

# The Double Eagle

ANCIENT ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE  
Valley of Indianapolis



Volume 58, Number 3

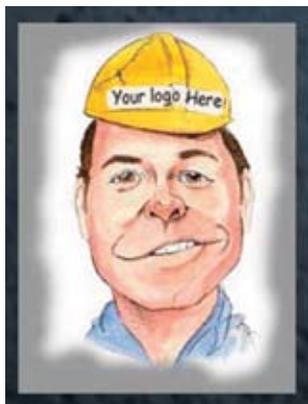
e-mail: [doubleeagle@aastr-indy.org](mailto:doubleeagle@aastr-indy.org) Web: [www.aastr-indy.org](http://www.aastr-indy.org)

Sep 2008

## Comedian Dave Dugan Bean Supper Entertainer

The annual Bean Supper is always our biggest gathering and serves as our fall kickoff event for our jam-packed new season. Enjoy a great meal, and Comedian and Indianapolis radio personality Dave Dugan for an enjoyable evening. Join us on **Friday, Sept 5th at 7 pm** for fun, food, and fellowship.

What makes Dave a unique corporate comedian is his ability to customize original humor to best relate to each event and group. The result is not only a laugh-filled event, but an audience that experiences a performance that is tailored just for them. This event gets the best of both worlds---laughs and relatability!



Show for over 20 years where his Bob Newhart-like everyman victim style has been utilized time and time again!

Before becoming a corporate comedian in-demand, Dave's unique observations earned him national television appearances on HBO, Comedy Central, FOX, The Arsenio Hall Show, VH-1 and a host of other networks and shows. He's also been a regular writer, contributor and guest on the nationally syndicated Bob and Tom

We'll trade you a canned food item for a sumptuous traditional bean supper and corned bread. Local food

pantry benefits and you enjoy great Masonic fellowship.

Bring a Master Mason as your guest and introduce him to the Scottish Rite and our beautiful Cathedral.

We encourage you to bring any petitions you have for our November class! Petitions are

available through the Scottish Rite office by calling local 317-262-3100 or toll free at 1-800-489-3579, or by visiting our web site at [www.aastr-indy.org](http://www.aastr-indy.org).

Be sure to reserve your seat by filling out and returning the pre-paid postcard found inside this magazine. This will ensure that we have plenty of delicious beans and corn bread for you. *Free to members and their guests.*



## How to Build a Membership

# Economic Incentives

Free gas card with every purchase of at least \$100! Stop by today and receive a free gift with your quotation! I see these advertisements in the paper all the time and they arrive in my mail with equal frequency. It seems everyone has an incentive to entice you to take a particular course of action. The question I always ask myself is why I should care. Does this really benefit me and is it something in my interest to consider?

I care deeply about Membership in the fraternity and so when an offer arrives that benefits me directly and serves to assist in the growth of the organization, I will always review its merits. The Valley of Indianapolis has a program that will allow members to have their dues paid in full for a year or for life. An extra \$10 per month is important enough that everyone should consider participating in the 3/10 program. For just bringing in 3 new members over a 12 month period, your following year's dues will be paid. Get 10 in the same time period and receive a life membership. I am sure we all have a friend, relative, co-worker or business associate who would like to carry the title of 32nd degree Mason. You can help him achieve that distinction while earning, not only monetary incentives for yourself, but by being a part of the select group of members earning a Scottish Rite Membership pin.

It has never been easier to get new members with multiple degree presentations and locations and Valley staff and volunteers willing to assist at every step. Consider:

- In addition to the Fall and Spring traditional convocations and reunions, the Valley will be presenting degrees at the Grand Master's one day classes in October in April.
- Certain degrees will also be presented at remote locations 3-4 times in the next 12 months with the first effort in Bedford on August 16th. What a great opportunity to have the degrees come to your Lodge.
- Numerous programs are scheduled throughout the area to acquaint potential members with Scottish Rite. These may be at the Cathedral in conjunction with an event, or a fellowship dinner in your area where you may bring your prospect for information.
- There are special initiation financial incentives for active duty military and active fire and police officers along with reduced rates for full time students and active DeMolays.

You will receive the calendar of events book for the 2008-09 year in the next few weeks. Look over the details and



pick out a program to introduce your prospective member to Scottish Rite. The benefits to you, the new member and the fraternity will be worth the effort.

*Jeffrey K. Saunders*

Executive Director

## The Double Eagle

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Editor & Art Design                      Jerry B Collins, 33°

Photos    Carl E Culmann, 33°,  
Rick Purcell, 33°, Mark Dill, & Editor

Committee Members  
W Eric Seidensticker, Nathan C Brindle,  
Amzie L Wenning, Randolph L Seipel,  
Jeffrey K Saunders, 33°, Richard D Purcell, 33°

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**Best Publication**  
**Category V**

(Valleys with 5,000+ members)

**2001 - 2007**





# Indpls Valley Children's L.C.



Saturday, September 29, 2007 was a beautiful day to take a walk and several members and friends took advantage of the great Indiana fall weather to do just that. Each year the Indianapolis Valley coordinates a 3K/5K Walk to help raise money for our Indianapolis 32<sup>o</sup> Masonic Learning Center for Children with Dyslexia.

Last year we raised over \$17,500 in donations compared to \$11,500 in 2006. All funds raised will go towards our efforts to help children with dyslexia. On average, it costs \$5,000 to tutor one child and we currently have 43 students taking advantage of this program in the Indianapolis Valley LC.

# \$59<sup>52</sup>

PER TUTOR SESSION

**That's what it costs to teach a child times 84 sessions per year.**

**You can help in one of 3 ways:**

- **Join us for the Walk**
- **Gift tutoring sessions**
- **Donate what you can**

For More Information and to make a Donation:

Tom Beattie

Tbeattiesr@aol.com 317-259-4335

Carl Culmann

Cculmann@mibor.net 317-442-4282

Bill Gloye

bgloye@aol.com 317-485-6481

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE WE ACCEPT MASTERCARD OR VISA OVER THE PHONE

# WALK



TO HELP CHILDREN WITH DYSLEXIA

**The Annual Indianapolis Walk To Help Dyslexic Children**

Course: 3K-5K thru the downtown Canal Walk.

When: Saturday, September 20th

Time: 9 am

Location: Begins at Scottish Rite Cathedral

For more information: [www.dyslexiawalk.org](http://www.dyslexiawalk.org) or call 317-262-3121

# Opportunities to Get Inv

## Washington's Retreat

Valley Stated Meetings are not just for routine business any longer. Within the past couple of years the spirit of our monthly business meetings has changed. "Washington's Retreat" was introduced by Ill Roger S VanGorden, 33°, Past TPM, as a place to rest and refresh oneself following the meeting. Attendance has increased steadily since its inception.



*Richard D. Swell*  
**Director Membership Services**

On occasion the Valley Officers and cast members have presented degrees following a Stated Meeting. This year we will present the 5<sup>th</sup> degree in December and the 17<sup>th</sup> degree in February. If you have been waiting to see one of these degrees to complete your passport, bring it with you, we will have the stamp ready.

Have you ever wished there was a time you could bring a fellow Master Mason to the Scottish Rite so he could see first-hand the fun and fellowship you enjoy as a member of

the Valley of Indianapolis? That opportunity can now become a reality. Based on the recommendation of Brother Randy Seipel, Jr Warden, Indianapolis Chapter of Rose Croix, the Executive Committee has approved a program where you can bring a potential member to designated Stated Meetings for a short tour and fellowship. This basic program has been quite successful in Randy's Lodge.

Stated Meetings begin at 7 pm and generally last an hour or less. During this time, your potential member will be given a personal tour of the Cathedral and given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the Cathedral and the Fraternity. Following the meeting, he is encouraged to join the officers and members in Washington's Retreat for refreshments and fellowship. Remember there are tables for card playing as well as two pool tables. We also have a "Snooker" table for the more daring players.

Following are the approved dates for this program, so please plan accordingly: September 3, November 5, January 7, March 4 and April 1.

*Introduce a friend to the fellowship of the Indianapolis Valley.*

## Musicians: Join the Orchestra

The Scottish Rite Orchestra was founded in 1956 by Fabien Sevitsky, then conductor of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, as a musical outlet for members of the Scottish Rite fraternity.

In 2002, the orchestra was opened to all members of the community, male and female, young and not-so-young. Since then, the membership has grown to about 45 members. In fact, there are several family combinations in the orchestra.

While we are hoping to expand the orchestra's membership, we would like to keep a semblance of balance between the sections of the orchestra. Any new instrumentalists will need the conductor's approval prior to joining.



Orchestra rehearsals are on Monday nights from 7:30-9:30 PM beginning on September 8 and continuing into early May. We practice on the third floor of the Scottish Rite Cathedral. The orchestra currently has six performances scheduled for the 2008-2009 season, and may add one more in the spring. Music is generally "light classical" with some jazz pieces and show tunes as well. Some of our members are professional musicians and music teachers, but most are amateurs.

If you would like to join, or require more information, please contact Jeff Warbinton, conductor, at 317-246-7256 or [warbintons@comcast.net](mailto:warbintons@comcast.net)

# olved at the Scottish Rite

## Singers: Join the Chorus

by John Duncan, Choral Leader

Many misunderstand and believe the chorus has attendance requirements. We do not! Some are seasonal members and none of these men are penalized because they winter in Florida, or have other social obligations. Their schedules may not permit them to attend every Monday night from September to May from 7 pm to about 8:45 pm.

Others have commented that making a commitment of rehearsing on Monday's from September to May is just too much to consider. Brothers may rehearse when their personal and family schedules permit. All we ask is that they know our music selections well enough so they can perform with us at our important performances which are;

- Spring and Fall Convocations, and rehearsal dates
- Our two performances at the Masonic Home
- Two Concerts at the Scottish Rite



*No tuxedo required, just your voice.*

In addition, we may perform at Lodge programs, or other venues. These are important, but not considered to be critical performances. We always want to have enough participation so that we may have a "quality sound".

The orchestra and chorus would like to make a new member appeal in hopes of attracting new members for each of our organizations: **Come to rehearsals beginning in October to perform for our Christmas Concert. No long-term commitment -- just fun!**

I'm sure we have many members in our Valley who can either sing or play an instrument, and would enjoy the fellowship and camaraderie that we share.

I can personally attest to the closeness of the members of the chorus. Over time, we have become family! We are indeed a "Brotherhood of Singing Masons" and a "Band of Jolly Brothers!" Call me at 317-862-6483 or email to [riteguymazerd@msn.com](mailto:riteguymazerd@msn.com).

## Nov 20-22 Convocation & Reunion

honoring Ill Russell K. Hughes, 33° & Clarence T. Stout, MSA, 33° Class

### Adoniram Lodge of Perfection Degrees

Thursday 6:30 pm	Oath of Fealty
4°	Ceremonial Section
11°	Sublime Master Elected
14°	Grand Elect Mason

### Saraiah Council of Princes of Jerusalem Degrees

Friday 6:30 pm	16°	Prince of Jerusalem
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### Indianapolis Chapter of Rose Croix Degrees

Friday 7 pm	18°	Knight of the Rose Croix
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### Indiana Consistory Degrees

Saturday 9 am	28°	Knight of the Sun
	29°	Knight of St. Andrew

12 pm Lunch

1:15	20°	Master ad Vitum
	31°	Knight Aspirant
	32°	Sublime Prince Royal Secret

*Volunteer to help the Make-up and Chorus departments!*

## Four Nominated for MSA in '09



The Indianapolis Valley has announced four brothers to be nominated to receive the Meritorious Service Award to be presented at the Council of Deliberation in June 2009:

**Charles R Bowling** – stage and properties,  
**Dale E Herthel** – stage and properties,  
**David M Johnson** – Manager of the Orchestra, and  
**William S Munson** – Chairman, Ass't Master of Ceremonies Committee

Congratulations to these brethren who have served the Valley cheerfully for many years.

## Campaign for the Cathedral

Last fall we offered statues of George Washington in full Masonic regalia to help raise money to honor Ill Thomas B Williams, Jr, 33° longtime Dramatic Director for the Valley.

Tom had portrayed George Washington in the 20<sup>th</sup> Degree for years, so in cooperation with the George Washington Masonic Memorial in Alexandria Virginia, we ordered 100 of these 1000 limited edition statues to be sold for \$200 each -- compared to \$250 at the George Washington Masonic Memorial. The response was extremely positive.



**Mark Dill**  
*Director of Major Gifts*

Included with each statue is a limited edition certificate and it states the base of the statue is made from marble laid in the hallways of the George Washington Masonic Memorial. As you can see by the picture, these statues are very impressive and would make quite a nice addition in either your home or office.

We received our allotment in April and have delivered 81 of these statues and only have 19 left for sale.



We will have the remaining 19 available at the Bean Supper on September 5<sup>th</sup> and at the Fall Convocation on November 20, 21, and 22, but after they're gone we will not be receiving any more. After these statues are gone we will be installing a display on the second floor foyer with a plaque listing all those who purchased a statue and a plaque commemorating Ill Thomas B Williams, Jr, 33°.

If you are interested in obtaining one of the remaining 19 statues, call me at 317-262-3123 or stop by the Valley office.

# Proud Masons Show Social Commitment

*Each year at the conferral of the 33rd Honorary Degree in the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, an Active Supreme Council member is asked to give a charge to the newly inducted class. This is a portion of a memorable charge given in 2006.*

*by Ill Tom Sturgeon, 33  
Active Supreme Council Member*

The future prosperity of Freemasonry will be predicated on the actions we take today and we continue tomorrow. One of the best ways that we can assure a viable fraternity for years to come is to have pride and to demonstrate your pride in this fraternity in your daily lives.

You should be proud of the \$8,000,000 commitment we make to teach challenged children to read and write. You should be proud of the \$400,000 a year that you give to college-age young men and women to help them with their education. You should be proud of the Knights Templar Eye Foundation that has given over \$98,000,000 for eye care to seniors and others over the past 50 years. Does it make you proud to know that the Shriners of North America spend \$650,000,000 a year for crippled children and burn victims? Within days of the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center, the Masons of this country donated over \$1,000,000 to that relief effort. Does that make you proud? Following Hurricane Katrina, the Masons of this



*The Council of Deliberation met last June in South Bend and celebrated a themed dinner party. The five Valleys of Indiana use this one weekend each June to get to know their counterparts and to raise the level of effectiveness within their operations.*

country donated over \$1,500,000 to the Grand Lodges of Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi.

I'm proud that the National Masonic Foundation for Children has trained over 34,000 school teachers in their student assistance program, and they have impacted almost 500,000 children. Across this country, several of the Grand Lodges will budget over \$700,000,000 next year to operate and maintain their Masonic homes. Thereby, they will take care of nearly 10,000 of our elderly brothers and their families. Are you proud of a fraternity that gives \$3,000,000 a day to charity?

**Join us on Wednesday, Sept 10<sup>th</sup> at Noon for the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Outing benefiting the 32<sup>o</sup> Learning Centers for Children. This year's event is again being played at The Fort Golf Course at Ft Harrison on the Northeast side of Indianapolis. The driving range opens at 10 am with lunch to precede the noon shotgun start. Dinner and awards follow a fun-filled day. Registration deadline is Sept 1<sup>st</sup>.**



Your registration fee includes lunch, driving range, 3 drink tickets during play, greens fees, cart, gift bag, dinner and prizes.

Hole Sponsor	\$250
Foursome	\$500
Foursome & Hole Sponsor	\$750
Single Golfer	\$140

- Register our foursome
- Register our foursome, and our company will sponsor a hole.
- Our company will sponsor a hole.
- Register me as a single golfer.
- Our company will donate a door prize item.

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/ST/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please detach and return with check payable to:  
 IREM Chapter 24  
 P.O. Box 90403  
 Indianapolis, IN 46290

## A Word With You



# 9/11 - Faith and Clarity and Choice

by Bob Walters

In early September 2002 PBS Frontline aired "Faith and Doubt at Ground Zero," chronicling America's and specifically New York's religious take on the previous year's terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center.



The show truly wasn't about faith in God; it was about doubting God. It perpetuated the myth that those four hijacked airliners and the resulting loss of life and peace were a "senseless act." It suggested morality is in the eye of the beholder. It said confusion about faith is normal. It indicted cultural misunderstandings.

Now seven years later, if we remember nothing else about 9/11, with great clarity we must remember this: those violent attacks had clear moral purpose and made perfect sense to the perpetrators. Theirs was the ultimate act of faith. Those people attacked us because they most definitely understand our culture, which represents evil to them.



**Those violent attacks had clear moral purpose sense to the perpetrators.**

Since then we have all had to make choices about God and about our faith in the light, or perhaps I should say, in the dark, of that tragedy.

My choice was to learn all I could about God. My choice was to learn all I could about Islam. My choice was to study the philosophical and practical foundation and implications of religious and personal freedom in America.



My choice remains to love and fear God, to have faith in his plan on earth and in heaven, and to rejoice in our salvation through Jesus Christ. My choice is to fight evil where I find it, and when it finds me or those I love. My choice is to love my country.

Evil found the United States that day. God didn't take the day off.

It was a day He put us on His shoulders. It was a day to remember that God loves all mankind, and proof that our fallen world can be just awful.

I do know this: I stopped being confused about 9/11 long ago, and am able to make choices.

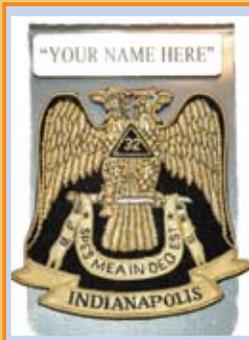
I choose God. I choose America. And I choose faith.

**My choice was to learn all I could about God and to have faith in his plan.**



*Brother Bob Walters is a member of Millersville Lodge No. 126 and a Christian lay person who as a youth grew up in the Episcopal church, became a journalist and public relations executive while taking a 30-year "break" from religion, and now writes, edits, serves and occasionally teaches as a baptized believer in Christ since the fall of 2001. His column, published Tuesdays in the weekly "Current! in Carmel" newspaper and available at [www.believerbob.blogspot.com](http://www.believerbob.blogspot.com), is an independent spiritual opinion, meant sincerely and with love and usually without apologies to secular convention (his rebelliousness comes naturally, exacerbated no doubt by several years as a sportswriter). Upon returning to church and coming to Christ in his late 40s, Brother Walters, a public relations professional and freelance writer, hosts [www.russstories.blogspot.com](http://www.russstories.blogspot.com).*

## Order your Personalized 32° or 33° Name Badge



\$5 from each sale will go to support the 32<sup>nd</sup> Degree Learning Center

**\$25**

Print your Name here as you want it to appear on your Badge:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name Badge sale sponsored by:  
 Indianapolis Order of  
 "The Knights of Saint Andrew"

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery  
 Make checks payable to KSA

Send this coupon to:  
 7859 Scarborough Blvd S Dr, Indianapolis, IN. 46256

## Did You Know?

by Jim Granneman, Librarian

Here are a few items from the book, "Did You Know?"

Did You Know that the Ancient Greeks carried a sprig of Acacia as an Emblem of Innocence and to protect themselves against Temptation?

Did You Know that the elevator in the George Washington Masonic National Memorial in Alexandria, Virginia runs sideways to maintain unbroken floor space?

Did You Know that Solomon's Temple built in 966 BC was only the first of three temples built in Jerusalem?

These are only a few of the Did You Know articles. This book may be found in the Indianapolis Valley Library. Come and see our collections.



## Iraqi Freedom



Brother Jacob Hoenstine, a member of the Indianapolis Valley's Fall 2005 class, is currently stationed in Iraq.

Jake is a Specialist 4<sup>th</sup> Class and serves in the 76<sup>th</sup> Special Troop Battalion of the 76 Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Indiana National Guard. He joined the Guard in 2002 as a high school junior.

Jake is currently stationed at Logistical Support Area (LSA) Anaconda near Ballad, Iraq. He is shown here with two Iraqi's who work closely with him. Photo courtesy of his father, John Hoenstine, who is a member of the spring class of 2005.

## Memorial Gifts

5-1-2008 to 6-30-2008

### In memory of Robert Van Rheenen

Eloise L. Bowers Russell D. Byrd Clair N. Campbell  
 Mark & Wanda Dodd Robert F. Huntington  
 Donald C. Lady Mary Marsh Monica Mulligan  
 Kim L. Rader Jeannie T. Ratterman  
 William & Sue Shields R. P. & Anita Wright

### In memory of Edith Hunter Jack Hunter

### In memory of Emory B. Blair Mrs. Marilyn Blair

## Ashlar Society

### In Memory of James P. Barton

Kyle L. Fahrner

### In memory of Clarence Stout, MSA, 33°

Sara Stout

### Samuel Thompson, 33° & Fran A. Thompson

Samuel J. Thompson

# Coming "Rite" Up

## Sep 10<sup>th</sup> Fall Golf Outing

The Indianapolis Valley Learning Center Golf Outing will be held at Fort Harrison GC in Indianapolis on Monday, September 10<sup>th</sup> with a shotgun start at noon. Cost is \$140 per person and includes cart, lunch, & dinner at the Golf Club. For further info and to register by Sep 1st, call Rick Purcell at 317-262-3100 ext 244.

## Ladies Luncheons

Spend the afternoon having lunch with the ladies of the Scottish Rite, then enjoy a wonderful program to complete the afternoon. Luncheons are open to members' ladies & their guests. Reserved tickets may be purchased at the Scottish Rite office after August 1st. A book of tickets, one for each of the three (3) luncheons plus preferred seating at the Tea and Fashion Show next May can be purchased for \$80. Single tickets are \$20. There will be no cancellations or refunds of tickets after purchase.

**Tuesday, Oct 21 at Noon** – Program by Gary Varvel, editorial cartoonist of the Indianapolis Star.

**Saturday, Dec 13 at Noon** – A Special Christmas program on Charles Dickens.



Sold Out Last 4 Years!

## Masonic Fellowship Day

Spirit of Jefferson

\$12.50

Children \$10  
4-12  
Under 4 - FREE

Sunday Sept 28<sup>th</sup>  
2 pm

We've chartered an historic paddlewheel steamboat with catered buffet lunch for a 2-hour cruise on the Ohio River

Only 200 seats available & tickets must be purchased in advance. Every passenger must have a ticket.

For more info call 800-489-3579 or [www.aasr-indy.org](http://www.aasr-indy.org)  
Sponsored by the Indianapolis Valley Scottish Rite

# Coming "Rite" Up

## Theatre of Performing Arts

### Fall Play

Try to cheat the IRS and look what happens! Here is a wild comedy with twists of fate, sight gags, mistaken identities and hilarious comic lines.



Here is a wild farce with twists of fate, sight gags, mistaken identities and hilarious comic lines. Jon and Leslie are out of work musicians who room together in New York City. To save money, Jon has been filing tax returns listing the pair as a married. The day of reckoning comes when the Internal Revenue Service informs the "couple" they're going to be investigated by a Mr. Spinner. Leslie masquerades as a housewife, aided by Jon's fiancée, Kate. Complicating matters further Leslie and Kate are having an affair behind Jon's back, Jon's mother drops in unexpectedly to meet her son's fiancée, and Leslie's ex girlfriend shows up demanding to know why Leslie has changed and won't see her anymore.

Oct 17, 18 & 24, 25 at 7:30 pm

Saturday, Oct 25 at 2 pm

Four tickets are included in an insert in this magazine.

## Madrigal Dinner

A long, long time ago, in a ballroom far, far away... Okay, so it is our fifth annual date with this event, but we think that a Madrigal Dinner takes you back to a different time and a different place. A time when kings were kings, ladies where ladies and jesters were annoying little men who could never do a thing right and always fell in love with the princess while fighting a duel against evil in the land who was trying to take over the kingdom. Good times.



Join us for an evening of fun on **Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm**. Continue a family tradition - tickets are \$25 per person. Reservation requests are already brisk so call today to reserve your party!

## Children's Xmas Party

The Children's Christmas Party is planned expressly for the entertainment of our members' children and grandchildren, so mark your calendars and plan to attend the a unique "Holiday Magic Show with the Ballisters" on **Saturday, Dec 6<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm**. Santa really gets around and shares the North Pole magic, including musical favorites, interactive sing-a longs, lively holiday takes and some of the latest Elf Workshop inventions. After the show meet Santa over refreshments in the Banquet Hall and enjoy music from our own Scottish Rite Chorus. Free to all members and their guests.

## Orchestra & Chorus



On **Sunday, Dec 14<sup>th</sup> at 3 pm**, the Scottish Rite Orchestra and Chorus will present a delightful evening of music for your holiday entertainment. Tickets are FREE for all members and their guests. No food service prior to this concert.



## Through the Cathedral Window

# Impossible Things Before Breakfast

by Jerry B Collins, 33<sup>rd</sup>, Editor

In Lewis Carroll's, *Through the Looking Glass*, Alice finds an upside down world full of strange creatures and unusual experiences. Alice meets the White Queen who lives backwards, remembers things before they happen, and whose age is "a hundred and one, five months, and a day." "I can't believe that!" said Alice. "Can't you?" the Queen said in a pitying tone. "Try again: draw a long breath, and shut your eyes." Alice laughed. "There's no use trying," she said. "One can't believe impossible things."

"I daresay you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast..."

Sometimes the promises of God seem impossible to believe. There is so much happening around us that leads us to doubt the faith. We join with millions of people in this world praying for peace, yet the world situation only seems to be getting worse. The killing continues between the Muslim north and the Christian south in Sudan; Israelis and Palestinians refuse to come to a reasonable compromise; the conflict in Iraq has occupied both terms of a Bush presidency perhaps at the expense of a needed domestic agenda.

I love my iPhone and have recently discovered many free podcasts and video downloads to occupy my frequent hour-long workouts on the treadmill. One podcast is particularly intriguing: *The Savage Nation*.

Michael Savage is a syndicated radio talk show host broadcasting daily out of "San Fran-sicko." (He is heard locally from 6-9 pm daily on 95.9 FM.) As a demonstrative right-wing vigilante, Michael rails against the "traitors" in our government like US Senator John Murtha who Michaels opines would have been put in jail for his treasonous pronouncements had they occurred 50 years ago, even though he is a decorated US Marine veteran. He likens Bush's failure to stop illegal immigration as the first steps to the Fall of the Roman Empire when wave after wave of Mongolian warriors kept pushing

previous generations of weaker warriors into western and southern Europe. He simplistically states that illegal immigration can be solved by two steps: cut off all government services and eliminate birthright citizenship. He is very right wing; however, some of his logic seems to defiantly ring true if the world could truly be painted only in black and white. Idealistically, Michael makes a lot of sense.

Thankfully, this election cycle is nearly over and a timetable for withdrawal from Iraq is being drawnup -- maybe the country can get back to tackling unemployment, care for our elderly, educating our youth, and improving the quality of life for all.

When the fulfillment of God's promises seems far off, it is easy to look at the world and think that what we see is all there is -- that trouble will seemingly go on forever. We say that we put our trust in God and mouth the words of faith, but we make uneasy compromises with the world -- one foot in each of two worlds and never make any spiritual progress -- like betting black and red on each turn of the roulette wheel.

In the strength of faith, we discover that the future is determined not so much by what we see as by what we believe. The world gives us grim reports of brutality, hunger, and war and cannot give us lasting hope. Faith looks beyond the burdens we carry and crises we face to the reassurance of the promises of God.

We believe that one day, Christians and Muslims will understand each other and find a way put our differences aside. Terrorism will no longer be an acceptable way to resolve disputes. What the world thinks is impossible is precisely what God has in mind.

Remember Sarah bearing Isaac at age 90? Remember God's many promises to David when death was near? Remember God feeding the wanderers in the desert for 40 years with manna from the sky? Remember the Carrolls' words of the White Queen: "Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."



Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite  
650 North Meridian Street  
Indianapolis IN 46204-1294

