

# The Scottish Rite HERALD

News from the Valley of Kansas City



Volume 65

SEPTEMBER, 2006

Edition 3

## THE HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY OF PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES

An interview with Illustrious Brother Tony Robbins, 33°



*Editor's note: The Society of Philosophical Studies is an integral part of that search for "further light" through which Freemasons seek knowledge of*

*themselves and their purpose and place in the grand design of the universe. As the organizer, Brother Tony leads the group.*

**Q: When was the society originally formed?**

A: The original group dates back to some 30 years ago. At that time, we

met away from the Temple; usually at each others homes and occasionally in the recreation room of a local apartment complex. You might say that we were a bit of a social club then, composed of men who enjoyed the company of other, like minded men. No officers... no special meeting date...just a "come when you can" club. If my memory serves me right the original group never exceeded over a half dozen Scottish Rite members. There was Thomas H. McCully, the Secretary in the Valley, John Howard Yingling, Gerald Owens, Howard Atkins, and myself. Occasionally there would be another person or two that would come and, once in a while, even someone who didn't belong to the fraternity at all.

Before too long we concluded that due to the schedules we all had and other responsibilities, it would be just as well for the brothers to become a part of The Philaethes Society, an international association of Freemasons who seek light and those who have light to impart. There main focus was to write essays and research papers on Freemasonry and we got together a few times but then it seemed to just fizzle out.

Due to our desire to look with an emphasis on the esoteric side of Freemasonry through The Ancient and Accepted Rite; several of us met at Ararat Shrine Temple, back in 91 or 92; and had dinner in the Harry Truman room. There, we created a group that would eventually become the Society for Philosophic Studies. Several of us are still involved today and attend its functions regularly.

**Q: What was the main purpose for the society?**

The goal was to do essays on Masonic subjects. Perhaps we envisioned ourselves to be scholars and authors, and we did have a few, who rose to the top of the group and produce articles. Some were published in Masonic circles such as The Philaethes Society, and other Masonic publications and periodicals.

**Q: Then you met regularly after that?**

A: We continued on a not too regular schedule meeting at various places, no officers, just a group of good men trying to be better men by sharing Masonic information and fellowship.

**Q: And so, that's where the College of the Consistory came in?**

A: It wasn't until (continued, page 6)

## KANSAS CITY BY-LAWS UNDER REVIEW

Valley faces change directed by the Orient

Over the past few months, in an effort to improve uniformity in the Orient of Missouri, The Sovereign Grand Inspector General for Missouri directed each Valley to submit their by-laws for review. From these submissions, a copy of proposed by-law changes was sent to all the Valleys in the Orient. The Masters, Wardens, and Committee Chairmen have been reviewing these articles that will cause revisions to our by-laws. As these reviews progress, all Brethren should plan on attending the regular monthly meetings in the coming months for the voting and possible adoption of these changes.

Making changes to the by-laws of our Valley is a serious step that, according to our current by-laws, requires a two-thirds majority approval for adoption of amendments.

Your input and vote will count immensely in seeing that your Kansas City Valley continues to be in alignment with the Orient and Supreme Council guidelines. More will follow as we prepare for these changes. As stated in our Valley's existing by-laws, and you should receive notice of the proposed amendments and the date of voting.



## BLUE LODGE AT THE RITE?

A Guest Editorial By Bernard J. Meister, 32°



*Brother Meister joined the Rite in 2001 and currently serves as the Orator of the Kansas City Lodge of Perfection. His home is in Peculiar, MO*

Recently it was asked at an advisory board meeting, if the Rite would be open to having one of the local blue lodges moving into and using the lodge room in the temple as their own. Many things have been discussed since that time, but

little has been done to move this idea forward. It seems that with falling membership, the age and condition of the lodge building, as well as other considerations, it was becoming very difficult for the lodge in question to maintain itself at its present location. Regrettably, this is not an isolated problem. Many questions have yet to be answered before we can possibly reply to such a request, but I would put forth this idea:

Many Blue Lodges are struggling to make ends meet. With the rising costs of fuel, building maintenance, and just the costs of functioning, coupled with an increase in the median age of the broth-

ers, an overall decrease in new members, and an overall decrease in the amount of time for the pursuits of freemasonry of the new members that are coming in, it may be time to consider consolidation of the man power and resources of the lodge brothers that are available. The brothers of these esteemed lodges are often times quite knowledgeable in the ritual and functions, but also spread out and go from lodge to lodge assisting with work and giving of the precious time that we all have too little of. If the Rite was to open its doors to Blue Lodges of the surrounding area, we would quickly run out time and resources to accommodate (*con't. page 4*)

## INTERVIEW WITH: DAN SMOTHERS, KCCH

Personal Representative in the Kansas City Valley

*Editors Note: This interview was originally published in the E-Herald on March 1, 2006. It is presented here for the broader audience that receives the printed version of our newsletter.*

**Q: I know you started in DeMolay but tell us about your Masonic background.**

A: "I joined DeMolay in 1982 and after I turned 21 I wanted to continue with serving. To do that, I had to be a Mason. In 1989, I joined the Lodge, the York Rite, the Scottish Rite and Ararat Shrine and my life has not been the same since. I immediately fell in love with the entire Masonic Fraternity. I served as Worshipful Master in 1993-1994 of Buckner Lodge #501. I worked my way through all of the York Rite bodies serving as the head of each of them. In 1999 I was honored by the York Rite with the KYCH (Knight York Cross of Honour) award. In 2004 I was appointed to the advancing Grand Line of the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of the State of Missouri. In the Scottish Rite I was active in degree work and I was appointed to the Lodge line in 1993 and served the Valley as Venerable Master in 1998. I was honored by the Supreme Council in 1999 by receiving the KCCH.



**Occupation:** Real Estate Mortgage Corp Officer  
**Birth Date:** October 21, 1967, Age 38  
**Place of Birth:** Kansas City, MO  
**City of Residence:** Buckner, Missouri  
**Married:** Yes, **Wife's Name:** Holly  
 3 daughters, Twins who are 7 and a third daughter who is 4

In 2001, I was elected Treasurer of the Kansas City Valley and served in this position for 5 years.

I have been an active participant at Ararat Shrine and was a member of their Ritual Cast for many years. In 2005 I was elected as the Treasurer of Ararat Shrine Temple, a position I continue to hold. I have served on many different committees in all of the bodies of Masonry and have learned an immense amount of information about Masonry.

**Q: What do you feel is the biggest challenge facing our Valley?**

A: "This is a very tough question to answer quickly. Obviously, membership is the main priority for us as Scottish Rite Masons and there are going to be some great things happen in the near future that I think will make a difference in the Scottish Rite across the country. Our

awesome building is very expensive to operate and to try to understand that in a paragraph will be almost impossible to answer. However, we Kansas City Scottish Rite Masons, from our earliest days of inception as a Valley, have always come together to answer the call of what we needed to do to get things done. I have faith in our Valley membership that we will be able to get through the tough times that we are facing financially. Communication is of utmost importance, especially at this time in our history. The majority of new members that are joining want to know about events and history and things going on immediately. We need to be on the cutting edge of technology to continue to be able to offer a great service as a fraternity to our members." (*Continued page 5*)

ARCHIE'S

CORNER

By Archibald Fletcher, 32°



~ DEAR JOHN ~

Isn't it wonderful when a romance turns out OK and the happy couple rides off into the sunset to live in joy and tranquility forever? The violins begin to play and a handkerchief dabs away the tears of joy from the cheeks. A warm fuzzy feeling takes over and your best wishes travel with the young couple as they set out on life's journey together.

Well that is how it is in fairytales where the Knights in Shining Armor come along and rescue the Damsels in distress, slay the dragons and swear undying love for all eternity.

However it does not always work out like that and many young couples have

to come to a parting of the ways. Sometimes it's easy but mostly a little bit of heartache is involved with one wishing to go whilst the other wants the status quo.

What is a young man to do? There are several ways of extricating himself from his predicament such as:

*I don't believe in the Hereafter because I'm not here after what you're here after so you'll be here after I've gone.* Subtle, effective but cruel.

*Remember I told you I loved you? I lied.* Less subtle, very effective but awfully cruel

*Hi, nice to see you. This is my new girlfriend.* Unsubtle, very effective but cruel and dangerous.

*The "Dear John" letter.* Very subtle and kind if you have the right linguistic skills and very effective if delivered from afar but somewhat cowardly. It's generally considered to be a good option by many young men.

Well I was up in the Arctic and it was time to move on so how is this for size? I give you:

The Lure...

THE LURE

In those rugged snow clad hills  
There's silver, gems and gold  
And if a man just proves his worth  
His fortune will unfold.

But there's more to life than making  
dough

If you want peace of mind.  
First there's "Wild Oats to sow.  
Then your woman you must find.

I found one in this rugged land.  
She's small and trim and neat.  
I trembled as I touched her hand.  
I put my world at her feet.

I know she'd like to marry me.  
She'd like to share my life.  
It's the look that's in her eye you see.  
Says "Take me for your wife."

I'll never find another lass  
Just as nice as this.  
I could wait for all of time to pass  
To know again such bliss.

But the rugged hill still lures me  
And the "Call of the Wild" is strong.  
The hill is where I have to be.  
That's where I belong.

So I kissed her lips and parted  
And loaded up my gear.  
I've left her brokenhearted  
Drying up her tears.

So I guess it'll be the lonely life  
Of tears and toil and sweat.  
I guess I'll have my share of strife  
And on that you can bet.

I'll take her love away with me  
And this to her I've told.  
But Brothers, Sisters can't you see?  
I have to toil for Gold.

A little bit journalistically melodramatic  
but fairly well told in places.

THE TIMES THEY ARE CHANGING

A Technical report on the Valley By Cody Hines, 32°



*Brother Cody received his 32nd Degree in 2002 and has been active in the Rite from the start. He is the Chairman the Board for the Childhood Language Disorders Clinic and a member of the Valley Technical Committee.*

It was over 40 years ago that Bob Dylan recorded a song and album by that title, but the message couldn't be truer today. As we progress into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the face of our Valley changes daily. Some changes are for the worse, as is to be expected, with faster lifestyles requiring

more and more time from our dedicated Brethren. Some changes, however, are for the better and we can only embrace the advances we have available to enhance our Fraternal experience.

For starters, increased technology gives us more powerful tools in the presentation of our degrees—LCD projectors can cast images on stage from 50 feet away or display graphic-rich lessons to our incoming classes. In addition, improved sound effects and lighting equipment have the possibility to make our degrees even more impressive.

But, that isn't even the beginning of our new abilities. The greatest improvement available by today's (continued, page 5 )

## BLUE LODGE AT THE RITE? *(continued from page 2)*

the many and important functions of these Lodges.

With these things in mind, I believe we should look at forming a Blue Lodge at the Rite and invite the lodges that approach us to consolidate with this lodge. The Scottish Rite is often referred to as the "college of freemasonry" and if this is true, we could be a premier lodge in the Kansas City Metro area, on par with the East Gate Travelers club, and known for the ritual and transmitting of the secrets of freemasonry. Perhaps it is pride that makes me think these things, I do not know. I do know that I am not really one to be expounding on the ritual, as I am still learning it and so many others are so much more adept. I also know that the Rite has already a fantastic amount of consolidated talent and knowledge. How can we not see this and act to assist our brothers and would be initiates to the

best we can give to them?

Anyway, it is just something to ponder before we make any decision, but to me it is an inevitable step and one that should be done, if not now, then soon.

---

### *What do you think?*

*Readers are encouraged to respond to this editorial at:*

*HeraldNews@scottishrite-kcmo.org*



## REMEMBER:

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TIONS EARLY FOR THE  
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## THANK YOU ALL!

*Contributions are mounting up!*

In the last issue of the Herald we told you all about the serious financial troubles the Valley is facing. We asked each of you to dig down deep and help with Temple expenses.

Well, as this issue of your quarterly newsletter goes to press, members of this Valley have sent around \$4,000 in financial aid.

If the Grand Old Temple could speak, I know it would say "Thank you all" from the bottom of it's very soul!

If you haven't sent in your contribution yet, you can still help. Just fill out the form on page 5 and mail it in or drop it at the temple offices. Don't let a few men carry all the weight; share the load with your brothers today!

## IN MEMORIAM

The following brothers have been called by the Supreme Architect of the Universe since our last Herald.

**LEROY CATON**  
**ROBERT D CHAPMAN**  
**KENNETH E COLE**  
**ARNOLD L COPPAKEN**  
**ELDON J CUSIC**  
**CLEM S EHINGER**  
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**DANIEL L SHIPPY**  
**JAMES W SPENCER**  
**HAROLD F STERNS**  
**JOE VILLA JR**

The Scottish Rite Herald is published quarterly by the Kansas City Scottish Rite Valley. Please direct all comments to:

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1330 Linwood Blvd,  
Kansas City, MO 64109

**Ron Hewitt, 32°**  
*Editor*

**Archibald Fletcher, 32°**  
*Poet Laureate and Contributing Editor*

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*Venerable Master*

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**Michael L. Mack, KCCH**  
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*Almoner*

~  
**Dan Smothers, KCCH**  
*Personal Representative*



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See our rate chart on page 7

INTERVIEW WITH: (Continued from page 2)

**Q: What is the biggest opportunity we have before us?**

A: There are several things that are happening in Hollywood and across the country with regards to movies and books that are coming out in the near future which will all be a catalyst to start moving our membership numbers up. People are interested in the mythical details surrounding this great beloved fraternity. Movies like *National Treasure* and the *DaVinci Code* have propelled the fraternity into the mainstream and we need to be able to handle the questions from people that want to be members of this part of Masonry.

**Q: What advise can you give the new Scottish Rite Mason to help them get the most out of being part of this great organization?**

A: I was at a Scottish Rite leadership conference in Houston, and one of the great quotes was *"The world is run by*

*those that show up!"* Obviously it is the same in Masonry, show up and enjoy the time in whatever meeting you are at. The Scottish Rite is a big organization with many things going on. We have the "local" clubs that have meetings and events, as well as the internal clubs like the Temple Guard and the Ducks (a great place to start). You do not have to go every night to be involved in Masonry. There are websites dedicated to Masonic research and books too numerous to mention. From a personal perspective, I do something every day of my life with the fraternity, whether it is reading, phone calls to brothers, attending dinners, sending emails, going to meetings, stopping by a nursing home or attending the last rites of for a departed brother. There is so much to do and so little time. If you do not get involved in the fraternity you are missing a great opportunity in your life.

THE TIMES THEY ARE CHANGING (continued from page 3)

technology is our ability to communicate at light speed by use of the internet. Today, we are able to communicate with the Brethren of the Valley at a rate that has the potential of ensuring no message is lost or late. The old S.R. Herald we've come to expect isn't going away but the quarterly communication standard is, as we move into faster and greater encompassing venues.

For starters, the Scottish Rite Herald, a quarterly publication, actually appears on-line the *same day* it goes to the press! Our award winning website contains electronic versions of the Herald, as well as an on-line calendar of events and a widely used forum for chat, conversation, and coming events for the Masonic community. In addition, our presence on the internet serves as a great recruiting tool for prospective members, should you need to refer someone in their search for further light. Do you have e-mail? If so, then the availability of instant information is even greater! Our Valley office sends out regular communications

via e-mail that can keep each of us up-to-speed on events around the Temple. In addition, the RiteStart is a weekly newsletter option—delivered to your e-mail inbox each week—full of weekly events, birthdays, important announcements, and inspiring news.

Now, I realize that a significant percentage of our Brethren have not and will not adopt the digital age. If you are willing, however, the Valley of Kansas City invites you to join us on the web! We have established a tech committee that would be happy to assist you in any part of our new endeavor on the internet, you only need to ask.

For more information, contact the Valley office or select one of the these Important Contact links below.

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## THE HISTORY *(continued from page 1)*

2001 that we got word, in Kansas City, that The Scottish Rite in Guthrie, Oklahoma had created the College of The Consistory. It sounded just like what we had been looking for all these years to supplement our study group, and it was.

Howard Yingling, William Bailey, Jim Gibson, and I drove to Guthrie, and attended the very first Feast and Forum of the College. We were on the ground floor of one of the most exciting efforts ever thought of in my experience as a Mason. We discovered that the format was made available to anyone who wanted to communicate by the internet and we were warmly received by its creators; before we returned, they made us a Campus of the College in the Valley of Kansas City and we were off and running hard.

**Q: Did you charge a membership fee at that time?**

**A:** Well, due to our need for books, postage, etc to supplement our own library and office expenses, we established an entrance fee of \$35 to the campus here in our Valley.

**Q: So the Society became the College of the Consistory?**

**A:** Yes. The College grew to between 35 and 40 students in a short time. It was exciting and we purchased "firing cannons" to be used for toasting, by the initial group, and gave them as an incentive to those who enrolled in the college at the very first Feast and Forum. Some of our charter members made application but did not produce essays or research papers on the Scottish Rite degrees which was the purpose of the college. Others attended the Feasts and shared in the fun and fellowship and still do today.

**Q: So what changed? Why aren't we still the "College"?**

**A:** About a year ago, needs in our Valley were recognized and we made modifications in the college to supplement those needs. Our intentions were good, but before long we had the college into the recruiting and fund raising business.



*The tables were set for a recent Feast & Forum for the College of the Consistory.*

The Mother College in Guthrie was quick to point out that the only purpose for the College was to produce research papers and essays on the 29 Degrees of the Scottish Rite.

After careful consideration by the founding brothers, it was decided to reorganize our Philosophical Society again and make it an umbrella organization under which our members could meet. We divided it into three succinct units consisting of **The Discussion Group**, **The Retirees / Businessmen's Club**, and **The College of the Consistory**.

**Q: What do the three groups do differently?**

**A:** Each body has a specific goal: **The Discussion Group** meets each Sunday Morning at about 9 AM. We fix breakfast and eat around 10:00 AM. Usually a topic of interest has been posted on the Kansas City Scottish Rite Forum for discussion. We open this group to all Master Masons. Naturally each attendee is expected to pay for his own breakfast so we set a donation of \$5.00 to cover this expense for the larder. We don't require reservations but as we continue to grow, it may become necessary if for nothing more than planning food. It sure helps if we know that someone will be coming. Currently, about 40 men participate in this group and we're still growing.

Our goal is to assist brothers in furthering their initiation experience in either Blue Lodge or Scottish Rite. Each of these orders, it seems to them, deals more in the "bolts and nuts" of the organization rather than the building a

spiritual Temple. New Masons are hungry for the very thing they have been promised. Since we continue to grow each week, I suspect we are fulfilling several of our new Masons needs.

You can't help sensing these young men of *this "new generation"* are coming into the fold with a level of Masonic understanding that supersedes by far the level of yesterday and most of our membership. They lack only in age and life experiences. One of my many blessings is the opportunity to be welcome among their number.

**The College of the Consistory** is back on track now and will be making Adepts of scholars who follow the syllabus provided by Guthrie. The endeavor will take about 5 years to complete in the 4 Scottish Rite bodies. I handled the enrollment of two more students just today making approximately 50 students. They came to us as new members during the last reunion class. No fee is required to join the college. In spite of our struggle with an identity, we are still the most active Campus in the College of the Consistory..

**The Retirees / Businessmen's Luncheon** is the remnant of the original philosophical society and has been meeting each Wednesday at Chubby's Diner on Broadway just south of the old Uptown Theater on the west side of the street. We order from the menu at 12 o'clock sharp. In this group we discuss news from the Lodges, Shrine, Scottish Rite, stock market and other sources of information. It's all available along with Masonic brotherhood in a social setting..

**Q: How does a new member join?**

**A:** I would suggest that a brother visit one, or better yet, each of the three groups. Then, if they think that they are important to them and want to get active in The Scottish Rite through this umbrella group, they can join with us.

**Q: Anything you would like to add?**

**A:** Yes, we meet without prayer caps so no one gets out ranked. We get along without officers; *(continued, page 7)*

THE HISTORY (continued from page 6)

we have some old 33° Masons who attempt to lead but only when asked. We come together in brotherhood as a matter of choice. Not because someone demanded us to be, but rather, we *choose* to be together.

I predict that the Society of Philosophi-

cal Studies will act as a catalyst for reviving excellence in our Rite. We are on the cusp of a new enlightenment here in the Valley of Kansas City, Missouri and I'm proud to be involved with it.



The brothers meet each Sunday for breakfast under the watchful eyes of Horus, the emblem of the Society. (Stained glass seal Created by Bro. David Phillips, 32°)

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