knights of St. Andrew
Dennis P. Samuelson Service Award

Each year, the Omaha Knights of St. Andrew present the Dennis P. Samuelson Service Award each year to a Scottish Rite Brother (or Brothers) who have consistently demonstrated the spirit of service and leadership within the Scottish Rite.

On Saturday, January 27th, the Omaha Knights of St. Andrew hosted a breakfast for members. Venerable Roy Bradburn presented the award to Carl Diamond, 32° and Matt Ellis, 32°. Both Carl and Matt have jumped in as active Scottish Rite Masons, serving as officers in the Lodge of Perfection and Chapter of Rose Croix, as well as within the Knights of St. Andrew.

FAT TUESDAY MARDI GRAS WARM UP PARTY

The Omaha Scottish Rite was in the Mardi Gras spirit on Tuesday, February 6th for a "Fat Tuesday Mardi Warm Up Party."

Omaha's Cajun band, the Prairie Gators, entertained 50 guests for a few hours with great music, and the Culinary Masters served fried oyster po' boys, shrimp gumbo, dirty rice, and crawfish. Louisiana native Sonny Ashford, 32° declared the dinner to be as good as any served in New Orleans.

King cake is a Mardi Gras tradition, and Nancy Pippin brought the king (cup) cakes. Mardi Gras tradition dictates that finding the baby in one's cake symbolizes luck and prosperity, and the finder becomes "king" or "queen" for the evening. Erin Simmons was queen for the night, and little Andrew Beckner was the king!



Photos: Carl and Erin Simmons (above); Andrew showed us his moves on the dance floor with Maxine MacDonald and Jane Pirnat (top right), and Matt Ellis and his daughter Harper also hit the floor as the Prairie Gators played (bottom right)

Gary (Grip) Williams, 32° KCCH and Don Leu, 32° KCCH organized the event with the KCCH Club. Grip, Don, and the Committee are already working on a Mardi Gras party for 2025!



Bruce Wood. . . and Bruce Did

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Teacher of the Year Award, and particularly seeing the award increased from \$1,000 in 2003 to the current annual award of \$10,000. Bruce has always enjoyed interacting with the RiteCare Clinicians and families, especially when the Lincoln RiteCare Clinic operated within the Scottish Rite during the remodel at the Barkley Memorial Center.

Bruce grew up in Fairbury and graduated from Fairbury High School in 1964. He attended Fairbury Junior College, the University of Nebraska, and The Radio Engineering Institute. Bruce joined the Air Force in 1969. After his 4-year tour was finished, he returned to Lincoln where he worked as a Sales Technician for Leuck Radio Supply before starting his career at the Lincoln Telephone Company, where he retired after 28 years.

Bruce's hobby is Amateur "Ham" Radio. He has been a Ham Radio operator for fifty years. During that time, Bruce has



Bruce Wood, 33° has always enjoyed presenting the annual Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award at the Lincoln Public Schools

made contact with all 50 states and 153 different countries.

Bruce and his wife Linda were married in 1970 and have one son, Jason, daughter-in-law Melissa, and two grandsons.

He joined Liberty Lodge #300 in October, 1973. He received his Individual Proficiency in 1977, and served as Worshipful Master in 1978. Bruce joined

the Scottish Rite and Sesostris Shrine in April, 1975. Bruce served as Executive Officer for the Nebraska Order of DeMolay from 1999-2006, and was elected an Active Member of the DeMolay International Supreme Council.

Personal Representative to the SGIG Mike Gray, 33° recalled that as General Secretary, Bruce stepped into "a real mess." Over 20 years, Bruce has righted the ship and moved the Valley forward. "We moved from the brink of having all our utilities shut off, dues not being paid to the Supreme Council, checks and cash found undeposited, to a Valley whose membership could have faith in once again," Mike said. "Bruce has been a big part of the successful remodel of the building. We will all miss Bruce, and wish him well in retirement."

Bruce expressed his gratitude to all the great people he has worked with over the years. "I could not have done the job without them," he said.

Membership, continued

Of course, the true fun doesn't happen in the actual business meeting. It happens when Brother's slip out for dinner in town and in the hospitality room later that evening. The best Masonry doesn't happen when voting to approve the legislation, but when you're sitting with Masons you've just met, arguing about whether an Islay or a Speyside is the better Scotch. I enjoy the Secretary's lunch, where we all grumble about the same things, while coming to appreciate the extraordinary work being done to streamline the administrative processes of Masonry.

In the past, I've written about Annual Communication as an example of the illusion of Masonry versus the reality of Masonry. I've written about how the rich food, the pageantry, the laughter and new friendships give way to a sometimes dreary Lodge reality of greasy fried chicken in the basement on paper plates, while we argue over a \$23 can of paint or the



The Brethren of Mizpah Lodge #302 showing what the reality of Masonry looks like.

Lodge pedant holding up the meeting over a missing apostrophe in the minutes.

This year's Annual Communication represented the reality of Freemasonry. I was reminded that the rote of a business meeting is the illusion, providing a false veneer covering up a million laughs, friendships, shared jokes, and the brotherhood, which is the true bedrock and foundation of our fraternity. Sometimes Masons can't see that reality through the façade of those routine elements of the Lodge meeting.

For a long time, the financial statements, reading minutes, and debating trivial matters seemed like the tedious reality of Masonry. This time, I see all that as the false illusion. The true Masonic experience gets buried under those minutes and reports. We forget the enthusiasm of newly-installed Lodge officers, Brethren eager to spearhead a new Lodge activity, or even the excitement of a new Entered Apprentice Mason ready to experience all that the fraternity has to offer.

Sometimes it just takes a new perspective to rearrange your thinking. This Annual Communication changed that perception. The boring parts of Masonry are revealed as a deceptive mirage, keeping us from seeing the true Brotherhood hiding below the surface. The task of all Masons is to make sure that those deceptive elements – sometimes monotonous, but necessary – don't keep us from enjoying all the beauty our Craft has to offer.

Giving the Gift of VOICE

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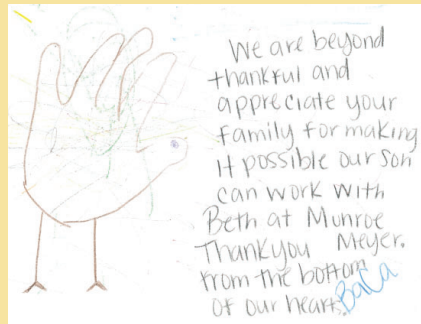
sixteen years, which is a true testament to the generous nature of Scottish Rite Masons in Nebraska.

It is the overwhelming gratitude from the families we serve through our RiteCare Speech and Language Clinic which is the true testimony of the good work Scottish Rite Masons support:

- *I could not thank you enough for the unwavering support my family has received. I truly do not think we would have the services, knowledge, helpful tactics if it was not for the Scottish Rite.*
- *I can't express my gratitude for the Scottish Rite who has done so much for my son and his language skills.*
- *My family and I are grateful for the amazing Scottish Rite members, for all you do and the difference it makes in my child!*
- *God bless you for the speech program at the Munroe-Meyer Institute.*

There are literally stacks of these letters from families.

If you have not donated, please consider a donation to the Scottish Rite Foundation of Nebraska to continue



the incredible impact the speech pathologists are making on the lives of children across the state. Whether you can donate \$101, \$300, or even \$25, you are helping children communicate and live rich lives as lifelong learners.

For members who can donate \$1,000 or more, Dan Wellendorf, 33°, SGIG in Nebraska, created the Rose Croix Society and authorized a special lapel pin for Rose Croix Society donors. In the last 3 years, Rose Croix Society members have donated around \$60,000, all of which continues to provide speech therapy across the state.

To learn more about how your donation, IRA distribution, or a gift through your estate plan can benefit the RiteCare Speech and Language Clinic, please e-mail me at micah@SRNE.org or call me (402) 342-1300. I would be happy to meet with you to discuss how you can create your Masonic legacy to help so many more families through our Scottish Rite philanthropies.

Micah I. Evans, 33°

Orient Development Director

(402) 342-1300

micah@SRNE.org

SGIG Circle Donors (\$300+) to the Scottish Rite Foundation of Nebraska: Sept. 1, 2023 - Sept. 30, 2024

Name	Valley
Dan Alati	Omaha
Scot Albertson	Omaha
Ken Beebe	Lincoln
Dennis Brydl	Lincoln
William Cook	Lincoln
Andrew Evans	Omaha
John Ferguson	Alliance
Peter Hartwig	Lincoln
Ben Harvey	Omaha
Charlie Haskell	Hastings
James Heinke	Lincoln
Virgil Johnson	Omaha
William Kimme	Omaha
Jeffrey Passer	Omaha
Robert Pelletier	Omaha
Steve Poulson	Omaha
Mike Stuhr	Omaha
Jim Turpen	Omaha
William Sullivan	Omaha
George White	Hastings
William Workman	Lincoln

Thanks to the generosity of Scottish Rite Masons, RiteCare children receive all the speech therapy they need, without regard to a family's ability to pay. SGIG Circle donors have pledged \$300 or more toward speech therapy for the year. **Please consider a donation or pledge and make a significant impact on our ability to provide exceptional speech therapy for Nebraska children.**

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

SCOTTISH RITE JOURNAL

OF FREEMASONRY ♦ SOUTHERN JURISDICTION ♦ USA

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@scottishriteomaha.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 July-August, 2024 Scottish Rite Journal must be received no later than mid-May for consideration.)