Denver's RiteWorks

November 2026 vol. 19 #9



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BUILDING SECURITY IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY! We ask that you be mindful of who you let into the lobby through the glass doors and also be aware of who follows you into the building. We have many "street people" waiting for an opportunity to slip into the building. Do not let anyone in who you do not know to be a member of Denver Consistory.

DENVER CONSISTORY PETITION FOR MEMBERSHIP—NEW QR CODE

Pocket petition cards with the new QR code are on the Tyler's desk. Pick up some of the new cards and discard the cards you have been saving in your wallet. The QR code on the old cards is no longer valid.

PLANNING CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 2026

Mon, NOV 2	7:00 p.m.	KSA Meeting in Lodge Room
Fri, NOV 6, 20		No Friday Lunch due to maintenance work in the garage.
Mon, NOV 9	5:00 p.m.	Special Officers Meeting to read petitions
Wed, NOV 11	5:15 p.m.	Children's Hospital RiteCare Presentation
Thu, NOV 12	7:30 a.m.	Fall Reunion (66th) **Parking Garage Available**
Fri, NOV 13	8:00 a.m.	Fall Reunion (66th) **Parking Garage Available**
Sat, NOV 14	8:00 a.m.	Fall Reunion (66th) **Parking Garage Available**
	5:30 p.m.	Ring Ceremony; Banquet; 25 & 50 Year Presentations
Mon, NOV 16		**Stated Meeting** **Parking Garage Available**
	5:30 p.m.	Red Room Business Meeting
	6:00 p.m.	Dinner
	7:00 p.m.	Entertainment: Veterans Recognition Program
	7:30 p.m.	Split Meeting: Annual Election of Officers
		5 min oration—Minister of State for Denver Consistory
Thu-Fri, NOV 26 & 27		**Consistory Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday**

DECEMBER 2026

Fri, DEC 4, 11, 18	11:30 a.m.	Consistory Lunch ($15—Fried Chicken on DEC 4)
Sat, DEC 5	9:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Consistory Decorating Party - All members and wives invited
Mon, DEC 7	7:00 p.m.	KSA Meeting in Lodge Room
Sat, DEC 19	noon	Wreaths across America - Fort Logan National Cemetery
Mon, DEC 21		**Stated Meeting -** Member Appreciation Night; Ugly Sweater Night - **Parking Garage Available**
	5:30 p.m.	Red Room Business Meeting
	6:00 p.m.	Dinner
	7:00 p.m.	Entertainment (See flyer in this issue)
Thu-Fri, DEC 24 & 25		**Consistory CLOSED for Christmas Holiday (NO LUNCH)**

JANUARY 2027

Fri, JAN 1, 2027		**Consistory CLOSED for New Year's (NO LUNCH)**
Sat, JAN 2	9:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Un-decorating Party—All members, officers, wives invited
Fri, JAN 8, 15, 29	11:30 a.m.	Consistory Lunch ($15 - Fried Chicken on JAN 8)
Sat, JAN 16		**Parking Garage Available All Day**
	8:00 a.m. - noon	Officers' Meeting/Installation Practice
	5:00 p.m.	KSA Whisky College (in classroom)
	6:00 p.m.	KSA Burns Supper
Mon, JAN 18		**Stated Meeting - Parking garage Available**
Fri, JAN 22		**Consistory CLOSED for Grand Lodge (No Lunch)**

Editor's Trestleboard



By: Bill Hickey, 33°
Email: wa3h@hotmail.com



"Catch-All" Day

ON THIS DAY (lyrics by Charles Strouse, © 2003 Charles Strouse Publications

The bugle has sounded
Its notes drift away.
This time now belongs to you …

(Verse)
On this day for one brief moment
Hear the silence fill the air.

Think of those, who walked beside us;
Now no longer there.

Then, don't cry, but hear their laughter
For their spirit lives inside,

Let the mystic stream of mem'ry
Fill our hearts with pride!

Make us humble,
Make us knowing,
And reflect on what is done …

On this day
For now, forever
Make this nation one!

On this day,
For all the fallen,
Make this nation one!

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We often ask ourselves "where are all our Brothers?" This is because, in a lodge of (let's say) 100 or so member on the books, we might get 10-12% to show up at any given meeting. It's a sad fact that I've observed over the nearly 50 years I've been a Mason—pretty much regardless of which jurisdiction you happen to be in.

So, let's look at what might be an apt analogy in a search for some reason we are seeing this phenomenon. A while back, there was an interesting examination of 12 Reasons Millennials are OVER Church. I'm NOT going to delve deeply into that particular article (it's way too long and in-depth to try to repeat here). And, where you see references to "church" - translate that to "lodge" or other meetings (regardless of type: social, civic, professional, etc.).

Only 4 percent of the Millennial Generation consider themselves "Bible-Based Believers." This means that 96 percent of Millennials don't live out the teachings of the Bible, value the morals of Christianity, and probably won't be found in a church. So if we typically see 5-10 percent of our lodge members showing up, does this mean that the balance of those NOT attending don't believe in the Masonic ethics and teachings? Or, is there something else at work? There used to be a saying that you didn't need to attend church to be a good person. That would seem to imply that you don't need to attend lodge to be a good Mason. Is that really true?

In a time when society itself is rife with dissent, violent argument, and division, what could possibly be better for the healing process our society needs than the values and teachings of Masonry? After all, we espouse "meet on the level," "act by the plumb," and "part by the square" - don't we? WHAT IF … all of society adopted this philosophy and treated each other with respect and dignity, regardless of any physical or perceived differences? Wouldn't that be a "good start?"

In a recent survey of 22 to 35 year -olds, only 2 in 10 (20%) of those under 30 believe attending church is important or worthwhile (this is an all-time low). Ignore the age range here - and translate the attendance in lodge IN GENERAL and you see a similar result.

59% of millennials raised in a church have dropped out. How many of your newly made Masons are still with you one or two years after they have been raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason? How many of our newly made 32° Scottish Rite Masons are attending our meetings after they take those degrees?

Now, 35% of millennials have an "anti-church" stance, believing the church does more harm than good. Now, this might be a result of an over-politization of church, and if you translate this into Masonry … or any of the other family bodies, "politics" isn't supposed to enter into our activities, but reality is that they really do … and should we be allowing that?

Millennials are the least likely age group of anyone to attend church (by far). Take a look at the numbers I've presented to you over the years and notice that the number of our members of age 22-35 is abysmally small!

Put yourself in the shoes of one of those younger members. In a 90 minute meeting, in all likelihood they are thinking "*where is everyone?" or "why am I still here?"*

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Despite the lack of millennial members in our midst, MOST lodges seem to be continuing on with "business as usual" seeming to believe that attendance (or the lack thereof) is only a temporary or insignificant aspect of their operation. They couldn't be more misguided.

Sure, maybe they add dinner to the meeting, maybe they have a social night out here and there, but pretty much no one seems to be reacting with any REAL level of concern at the statistics and what they are telling us. If they were really concerned, they would be DOING something. After all, TRYING something is ACTION, even if it ends up not being successful. You can always try something different if the first attempt doesn't seem to be working.

FACT OF LIFE: Millennials (younger generation) and the Greatest Generation (older generation) look at things totally differently, have different values on how to spend their time and with whom to spend it.

So, if the younger group feels or believes you aren't listening to them, they're probably right and you need to start paying more attention. After all, the older generation (and I'm in that group now) isn't going to be the factor that sustains Masonry into the future. It's those missing Millennials out there that will either take Masonry into the next century OR will oversee it's eventual demise into irrelevance.

Like most of us, they would prefer to be "mentored" and not handed a book and told to "look it up" on their own. **If all we do is look it up on our own, why do we need to come to lodge?** OK, I realize "that's the way WE did it back in our day" but that way isn't the way of the current generation. But, it many cases, the notion of a "personal mentor" was prevalent in the past … not as much so today. If you want their support and presence, you need to accept that, change your outlook, and move forward.

At the same time, it's past due for us to change the PUBLIC PERCEPTION of Masons and Masonry. Too many people get their attitudes about the craft from the internet (and it's anti-Masonic vibes) and never look beyond that. How many of your neighbors know you are a Mason? You don't have to recruit them into the craft to SHOW them what Masonry has done for you. That's demonstrable advertising that you can't buy at any cost.

They're tired of the endless TALKING about a problem without actually taking any decisive action. DO SOMETHING, don't just talk about doing something. Yes, that means actually putting yourself on the line, putting in the time, and seeing the results.

In the end, it really is Masonry's next move. If all we have to offer is something that they can get out of a book without the PERSONAL mentorship to help them incorporate it into their lives, then we've really missed the boat!

If you truly believe that Masonry is just in one of those "down swings" and we'll eventually come out of it like we always have … then you just haven't been paying attention to the NUMBERS over the past 50 years that are associated with EVERY Masonic jurisdiction in North America! A steady 5% to 5.5% PER YEAR of membership decline for 50 years is significant!

The Baby Boomers and Greatest Generation may be your "present" - but it is the Millennials and newer generations yet to be born that are your "future" - choose wisely.

Bill



From the Secretary's Desk



Matt Raia, 33°

CONSISTORY OFFICE HOURS

Monday—Thursday 7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Friday 7:00 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.

Monday is a hard way to spend one-seventh of your life.

PARKING PERMIT REQUIRED - A Denver Consistory parking permit **MUST** be displayed on the lower left of your vehicle windshield. (Where the emission certificate is usually located.) Do NOT place the permit in a location other than the lower left of the windshield. If you park in the garage without a properly displayed parking permit, you will receive a ticket. Denver Consistory cannot dismiss the ticket, and we will not pay it. We do not own the garage; we do not control the parking, and we do not issue the tickets. Parking permits are available in the Consistory Office.

Transportation Available - Brethren, if you need a ride to a stated meeting, the reunion, or one of our events, call the office and let us know. We will send a ride-share service (Lyft or Uber) to pick you up and to bring you back home, **at no expense to you**. The Consistory will pay the bill. You do not have to miss out on participating in Denver Consistory events because you need a ride.

Scottish Rite Masonic Center Endowment Fund Contributions

The SRMC wishes to acknowledge those who donated to the Endowment fund this past month and began or added to a Cathedral Club membership.

Illustrious Brother Keith Anderson, 33°; Illustrious Brother Jay Bobick, 33°; Illustrious Brother Marv Feldman, 33°; Illustrious Brother Steve Jaouen, 33°; Illustrious Brother Jerry Lau, 33°; Illustrious Brother Dean McConnell, 33°; Brother Bill Achbach, 32° KCCH; Brother Jerry Edwards, 32° KCCH; Brother Mike Tims, 32° KCCH; Brother Mike McMinimee, 32°; Brother John Ballard, 32°; Brother Eggel Bernard, 32°; Brother Kelly Bissell, 32°; Brother Gordon Calahan, 32°; Brother Paul Chamberlin, 32°; Brother Christopher Dickson, 32°; Brother Alan Cox, 32°; Brother Bryce Dunn, 32°; Brother Donnie Duff, 32°; Brother Vance Edwards, 32°; Brother John Hellen, 32°; Brother Kenneth Johnson, 32°; Brother Thomas Jones, 32°; Brother Justin Kirkland, 32°; Brother Karl Klinger, 32°; Brother Terry McAnnich, 32°; Brother John Nail, 32°; Brother Jay Siegel, 32°; Brother George Speliotes, 32°; Brother Richard Surroz, 32°; Brother Ronald Tanski, Sr., 32°; and Brother Paul West, 32°.

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Thank You to everyone who has already contributed to the SRMC Endowment Fund. Your generosity has made it possible for the SRMC Endowment Fund corpus to reach an impressive current balance of ***$1,966,163.***

The Endowment Fund is designed to provide a lasting source of financial support for preserving the historic Scottish Rite Masonic Center. As the fund grows, its earnings will help offset maintenance expenses while protecting the principal of the fund for the future. Our Endowment Fund has already provided approximately $50,000 from earnings to the Scottish Rite Cathedral Association (SRCA).

With continued contributions and anticipated earnings, the next milestone of a $2 million corpus is within reach. Your contribution to the Endowment Fund is more than a gift for today. It is an investment in the future of the historic Scottish Rite Masonic Center and an opportunity to help ensure that this important part of our Masonic heritage remains strong for generations to come.

As you make your **year-end charitable contributions,** please consider making a donation to the **SRMC Endowment Fund, a 501(C)(3) charitable organization.** Monthly automatic reoccurring credit card contributions can be established by contacting the office. *(Please consult your tax advisor regarding the tax deductibility of your charitable contribution.)*

Donate Your Car - We have a donation plan in place to give you a receipt for a tax-deductible donation to the Scottish Rite Masonic Center. Donate your car, truck, RV, or boat. Go to www.carsforcharity.net to donate for the benefit of the Denver Scottish Rite Masonic Center.

2026 Membership fee was payable December 31, 2025. If you have not yet paid your 2026 membership fee, please do so and do not become delinquent. $140 is a real bargain for membership in Denver Consistory. Please do your part to help sustain the operation of Denver Consistory by paying your membership fee.

The Supreme Council mailed the 2027 membership fee notices in August of 2026. Please pay your membership fee when you receive the notice and do not lay it aside and forget about it and then become delinquent.

If you are experiencing financial difficulty and are unable to pay your membership fee, PLEASE CONTACT ME. We have programs available to assist you so that you are not suspended for nonpayment. **You must contact me. We can't help you if you don't ask.**

Monthly membership fee payment is available - Are you tired of paying fees at the end of the year to all the Masonic bodies where you are a member? You may pay your annual Denver Consistory membership fee in eleven easy monthly payments rather than one lump sum, eliminating one more year-end bill to pay. By authorizing an automatic credit card payment each month, at the end of eleven months your membership fee for the ensuing year will be paid. Contact the office to set up a payment plan.

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Automatic Membership Fee Renewal Program

Supreme Council created and installed an auto renewal program to pay membership fees. This is a completely voluntary program that gives members the option to have their membership fees automatically deducted using a credit or debit card through the online Membership Portal.

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS are an ideal way to avoid paying future membership fee increases. A Life Membership guarantees that you will never be suspended for non-payment of membership fees should your future financial situation change. It also ensures that should you no longer be able to take care of your finances, you will not be suspended for non-payment because your Scottish Rite Membership is of no significance to the individual handling your finances. By purchasing a Life Membership, you leave a continuing legacy to Denver Consistory after your death.

Current Life Membership Fee Structure

75 years old and older - a single payment of $1,250

62-74 years old - a single payment of $1,750

Younger than 62 years old - a single payment of $2,500

Extended payment terms may be arranged. Contact the office for details.

Fall Reunion - The Fall Reunion will take place Thursday-Saturday, November 12-14, and is dedicated to **Illustrious Brother Bob Applegate, 33°.** We need **YOU** to do your part to facilitate the Fall Reunion. **We STILL need candidates!** Get those petitions turned into the office—remember, November 9th at 1:00 p.m. is the deadline to turn in petitions for this reunion.

Fall Reunion Special – The Executive Committee reduced the fee for membership from $400 to $225 for the Fall Reunion in honor of the 225th anniversary of the Southern Jurisdiction Scottish Rite. It would be fantastic if we have 225 candidates. (Like the 1940's) The goal is a minimum of 25 candidates. The fee will go back to $400 for the Spring 2027 Reunion.

DENVER CONSISTORY

PETITION FOR MEMBERSHIP

First Line Signer Incentive Program: **THREE** petitions in a calendar year will pay your membership fee for a year. If you are already a life member, it entitles you to receive free stated meeting dinners for a year.

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Membership Record Update - If your address, phone number(s), or email address has changed, you can update this information in your membership record by going on the Supreme Council website: www.scottishrite.org and click on the member portal tab.

October 19th Stated Meeting - At the October meeting we presented Double Eagle awards and Passport Jewels. Congratulations to the award recipients. Patents and class photos were presented to the Spring Reunion class. **Brother Larry Bendt, 32° KCCH,** Venerable Master of the Centennial Lodge of Perfection, spoke about the significance to the Scottish Rite of Tishri and why the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite celebrates the Feast of Tishri.

While we conducted our business meeting, the ladies were entertained by **Mrs. Thelma Shaeffer** (wife of Illustrious Brother Charlie Shaeffer, 33°) who presented Part 2 of the Denver Consistory Organ Story.

Calling Committee - The officers of the Kadosh Line, and a group of volunteers, make calls to our members each quarter. The Calling Committee members are not required to come to the office on a specific day to make the calls. Instead, they make the calls at their leisure. Every quarter the committee is given a new list of members to call, and a list of "talking points." The goal is for every Denver Consistory member to receive at least one phone call during the year. The purpose of the call is to verify information in their membership record, let the member know that we have not forgotten about him, that he is important to us, and to find out how they are doing and offer assistance if needed.

I want to express my gratitude and thanks to the Calling Committee members for reaching out to our brothers. The recipients of the calls really appreciate the call. You are a vital link between Denver Consistory and our members. As a result of the calls, we have discovered some brothers who are in poor health, some who are experiencing financial difficulty and need assistance (and have been referred to our Almoner), and unfortunately, some who have passed on and we were not notified by the family of the passing.

<u>If you would like to be a Calling Committee member, let me know and I will add you to the list of volunteers and send you a list of brothers to call</u>.



2026 Dwight Hamilton Scholarship Winners



On September 21, the 2026 Dwight A. Hamilton Scholarship Award Ceremony was held at the Denver Consistory. This scholarship is named after our Illustrious Brother Dwight A. Hamilton, whose leadership and vision expanded RiteCare clinics across Colorado and strengthened our mission of supporting children with communication disorders. Last year, the Foundation expanded the program from six to nine scholarships and increased the award from $5,000 to $6,000 per recipient. We were thrilled to award scholarships to outstanding graduate students pursuing degrees in Speech-Language Pathology at the University of Colorado Boulder, Metro State University, and the University of Northern Colorado.

These students embody service, integrity, empathy, and excellence, and each is committed to building a career that helps children, especially those in rural and underserved areas of Colorado, find their voices. These scholarships are more than financial awards; they are a symbol of our trust in these students and in the future they represent. We celebrate not only their academic achievement but also the potential to transform lives through compassion, expertise, and dedication.

Congratulations to our 2026 recipients. This milestone marks the beginning of many great things to come.

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Aaron Davis grew up in a low-income, single-parent household in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and became the first in her family to attend college and pursue a master's degree. Her experiences as a seventh-grade teacher in an underserved Denver community opened her eyes to the profound impact of communication, particularly when she worked alongside a school-based SLP to advocate for a student with cerebral palsy who, after receiving a more accessible AAC device, began making friends, participating in class, and advocating for his own needs. Aaron has continued building that commitment through her work with students with autism and complex communication needs, partnerships with Spanish- and Vietnamese-speaking families, and advocacy for adolescents whose education has been disrupted by hospitalization. As a future school-based SLP, she hopes to bring her perspective as an educator and advocate to underserved Colorado communities, helping children overcome barriers and unlock their potential.



Anna Graves began her journey in Iowa before relocating to Colorado in 2022, where her work as a board-certified music therapist has shaped her passion for helping people connect through meaningful communication. Working primarily with children and adults with developmental disabilities, Anna recognized that for many of her clients, the ability to communicate was essential to building relationships and feeling connected—an insight that inspired her to pursue speech-language pathology alongside her music therapy career. Her experiences providing telepractice services to families on Colorado's Western Slope and working with Spanish-speaking families have given her firsthand understanding of the barriers rural and bilingual communities face in accessing care, while strengthening her commitment to culturally responsive and accessible services. As a future SLP, Anna hopes to combine her bilingual skills and unique background in music therapy and speech-language pathology to create engaging, individualized care for children and families across Colorado..

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Genevieve Miller grew up in Morgantown, West Virginia, where her curiosity about different cultures began at an early age through her family's experience hosting foreign exchange students. That curiosity grew into a passion for understanding diverse perspectives, leading her to participate in exchange and study-abroad programs, live with host families, travel to six continents, study International Studies, and earn the Global Mountaineers Certificate for her knowledge and application of intercultural awareness. Her commitment to cultural humility has also shaped her professional path, including research on communication between healthcare providers and patients who speak English as a second language that was developed into a micro-credential now used to train medical students at West Virginia University. As a future school-based SLP, Genevieve hopes to bring this global perspective and her passion for children to Colorado communities, building meaningful connections and helping ensure every child feels understood, valued, and empowered to find their voice.



Gloria González is a first-generation Mexican American and daughter of immigrants from the Rio Grande Valley, whose early experiences navigating two languages and cultures sparked a lifelong commitment to serving immigrant and multilingual communities. Her journey from struggling as an English Language Learner to becoming an educator and advocate has included teaching refugees, serving the Denver-area migrant and refugee community for four years, and earning advanced training in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners and Social-Emotional Learning. After seeing multilingual students in Title I schools too often misunderstood or misdiagnosed, Gloria became determined to advance linguistic equity and ensure that language differences are recognized as strengths rather than barriers. As a future bilingual SLP, she hopes to continue giving back to the Colorado communities she now calls home through culturally responsive literacy and AAC services that help Spanish-English speaking children find their voice, build confidence, and feel a sense of belonging.

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Meet Katrina Smoot, a first-generation college student from Colorado Springs and the eldest daughter in a Filipino-American family, where being the "Ate"—big sister—has meant being a role model, caregiver, and bridge between cultures. Her path to speech-language pathology began in an especially personal way during the pandemic, when she helped her five-year-old sister navigate online kindergarten and speech therapy and saw the frustration of not being able to communicate wants, ideas, and needs—and the confidence that grew when she could. Those experiences, combined with her work alongside neurodiverse children, individuals with disabilities, rehabilitation and elderly patients, and her research on bilingual communication disorders, have shaped Katrina's commitment to making care more accessible and culturally responsive. After graduation, she hopes to return home to Colorado Springs and serve underserved children with complex communication needs, using her personal experiences and diverse clinical background to advocate for families and help every child have the opportunity to be heard and understood.



Madeline Nelson is a Colorado native whose own experience receiving speech therapy as a child gives her a personal understanding of the frustration that can come with struggling to communicate and keep up in the classroom. Her passion for inclusion took shape at Boulder Parks and Recreation, where she began as a camp counselor working with children with autism and cerebral palsy and eventually became an Inclusion Specialist, helping counselors create environments where children with and without disabilities could participate, connect, and build friendships. Madeline's commitment to removing barriers extends beyond the camp, from helping a Chinese immigrant develop English skills and sharing in her story of navigating life as a single mother, to providing transportation for a child with DiGeorge Syndrome when her family's circumstances made getting to camp difficult. As a future SLP, Madeline hopes to carry these personal experiences into her work with children with complex communication needs, looking beyond a diagnosis or communication disorder to understand the child, family, and circumstances that shape their ability to participate and thrive.

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2026 Dwight Hamilton Scholarship Winners - Continued from previous page



Meet Maggie Pfeiffer, a Colorado native who grew up in the small mountain town of Granby, where a childhood spent skiing, hiking, and camping gave her a deep connection to the outdoors and the rural community she hopes to one day serve. Her path to speech-language pathology is personal: growing up with hearing loss, Maggie experienced firsthand the difference compassionate support and strong advocates can make, inspiring her to become that same source of encouragement for children facing communication challenges. Her perspective has been shaped by stepping well beyond her rural Colorado roots—from living with a Spanish-speaking-only family in Seville, Spain, to working alongside people from Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe, and volunteering with immigrant and refugee children in Colorado. After gaining several years of experience along the Front Range, Maggie hopes to return to rural Colorado and use what she has learned to help children and families overcome the resource and access barriers she experienced growing up.



Paula Espinoza grew up in Tijuana, Mexico, where pursuing higher education as a woman meant navigating both real-world risks and the expectations of a traditional Mexican family. When she immigrated to the United States, she found herself learning to navigate a new language, culture, and educational system—and discovered that graduate school, something she once believed was reserved for "other people," could become her own dream. Paula says her educational journey has also been a way of honoring her family, particularly her father, for whom many opportunities remained out of reach, not because of a lack of effort, but because of circumstances beyond his control. She chose to keep his last name after marriage because it represents perseverance, sacrifice, and resilience. Today, as a bilingual SLP clinician-in-training and former teacher in both Mexico and the United States, Paula is preparing to give Spanish-speaking families the kind of clinician she once needed: someone who understands their language and journey, values their culture, and reminds them that their future does not have to be limited by where they began.

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2026 Dwight Hamilton Scholarship Winners - Continued from previous page



Victoria Watson, an adopted child herself, grew up moving from one small Colorado community to another, with a school-based SLP for a mother and a school administrator for a father – giving her an early, firsthand look at both the importance of education and the difference a caring advocate can make in a child's life. As she moved through rural and Title I schools, Victoria learned that children come from vastly different circumstances, a lesson that became especially real when she later taught students who were facing homelessness, hunger, and uncertainty about where they would sleep or find food after school. Those experiences shaped her belief that a child should never be defined by a diagnosis, zip code, or socioeconomic status, and fueled her determination to connect families with the support they need to recognize their children's potential. Victoria is especially passionate about rural Colorado, where she hopes to combine her experience as a special education teacher with her love of parent coaching to support children and help families become confident advocates for their children.

Ever Wonder WHY - a mile is exactly 5,280 feet?

In ancient Rome, land distances were measured in paces, with one pace being defined as two steps, or about 5 feet. The largest unit of land measure used by the Romans was the *milia passuum,* which is Latin for "a thousand paces." Since one pace was equated to 5 feet, a *milia passuum* was 5,000 feet.

Great Britain, once a part of the Roman Empire, adopted the *milia passuum* but abbreviated it to "mile." Now the British also used another unit of land measure called the FURLONG, which was defined as 660 feet, the approximate length of a plowed furrow in an ordinary field. (The word "furlong" is actually a contraction of "furrow long.") The furlong was used extensively in surveying, and when it became apparent that the mile would also be used in surveying, it was decided that the mile should be a whole number of furlongs. Since the mile was 5,000 feet and the furlong was 660 feet, it was decided to change the mile to exactly 8 furlongs, or 5,280 feet. In 1575 Elizabeth I passed a law equating the mile to exactly this number.

EVER WONDER WHY … 'lb" is used to represent the pound?

Like much of our language today, this comes from the Latin. It is a contraction of the word ***libra,*** the Latin word for pound.

EVER WONDER WHY … judges wear black robes?

Judges' robes were not always black. They were very colorful until the death of Queen Mary II in 1694. At that time, they were changed to black to mourn her death and were just never changed back.



Bill Achbach, 32° KCCH

Director of Education

The Rite in the Early Twenty-First Century

One quick piece of housekeeping (and unabashed bias), to lead off this month! In December … on the 21st to be precise, the Consistory Officers Line (the entertainment and educational committee for our Stated Meetings … and the hardest working line in the Valley) will sponsor what is becoming a solid tradition of Holiday Entertainment at Denver Consistory. Please bring your family and friends to the meeting that night, for a musical performance by "The Other Reindeer" Christmas Carolers. It'll be a wonderful opportunity to kick back for one final time, before the rush of the holidays takes over. There's a promo flyer elsewhere in this issue.

Finally, what began waaaaaay back in March, intended as a "couple of months" focus on the Rite's history, to commemorate the 225th Anniversary of the SJ, comes to an end this month! Obviously, I didn't build a quite strong enough fence around the thing at the start, and it got loose and carried me (**us**, if you've travelled along over these nine months) away with it! Anyway, time to wrap it up …

I. Entering the 21st Century: Institutional and Leadership Continuity

The first years of the twenty-first century marked a period of profound transition for the Southern Jurisdiction: nearly as profound, in its own way, as the turn of the twentieth had been! Emerging from the institutional modernization of the late twentieth century, the Supreme Council entered the new millennium facing a rapidly changing social landscape - one defined by digital communication, shifting patterns of civic engagement, and evolving expectations of fraternal organizations. Yet, by approaching these challenges not as disruptions but as opportunities, the Mother Supreme Council of the World was able to focus on reinterpreting its historic mission for a new era.

The first decades of the century were shaped by the long tenure of Sovereign Grand Commander Ill. Ronald A. Seale, 33° (Active) whose leadership from 2003 to 2019 provided continuity and stability during a time of cultural flux. Seale emphasized administrative modernization, transparency in governance, and renewed attention to the Rite's charitable identity. Under his direction, the House of the Temple undertook significant restoration work, preserving the architectural and symbolic heart of the SJ while preparing it for expanded public engagement. These efforts culminated in a multi-year restoration project beginning in 2011, which not only addressed structural needs but also reaffirmed the building's role as a national Masonic landmark.[1] That work continues and includes a number of expanded giving programs like Adopt-a-Book and the Acacia Guild.

Continued on next page

II. Communication, Public Engagement, and Philanthropy

Paralleling physical improvements and expanded giving opportunities, the SJ invested heavily in digital communication, recognizing that the future of fraternal outreach depended on accessibility and visibility. *The Scottish Rite Journal* transitioned into a hybrid print/digital model, Valley communications adopted email and web-based platforms, and the Supreme Council expanded its online presence through educational videos, virtual tours, and social media.[2] These initiatives were not merely technological upgrades - they represented a philosophical shift toward openness, aiming to demystify the Rite's work for both members and the broader public.[3]

Charitable work likewise evolved. The RiteCare program, long a cornerstone of SJ philanthropy, entered a period of dramatic expansion. By partnering with universities and clinical centers across the country, the SJ broadened its reach and professionalized its services.[4] What began here in Denver in the mid-twentieth century, as a modest effort to support childhood speech therapy, matured into a national network of clinics, research partnerships, and evidence-based interventions.[5] This growth reflected the Rite's commitment to practical, measurable service - an approach increasingly valued in twenty-first-century charitable culture.

III. Membership Trends and Organizational Response

Membership trends, however, presented … and still present … challenges. Like most fraternal organizations, the SJ confronted declining numbers, a consequence of demographic shifts and changing patterns of civic participation.[6] Rather than retreat, the Supreme Council responded with renewed emphasis on leadership development (including the initiation of the Supreme Council Leadership Conference program), Valley revitalization, and the cultivation of meaningful Masonic education (more on that shortly). Updated leadership manuals, Valley development guides, and strategic planning documents encouraged local bodies to adapt to contemporary expectations while preserving the Rite's ritual and philosophical heritage.[7]

A huge part of the Valley revitalization focus was the introduction, in 2015, of the Valley Membership Achievement Project (VMAP). VMAP emerged from a practical need: the SJ's recognition that membership decline could not be reversed by enthusiasm alone. Valleys needed structure, metrics, and best practices.

VMAP is designed to provide exactly that! Rather than a single program, VMAP is a framework — a set of standards and goals across key areas of Valley life:

- Leadership development
- Member engagement
- Ritual excellence
- Philanthropy
- Communication
- Education
- New-member integration
- Community presence

Continued on next page

VMAP's objective is to encourage Valleys to think systematically about their strengths and weaknesses. Its purpose is also to reward consistency, planning, and follow-through. By creating a shared language across the Jurisdiction, Valleys can compare progress, adopt successful practices from one another, and build a culture of continuous improvement. While efforts to follow "best practices" are respected and applauded, it is also a program that recognizes that such progress is never a one-size-fits-all proposition!

So, in the context of membership decline, VMAP represents a philosophical shift. Instead of merely lamenting cultural changes, the SJ embraces a professionalized, data-informed approach to fraternal life. It treats Valley operations with the seriousness of nonprofit management, recognizing that modern members expect clarity, quality, and purpose. The Valley of Denver participates in and has completed the requirements of VMAP each year since its inception, with the Council of Kadosh responsible for coordination of the program.

VMAP doesn't solve membership decline outright - no single program can - but it has helped to stabilize many Valleys, improved retention, and raised the floor of organizational health across the Jurisdiction. It's definitely an ongoing process, and successful participation in the program shows a commitment to preserving the institution.

IV. Leadership and Education in Transition: The Cole Era

A major transition occurred in 2019 with the retirement of Ill. Ronald Seale and the installation of James D. Cole, as Sovereign Grand Commander.[8] SGC Cole's leadership signaled continuity with modernization efforts while introducing new priorities, including expanded digital outreach, enhanced transparency, and a renewed focus on member experience.[9] His early tenure coincided with global disruptions - including the COVID-19 pandemic - which forced the Rite to experiment with virtual events, remote education, and hybrid Valley operations.[10] These adaptations, once considered temporary, ultimately reshaped expectations for accessibility and participation.

An especially good example of both expanded digital outreach and that focus on member experience is the evolution of the *Master Craftsman* correspondence courses into the *Master Craftsman® Online College & Leadership Academy*.

When Master Craftsman began in 2008, it was an intentionally traditional, pencil and paper correspondence course: mailed in packets, graded by hand, and rooted in the kind of quiet, reflective, individual study that had long characterized Scottish Rite education. It was a valuable educational resource, even at that stage, but it had serious limitations.

COVID changed everything! Master Craftsman was my own introduction to education in the SJ, and I can tell you unequivocally that some issues were massively frustrating: trying to promote the program and mentor members, working through traditional correspondence courses, when there was suddenly no one, on the jurisdictional end, to score coursework, address questions, or deal with administrative issues. In the end, the pandemic forced the SJ to accelerate a modernization process that had already begun … but was moving at a snail's pace! Suddenly, what had been a correspondence course became … HAD TO BECOME … a multimedia curriculum, incorporating:

Continued on next page

- Online submission and grading
- Video lectures and webinars
- Interactive discussion groups
- Digital versions of *Morals and Dogma*, *Clausen's Commentaries*, the *Ritual*
- *Monitor and Guide*, and other publications
- Modular course tracks (History, Ritual, Philosophy, Leadership)

The transformation was more than technological, representing a shift in how the Rite understood education: not as a solitary exercise but as a shared, accessible, structured learning environment that could reach members wherever they lived … and one that also encouraged them to work and learn together.

Master Craftsman has now become a gateway - not only into Pike's philosophy, but into active participation, leadership development, and Valley engagement. In many Valleys, it's become the backbone of new member orientation and long-term retention. There were **three** pencil and paper courses when I took my first look at Master Craftsman … there are now **seventeen** entirely digital and multimedia courses … including the program's first Spanish language offering!

V. Conclusion: Tradition Reframed for a New Era

So, by the mid-2020s, the SJ has become a more digitally connected, administratively streamlined, and publicly engaged institution than at any previous point in its history. Yet its core identity remained rooted in the philosophical and ritual traditions inherited from Pike, Richardson, Clausen, and the generations of leaders who shaped the Rite's intellectual character. The early twenty-first century did not replace that heritage, but rather reframed it, ensuring that the Scottish Rite may continue to speak meaningfully to a world very different from the one in which it was born.

Brothers, I hope you've enjoyed my meanderings over the past months. It's been endlessly challenging to attempt turning hundreds of pages of published material - both factual and commentative - into something even remotely coherent and manageable. I'd appreciate hearing your thoughts on whether I succeeded, and, always, in having your suggestions on what you'd like to see in this space. As I did with the 20th century material, I've included a few reference notes, as well as a bibliography, which I hope may pique a bit of interest in further study.

Bill

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Continued on next page

This Month's Trivia Question: What new Master Craftsman course represents an opportunity to study the founding of the Southern Jurisdiction in 1801?

October's Trivia Question: Masonic lectures originally contained references to "pan." As the English language evolved, so did this portion of the First Degree Lecture (Yep, there's a hint!). Masons still have the lecture, but "pan" is now referred to as _____? (A "pat on the back" bonus, if you can come up with a modern word that references this archaic term!)

Answer: Operative Masons make use of many natural materials in their construction … sand, stone, clay, chalk, ash, and lime. Speculative Masons, applying allegorical significance to these materials' attributes, incorporated some of them in their lectures or illustrative portions of their Degrees. The EA lecture originally contained references to "pan" … a material now referred to as **"clay."** Oh, and for that pat-on-the back bonus? The original meaning of "pan" continues in the English word "**hardpan**." (Champion, Peter G.; *Masonic Trivia: Amusements & Curiosities*; eBook Edition; ISBN: 978-1-61915-702-6; 2011)

Notes:

1. House of the Temple Archives, *Restoration Project Documentation*, 2011–2013.
2. *Scottish Rite Journal*, selected issues, 2000–2024.
3. Supreme Council, 33°, SJ, *Digital Modernization and Communication Initiatives*, 2005–2024.
4. Scottish Rite Foundation, *RiteCare History and Development*, internal reports, 1980–2020.
5. University partnership documentation for RiteCare clinical programs, 2000–2020.
6. U.S. Fraternal Organization Membership Reports, 1970–2020.
7. Supreme Council, 33°, SJ, *Leadership and Valley Development Manuals*, early 21st century editions.
8. Supreme Council, 33°, SJ, *Announcement of the Retirement of Ill. Ronald A. Seale, 33°*, 2019.
9. Supreme Council, 33°, SJ, *Installation of Ill. James D. Cole, 33° as Sovereign Grand Commander*, 2019.

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Supreme Council, 33°, SJ. *COVID Era Communications and Adaptation Strategies.* 2020–2022.

Ritual, Instructional, and Organizational Materials

The Scottish Rite Ritual Monitor and Guide. (3rd & 4th editions)



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John Thomas Parker, Jr.
Ernest James Thompson

90 Years "YOUNG"

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James Robert Hanna
Joe Edward Kier
Thomas Chester Mehsling
Terry Dean Paige

60 Years

Paul Eugene Chadwick

50 Years

Brian Charles Kelly

Our Youngster

Michael A. Guerrero, Jr. (28)

10

NOV

1775

November was originally the ninth month in the Roman calendar ("novem" = nine), features the "Beaver Moon, and includes major observances such as Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and the end of the Atlantic hurricane season.

In Old English, it was called *Blotmonath* (Blood Month) due to livestock slaughtering, and *Windmonath* (Wind Month) due to the cold seasonal winds.

Birthstones: Topaz and Citrine, symbolizing friendship and affection.

Flower: Chrysanthemum, representing honesty, joy, and optimism.

Zodiac signs: Scorpio (until Nov 21) and Sagittarius (from Nov 22).

November 22, 1963: President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas TX. Do you remember where you were on that day?

November is "Banana Pudding Lovers Month" and includes such quirky days as National Button Day (Nov 16) and World Hello Day (Nov 21).



MEMORIAL SCROLL

James Homer Anderson, 32°	09/24/2026
Samuel James Howard, 32°	09/22/2026
Melvin Edward Johnson, 33°	10/08/2026
John Albert Moreno, 33°	10/13/2026
Charles Joseph Reynolds, 32°	09/28/2026



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66th Reunion
Fall 2026
Nov. 12, 13, 14, 2026

Thursday Nov. 12, 2026

7:30 AM Registration
8:00 AM Welcome/Class Instruction
8:30 AM Exemplify 4°
9:10 AM Communicate 5°
9:17 AM Communicate 6°
9:24 AM Communicate 7°
9:31 AM Communicate 8°
9:43 AM Exemplify 9° & 10°
10:48 AM Exemplify 11°
11:48 AM Exemplify 12°
12:25 PM Lunch
1:18 PM Shrine presentation
1:44 PM Exemplify 13°
2:36 PM Exemplify 14°
3:58 PM Exemplify 15°
5:04 PM Communicate 16°
5:11 PM Communicate 17°
5:18 PM Adjourn

Friday Nov. 13, 2026

8:00 AM Class Convenes
8:17 AM Exemplify 18° First & Second Apartment
9:16 AM Exemplify 18° Third Apartment
10:00 AM KSA Presentation
10:23 AM Communicate 19°
10:35 AM Exemplify 20° First Apartment
11:20 AM Exemplify 20° Second Apartment
11:50 AM Grand Master Address
12:10 PM Lunch
1:10 PM Exemplify 21°
1:45 PM Communicate 22°
2:17 PM Exemplify 23°
3:05 PM Exemplify 24°
3:51 PM Communicate 25°
3:58 PM Communicate 26°
4:05 PM Communicate 27°
4:12 PM Communicate 28°
4:22 PM Exemplify 29°
5:09 PM Adjourn

Saturday Nov. 14, 2026

8:00 AM Class Convenes
8:05 AM Class Photos
9:06 AM Exemplify 30° 1st Apartment
9:26 AM Exemplify 30° 2nd Apartment
9:46 AM Exemplify 30° 3rd Apartment
10:13 AM Secretary's Presentation
10:36 AM Exemplify 30° 4th Apartment
11:12 AM Committee Tours
12:02 PM Lunch
12:55 PM S.G.I.G. Address
1:22 PM Communicate 31°
1:35 PM Exemplify 32° First Section
2:35 PM Exemplify 32° Second Section
3:45 PM Adjourn
5:30 PM Ring Ceremony
6:00 PM Banquet
25- & 50-Year Membership Awards
8:00 PM Adjourn

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Raffle tickets - $1 each

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The Other Reindeer Christmas Carolers

Scottish Rite December 21st Stated Meeting

7:00PM Entertainment for any Masons and their families and guests.

Dinner available by reservation at 6:00pm https://centennial-lodge-of-perfection.square.site/#NCXEPf <select December Dinner>

Burns Night Supper & Whisky College

Saturday, January 16, 2027

Scottish Rite Masonic Center, 1370 Grant Street, Denver, Colorado 80203

Scottish Music Silent Auction Burns Poetry

Presented by the Denver Knights of Saint Andrew

Whisky College | 5:00 p.m. | $55 – Adult (21 and over)

Join us for a captivating Scotch whisky tasting and educational journey led by a true expert. This year's special class takes a deep dive into the world of American Malt Whisky, showcasing how a single malt evolves through time and craftsmanship. Discover how age, cask type, and maturation techniques transform aroma, taste, and finish—revealing the subtle complexities that make each expression uniquely exceptional. *Price includes a commemorative tasting glass!*

Dinner & Entertainment | 6:00 p.m. | $74 – Adult (13 and over)

Apple and Cheddar Salad, Haggis with Whisky Cream Sauce, Beef Wellington, Mashed Potatoes, Glazed Carrots, Brussels Sprouts, Sticky Toffee Pudding

Join us for a lively dinner in honor of Robert Burns: Celebrate Scotland's beloved bard with an evening of traditional fare, poetry, and song. Enjoy the stirring sounds of the El Jebel Pipe Band and the Celtic folk tunes of Gobs o' Phun. Raise a glass to heritage, humor, and Highland pride in true Burns Night fashion!

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Proceeds support RiteCare Colorado's programs for childhood language disorders and the Scottish Rite Masonic Center building preservation

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Sovereign Grand Commander



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Sovereign Grand Inspector General
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