



THE VALLEY VOICE
VALLEY of MONTPELIER aasr
TRESTLEBOARD # December, 2009

SCOTTISH RITE DAY CELEBRATED



As I write this, the great experiment the Supreme Council called “SRD” or Scottish Rite Day has just ended. This was a specific initiative of our Sov. Grand Commander, John William McNaughton, and he had a very specific agenda in mind which he insisted upon. It isn’t often that we in the Scottish Rite experience a top driven event, but we did this time. Instructions were that every Consistory in our 15 States would open at 10AM, present the 31st and 32nd degree and have a luncheon without any introductions except for the Grand Master of the State. And this is exactly what happened on Nov. 14th at the Montpelier Masonic Center.

Just by chance Vermont was also celebrating the opening morning of “rifle season” that morning. Illus. Rick Rayfield, the Consistory’s Commander in Chief, accounted for this by extending to our members freedom to arrive in hunting clothes, and by offering deer and elk stew for the luncheon. Very creative, Rick, and the stew was delicious too. In the end, I don’t think we lost too many attendees. Several were in hunting clothes and came in from the field- a hard steady rain outside may have encouraged this- and I did what I could to honor the season by wearing a red bow tie.

Illus. Roland Smith’s staging crew had transformed the lodge room into a well thought out set for the degree work. Attendance was good, with 55 brothers including 14 candidates from our four VT Valleys. Our MWGM Thomas Johnston IV attended, together with two Past MWGMs of our State. The officers of the Consistory did an outstanding job with the explanations of the Scottish Rite “Camp,” the nonagon enclosing a heptagon, and so forth.

The candidates were obligated and then in an unusual twist each candidate was dubbed at the altar, one at a time, by the Commander in Chief as a Sublime Prince. After the investiture of the Exemplar with the clothing of a Sublime Prince, brother Rayfield concluded the work with the stirring and beautiful flag charge of the Consistory.

Following a brief costuming recess labor continued on the concluding allegory of the Scottish Rite, the beautiful story of Constans and the four temptations written by Illus. Brother John Lloyd Thomas in 1916. The cast performed their labors to perfection. Of special note was the performance of brother Jay Purvis, whose rendition of Constans was thrilling, and his performance was ably supported by every member of the cast. All in all, a suburb presentation that awoke in each brother the deep meaning of the Royal Secret. Our candidates, now Brothers, received a wonderful entry into the ranks of the Kadosh.

The degree work was immediately followed by a great luncheon served by Montpelier's Aurora Lodge square and compasses club. I confess I had thought that many brothers would slip away after the work was done and not stay for the food. Boy, was I wrong. Nearly two hours of great fellowship equaled the degree work in cementing the meaning of Scottish Rite Masonry. At one point I looked around and noticed there was no one not engaged in animated conversation with his brothers. Surely the fellowship was every bit as important as the work in the lodge room had been.

So in conclusion I can only say SGC John William had hit on a winning formula, as was evidenced by the success of the day. A huge thank you must go out to Commander Rayfield and all the brothers of VT Consistory for the hard work they put in to make this event such a success. This is the first year for a long time we have had two candidate classes in a single degree season, but with 14 new sublime princes now added to our ranks no one can say the effort was not worth while. And of course our brothers all enjoyed the event tremendously- I know I did. If you missed the fun, we will be doing it again at the Williston Masonic Center on April 24, 2010.

Eric Ginette
Deputy Inspector VT



To Order Princes

The 32nd degree, like many Scottish Rite degrees, used to include a ceremonial section and then an allegory. The idea was to convey the virtues with words and ritual symbols and a matching name of God, and then to tell a story that makes the point. With a literate society, the Rite has turned increasingly (thought not exclusively) to allegory- stories with characters and action.

The 32nd degree, Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret, was divided several years ago into a separate 32nd degree which is the ceremony explaining our masonic camp with its ideals and goals, and moving the allegory as a new 31st degree. The Supreme Council wished the 32nd degree- the last regular degree- to contain the knighting of the Sublime Princes. But the Supreme Council also recognized the power of finishing a Masonic reunion with the drama of the Constans story. So we are given the choice of presenting these two degrees separately. Or, when we do them on the same day, we have the option of presenting them in reverse order- the old way as it were.

The Vermont Consistory has chosen to continue to do the 31st and 32nd degree together, not because of tradition, but because they always fit well together as the drama and ceremony to mark full membership in Scottish Rite. Our stage in Williston, where these degrees are usually done, is a particularly wonderful place to present the church scene. We choose to present the allegory after the ceremonial there. We made this same choice for the special Reunion held in Montpelier on Nov 14th. Not all Valleys have the ability to cast both degrees the same day, or take them on the road.

So what's a 32nd degree Prince to do who has seen only a few of the degrees? For one thing, do not be shy. Only a few degrees (4th, 14, 15 or 16, and 17 or 18) are required to take the 32nd degree and become a Sublime

Prince of the Royal Secret, 32nd degree. AASR. Every active Scottish Rite member would like to see all 28 or 29 degrees. This can take years.

What is striking is how pleasant it is to repeatedly see the same degrees- like those required ones which get put on regularly. Every time a degree is done, something is different, or you see it or hear it differently. Whether you are a candidate or in the audience or in the cast, the degrees are full of symbols and meaning which bear repetition and continued mining. Even the 33rd degree- presented only at meetings by the Supreme Council- while full of meaning, has a primary feature of urging us forward. "For the Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret", we hear in the 32nd degree, "the time is always NOW." Scottish Rite is not about the degrees you HAVE seen. It is more about the degrees you WILL see. When we are raised as Master Masons, it is not a reward for code learned, or a life well led. Every step in Masonry is a platform from which we continue building the Temple. It is winding staircase.

After 16 years playing Prince Commander, you would think I had exhausted the role. Not so. Every time, I find new nuance or fresh relations in the degree. In Montpelier recently- a new setting- I felt a different relationship between the Commander who is presenting Constans in the church for a vigil, and the Bishop whose building and its symbols provide the sacred setting for the vigil, but also for the temptations. My line simply addressing the Bishop as "Reverend Father" felt different and reminded me of the many paternal as well as fraternal relations in my life. In part what I felt was in contrast to "and Sublime Princes" which followed- having all the newly dubbed Princes so nearby on Montpelier Lodge floor. I also attempted greater outrage at Constans' absence. I felt this fall flat and overdone, like meat cooked too long. Lesson learned. After every performance, I give thanks to the cast and audience, because my life is always enhanced by the degree experience.

Rick Rayfield, Commander-in-Chief, Vermont Consistory



Dear Brothers,

This is my first report as an Active member from of the Supreme Council .I am very humbled by what has taken place in Boston over the four days at Supreme Council .I was approached almost two years ago by Illustrious Eric Ginette and Illustrious Frederick Jackson that I might be under their consideration for the Actives position as Fred was retiring and I should give it some thought for the future. Being an Active is not something that anyone should take lightly and I did not. I only have to look at those that came before me. These are men that are models of Masonic life. I was very comfortable being Secretary of my Valley and things are really going quite well as we have a great line of officers and it was a rewarding place to work. I looked forward to every degree and board meeting. Why would I want to look down the road at some other leadership position when things are going so well?

I spent time with Fred and Eric discussing what it meant to be an active. It was a chance to again work along side our Deputy Eric and help address the challenges that our brothers are facing in their Valleys, to be able to

serve the whole state and not just one Valley. I also talked it over with my family. They are very supportive of my Masonic activities and encouraged me to take on this new leadership position.

I think the thing that made me most comfortable was the confidence Eric had in me to help him in the coming years. This position also means I will be on standing committees at Supreme Council and give Vermont a voice in its actions. I look forward to working for all the Valleys and accompanying the Deputy to your future valley events.

I would also like to talk about something that I have become involved in the last six months. The valley of Burlington's Scottish Rite Learning Center. I casually started going to board meetings as Secretary for the Valley of Montpelier so I could learn about the Center and report back to the Valley. What I learned about was the mission of the learning Center and the dedication of the board. It is something all Scottish Rite Masons should be very proud of.

The Center has been going through some changes this year as it now has a new director Jan Ellis –Clements and assistant Catherine Anderson-Nguyen. Jan brings an incredible history of teaching and leadership to the learning center and is a great addition to the Staff. Another change was the Chairman of the Board. Rich Hildebrand has become interim chair replacing Mike Raley who had to take a leave due to work and family obligations. Thank you Mike for the hours you have dedicated to the Learning Center.

Rich has brought all his energy to the board and has been adding new and talented members monthly. I am sure you will be hearing more about the learning center in the coming months as there will be some big announcements of events and from members of your communities that have been touched by the learning centers work.

I encourage you to do what my wife and I did and schedule an appointment (802-872-9900) to tour the Learning Center and talk to the director and I am sure you will be deeply moved by the work done at our Valley's Learning Center.

Respectfully,
Don Duquette Active



From The Gavel

My Brothers it has been too long since our last Valley news was published and I am very grateful we may at last have a handle on getting it out in a timely manner.

We have Bill Shwab to thank for stepping up and putting The Valley News back in circulation along with Stan Schmaucher. We are hoping to get the news out on a more regular basis.

The Valley has been very busy the last few months with Scottish Rite Degrees and Third Degrees. The Valley of Montpelier is blessed with men not only with talent to be able to put on these degrees but are also going out of there way to see that, when called upon are eager to participate. After all where does a Master Mason receive more light except thru us, you and me not only by participating in degrees but in everything you or I do to promote the brotherhood, are you setting the example?

A special thanks to all who participated in the third degrees for Northfield, Barre, Morrisville [For the Stow Lodge] and Island pond, all of these Lodges have expressed their appreciation and gratitude for going to their Lodges and performing some of best degree work they have seen. I am sure we will be called upon again next year and am looking forward to it.

If there are any brothers that would like to participate in either a third degree or Scottish Rite Degree in any capacity, speaking or non speaking please let me know. Lee Martenson 479-0334 or lmartenson@msn.com. Please don't be bashful we have some great teachers of course I am speaking of our own Rick Rayfield, Eric Ginette and others who are willing and able to help prepare you for a part in a degree.

We want to remind you of an upcoming 13th degree on January 23rd [your schedule shows a 4th degree] also on February 20th a 16th degree [your schedule shows a 15th degree]. Please make note of these changes.

Well I hope all had a safe and Happy Thanksgiving. My wife and I are getting ready to head to California to be with our son, his wife and the grandchildren for Christmas. Then off to Arizona to visit our daughter and husband and of course more grandchildren. We have been looking forward to this trip and ask for your prayers that it be a safe one.

Steve Engle [Deputy Master] will be taking over my duties while I am gone.

I can still be reached via e-mail or phone.

On behalf of the ADMIN council we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy Chanukah.

Lee Martenson
Thrice Potent Master
Valley of Montpelier AASR
lmartenson@msn.com
802-479-0334

Any calls to my home # will be forwarded to my cell phone.



For those of us who were raised "back in the day", this will make sense...

An Obituary printed in the London Times:

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as:

- Knowing when to come in out of the rain;
- Why the early bird gets the worm;
- Life isn't always fair;
- And maybe it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge). His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children. It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion. Common Sense lost the will to live as the churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims. Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault. Common Sense finally gave up the will to live, after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death, by his parents, Truth and Trust, by his wife, Discretion, by his daughter, Responsibility, and by his son, Reason. He is survived by his 4 stepbrothers;

- I Know My Rights
- I Want It Now
- Someone Else Is To Blame
- I'm A Victim

Not many attended his funeral because so few realized he was gone.

Brothers,

At this time web sites and e-mail addresses are being up-dated. If you have a new or changed e-mail address would you send it to: Lee Martenson at; lmartenson@msn.com.