



LAFAYETTE CONSISTORY NEWS

FROM THE VALLEYS OF BRIDGEPORT,
NEW HAVEN, AND WATERBURY
OLDEST CONSISTORY IN THE NORTHERN MASONIC JURISDICTION

Issue No. 41

FALL 2024



HIGHLIGHTING BROTHERS AT WORK

Shane Dufresne, Police Officer



Symbols of Integrity

Parsifal — A Fool by Pity Enlightened (Part 4) • The Flood of August 15, 2024



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Lafayette Consistory News is the official publication of the Valley of Bridgeport and Lafayette Consistory, Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, USA © The Board of Trustees of the Valley of Bridgeport.



**Fishing Trip Aboard the
“Lucky Lady” on Sunday,
September 15, 2024.**

Everyone should believe in something. I believe I’ll go fishing.”
-Henry David Thoreau

ALLEGIANCE

The Bodies of the Scottish Rite, sitting in the Valley of Bridgeport, State of Connecticut, acknowledge and yield allegiance to the Supreme Council, 33°, Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry for the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the United States of America whose Grand East is in Lexington, Massachusetts.

ILL.: WALTER F. WHEELER, MSA, 33°
Sovereign Grand Commander

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Deputy for Connecticut

ILL.: BRUCE T. WORK, 33°
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ILL.: RICHARD V. TRAVIS, 33°
Active Emeritus for Connecticut

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Active Emeritus for Connecticut

ILL.: DAVID L. SHARKIS, 33°
Active Emeritus for Connecticut

ILL.: GAIL N. SMITH, 33°
Active Emeritus for Connecticut

Attest: ILL.: BRUCE R. BELLMORE, MSA, 33°
Secretary for the Valley of Bridgeport

ILL.: JACK J. S. FARKAS, MSA, 33° Secretary Emeritus

Lafayette Consistory

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Bermann Thelison, 32° - Captain of the Guard

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ILL.: Robert J. Furce, MSA 33° - Standard Bearer

Pequonock Chapter Rose Croix

Christopher S. Jennings, 32° - Most Wise Master

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William E. Schueler, 32° - Junior Warden

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Daniel D. Sharkis, 32° - Secretary



SYMBOLS OF INTEGRITY

By JAMES W. D'ACOSTA, 32°, VALLEY OF BRIDGEPORT

A man approaches. We study his appearance and consider his words to predict his behavior. We prepare for our interaction carefully, knowing that appearances and words are deceptive. His actions then confirm or refute our assumptions until repeated experiences reveal whether he acts consistently from laudable core values.

Improving society one good man at a time is an all-encompassing goal of our Blue Lodges and appendant bodies. Our Scottish Rite contributes by helping produce men of integrity, men whose core values direct their actions and whose appearance, gestures, and words make these predictable and reliable.

Each morning, we consider the people with whom we expect to interact and the settings in which we will do so. Then, we groom, dress, and adorn ourselves according to the values we choose to communicate openly. The image we project will influence our interactions. Appearance matters.

At work, we know to dress at or above the level of formality of clients, partners, and bosses. This is especially true when meeting with people from different cultures. A jacket can be taken off, a tie loosened, and a pang of embarrassment overcome if we find ourselves overdressed. On the other hand, the suggestion of disrespect through casualness or uninvited familiarity can cripple a relationship at its birth.

To what extent do we reveal our Masonic affiliations, if at all? Available for display on rings, pins, clothing, patches, and the like, are symbols ranging from ones that are easily recognized, such as our square and compasses, to ones that are intentionally covert, such as the little blue flower of the Forget-Me-Not adopted by the German Grand Lodge of the Sun in Bayreuth during the period of persecution by the Nazi regime.

Oddly, though the Shrine's iconic red fez and pseudo-Middle Eastern crescent and scimitar are familiar to the general public, few realize that Shriners are Masons, despite the clue that the initials in "Shrine," rearranged [Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine], spell out the words "A Mason." The uninitiated know little of our organizational structure or of our many appendant bodies.



The best chance for recognition of our own Scottish Rite's double-headed eagle as Masonic is if the observer looks closely enough to see the 32 or 33 on the eagle's breast. York Rite's combination of crosses and crown, DeMolay's knight's helmet and crossed swords, Eastern Star's pentagram, and the Grotto's bearded man are as

obscurely Masonic to the man in the street as the Tall Cedars of Lebanon's proud evergreen. Nonetheless, revealing our Masonic membership to any extent at once reminds us of our obligations and invites non-members to judge our fraternity by our individual actions.

With obscurity prevailing beyond the square and compasses, our symbols for rank and awards are for ourselves. Largely free from regulations governing the wearing of symbols, our choices are personal. Within our sacred band, we support, are inspired, and take pride in each other's accomplishments. Our displays become reminders of our own progress as well as aids to conversations as we seek fellowship and encouragement.

At masonic functions, indications of affiliation, office, and distinction laudably reveal that we work on the level and mix freely with each other. Roles in our dramas go to brothers who can best do the work, with respect paid to those in non-speaking roles and the many brothers involved behind the scenes, including prop, stage, and wardrobe managers.

Blue lodge lessons of awareness and respect for the humble role and manual labor of the junior steward are apparent throughout the meetings of our appendant bodies. Common sights are past masters, former grand lodge officers, thirty-third-degree Masons, and similarly distinguished brothers laboring in the kitchen, tidying a performance area, and lending a hand with communication equipment.

At our best, we enact the core values suggested by our symbols and behave with integrity toward our brothers and non-masons alike.



Fun at the Valley of Brid

September 29, 2024



Bridgeport Annual Clambake



A Great Family Day at the Orange Fairgrounds!



AASR Enjoys the Essex Clipper Dinner Train Trip October 5, 2024



PARSIFAL — A FOOL BY PITY ENLIGHTENED (PART 4) AN EXPOSITION OF THE TRAVAILS OF A DEVELOPING SOUL

BY JOHN A. AMARILIOS, MSA, 33°

The fourth installment of our analysis of Wagner's Parsifal covers this opera's third and final act.

The third act opens on Good Friday, many years after the second scene. As it opens, we see a weary Warrior clad in black chain mail entering the grounds of Mount Salvat, where Gurnemanz lives in a hut. The warrior removes his helmet, places a spear against a nearby rock, and kneels to Pray. Gurnemanz can be seen returning with Kundry from who he just found asleep in the bushes. He recognizes the Warrior as Parsifal, who is in possession of the holy spear and welcomes him, asking where he has come from. Remember that this is the same question he was asked in the first scene. At that time, he answered, "I do not know". But this time, Parsifal's answer is significantly different: "

"Through search and suffering, I came." The first occasion is illustrative of a soul that has begun its search for consciousness and has obtained but glimpses of the Higher Life. The second instance indicates a conscious attainment of a higher level of spiritual activity by the Soul, which has developed its consciousness through sorrow and suffering.

Parsifal proceeds to tell how his life has been beset by enemies and how he avoided using the spear. It was supposed to be an instrument of healing and not to be employed as an instrumentality of pain and selfish attainment. The spear represents the spiritual power that can only be attained through developing a pure and unsullied heart and a positive life. It must only be used for unselfish purposes, and the introduction of any impurity or passion will cause its loss, as was the case of Amfortas. A man may possess it for a period of time and may be able to use it to feed hundreds of hungry people. However, he may not employ it at any moment to save his very own hunger. He may use it to heal the wounds of his enemy. However, he may not use it to stay the lifeblood that flows from a wound on his own side. "Others he saved; himself he could not (or would not save.)" Have we not seen this critical principle in operation in the Passion related to the Great Light?

Parsifal and Gurnemanz go into the Grail castle where Amfortas is being urged to perform the Sacred Rite, but he refuses in order to save himself the anguish of viewing the Holy Grail. He bears his chest and begs his followers to kill him instead. Parsifal steps up to him and touches the wound with the Lance, causing it to heal. He then dethrones Amfortas and assumes the job of warder of the Holy Grail and the Sacred Lance. However, he takes control of the Holy Grail and the secret Lance to himself. Only those who have developed

PASSPORT CERTIFICATES AWARDED

perfect unselfishness and developed a keen sense of accurate discrimination are fit to have the spiritual power symbolized by the spear. Amfortas would have used it to attack and hurt an enemy. Parsifal would not even use it in self-defense. Therefore, he is able to heal, while Amfortas falls into the pit which he had dug for Klingsor.

In the last act, Kundry, who represents the lower nature, says but one word: "Service." It is only through Service rendered with the innocence of motive - i.e., without thought of reward that - one can hope to attain progression in our development. She helps Parsifal to attain spirit by her perfect service. Remember that in the first act, she went to sleep when Parsifal visited the grail. At that stage, the Spirit cannot soar higher except when the body has been left asleep or dies. However, in this last act, Kundry (Who is the body) goes to the grail castle as well, for it is dedicated to the higher self. When the spirit (soul) as Parsifal has now attained, he has reached the stage of liberation spoken of in Revelations 3:12: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the house of my God. He shall go out thence no more." Such a soul will work for humanity from the etheric higher worlds; he needs no physical body anymore; he is now beyond the Law of Rebirth, and therefore, Kundry's utility has come to an end, and she dies.

Given this explanation, the opera Parsifal can be understood clearly as it maps out the Soul's path toward the Everlasting Light or the state of Cosmic Consciousness. The mission of this opera is not to only lightly entertain, but to educate and inform its audience in the means of attaining the "Higher Life". For those of our members who are earnestly seeking to attain the Light, they can obtain assurance that a path does indeed exist and that this search is not a mere fancy or fantasy. What you are being given here is a brushstroke treatment or outline of how the Light can be obtained. While you enjoy Wagner's titanic and stirring musical work along with the lush sets of the opera company performing the presentation, remember to review this four-section explanation, which will reinforce your search for Light! It is indeed attainable if you are willing to put in the long, hard work and sacrifice.



COMPLETED
29 DEGREES



SEPTEMBER 23

VALLEY OF BRIDGEPORT



RIVERVIEW BISTRO, STRATFORD

- INSTALLATION DINNER



SEPTEMBER 14, 2024

VALLEY OF NEW HAVEN INSTALLATION DINNER - AUGUST 19, 2024



~WOODWINDS
IN BRANFORD



FAMILY LIFE EVENTS ~ 2024

<i>Date</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Event</i>
11/28/24	Thursday	7:30 am	Annual Turkey Trot 5K Road Race, Thanksgiving morning, supports the Connecticut Children's Dyslexia Centers and other local Charities.
12/14/24	Saturday	3:00 pm	Boston Pops Holiday Concert at Symphony Hall, a performance filled with Holiday music favorites, the traditional sing-along, and a visit from Santa Claus himself. Shopping or dinner on your own at Faneuil Hall Market Place afterward. The bus leaves The Leo H. Lohrman, II, Theatre in Stratford at 10:00 AM. Limit 40 people. \$95/person.
12/20/24	Friday	6:00 pm	Annual Holiday Party and fundraiser for CT Children's Dyslexia Centers, Woodwinds Banquet Facility, Branford, CT to include Cigar Rolling and Silent Auction. Formal Black Tie or Formal Holiday Dress. \$40/Person.

Own This Beautiful Knife and Donate to the Scottish Rite Charity!



You will love this beautiful knife with a wooden and metal handle that has the 32° Double-Headed Eagle engraved on one side and the Square and Compasses on the other. For your donation of \$90, \$25 of which is a tax deductible contribution to the Children's Dyslexia Center's of Connecticut plus \$6.95 shipping & handling.

Please use the coupon below,



I would like the **32° Double-Headed Eagle/Masonic emblem knife** for a donation of **\$90 each plus \$6.95 s/h each** and please mail to:

NAME _____ PHONE _____ - _____ - _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

I would like (quantity) _____ knives at \$90 each plus \$6.95 s/h My check or credit card info is enclosed for \$ _____

Send your check or credit card information with this coupon to **Lafayette Consistory, PO Box 309, Stratford, CT 06615-0309**

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION Charge my credit card

CARD NUMBER _____ EXP. DATE _____ / _____

SECURITY CODE _____

SIGNATURE _____

THE FLOOD OF AUGUST 18, 2024

BY ROBERT A. BUCK, 32°, SOUTHURY, CT

As I got ready to leave the house in Southbury, CT, for the 2 p.m. monthly meeting of the Oxford Historical Society on August 18, my phone issued a flash flood warning saying to stay put, which my wife echoed in sentiment. I replied that nobody had called the meeting off and hoped things wouldn't be too bad. I didn't want not to show up as I serve as President of the Society and missed the last meeting for other obligations. Famous last words! Ironically, we had the best attendance of recent notes, with 14 present. Things went well until departure time at 3 p.m. Richard had left a little early only to return and say not to take Towner Lane back to CT Route 67 as the low spot on that road was flooding. We proceeded to Christian Street and out to Rte. 67 only to find that the road northbound was flooded, making us head south on 67 into the center of Oxford.



We were stopped by police and firemen at Academy Road, diverted up that road to the high ground of the Congregational Church, and parked with many others in the lower parking lot. As water from a raging brook continued to encroach on the parking lot, I kept moving my car to higher ground until I ended up on the edge of the hill along Academy Rd. on which the church sits. It was then I left the car to go into the open church

to sit this thing out. I, along with three of the Society members, Bo, Essie, and Nancy, are all members of this church and ended up here. Bo had the idea to open the church at this time if needed to harbor the stranded travelers. We put out snacks and drinks and became the refuge in the 1000-year flood. We had a front-row seat to the Oxford House Tavern, which, with the Little River behind it, was surrounded by flood waters (see picture). Their propane tanks had torn loose of mooring and were floating, providing a distinct gas smell to the area. The lot below the restaurant had at least three feet of water as one black Honda had water 2-3 inches up its windshield and, between two viewings, was pushed thirty or forty feet down the lot. I spoke to an architect who had offices on the third floor of the Tavern building who thought he would come in Sunday to get a little work done, only to regret his decision.

The front lawn was underwater when I passed the Oxford Grange Hall (I am the Secretary of that organization and President of the Connecticut State Grange). We would later learn that we had had two and a half feet of water in the basement, of which ten inches had to be pumped out, with the rest receding on its own. Furniture will have to be thrown away, the front wooden basement doors will have to be replaced, and we hope the refrigerator and furnace blower will work after drying out. Back to the church, among the stranded, there was a fellow from Beacon Falls passing through, a father and daughter from Watertown, a lady from Stratford trying to figure the best route home, and an Oxford resident from Ukraine named Vladimir with whom I had a most interesting discussion on world events and politics. By 8 p.m., we had clearance from police and firemen to leave and notes on which ways to avoid due to flooding and washouts. The raging brook behind the church would eventually wash out Academy Rd., which you can see in the picture with water over a broken guardrail before the road gave way. As Route 67 in Southbury was closed, I had to take Christian St. to Airport Rd, across to CT Route 188, and catch I-84 west to Exit 14. Exit 15 was closed because a burst dam drained an old pond and filled the area in front of Southbury Plaza with several feet of water and mud.



HOSPITALER'S CORNER

Your gifts to the Hospitaller Fund assist David in helping out local brothers who are members of the Consistory. Unfortunately, there never has been a greater need. If you have experienced good fortune in the past year, why not pass a portion of it forward to help a brother in need. Many are struggling with age-related debilities, as well as misfortunes of every kind.

Please make your contribution payable to
Lafayette Consistory
and mail to
David B. Urban, Hospitaller
P.O. Box 309
Stratford, CT 06615

Several ladies did not leave the church until 10:00. We were Ok at home, suffering only a little water in our basement due to high water tables and saturated ground. Estimates put the rainfall for Oxford and Southbury at upwards of 16 inches in four hours. The next flood warning, I'll stay home!

Editor's Note: Brother Buck is President of the Connecticut Grange, a quasi-Masonic fraternal body dedicated to rural, agricultural, and animal husbandry interests.



WANTED: Donations for the December 20 holiday party silent auction. Bring us your gift cards, restaurant and service certificates, and regifted new unused items so that we can help raise \$ 40,000 for our Children's Dyslexia Centers!

Call the office for details and advice on how to gift: (203) 375-0064.



VALLEY OF BRIDGEPORT

2024 DEGREE SCHEDULE

DATE	DEGREE(S) in Stratford Unless Otherwise Noted.
Mon. Nov. 18	30th Degree (live), 5th Degree (video)
Mon. Dec. 2	32nd Degree (live)

Dinners are at 6 p.m., Degrees at 7:30 p.m. in Stratford unless otherwise noted. The 4th Degree video is offered as needed to new candidates prior to degree portrayals, so they can start their Scottish Rite journey on any date. New candidates must register 45 min before degree. Dinners before the Bridgeport degrees on Mondays are at 6 p.m. in the Shrine building, unless otherwise noted,

- Monday candidates must fill out the application by Noon on Friday.
- Saturday candidates must fill out the application by Noon on Thursday.
- New candidates must register 45 min before Degree.

Saturday degrees are at 11 a.m., followed by lunch in the Shrine building. \$10/per brother.

RSVP required for dinner or lunch.

Email: Office@LafayetteConsistory.com or call 203-375-0064.





SAVE THE DATE TO
PLAY IT AGAIN AT THE

HOLIDAY PARTY

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2024
6 -10 P.M.

WOODWINDS, SPECIAL EVENTS VENUE

A Holiday Buffet Dinner
At the Woodwinds by Chef Silvío
And Dancing with a DJ

Four Hour Premium Open Bar
Cocktail Hour, Hot and Cold Hors d'Oeuvres

Salad Station

Pasta Station

Farfalle with Sunday Sauce, Tortellini Alfredo

Entrée Station

Chicken Marsala, Chicken Florentine, Salmon Champagne

Carving Station

Prime Rib & Stuffed Roast Pork

Complements Station ~ Herb Roasted Potatoes,

Seasonal Vegetables Medley, Rice Pilaf

Desserts ~ Assortment of Cookies and Pastries

Served with Coffee, Tea, or Espresso

DRESS IS FORMAL

ONLY \$40.00 a person (cost the same as last year)

Reserve your place today.

Silent Auction and a Cigar Roller after dinner to
benefit the Children's Dyslexia Centers of Connecticut.

CALL the Scottish Rite Office today to

RSVP: 203-375-0064

Limited Space so RSVP Early

by Friday, December 13.



Lafayette Consistory
P.O. Box 309
Stratford, CT 06615-0309

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

LAFAYETTE CONSISTORY NEWS

From the Valleys of Bridgeport, New Haven, and Waterbury

CONSISTORY SECRETARY

Ill.: Bruce R. Bellmore, MSA, 33°

EDITOR

Ill.: John A. Amarilios, MSA, 33°

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS/MAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Lafayette Consistory News
P.O. Box 309, Stratford, CT 06615-0309

E-MAIL

Office@LafayetteConsistory.com

CONSISTORY TELEPHONE

203-375-0064 • Fzx 203-386-0828



BROTHERS REMEMBER

Whether traveling from in or out of the state it is easy to get to the Stratford Leo H. Lohrman, II, Scottish Rite Theatre via Metro North. Our Theatre is located right next door to the Stratford Station. Avoid I-95 traffic and parking concerns. Consult the Metro North Train Schedule at: <http://www.mta.info/schedules>.

For those who drive to the Theatre, the street address is 2422 Main Street, Stratford, CT. The building is clearly marked with the name at the top of the building. There is limited handicap parking in front and there is parking behind the Theatre.