



Northern Masonic Jurisdiction

# SCOTTISH RITE

# REPORTER

Valley of Eau Claire Fall 2024

## COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S CORNER

Greetings all.

As I sit here writing this, my last message as the sitting Commander in Chief of the best #@\$%&! Valley in the entire Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, I'm reminded of all the things I need to do today that I'm procrastinating on. This message was on a list of previous to-do items that I kicked into the future and now I have to make good on it. As they say, if you wait until the last minute to do something, it only takes a minute to do.

Writing this message though gets me out of other stuff I'm too lazy to give my undivided attention to. Such as getting a boat ready to sell. I really don't feel like doing it. Another is telling my wife happy birthday. I won't mention her age here as I'm one classy guy but the ol' girl jumped into a new decade and managed to do so without breaking a hip, so she's got that going for her.

So I'll worry about those items later when it's last minute. Back to this however. I would like to say thank you to all the officers, directors, degree casts, sound/lighting/stage/kitchen crews, the wives and girlfriends who make many things more bearable than just us left to our own devices. (Certainly, more edible--thank you Gail Abernathy!)

But the warmest heartfelt thanks goes to the best #@\$%&! Valley Secretary in the entire Northern Masonic Jurisdiction Lyle Koerner. You would not believe the heavy lifting he does around the joint to make it hum the way it does. You're aces Lyle. Thanks!

I would love to take a moment to congratulate our newest 33° elect Scottish Rite Masons to receive this high honor next August in Indianapolis: Joshua Sudbrink, 1st Lt Commander Mike Abernathy and Nick Koerner. I am excited for all three of you and it is well earned!

Thank you to all the Valley Princes for a terrific experience and I am looking forward to our next 2 years with the incoming Commander in Chief when he's duly elected. I look forward to seeing you at the fall reunion and please hit me up if you're looking at doing some boat buying. Low buck Barlow deal is in store for this beaut.

Cordially and Fraternally  
Joe Barlow  
Commander in Chief, Valley of Eau Claire

*P.S. Jean, if you're reading this, happy birthday toots. Please don't go buying any green bananas.  
Love, the best #@\$%&! husband in the entire world.*



# SPRING REUNION CLASS 2024

## Michael L. Hunter 32° MSA



**Row 1:** Mike Abernathy 32° (1st Lieutenant Commander); Robby Oemig 32°; Kenneth Harmer 32°; Mike DeMar 32° (Class President); Michael L. Hunter 32° - MSA; Phillip Johnson 32° (Class Vice President); Alfredo Velasco 32°; Benjamin Kusilek 32°; and Joseph O. Barlow 33° (Commander in Chief & Co-Director of the Work).

**Row 2:** Rick Schnabel 33° (PCIC); Illustrious L. Arby Humphrey 33°- Active for the State of Wisconsin and Grand Minister of State; Lyle N. Koerner Jr. 33° (PCIC & Valley Secretary); Steven L. Lasure 33° - MSA; Casey Ludwig 32°; Markus Moes 32°; Adam Fleischman 32°; Keith Techmeier 32°; Monte Lewis 32°; Raymond Brown Jr. 32°; Paul Draxler 32°; Aaren Petersen 32°; and Dustin Larson 32°.

**Row 3:** Allen Heinkel 32°; James Suchy 32°; Kevin Fischer 32°; Chad Fonseca 32°; Jay Petrowski 32°; Jason Hoffman 32°; Kevin Schumann 32°; Ethan Gatewood 32°; Timothy Buckley 32° - MSA; Ryan Wojciechowski 32°; Chad Svacina 32°; and Mario Altuzar 32°.

**Row 4:** Todd Skortz 32°; Scott Nelson 32; Lars Framness 32° (Co-Director of Work); Michael Sawyer 32°; Derek Hand 32°; Don Miller 32°; Brad Edstrom 32°; Nicholas Koerner 32°; Peter Sterzinger 32°; Dan Maguire 32°; Rodney Schultz 32°; and Anthony Stange 32°.

**Row 5:** James Fenno 32°; Alexander Nelson 32; Jim Knapp 32°; Jordan Markquardt 32°; Jerome Gebert 32° (Treasurer); Jon Scott 32°; David Larson 32° (2nd Lieutenant Commander); Josh Sudbrink 32° - MSA; David Jacobson 32° - MSA; and Dan Bourassa 32°.

# CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION – VALLEY OF EAU CLAIRE

The early history of the Valley of Eau Claire was described by the Illustrious Robert M. Millard, 33°, PGM, and summarized in this article. Early on, this endeavor was one of much sacrifice, undaunted effort and selfless devotion on the part of a few in behalf of a great and noble cause.

By 1921, George B. Wheeler of Eau Claire was the only 33° Mason in Northern and Western Wisconsin. He had long cherished the hope that bodies of the Scottish Rite Masonry might be established here. However, there were some obstacles in his way. Brother Wheeler was approaching 70-years of age and was an extremely busy man as a prominent leader in business and civic life in the city. It was also known that the building (Temple at Main & Grand) would be inadequate in size to accommodate the organization. Besides this, there were only forty consistory members in Eau Claire, surely a rather small group to be laden with the responsibility of founding an institution whose members could number into the thousands. Furthermore, only Knight Templar were eligible to petition for the degrees at the time. This necessarily limited the field of operation to those cities in which Commanderies were located.

Brother Wheeler recognized the challenges and pressed forward. He invited all the 32-degree Masons in Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls, and Menomonie to dinner at the Temple on January 22, 1922 to discuss the advisability of the petitioning for a dispensation to form and open a Lodge of Perfection. At this gathering the proposal received the unanimous and enthusiastic approval of those present, 61 in number, all whom signed the petition.

The first working session was held May 8th, with 87 initiates. The 4th and 14th degrees were conferred by the brethren of the Madison Lodge of Perfection. The initiation fees were \$50, and no dues were charged at the time. The following two sessions added 83 more members to the Lodge of Perfection, thus ensuring its unquestioned success. The sponsors petitioned for dispensation to form a Council, Princes of Jerusalem, and a Chapter of Rose Croix. These two bodies were instituted July 6, 1923, each with a charter membership of 34. Eight weeks later, on August 27th, they held their first working session, having 89 candidates, and fees of \$25 for each body. A number of prominent 33° Masons from Milwaukee assisted in the degree work. Enthusiasm ran high, less than a month after the Council and Chapter sessions, petitions were circulated for a Consistory dispensation.

During the ensuing 3 months, recruitment throughout Western and Northwest Wisconsin for 32-degree Masons to join in organizing the Consistory was conducted. By the end of December, a total of 230 had signed the petition. The Consistory was instituted January 3, 1924, and the first working session was held on May 5th and 6th of 1924, with 148 candidates who received the degrees from 19° through the 32°. The Scottish Rite venture had become so successful that the Consistory was able to contribute \$25,000 to the new Temple building fund by 1927, and in turn, was deeded a one-fourth undivided interest in the Masonic properties. The Eau Claire Temple of Free Masonry has been the headquarters of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite – Valley of Eau Claire

since its construction in 1927. Also in 1927, the Consistory joined those in Milwaukee and Madison in establishing annual dues of \$5.00 per member.

All went well until the Great Depression, when classes dropped as low as 14 members. To combat the situation, in 1933, fees for the degrees were reduced from \$150.00 to \$85.00 and the rule regarding eligibility for a petitioner was liberalized to require Blue Lodge membership only. Despite these concessions, members were still unable to pay their dues. The result was that by 1940 the Consistory owed the Board of Trustees of the Temple some \$20,000 in maintenance charges. With the coming of World War

2, however the situation changed rapidly, and a heavy influx of candidates became the rule. This enabled the Consistory to liquidate its debt and build up a substantial reserve.

In 1957, the Valley began publishing a monthly newsletter called "The Scottish Rite Reporter", which continues today on a quarterly distribution. Communication continues to be a very important means of success for our Valley. Many methods of communication are utilized to build our success. Which today includes: Web page, electronic version of the Reporter, Zoom meetings, and email communication.

The building has seen its challenges throughout the years. In 1961 the Auditorium was remodeled, and in 1963 a campaign held to remodel the Ballroom and the public address system within the building. A disastrous stage fire occurred at the Fall of 1968, and eventually cancelled the Reunion. This proved a blessing in disguise for we improved both the stage, auditorium, and organ.

Throughout the years of the Valley of Eau Claire's existence, we remain as enthusiastic as those founding Brothers who back in 1921 had a vision of spreading Brotherly Love. As our membership grew, over the years, men of the Valley of Eau Claire (Western, Central and Northern Wisconsin) have become better men for their families and communities with the help of the Valley.

Membership in 1949 was 1701, and at the Golden anniversary was 3151. Today we stand at 517 members. The years past is rich in memories of the great men who have helped to bring Scottish Rite to the Valley of Eau Claire and Masons of Northwestern Wisconsin. They opened ways for Masons to receive more light in Masonry.

## A NOTE FROM THE "DIRECTORS OF THE WORK"



"The Directors of the work encourage any members of the Valley currently involved in any facet of the degrees or those would aspire to, to reach out to us with any questions they may have. We appreciate your hard work, dedication and interest."

### Directors of the Work Contact Information

**Joe Barlow** (715-803-8766)  
elvishimself33@gmail.com

**Lars Framness** (608-695-6677)  
lars.framness@gmail.com

# 2024 FALL REUNION SCHEDULE

## Saturday, October 12, 2024

7:30 AM	Donuts and Coffee	Main Floor Lounge
8:00 AM	Class Registration	Office
8:30 AM	Ceremonial Opening - All Bodies	Large Lodge Room
9:00 AM	<b>4th Degree: Builder</b>	Upstairs Lounge
9:45 AM	Discussion of the 4th Degree - Class Members Only	Discussion Area
10:15 AM	<b>6th Degree: Master of the Brazen Serpent</b>	Auditorium
10:45 AM	Discussion of the 6th Degree - Class Members Only	Discussion Area
11:30 AM	Lunch	Small Dining Room
12:30 PM	<b>12th Degree: Master of Mercy</b>	Auditorium
1:05 PM	Discussion of the 12th Degree - Class Members Only	Discussion Area
1:35 PM	<b>31st Degree: My Brother's Keeper</b>	Auditorium
2:05 PM	Discussion of the 31st Degree - Class Members Only	Discussion Area
2:35 PM	<b>14th Degree: Knight of the Rose Croix</b>	Auditorium
3:30 PM	Discussion of the 14th Degree - Class Members Only	Discussion Area
4:00 PM	Reception	Small Dining Room

## Saturday, October 26, 2024

7:30 AM	Donuts and Coffee	Main Floor Lounge
8:00 AM	Class Assembly	Large Lodge Room
8:00 AM	Presentation by Directors of the Work	Large Lodge Room
8:15 AM	<b>17th Degree: Knight of the East and West</b>	Auditorium
9:00 AM	Discussion of the 17th Degree - Class Members Only	Discussion Area
9:30 AM	Class Picture	Auditorium
10:00 AM	<b>18th Degree: Knight of the Rose Croix</b>	Auditorium
10:45 AM	Discussion of the 18th Degree - Class Members Only	Discussion Area
11:30 AM	Lunch	Small Dining Room
12:30 PM	<b>20th Degree: Master Ad Vitam</b>	Auditorium
1:30 PM	Discussion of the 20th Degree - Class Members Only	Discussion Area
2:00 PM	<b>32nd Degree: Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret</b>	Auditorium
2:45 PM	Discussion of the 32nd Degree - Class Members Only	Discussion Area
3:15 PM	<b>Installation of Officers</b>	Auditorium
4:00 PM	Reception	Small Dining Room
5:00 PM	Banquet	Large Dining Room

# 2024 ABBOTT SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

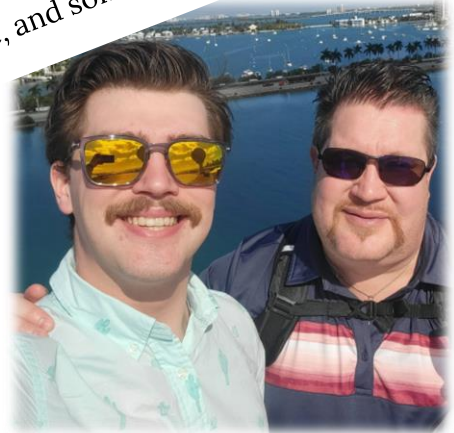
Named for Leon Abbott, Sovereign Grand Commander from 1921-32, the program provides financial support for the continuing undergraduate education of young men and women from Scottish Rite families and Masonic youth groups. Since 1951, more than \$15 million has been awarded to students from the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction.

The Valley of Eau Claire Scottish Rite is happy to announce the recipients of the 2024 Abbott Scholarship.

*Megan Standiford, Grand Daughter of Sterling Standiford*



*Cutler Nowak, a member of the Valley of Eau Claire, and son of Corey Nowak*



*Jade Kruse, Grand Daughter of Albert Jennerman*



*Allison Connet, Grand Daughter of David Acheson*

**Charles Tempski**



# DUES INCREASE FORTHCOMING

Earlier this year, the Officers of the Valley of Eau Claire identified that there was a need to increase membership dues to keep up with the cost associated with operating the Valley. The membership was asked to vote whether to increase the membership dues from \$96.00 annually, to \$120.00 annually.

The vote was tallied on April 6th, resulting in an increase in membership dues effective August 1, 2024. Members should have received an email indicating methods of paying online, and mailed membership dues notices should be mailed out in early September.

# STICKS AND STONES

10.12.24

4:00 pm

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

# 100<sup>TH</sup>

SCOTTISH RITE CLASS

**Sticks**

*Featuring comedian  
TIM HARMSTON  
starting at 5:00*

# \$50

**& Stones**

**Premium Cigars, Bourbon, Scotch,  
Rye, Whiskey, and Snacks!**



**1 Stick and 3 Stones or 4 stones**

PRESALE ONLY AT

[WWW.HTTPS://SCOTTISHRITE-EC.ORG/STICKS-STONES](https://scottishrite-ec.org/sticks-stones)

Event to benefit Scottish Rite Almoners Fund



# FALL REUNION LADIES PROGRAM

October 26, 2024

Come and enjoy the day with other Ladies at the Masonic Temple. All ladies are invited for the entire day or any part of the day.

**8:00 - 9:00** Meet and greet in the 3rd floor lounge of the Masonic Temple. Light refreshments will be available.

**9:00 - 11:30** Decorate Christmas Ornaments. Various supplies (pinecones, fabric, paint, ribbon.....anything that I come across that could be used) will be available to make your own unique ornaments.

**11:30 - 12:30** Lunch with the men in the small dining room downstairs.

**12:30 - 3:00** Various activities will be available to everyone while socializing and enjoying the company of other ladies.

\*All times are approximate.

Please come dressed casually. There will be time to change before the installation of officers and the banquet's social hour.

There will be no cost for the day's activities and lunch. Please reply if you are attending when you send in your banquet reservation.

Any questions feel free to contact me.

Gail Abernathy  
715-523-1174  
gabernathy1174@gmail.com



# FALL REUNION BANQUET

## IN HONOR OF THE VALLEY OF EAU CLAIRE CENTENNEIAL CLASS

Main Ballroom – October 26, 2024 – 5:00 PM

HISTORIC EAU CLAIRE TEMPLE OF FREEMASONRY

CATERED BY WISSOTA LODGE CATERING

The Banquet honoring our new members and their Ladies and recognizing the “Centennial Class” Valley of Eau Claire and its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, which will start promptly at 5:00 P.M. in the Historic Eau Claire Temple of Freemasonry Main Ballroom. Wissota Lodge Catering (Jack Schulte) has provided fine dining in the Eau Claire area for years and will be catering the Fall Banquet.

The **Buffet Dinner** will feature:

- Mixed Field Greens Salad with choice of Ranch or French dressing
- Dinner Rolls with Butter
- Braised Swiss Steak with Roasted Vegetables in a rich demi-glace
- Lemon Chicken-bone-in dusted with a seasoned flour and lemon zest, oven baked
- Candied Carrot with Sweet Cranberries
- Red Skin Mashed Potatoes
- Coffee or Milk will be served, and we will again be having our open dessert table(s) featuring our Fraternities best desserts. We encourage you to bring a special dessert for us to try.

All this for \$35.00

Child Plates (under 12 YO) available for \$18.00

Tickets must be purchased by Saturday, October 19, 2024. ***No Tickets Will Be Sold at The Door.*** You can reserve either at the office or on Eventbrite, however taxes will be charged in addition to the service fee for those utilizing Eventbrite. Those having questions please contact the Valley Secretary at 715-832-7759.

**Candidates and their Lady do not need to purchase tickets, however must have meal reservations in by October 19, 2024.**

Mail With Payment To: Eau Claire Scottish Rite  
P.O. Box 345  
Eau Claire, WI 54702

NAME:

ADDRESS:

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### Number of Meals

Adult Meals at \$35 each

Total for Adult Meals \$

Child Meals at \$18 each

Total for Child Meals \$

**Total Amount** \$

# YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS – VALLEY OF EAU CLAIRE

Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite and the Valley of Eau wish to extend our sincere congratulations to the following men who have been members of our Scottish Rite Family celebrating 60 and 50 years of membership.

## 2024

### 60 years

Robert C. Dietz, 32° - WI 229

Harvey D. Reilly, 32° - WI 148

Dr. David E. Weiss, 32° - WI 112

### 50 years

Roderick W. Anderson, 33° - WI 347

Roger R. Hancock, 32° - WI 130

Donald E. Hedman, 32° - WI 128

Merlin J. Isaacson, 32° - WI 347

Virgil C. Nylander, 32° - WI 109

Richard E. Wilhelm, 32° - WI 229

NOTE: These Gentlemen will be receiving their Certificates of Achievement, and for the 50-year recipients, they will be receiving an additional item.

# THE SPRING CLASS OF 2024

Would like to welcome everyone to the FALL REUNION CLASS of 2024

