



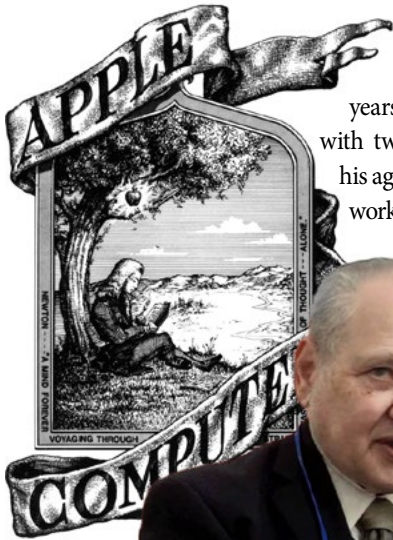
THE RITENEWS OF NORTH CAROLINA



JULY AUGUST-2015

LOOKING BACK WITH ...REGRET?

by William B. Brunk, 33° SGIG in North Carolina



RONALD WAYNE

Ronald Wayne is a retired electronics industry worker. Some years ago, he entered into a partnership with two young entrepreneurs, but due to his age and an earlier business venture that worked out poorly, decided to depart the new company. Two weeks after co-founding Apple Computer, he received \$800 for his ten percent share, which today would be worth well over \$60 billion.

Does he regret his decision? Not at all. To the contrary, he feels that he made the best decision possible,

given the information he had available to him.

In 2015, we are at something of a crossroads in the Scottish Rite of North Carolina. The decline in membership that began several decades ago has resulted in a significant reduction in the income base of each of our Valleys, and maintaining a balanced budget has become a difficult task. One of the major operational costs relates to our buildings, and several of our Valleys are having to take a hard look at the manner in which they provide homes for their activities, and places to meet, confer degrees, and enjoy fellowship.

There is a tendency to view some of these situations with a bit of discouragement. The Valley of New Bern was scheduled to depart its building by June 1st and relocate to the nearby York Rite building. It simply could no longer afford the high maintenance costs of the building that it had called home for over a hundred years. The Valleys of Charlotte and Raleigh are both entertaining offers to purchase their buildings, and the Valley of Wilmington is in negotiations with a realtor to list its building for sale.

But there are also grounds for optimism. The Valley of Asheville, which departed its temple association building several years ago, only to find that member participation decreased, is again meeting in the building in downtown Asheville – with increased attendance and a renewed sense of energy. The Valley of Winston-Salem is a part of a temple association that is erecting a new building that should be completed sometime next year. The Greensboro Masonic community is enjoying a renaissance of brotherly love, with mutual support, peace, and harmony. And there's a new Valley in Franklin—small, but growing—eager for further enlightenment through Masonry.

And the aforementioned Valleys that are divesting themselves of their buildings? In each case, their members are clear in their understanding of the situations, in realizing that change is inevitable and in looking to the future with eagerness to see what it will hold.

Life is easier when our business is expanding, when we're growing, and when there seem to be new opportunities around every corner. But decisions also need to be made when we're shrinking, when business is contracting, and when discouragement clouds our thinking. Freemasonry and the Scottish Rite have been around for a very long time, and this organization will not be going away any time soon. Not as long as there are men who believe in our precepts and principles, and want to live their lives in accordance with the honorable and noble teachings of our Order.

The decisions made today will be judged by those to come after us. We fervently hope and pray that those decisions will be looked upon with favor and not regret.



LODGE OF PERFECTION MEETINGS

Asheville, 2nd Thursday of each month

(Advisory Council 5:00PM, and Stated Meeting 7:00PM)

Charlotte, 1st Wednesday of each month

(Advisory Council 5:30PM, Dinner 6:30PM and Stated Meeting 7:30PM)

Franklin, 2nd Monday of each month

(Dinner 6:00PM & Stated Meeting 7:00PM)

Greensboro, 2nd Wednesday of each month

(Dinner 6:30PM & Stated Meeting 7:30PM)

New Bern, 2nd Monday of each month

(Dinner 6:30PM & Stated Meeting 7:30PM)

Raleigh, 2nd Thursday of each month

(Dinner 6:30PM, Advisory Council 7:00PM, and Stated Meeting 7:30PM)

Wilmington, 2nd Thursday of each month

(Advisory Council 5:30PM, Dinner 6:30PM, Stated Meeting 7:30PM)

Winston-Salem, 2nd Thursday of each month

(Dinner 6:00PM, Advisory Conference 6:30 PM, Master Craftsman&KSA 7PM, Stated 7:30PM)

For more information, call the General Secretary in your Valley

Rick Patton (Asheville).....	828-253-9911
D. C. Heilman (Charlotte).....	704-918-3797
Marty Fischer (Franklin).....	828-253-9911
Donald Kehler (Greensboro)	336-275-3579
William Dill (New Bern).....	252-638-4031
Luigi Ammons (Raleigh).....	919-834-8873
Billy J. Graves (Wilmington)	910-762-6452
S. Ray Ashby (Winston-Salem)	336-723-1217
Michael May (Raleigh), <i>Editor In Chief</i>	919-481-0425

THE VALLEY OF ASHEVILLE
HONOR TO SERVE AS VENERABLE MASTER

by Jack Williams, 32° KCCH-Venerable Master

Brethren, summer is almost upon us and thoughts of vacation will soon be coming to a reality. However, before we can take off for some fun in the sun, we must first get our house in order. I first want to extend a very grateful thanks to the Valley of Charlotte for being most gracious hosts at the joint Spring Reunion we had in April. A good time was had by all that attended. Special thanks to the Valley of Asheville's General Secretary, Ill. Bro. Rick Patton 33°, Ill. Bro. Jim Medlin 33° and Ill. Bro. Larry Melton 33° for conferring the 18th Degree at the Charlotte Reunion. They did a fantastic job.

I also want to recognize our new Director of the Work, Bro. Tony Rathbone, 32°. Brother Tony has stepped up to the plate at a very critical time for the Valley of Asheville. We are going through some major adjustments moving back to our home at 80 Broadway. Degree teams must be rebuilt and reorganized to fit a stage and theatre setting versus the Lodge room setting we have used for the past few years. Brother Tony has a long row to hoe, and will be needing help in this most important endeavor. Fortunately, he has the encouragement and support of his wife, Hope. Tony and Hope are currently serving as Associate Matron and Associate Patron of Biltmore Chapter No. 38, Order of the Eastern Star.

Brethren, it is our duty as members of the Valley to assist him in any way possible. Be expecting a call from ei-

ther Brother Tony, or someone helping him, to call on you to participate in our upcoming Reunion. This leads me to my final point. The Valley of Asheville will be having its Fall Reunion on Friday, September 11th and Saturday, September 12th. Please attend brethren if at all possible. Your Valley needs your contribution as well as your comradery. There is always a need for last minute people to help fill small parts, both nonspeaking as well as speaking or working behind the scenes. Your presence is most needed and appreciated. If there is a brother in your Blue Lodge that is interested in joining the Scottish Rite please give him a petition. They can be downloaded and printed from <http://ashevillescottishrite.org>.

Finally, it is my high honor that I serve as Venerable Master for the Valley of Asheville. It is an honor that I do not take lightly, or one that I take for granted. Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything I can do. I can be reached through the Asheville Scottish Rite Facebook Page.



Brother Anthony Rathbone, 32° and his wife, Hope

THE VALLEY OF CHARLOTTE
ILL. ARDRAY A SOLOMON, 33° MEMORIAL REUNION-SPRING 2015

by D.C. Heilman 32° KCCH-General Secretary

The Valley of Charlotte in conjunction with the Valley of Asheville held their Spring reunion on Friday, April 24th and Saturday, April 25th at the Scottish Rite Temple. During the 2 day event, 18 new brothers were brought to increasing light in Masonry by receiving the 32 Scottish Rite degrees. Courtesy work was extended to the Valley of Raleigh as they had a new brother needing to complete the Master of the Royal Secret degree.

As one would expect the 2-day event got off to the normal hectic start with candidate registrations, various cast and crew arriving to begin the work as well as brothers in attendance to support the proceedings.

The class and members of the various valleys were honored to have the Grand Master of Masons of North Carolina, Most Worshipful Douglas L. Caudle and the Deputy Grand Master of Masons of North Carolina, Right Worshipful Bryant D. Webster join the work of the day on Friday afternoon. It was a rare opportunity indeed to have Grand Master Cau-

dle and Deputy Grand Master Webster join in the class photograph. I am sure new brothers will be talking about that for some time.

As the day progressed the Valley of Asheville took the stage to confer the Knight Rose Croix or 18th degree. What an outstanding degree indeed! As many know this particular degree is complicated with its' many sections. The cast of the Valley of Asheville brought their "A" game, working with the stage and lighting crew of Charlotte, they exemplified the work with passion and commitment.

Day 2 began with the 20th degree and a visit by the Sovereign Grand Inspector General for the Orient of North Carolina, Ill. Dr. William B. Brunk, 33°. Dr. Brunk began his day by visiting the work of Charlotte / Asheville. He took opportunity to speak to the class before leaving to attend yet another reunion in the Valley of Greensboro meeting on the same weekend. The work culminated the experience with the Mas-

ter of the Royal Secret or 32° late afternoon on Saturday.

Many thanks to Ill. Dr. Marty Fischer, 33°, SGIG Personal Representative, Ill. C. Rick Patton, 33°, General Secretary and the brothers from the Valley of Asheville who participated in making the reunion experience such a success.

Thanks to Ill. Jack H. Huskey, 33°, Director of the Work, Degree Masters, cast and crew of the Valley of Charlotte. All of the hard work and dedication over many years of patience, practice and perseverance delivered an outstanding experience to the candidates as they begin their search for more light in Masonry through the many degrees of the Scottish Rite.

GENESIS GROUP PHOTOGRAPHY



Ill. Ardray A. Solomon, 33° 2015 Spring Reunion Class

THE VALLEY OF GREENSBORO
DEGREE TEAMS IMPROVING

by Ben Wallace 32°

As the Greensboro Valley continues its ascension, one of the areas in which we have been making great strides, is in our ritual. Every reunion, we are adding parts that are done from memory, rather than just reading them. This is paying huge dividends in the quality of our work. When ritual is delivered from memory, and with a little emotion it takes on an entirely different persona. Poorly done ritual can be boring at best, and counter-productive at worst. When ritual is done well, it takes on a life of its own. The words can cast a spell that draws the candidate in, and imbeds the message into his psyche, leaving him with an understanding of the lesson that will remain for the remainder of his life. This leads to the candidate understanding

why the lessons of the Scottish Rite are important to him. This in turn leads him to continuing to attend our functions, and encouraging others to do so. The importance of this is self-evident.

Our Valley has begun the process of improving our degrees but we need to continue to strive for excellence in this area. We intend to add more degrees, make sure that all degrees are done from memory. If you are interested in forming a team to take on a new degree, or if you want to be added to an existing team and learn a part from memory, we would be thrilled to hear from you.

Please contact Mike Daniels so he can help you fill a need. As always, I am also available to help in any way.

THE VALLEY OF GREENSBORO
VMAP CHALLENGE

by Gene Cobb 33°-Personal Representative

One of the great joys of Valley Membership Achievement Project (VMAP) is that it challenges all of us to be better at who we are and what we do as Scottish Rite Masons. There are so many opportunities for us in North Carolina to improve ourselves in Masonry and the VMAP program of the Supreme Council has lit a fire under us in Greensboro!

On Saturday June 27, 2015, we are going to gather in the Greensboro Scottish Rite Room for an educational read through of degrees we have not done in Greensboro in our memory. This event will afford us the opportunity to be exposed to some of the most beautiful teachings of our Craft that will hopefully inspire us to begin new degrees in our Valley. We are not doing it for

credit or for a checklist completion task. We are doing it because we want to learn to improve ourselves in masonry. I wish the details were complete by this printing and that every Scottish Rite Mason in North Carolina interested and free that day could be present. We are excited in Greensboro about the wonderful opportunities we have to grow and to improve ourselves in the practice of our gentle craft that we love and cherish. If you are still reading this, please give us a call or send us an email for details. We would love to have you with us on June 27. The God of peace delight to dwell with and bless you all!

THE VALLEY OF NEW BERN MEET YOUR BROTHERS

by Aaron Morris 32° –First Knight KSA

The Annual New Bern Scottish Rite “Rite Care” BBQ Chicken Fundraiser was held on May 8th, 2015. I would like to thank everyone that participated to ensure that the event was a success. It really takes a collective effort from everyone involved to ensure the event goes off without any hitches. Brother Charles Moore was the winner of the 42” HDTV. I spoke with Brother Moore, who now lives in Bradenton, FL, who indicated that he had never won anything until now and to say he was surprised would be understatement! I would like to thank Brother Moore who decided to not accept the prize but rather include the cost of the TV along with the proceeds that are to be sent to our Rite Care clinics.

As we get to know our newer brothers, meet:

Charles Douglas Gower

I was born and reared in Catawba County, NC. I am the 14th generation of my mother’s family in Catawba County, N.C. I attended Lenoir Rhyne College. My USAF service was with Minuteman I & II Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles.

I have worn many hats, but always for myself. I was fortunate to experience many aspects of business, and somehow always made a living in the process. I have owned and operated

THE VALLEY OF RALEIGH BRICKS

by Glenn Todd 32°, KSA

As a very young boy whenever our family took a trip, it was my duty to sit in the back seat and behave myself under penalty of some mortifying punishment. On occasion we would pass a large building or smoke stack and I would comment as to the size of this object. My Dad would ask, “Do you know how many bricks it took to start the building or smoke stack?” To which I would reply in child-like fashion, “I don’t know but I bet it was a thousand million!” Dad would smile and say... “Nope, just ONE!” This answer is not unlike our efforts to raise money for Rite Care Clinics. While it takes considerably more than One Dollar to maintain this operation, every dollar we can muster comes together like that brick and builds a edifice that will withstand time and needs. The same holds true for our largest fund raiser; our annual Golf Tournament. There are plans underway to increase this effort to make it into a “Flagship” operation. Not for the glory of a few, but to increase the public education process of what Scottish Rite Masons stand for, our benevolent cause, and to provide a more solid future for those who need our services so desperately.

businesses in industries as varied as food, floral, publishing, seafood, proprietary education, and real estate.

I live in Stonewall, NC from March thru November. I winter in Warm Mineral Springs, Florida.

MM Rainbow Lodge 479 in Arapahoe, NC. Scottish Rite 32. Valley of New Bern, NC. Life member DAV Chapter 82, Port Charlotte, Florida.

My hobbies include fishing, vegetable gardening, pocket billiards, photography, and reading many volumes of ancient and forgotten lore.

I wish to learn more about Free Masonry, it’s symbols, history, and allegories. I want to enroll in a study group. I seek more light.

Fraternally,

Charles Douglas Gower

We will have our next LOP Meeting at the York Rite Building on Glenbernie St. in New Bern. As we adjust to the problems in our own building, we want to express our appreciation to the York Rite for helping us with the use of their building and their outstanding cooperation as they work with us.

You will have access to this article in July-August, before the Tournament on October 5th. It will again be at Washington-Duke Hotel and Golf Course. We have room for 32 teams, that’s 128 players! The prizes are established and a fun day will be had by all. I sincerely hope that by the time you read this, the field will be full but never fear, we will make arrangements if need be for “extra” players. It is my earnest hope that each Scottish Rite Mason in North Carolina will step up to the wall with trowel in their hand and assist with this great effort. It is a “no-sweat” effort. All you have to do is TALK, to your neighbors, friends, or those around you at the coffee club. If everyone would get just 1 player, we would be overrun with teams. Let’s, together, make this happen! You see we are each that ONE/FIRST Brick to start a tremendous effort. I believe you really do want to be the “one”! Go forward My Brothers, Do for those who cannot do for themselves!

THE VALLEY OF RALEIGH THE 5° RITUAL AND THE MEDIEVAL CONCEPT OF DEATH

by Marc Fusco 32°

“Remember, O man, that thou art dust and to dust returneth.” While at a recent Ash Wednesday service, the Bishop recited this while tracing the sign of the cross on each parishioner’s forehead in ashes made from last year’s Palm Sunday palms. The Ash Wednesday service paraphrases a passage from the Book of Genesis, in which God says before driving Adam and Eve from Eden, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou returne vnto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken, for dust thou art, and vnto dust shalt thou returne.” Genesis 3:19

This is a modern version of the medieval concept of memento mori, a Latin phrase that translates as “remember you will die.” While pondering this, the 5° Ritual of the Scottish Rite came to mind as another example of the memento mori theme. This is not a theme embraced by modern culture, and one is hard pressed to identify other examples in common usage, especially in a secular context. Life insurance and funeral insurance come to mind, but neither are concerned with spiritual preparation for the afterlife, as are the Ash Wednesday and Scottish Rite examples. Both life insurance and funeral insurance are meant to help those we will leave behind when we die, and are not spiritual in nature, but temporal. Although each provides a real and needed service, they provide the insured the peace of mind that comes with knowing that one’s loved ones will be cared for after he or she dies, similar to preparing one’s will. These are what responsible people do—they purchase life insurance when married and prepare a will when they have children. But what of preparing spiritually for one’s inevitable death?

Until 1937, Scottish Rite candidates were instructed to prepare a Last Will and Testament before the 5° was conferred. It was a useful exercise, as it forced the candidate to envision their own death and to prepare for it both mentally and materially, and it served as a segue for one of the lessons of the degree, that living a good life prepares one spiritually for death.

In the Middle Ages, the death process was generally more prolonged, with much less sudden death than today. One could die from cancer or an infection, or any one of thousands of diseases. Many treatments given by medieval physicians actually hastened or even caused death. The modern sudden death, of the type experienced in automobile accidents, was more of an anomaly—you could fall from a horse, or be murdered, but that did not rank in numbers with disease. Murders were commonplace and almost never solved. If you left a city at night, (the absolute dark-

ness outside of a city at night is now hard to imagine), there were all types of dangers—bandits, wild animals, murderers. That being said, most death was a prolonged affair, at home surrounded by friends and family.

As mentioned earlier, memento mori, or remember death, was a very common theme in art and literature. The idea of the danse macabre, or dance of death, was a common theme in art and in literature, especially in the popular woodcuts of German Hans Holbein, featuring a skeletal personification of Death escorting people of various stations in life to death and the afterlife. This served as a reminder to medieval Europeans that eventually death comes for everyone and is the great leveler. Whether King or leper, wealthy merchant or commoner, death was inevitable and looming. In death, we meet on the level. Another medieval theme, carpe diem, or seize the day, exists to this day, but its meaning has changed. The modern interpretation is to enjoy the flower of youth, for someday you’ll be old (a faded flower); in the Middle Ages, it meant to enjoy living and prepare your soul for eternity, for someday you’ll be worm food.

Perhaps the most appropriate medieval commonplace to this discussion would be the Ars Moriendi, or art of dying, a guide book on how to die, emphasizing spiritual preparation and advising on the proper etiquette of death. The Ars Moriendi teaches that there was in fact such things as good and bad deaths. Good deaths involved dying for what is right, as did Master Hiram, while bad deaths involved dying during sin or while carrying unshriven sins on one’s soul. The Ars Moriendi identifies the five temptations that can beset a dying person and must be avoided if one is to arrive in Paradise: lack of faith, despair, impatience, spiritual pride, and avarice or greed. The Ars Moriendi admonishes humanity to imitate the life (and death) of Christ. The Ars Moriendi is not just for the dying—it teaches the proper deathbed etiquette for the attending friends and family.

We are preparing for our own deaths while at the same time facing it intellectually. But what of our souls, the part that is immortal? The Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus wrote in 1534 that the best preparation for death is a life lived well, not lived fully as in the modern sense, but morally or righteously. The degree teaches us to live and die like Master Hiram, who was moral and righteous in both life and death, as a preparation for death and immortality. The 5° is, in essence, a Masonic Ars Moriendi.

The degree also admonishes us to be industrious, to “work while it is day,” reminding us that Master Hiram was

both honest and industrious while alive, and that laziness leads to dissipation and corruption. Pike tells us “idleness is the burial of a living man,” and that it is important to study, because study grows the soul like an oak—the soul must be cultivated and nourished like a tree or crop.

This is one of the most important lessons of the Scottish Rite degrees, especially in the year 2015—how best to prepare the soul for immortality. This lesson is more valuable

today than when it was written—we live in a culture that celebrates youth over age, and has hidden death because it is no longer an appropriate secular topic because it is considered too unpleasant to discuss.

The 5° admonishes you to set your spiritual house in order. Are you prepared?

Remember, O man, that thou art dust and to dust returneth.

THE VALLEY OF RALEIGH THE COUNCIL OF KADOSH

by Johnny Davis 33°

It is my great honor to serve as Master of the Council of Kadosh in the Valley of Raleigh. It is important that we all pause and reflect upon the degrees of the Council of Knights Kadosh and their deep rooted lessons in our lives.

The Council of Kadosh in Scottish Rite Masonry, contains the most degrees, the 19th through the 30th and the lessons contained in these degrees are of high importance. Albert Pike referred to these degrees in regard to their Chivalric and Philosophical nature, but they are also deeply Mystical and rich in Symbolism. And since Symbolism is the heart of Scottish Rite Masonry, we all need to understand the lessons contained in these degrees.

The word Kadosh, of course, is a Hebrew word that is often translated to mean “Holy”. However, we, as Scottish Rite Masons give it the more precise meaning of “separated”. We, as Scottish Rite Masons, are to separate ourselves from the masses of society by employing and pursuing the lofty virtues and lessons of these degrees. We should always keep in

mind and strive for moral, political and spiritual perfection.

One vital lesson that we must remember is that the lessons taught in these degrees are for Personal Instruction. They are not meant to preach Doctrine. The way you incorporate and exemplify these lessons are up to you. The Symbols and lessons taught are to be aligned with your own beliefs. Each of you must discover these Truths for yourself.

The degrees of the Scottish Rite are building stones in a progression of steps in the learning process. The lessons of each degree, one by one contribute to our completion as Masons. In Pike’s words “*Masonry must teach the Truth or die. It only lives by telling the Truth*”.

Brethren, let us all strive to learn these lessons and remember that it is our duty to contribute these Truths to those who come after us.

God Bless Scottish Rite Masonry!

THE VALLEY OF WILMINGTON THE VALLEY OF WILMINGTON WILL BE DARK JULY & AUGUST

by Richard W. Knauss, 33°-

The Valley of Wilmington will be dark (No stated meeting) during the months of July and August. However, the office will be open and members are encouraged to come by the Temple and have a cup of coffee. The next stated meeting will be September 10, 2015.

THE VALLEY OF WILMINGTON THE KNIGHTS OF ST. ANDREW

by Richard W. Knauss, 33°-

During the Fish Fry, the Knights of St Andrew sold sodas and brownies in order to support Rite Care. Including proceeds from sales, the Knights made a \$400.00 donation to Rite Care.

Pictured from Left to right: Jim Brant, 32°, KSA, First Knight; Richard Knauss, 33°, Treasurer of The NC Scottish Rite Masonic Foundation, Inc., Danny Buck, 32°, KSA



THE VALLEY OF WILMINGTON ANNUAL FISH FRY

by Richard W. Knauss, 33°-

The 2015 Fish Fry was held on April 22th. The event was well attended and we were able to sell 1,100 plates.

A special thanks to our Fish Fry chairmen Steve Bland, 32°, KCCH and Ken Hooks, 32°, KSA.

Left Picture: Charles Hughes, 32°, KCCH; Gary Stoehr, 32°, Jim Brant, 32°, KSA, First Knight; Woody Henderson, 33°

Right Picture: Ken Hooks, 32°, KSA; Bill Moore, 32°; Jay Taylor, 32°; Joe Gupton, 33°



THE VALLEY OF WILMINGTON PROCLAMATIONS PRESENTED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT

by Richard W. Knauss, 33°-

During the Fish Fry, Wilmington City Councilman Charlie Rivenbark (pictured to the left), and Chairman of the New Hanover County Commissioners Jonathon Barfield (pictured to the right), each presented the Valley of Wilmington with a Proclamation recognizing us for our efforts to raise money to support the RiteCare Centers for Children.

Pictured from Left to right: Billy J. Graves, 32°, KCCH, General Secretary; Charlie Rivenbark; E.Earl Wells, 33°, Personal Representative and Billy J. Graves, 32°, KCCH, General Secretary; Jonathon Barfield; E.Earl Wells, 33°, Personal Representative



THE VALLEY OF WINSTON-SALEM EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY CLINIC DONATION

by Christopher Pearman 32° KCCH

On Thursday, April 30, 2015, members of the Winston-Salem Scottish Rite traveled to the Learning Disorders Clinic at East Carolina University for a tour and presentation. Personal Representative Ill. Joel Black 33° and Brother Michael Fischer 32° KCCH presented a check to the ECU clinic for \$12000.00 to start the clinic’s electronic record conversion project. The Valley also donated \$7217.35 in 2014 for the purchase of iPads and apps. During the visit, the Brothers were shown the new iPads, apps, and how they help the students and clinicians to work with patients. The \$19, 217.35 donated during the

last twelve months will help train students so they can become professionals and help thousands of children. Technology in this field is constantly changing and improving. It’s our chance to help the professionals to continuously move forward so they can help the children.



THE VALLEY OF WINSTON-SALEM

LIFESTYLE AND SATISFACTION – IT’S YOUR CHOICE

by Joel Black 33° - Personal Representative

T.S. Eliot said, “Half of the harm that is done in this world is due to people who want to feel important. They do not mean to do harm ... they are absorbed in the endless struggle to think well of themselves.”

How do we feel important? Often, it’s by trying to obtain an image of success created by a culture that prizes getting ahead in terms of money and career. Think how much more integrity there would be if we understood how futile it is to pursue the empty vessel of prosperity. We should all be reminded of the admonitions of the closing words of the 32°. What will you choose? Remember, we are at the point where the roads diverge.

In *The Death of Ethics in America*, Cal Thomas quotes a letter written to *The Washington Post* in the mid-1980s: “I’ve lived both lives, Yuppie and non-Yuppie,” the person wrote. “In the first, I was married to a professional woman,

and on our dual incomes we Club Med-ed, sports car-raced, alpine-skied, and Kennedy-Centered our 14-year marriage into oblivion. I’m now 42, remarried to a woman who gave up her professional career to provide full-time care for our 1- and 5-year-old daughters, and living in Gaithersburg, Maryland — on one salary.

Trips to Australia and Europe, Saturday night dining at Nathan’s, and Wolf Trap concerts are distant memories. Vacations are now taken in our nine-year-old used pop-up camper, and dining out means ‘Hooray! Daddy’s bringing home a pizza.’ We’ve just started into the second round of one hundred readings of *Pat the Bunny* for our 1-year-old. Satisfaction level in my first life measured about 2 on the 10 scale. Measured now, satisfaction is about 9.5.”

it would appear this individual had discovered the Scottish Rite’s “Royal Secret.”



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