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# THE BILLBOARD

## DECEMBER 2024

For The Valley of Billings, Orient of Montana - Serving Eastern Montana Scottish Rite Members

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**To The Celestial  
Lodge:**

NONE

### *Message from the Venerable Master*



Greetings, Brethren!

In his book *Morals and Dogma*, Bro. Albert Pike defines what the characteristics of a Freemason should be, in his view, in the following manner: "A Freemason, therefore, should be a man of honor and of conscience, preferring his duty to everything beside, even to his life; independent in his opinions, and of good morals; submissive to the laws, devoted to humanity, to his country, to his family; kind and indulgent to his brethren, friend of all virtuous men, and ready to assist his fellows by all means in his power." In 1976, then Sovereign Grand Inspector General Jack Rehberg created an award to recognize Scottish Rite Masons who exemplified precisely those characteristics and who utilized them in the continual furtherance of Freemasonry. That honor was called the Chandler C. Cohagen Award.

As stated by SGIG Rehberg, the factors to be considered for earning the award were to include but not limited to dedication to the Rite, outstanding service during reunions, meritorious degree work, and services performed for the benefit of the Rite such as building, library, kitchen, wardrobe, etc. Nominations for the award were to be made by and limited to the SGIG, the Venerable Master, the Honor Men and the Secretary of the Rite in writing to the Venerable Master. After the nominees were selected, the award was to be presented during the presiding Venerable Master's term.

(Continued on page 2)

## **(V.M. message continued from page 1)**

From 1976 to 2005, thirty-five Billings Valley brethren were recipients of the Chandler C. Cohagen Award. Then, for some unknown reason, the award became seemingly forgotten and was not issued for the next nineteen years. That is, until Ill. Bro. Sean McDuffee found an old folder stored away in a filing cabinet containing the award's creation and decree written and signed by SGIG Rehberg. Also within the folder was a complete list of its distinguished recipients, and a ceremony written in 1969 by Ernest A. Neath 33° from the Helena Bodies to present the award.

Desiring to revive this honor and realizing there were many worthy brothers deserving to receive it, Ill. Bro. Sean and I strived to select two outstanding Scottish Rite role models who, as the award ceremony stated, "devoted unselfishly of their time and effort in the furtherance of Freemasonry." Therefore, I am happy and proud to announce that the two brothers who were chosen to receive the award during this year's November stated meeting were Hon. Bro. Ron Swenson and Bro. Cody Thormahlen. On behalf of the Billings Valley Scottish Rite, I would like to personally thank them for their many contributions to our organization, always freely and quietly given, and never with the intent of seeking personal recognition. It is my hope that the engraved plaques they received when presented the award will suffice for the laudable recognition they so richly deserve.

When it comes to Hon. Bro. Ron's achievements, he was instrumental in planning the temple's new underground sprinkler system and insuring it gets properly blown out each year. He also adroitly operates the lodge's sound system during the exemplified Reunion Degrees and routinely attends all the degree practices to ensure the performers are aware of their cues. Speaking for myself, if it may be challenging to make some of us brothers look good during the degrees, Bro. Ron at least makes sure that we sound good.

And speaking of looking good, if there is a repair or project that needs to be done within our beloved temple, Bro. Ron often completes it on his own to make sure it maintains its impressive appearance. For example, have you seen how lush and manicured the lawn looks outside the lodge during the summer? You can thank Hon. Bro. Ron for it (unless Ill. Bro. Bob Hanson beats him to the lawn mower first).

As for Bro. Cody Thormahlen, if you have been to any of our lodge meeting dinners over the past couple of years, then you would know that his cooking is worthy of an award alone. Bro. Cody prepares all the dishes by hand and ensures the menu contains a variety of options for everyone to enjoy. Furthermore, the portions are so hearty that many attendees frequently require a to-go box to take home with them afterwards. Bro. Cody is often personally to thank for us enjoying his leftovers and not having to cook the night after a Scottish Rite meeting!



## THE RITE CORNER

### **“Balancing Disagreement— Indispensable to Unity”**

David L. Nielsen. S.G.I.G. in

For the first time since my college days, I worked in the elections in Helena. While attending college, since election day was a holiday, I worked for elections in Bozeman. It was easy duty, a good feeling of citizenship, and I made \$1.50 per hour, which was okay for a student. Much has changed since that time. Now we ask for identification, which is not overly difficult, but the variety of printed identification varies, and some are acceptable, and others are not.

The elections that I worked at many years ago were in-person at a voting precinct, and were a relaxed place where people would gather. I know the election workers were a mix of people from major political parties and independents. The primary rules for election have been consistent, particularly the prohibition against campaigning or displaying campaign buttons or material in the election area. Within the voting area, electors and election workers do not reveal their political beliefs in any manner. The result, then and now, is that there is civility between all the people in the voting area. It is like a Masonic meeting. We each have the freedom of thought and belief on all things political and religious, but when we meet at Masons, all equal before the Grand Architect of the Universe, we can enjoy the companionship of good people, uncluttered with any partisan label. We can experience the satisfaction of participating in democracy without the clutter of buttons, signs, and logos.

In my experience in working for elected governing bodies, at a city, county and state level, the bodies whose members mutually respect other members of the body, I have seen better results than bodies whose members who seem to be more interested in achieving an agenda or making those with opposing views look bad. I have a friend that was on the City Commission, and once he told me that he was always on the minority vote of every issue. I disagreed with his concern and could cite instances when he was on the majority side. More importantly, he did not recognize that even when he was outvoted, that the majority listened to him and often tried to accommodate or ameliorate his concerns. Bringing one's own beliefs to the discussion can give a better result.

Masonry teaches us to form our own beliefs and yet respect the rights of others to have differing beliefs. Democracy works best when people with differing beliefs can adapt and respect others for the common goal of finding the best possible result.

**(Continued on page 5)**



## *Message from our Personal Representative*

### **Tis the Season!**

The holiday season is upon us, and I hope you and your loved ones had a wonderful Thanksgiving. As we approach the end of another year, I take a moment to reflect on how grateful and privileged I feel to be surrounded by such outstanding Brethren in our cherished fraternity. The year, 2024 has been a remarkable one for the Valley of Billings, and with the recent election of officers, the prospects for 2025 are equally promising. During this time of gratitude, I would like to extend my appreciation to a few brethren who have consistently earned my admiration.

First and foremost, our esteemed Venerable Master, Bro. John Hugdahl 32°, has done an exceptional job this year. I still remember with fondness when Bro. John joined our fraternity in April of 2017. Since then, our camaraderie has only grown stronger. Bro. John has held numerous successful positions within our fraternity, and his commitment continues to this day. His tenure as Venerable Master has brought about positive changes that I sincerely hope will endure. Bro. John is also very active in Grand Lodge, York Rite, and the Shrine. I am continually amazed by his ability to balance these responsibilities and deeply appreciate his contributions as the Venerable Master of the Valley of Billings.

As previously stated, your Valley of Billings held Election of Officers last month. Your Venerable Master-Elect is Bro. Tom Hanel 32° KCCH. The rest of the elected officers for the Lodge of Perfection are: SW Nate Frickel 32°, JW Tom Watson 32°, Orator David Jobrack 32°, and Almoner TC Chatman 32° KCCH. Your newly elected Wise Master is Cody Caitlin 32°, Commander Knights Kadosh is Jacob Hammersmith 32°, and Master of Kadosh is Bob Donaldson 32°. The two Representatives of the Craft elected as members of the Executive Board are Nate Frickel 32° and Jeffery Anderson 32°.

As terms and positions draw to a close, new beginnings emerge. The Valley of Billings is truly fortunate to have a resilient group of brothers who continue the work initiated by our predecessors. I extend my gratitude once again to the gentlemen who have devoted their time in the past, as well as to all those who contribute to the ongoing success of our Valley.

Our Annual Fundraiser, the Rite Care Cookie Jar Auction, is on December 4<sup>th</sup>. This event has grown every year due to the dedication that you have for our Rite Care Language Clinic. This public event is fun and exciting. This year we are going to have a wonderful prime rib dinner catered by Ken Catlin, owner of Beachwood Eatery in Dalles OR, and is also Bro. Caitlin's father! (<https://www.beachwoodeatery.com/>). So, make sure to invite your friends and family and get your dinner reservations in. As always, I look forward to seeing you then.

### **(S.G.I.G. message continued from page 3)**

I think the political divide goes well beyond the two-party system. The fragmentation of belief is not binary and is more complex and at times less tolerant. We have the advantage that Masonry provides us with a temporary sanctuary from the vitriol we may see in the political structure in the outside world. The goal of Masons is to keep our beliefs from not being a bludgeon for those who disagree, but an opportunity to compare beliefs and learn from others. Masonry is a thinking organization, where we gather the best information and education, and learn to apply it to our own behavior, while fostering a kinder behavior in us and others.

We have much to offer for our country and it is a duty to promote civility, mutual respect, and openness for healthy discourse. I have learned much from those with whom I may initially disagree. It is okay to be challenged on beliefs. Sometimes a belief may be based on a misunderstanding of the issue or the facts, which when realized is hard to admit. Remember, it is important to listen as much as to talk.

With Thanksgiving coming up and the chance to get together with family and friends, I will remember my Masonic commitment to being kind, considerate, listening, and open. We can compare notes later to see how it went. Have a great Thanksgiving!

### **(VM message continued from page 2)**

Furthermore, when Bro. Cody's hands aren't busy preparing meals in the kitchen, they are full guaranteeing our Reunion Degrees are performed smoothly, expertly and punctually as the Director of the Works. To assure this, he regularly steps in and performs parts where needed in the degrees, maintains script binders for all the degree teams, directs the floor work for the ceremonies, and ensures each degree has the proper costumes and props for its performances. Bro. Cody has included many new team members within the various degrees, and he has even incorporated a brand-new exemplified degree, the *29<sup>th</sup> Degree - Knight of St. Andrew*, during our Reunions. Under Bro. Cody's diligent direction, many members have commented that the Billings Valley has seen some of the best degree work performed in recent memory.

In closing, Bro. Albert Pike writes in *Morals and Dogma* that, "Masonry is useful to all men: to the learned, because it affords them the opportunity of exercising their talents upon subjects eminently worthy of their attention." We, in the Billings Valley, are very fortunate to benefit from the talents of this year's recipients of the Chandler C. Cohagen Award, Hon. Bro. Ron Swenson and Bro. Cody Thormahlen. To ensure we remain worthy of their attention, please remember to tell them thank you and congratulations for all the hard work and selfless dedication to their extraordinary promotion of Freemasonry.

With Masonic Regards!

Bro. John Hugdahl, 32°  
Venerable Master  
Billings Valley Scottish Rite

<https://scottishrite.org/blog/about/media-publications/journal/article/albert-pike-on-freemasonry-force/>



The Clinic is providing sponsorships to over 70 children. These children will benefit greatly having had speech/language therapy in the future of their lives. This all happens through the philanthropy of the Scottish Rite.

The major fundraiser for the Clinic will be on Wednesday, Dec. 4, when we have the Cookie Jar Auction. Please plan to attend this & bring cookie jars filled with goodies. It is a fun evening and the auctioneer is Bruce Butler. The coordinator of the event is Patty Murphy with the help of others.

**Remember that the donations to this is to help the kids.**

Jered Scherer

Chairman

(re-posted from the Nov. 2024 Billboard)

## 2025 Valley Information 227 Members

**(Remember– you can pay your 2025 dues on-line or through the office!)**

Active Members with Dues Paid in Full: 78 34.4 %

**Members with Current Dues Balance: 67 29.5 %** ←

Active Members with Arrears Dues Balance: 10 4.4 %

Active Members that are Dues Exempt (ALR): 47 20.7%

Active Paid Life Members (E): 25 11%

**A note about 2025 dues Renewal Notices coming from Supreme Council: Remember your dues must be paid by 01 January to be in good standing.**



**May your  
holidays be for a  
blessing!**

# 2024 Officers & General Information

## 2024 Officers

### LODGE OF PERFECTION

Venerable Master	John Hugdahl, 32°
Senior Warden	Tom Hanel, 32° KCCH
Junior Warden	Nate Frickel, 32°
Orator (all bodies)	Gerald Giebink, 32°
Almoner	TC Chatman, 32° KCCH
Secretary	Llewellyn Fletcher, 33°
Treasurer	Dan Jobrack, 32° KCCH
Prelate	David Jobrack, 32°
Master of Ceremonies	Cody Catlin, 32°
Expert	Robert Cauckwell, 32°
Captain of the Host	Michael Ebert, 32°
Tyler	Anthony Morse, 32°
Organist	John Baber, 32° KCCH

### ROSE CROIX

Wise Master	Jacob Clos, 32°
Senior Warden	Rick Ingram-Hegenbart, 32°
Junior Warden	Mitch Burns, 32°

### COUNCIL OF KADOSH

Commander	Tom Watson, 32°
1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. Commander	Cody Thormahlen, 32°
2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. Commander	Anthony Morse, 32°

### CONSISTORY

Master of Kadosh	Tom Hornung, 33°
Prior	Tracy Dinkel, 32°
Preceptor	Marc Sewell, 32°
Minister of State	TBD

## 2-Month Valley Calendar Snapshot

(Detailed upcoming events on page 10)



Rite Care Board Meeting	Dec. 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2024
Exec. Board Mtg.	Dec. 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2024
<b>Cookie Jar Event</b>	<b>Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024</b>
<b>KSA Meeting</b>	Dec. 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2024
<b>Cap &amp; Ring &amp; Annual Installation of Officers - This is event is on <u>Thursday</u> January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 beginning at 6:30 in the Dining Hall</b>	
Rite Care Board Meeting	Jan. 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2025
<b>KSA Meeting</b>	Jan. 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2025
Honormens Luncheon	Jan. 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2025



## Billings Scottish Rite Office Hours

Wednesday and Thursday  
9 a.m. – noon

### Coffee Klatch

Every Thursday morning beginning at 7:30 a.m.  
in the Temple Dining Room





### Re-Posting

December 4<sup>th</sup> is the Annual Cookie Jar Event. **This is our primary fundrising event of our Scottish Rite Philanthropy, our Language Clinic.** This is a critical event for which we unite together annually and give our to support every year during the holiday giving season! Please put it on your calender, invite family and friends, bring your wallets, your smiles and most importantly your joy as we break bread together and dig in deep to help and support societies future, **the children!** The Secretary reports that there are some free cookie jars sitting on the table as you enter the building for anybody to take, fill up and bring back on December 4<sup>th</sup>! Contact the Secretary with any questions! See you in December! **This is also the perfect time to recommit to or join our 365 Club that also raises funds for the Clinic!**





**365 CLUB**

Ronny & Mary Beth Aasterud

**SHOES FOR KIDS PROGRAM**

National Sojourners Devils Brigade  
Chapter 558

**LANGUAGE CLINIC OPERATIONS**

Jephthah Chapter 116 OES  
Dairy Queen

**COURTESY TRANSPORTATION VAN**

National Sojourners Devils Brigade  
Chapter 558

**Wear your favorite holiday sweater!**



**DINNER**

**DINNER RESERVATIONS REQUIRED.** PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATION WITH THE SECRETARY **(259-6683 NLT 12/24 @ NOON)** OR REQUEST THE SECRETARY ADD YOU TO THE CALL LIST. THOSE ON THE CALL LIST WILL RECEIVE A REMINDER CALL 2-3 DAYS BEFORE STATED DINNER.

**MEAL MENU by Chef Ken Catlin of Beachwood Eatery**

**Main Dish and Sides (choice) - \$20.00**

1. Prime Rib, Fettuccine Alfredo, Broccoli Normandy
2. Chicken Fettuccine Alfredo, Broccoli Normandy
3. Veggie Option – Alfredo Pasta Primavera

**Dessert**

TBD

## Billings Scottish Rite Bodies

514 14<sup>th</sup> Street West  
Billings, MT 59102-5216

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Office Hours Wednesday & Thursday  
9:00 a.m. – noon

**Email the Secretary to be added to  
our Email list for an electronic  
Billboard**



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## Upcoming Events

Billings Scottish Rite



Orient of Montana  
Freemasons of Montana

### **Lodge of Perfection**

**Venerable Master**  
John J. Hugdahl, 32°

### **Chapter Rose Croix**

**Wise Master**  
Jacob Clos, 32°

### **Council Knights Kadosh**

**Commander**  
Tom Watson, 32°

### **Consistory**

**Master of Kadosh**  
Tom Hornung, 33°

## **MEETINGS/EVENTS**

<b>Rite Care Board Meeting</b>	Dec. 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2024 noon Conference Room
<b>Exec. Board Mtg.</b>	Dec. 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2024 6:00 p.m. Conference Room
<b>COOKIE JAR EVENT!</b>	Dec. 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2024 6:30 p.m. Dining Room
<b>NO Upstairs Stated Meeting – This is a Public Event!</b>	
<b>KSA Meeting</b>	Dec. 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2024 6:30 p.m. Lodge Room
<b>Exec. Board Mtg.</b>	Jan. 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2025 6:00 p.m. Conference Room
<b>Cap &amp; Ring and Installation</b>	<b>Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 6:30 p.m. <u>THURSDAY!</u> Lodge Room</b>
<b>Rite Care Board Meeting</b>	Jan. 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2025 noon Conference Room
<b>KSA Meeting</b>	Jan. 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2025 6:30 p.m. Lodge Room
<b>Honormans Luncheon</b>	Jan. 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2025 Noon Dining Room
<b>Rite Care Board Meeting</b>	Feb. 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2025 noon Conference Room
<b>Exec. Board Mtg.</b>	Feb. 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2025 6:00 p.m. Conference Room
<b>Stated Dinner</b>	Feb. 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2025 6:30 p.m. Dining Room

**Annual Business & Rite Care Meeting – 7:30 p.m. Lodge Room**