



Orange County Scottish Rite

ORIENT OF CALIFORNIA, SOUTHERN JURISDICTION

Volume 45, Issue 08

August 2025

An August Gathering: Open House for Scottish Rite Members and Our Orange County Lodge Brothers



This Monday, August 11, 2025 at 6:30 PM you are invited to an evening of dinner, fellowship, and purpose. Come down, share a meal with the officers of the Orange County Masonic Lodges - **YOUR** Lodges! - and introduce your Masonic brothers to the Scottish Rite. This is an opportunity to strengthen ties across the Craft, showcase what our Valley does, and highlight the impact of our philanthropic work while enjoying good company in a relaxed setting.

The evening will include brief remarks from Illustrious Ralph Shelton, Personal Representative of the SGIG, Orient of California, and a presentation by Leora A. Shaffer, M.A., CCC-SLP, Clinic Director of the RiteCare Childhood Language Center of Orange County (Chapman University, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders), on how RiteCare serves children and how Scottish Rite support sustains it. Valley leadership will be on hand to welcome guests, but the focus is on connection, conversation, and bringing your brothers into the Scottish Rite fold.



Keep the Going Momentum: Bring a Brother and Grow Our Valley

**Russ Hennings, 32°
Venerable Master**

If you were at our Valley Picnic on July 12th, you already know—it was outstanding. The energy, the laughter, the fellowship... it reminded me exactly why we do what we do. A huge thank you goes out to Brother Barry, our resident grill master, who kept the burgers flipping and the crowd smiling. We had over 45 friends and family in attendance, including several visiting Master Masons and prospective Scottish Rite Brothers. It was exactly the kind of gathering that strengthens not only our Valley, but our Masonic family across Orange County.

And now, we keep the momentum going.

This August Stated Meeting marks our Valley's Open House—an evening designed specifically to welcome and introduce Master Masons from our local Blue Lodges to what we're all about here at the Scottish Rite. If you're reading this, you have a role to play.

We're holding a friendly contest among our members to see who can bring the most Master Masons—or the spouses of Master Masons—to the Open House. Prizes will be awarded, but more importantly, you'll be helping to grow something that will outlast any award: the future of our Valley.

Why does this matter?

Because every new member brings something irreplaceable to the table—fresh perspectives, new energy, and a new voice in our ongoing work. With more Brothers in our Valley, we can cast fuller degrees, fill committees, revive dormant programs, and support more philanthropic initiatives through the RiteCare Childhood Language Center. Growth doesn't just benefit the Valley—it benefits everyone involved. A larger, more active membership strengthens the experience for all of us.

Imagine our stage filled with eager new ritualists, our Stated Meetings bustling with ideas, and our events drawing crowds that reflect the strength of Masonry in Orange County. That future starts with a simple invite from you to a Brother in your Lodge.

So, let's do it. Let's pack the room this month—not just with our own members, but with those who are ready for the next step in their Masonic journey. Let them see what we're building. Let them hear our stories, meet our Brothers, and feel the spirit of fellowship that defines this Valley.

Together, we're not just maintaining a legacy—we're expanding it.





A Joyful Day at the Scottish Rite Picnic: Brotherhood, Family, and Fun

**Alejo Velarde, 32°
Wise Master**

This year's Scottish Rite Picnic was nothing short of a fantastic celebration of fellowship, family, and the timeless spirit of Freemasonry. Under the warm summer sun, brothers, their families, and friends gathered to share food, laughter, and good company all thanks to the hard work and dedication of our Venerable Master, Brother Russ.

A heartfelt thank you goes to Brother Russ Hennings for organizing such a memorable event. From securing the location to coordinating the day's activities, his efforts were evident in every detail. The energy was warm, the atmosphere inviting, and the turnout was a true testament to the bonds we share as Masons.

We'd also like to give special recognition to Brother Barry McKinley, who worked his culinary magic at the grill. His cooking was nothing short of amazing! From juicy burgers to sizzling sausages, Barry made sure no one left hungry, and many went back for seconds (and thirds). His food brought people together and filled the air with the unmistakable smell of summer cookouts.

More than just a picnic, this event reminded us of the deeper meaning of our Masonic journey. Freemasonry isn't solely about rituals and degrees; it's also about building a community that spans generations. Events like this allow our families to connect, children to laugh and play, and our spouses and loved ones to feel included in the brotherhood we hold dear.

It's in these shared moments over a plate of great food or a game of horseshoes that we strengthen the ties that bind us. The Scottish Rite Picnic was a perfect example of how Freemasonry continues to unite us, both in purpose and in joy.

To all who attended, thank you for making the day special. And to those who made it possible especially Brothers Russ and Barry your leadership and dedication are deeply appreciated.

Here's to many more gatherings that bring us together in brotherhood, fellowship, and fun!

Calling All Writers!

You don't have to be a head of body or a member of the line to contribute to this newsletter. If you have something to say from a masonic perspective — perhaps insights into your masonic ruminations, scholarly endeavors you'd like to share, or general news for the brethren — this newsletter is your conduit for those ideas. I encourage any and all brothers who'd like to contribute something to this newsletter to send their ideas to: sbell@ocscottishrite.org





Share the Light: Open House and Knighting Following a Successful Picnic

Barry McKinley, 32°
Commander of Kadosh

Dear Brothers of the Orange County Scottish Rite,

August is shaping up to be a meaningful month for our valley as we continue our efforts to grow, strengthen, and connect. Before we look ahead, let us take a moment to celebrate the success of our recent Fellowship BBQ picnic. It was a fantastic day filled with laughter, great food, and even greater brotherhood. Getting together outside of our usual setting provided an excellent opportunity to bond, relax, and enjoy each other's company in a more casual atmosphere.

On August 11th, we will be hosting our Membership Open House in conjunction with our stated meeting. This is a call to all our brothers: encourage those Master Masons in your lives who are not yet part of the Scottish Rite to come and learn more about what we offer. Our valley thrives when we welcome new members who are eager to grow in Masonic knowledge and engage in deeper fellowship. Let's make this event a strong showing of what makes the Orange County Scottish Rite such a vibrant and welcoming community.

We also look forward to the Knighting Ceremony hosted by the Knights of St. Andrew on August 2nd. This is a meaningful and proud moment for those involved, and we invite everyone to come and support our newest Knights as they embark on this next chapter of their Masonic journey.

SCOTTISH RITE NEWS

Scottish Rite News is published monthly by the Valley of Orange County, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction of the United States of America, 71 Plaza Square, Orange, CA 92866. There is no Subscription Price. Scottish Rite News is the official publication of the Valley of Orange County. This issue edited by Shawn Bell, 32°, sbell@ocscottishrite.org

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All articles for publication must be submitted prior to the 10th of the month.



Celebrating Success and Opening Doors to Deeper Fellowship

**Joshua S. Price, 32° KSA
Master of Kadosh**

As we continue to move through the summer months, I want to take a moment to express sincere gratitude for the tremendous success of our recent efforts and work. Whether it was the family picnic, new ideas that are on the horizon, or just our regular meetings, each instance is a powerful reminder of the bonds that unite us not only as Masons but as family.

This year has been filled with experiences that are deeply meaningful and will surely become new traditions for our valley. I commend Venerable Master Hennings for his tireless efforts in uniting us and bringing us together.

Looking ahead, we are focusing on Blue Lodge Appreciation Night, which is quickly turning into one of the year's most anticipated events. This is our chance to welcome Masons from all over the region, including both new members and seasoned Past Masters. It's more than an introduction to Scottish Rite—it's an invitation into a deeper, purpose-driven path of fellowship, leadership, and service.

Through our Language Center and community programs, we provide a tangible example of Masonic values in action. I look forward to the friendly competition and wish us all luck with the end goal, spreading new light and deeper meaning above the 3rd degree.

To me, it really seems like our valley is experiencing a season of unbridled momentum, as new faces are becoming familiar ones. New members are becoming more familiar, ideas are transforming into actionable plans, and our calendar is filled not only with events but also with meaningful opportunities to serve, grow, and connect.

This is the Scottish Rite at its best: dynamic, inclusive, and anchored in a sense of purpose that transcends any one gathering. It's something we should all be proud of, both now and long into the future.

Visit your valley online, and be sure to like and follow us on social media!



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We need your email address so we can electronically send you the Scottish Rite News.
Call the office at (714) 543-7277 and give it to our Secretary or leave a message.



From the General Secretary

Jamie Hopkins, 32° KCCH
General Secretary

Brethren:

Hope you are enjoying our mild, summer weather. On Saturday, July 12th, the Valley of Orange County held an outstanding picnic at William R. Mason park in Irvine. The weather was beautiful and the event was very well attended. If you didn't make it, you missed a great, summer barbecue. We greatly appreciate the hard work of Venerable Master Russ Hennings and Brother Commander Barry Mckinley (and their wives) for all their time and effort in making the picnic such a success. Let's see if we can make this an annual event.

Our Supreme Council will begin sending out dues notices for 2026 dues in late August. If your dues notice looks incorrect to you, please contact the Secretary at the Valley office. For any dues questions whatsoever, please contact us at the office.

Our Fall Reunion is coming up on Friday, October 3rd & Saturday, October 4th. Now is the time to get those petitions in for Master Masons who have shown an interest in joining the Rite. Our Lodge Brothers will never know about the benefits of joining OCSR if we don't tell them. Our August Stated Meeting is on Monday, August 11th at 6:30 pm at the Orange Grove Masonic Lodge. See you there!

Fraternally,
Jamie Hopkins, 32nd KCCH
General Secretary
gensec@ocscottishrite.org



We're Doing Great!

Hon. James Olivier, 32° KCCH
Prelate, Director of The Work

Hon. David Soliven, Bro. Cris DeDios and I all got together recently to begin the process of taking an inventory and planning our next reunion. For our Brothers who are in the degree casts, this means we start work in just a few short weeks with zoom calls to review the cast assignments and practice our read-throughs. This time around, we're working more in-person rehearsals into the mix as well!

So for the Brethren who have shown interest in being in the degrees or helping in another fashion, now is the time to speak up and reach out! Please feel free to contact me, Hon. Soliven, or Bro. DeDios and let us know what you'd like to do to help out! See you all very soon!

We're doing great! I'd like to thank the Brethren who have stepped up to take roles in the degrees including a few Brothers from the Valley of Long Beach who have helped with some last minute substitutions due to scheduling conflicts. Which goes to show that we are all stronger and better together!

Remember that our reunion will be taking place on October 19 and 20. Both days will have the first degrees starting at 9AM and we'll try to have things wrapped up by 2-3PM each day. The degrees being performed in their full form will be the 4th, 14th and 18th on October 19. And the 23rd, 30th, 31st, and 32nd on October 20! So remember to come out and support our casts and most importantly, your new Scottish Rite Brothers (at the time of writing, we have 7 in our class). It's very important to see the degrees, but also it's a great chance to come out and show our new members what the Valley of Orange County is all about!



Fun, Food & Future Plans: Pechanga Weekend with the Blue Slipper Club

Erin McKinley

The Blue Slipper Club is excited about our amazing weekend at Pechanga on August 8-10. We plan on hanging out by the pool, eating a terrific steak dinner and seeing a comedy show. The ladies are also excited to be planning another outing for fall. We will be discussing details at the August meeting, so please join us.



A Knight's Beginning: History, Duty, and Brotherhood

Sir James Cates
Knight Orator

Dubbing a Knight

"Listen worthy Squires, and I will relay to you the history of our order. Only in the knowledge of our past can you hope to establish a foundation by which you can build a Knightly future."

Thus begins the story behind the history of the Knights of St. Andrew (KSA) during the dubbing ceremony. It is a story rich in history, intrigue and chivalry, and one that reveals the direct relationship between the Knights Templar and the KSA. Knowing your beginnings, your history, is a vital step in knowing where you come from and who you could be. It creates a connection to the past that, we hope, will enhance and help us to improve upon the present, leaving a better tomorrow for everyone. This particular story helps our newest knights focus on what the order is, where it comes from and put them in the somber mood appropriate for the ceremony they are going through.

The tale of the history can also spark the interest, and lead someone to deeper study and research of the subject matter. What is the connection to the Thistle? What battles did the Knights Templar assist with? What happened to the other Knights who didn't make it to Scotland? Why Scotland? So many questions can be asked that will hopefully trigger interest and desire to seek further knowledge on this noble subject that is an active part of the Scottish Rite. Being a Knight of St. Andrew is a special privilege, filled with duty, learning, fun, and fellowship.

The next knighting ceremony will take place immediately following the stated meeting in September. It is open to the public and all are welcome to attend. If you have any questions regarding the KSA, please feel free to ask any of us. We are easily spotted by the uniforms we wear.

Other knightly events in September include our next fellowship meeting at Dana Point harbor aboard Honorable Brother Jack Hennings' yacht. It is for brothers of the KSA and their guests. A night at the Improv (or other comedy club) is also being prepared for September, and everyone is welcome to join us. As always, just ask one of your brother Knights for details.

If you have any questions about becoming a knight, or the knighthood in general, please feel free to reach out to any of us.

Sir James Cates
Knight Orator



Resolution to Move Our Stated Meetings to the Fourth Monday

As calendar conflicts with other Masonic organizations have impacted attendance and engagement, the Heads of Bodies have proposed a change of meeting date to the fourth Monday of the month. Our PR, Ill. Shelton, and Deputy of the Supreme Council 33° have approved the consideration of the following resolution:

RESOLVED - that the Bylaws of the Orange County Valley Scottish Rite Bodies be amended to provide that the Valley monthly meetings shall be held on the fourth (4th) Monday of each month, commencing October, 2025.

Should you have questions or concerns in advance of the vote, please contact Personal Representative Ill. Ralph C. Shelton, 33°.



Shared Light, Shared Purpose

Shawn E Bell, 32°

How the Orange County Scottish Rite Strengthens Local Lodges through a foundation of unity, brotherhood, and partnership for Masons across the county

The Orange County Scottish Rite exists not beside the Blue Lodges we serve, but as an extension of their work—bringing depth, continuity, and shared purpose to the broader Masonic journey. At its heart, the Rite is about connection: connecting good men, linking today's work to a tradition of meaning, and uniting individual growth with collective strength. Through fellowship, education, mentorship, and ritual excellence, we offer local lodges a partner in amplifying what Masonry already stands for—integrity, service, and fraternal support.

We do that in practical ways. Scottish Rite degrees deepen understanding and provide context that enriches a Mason's experience beyond the third degree. We cultivate leaders by offering opportunities for involvement, teaching, and collaboration. Our members serve as sounding boards, mentors, and advocates—bringing new ideas back to their Blue Lodges and helping bridge isolated efforts into coordinated progress. The Valley creates spaces where fellowship isn't just a word but a lived practice: shared study, mutual encouragement, and a network of brothers who lift one another. In doing so, we strengthen lodges by supplying ritual talent, leadership development, and a broader sense of belonging to something lasting.

The invitation is simple: lean into the relationship. Reach out to your Scottish Rite brothers. Invite Master Masons from your lodge to learn more, serve together, and help build a more vibrant, unified Masonic community in Orange County. When we move forward together—sharing light, experience, and purpose—the Valley and the lodges it serves both grow stronger.

2025 Orange County Scottish Rite Calendar

Stated Meetings are held monthly, Second Monday of the month, 6:00pm – 9:00pm

Unless otherwise noted, all events are at the Orange Masonic Center, 71 Plaza Square, Orange

Our Stated Meeting Meals are \$25 per person

Membership Open House - All Blue Lodge Officers are welcome! August 11, 2025 (Monday) - 6:00 – 9:00pm

KSA Knighting Ceremony - September 8, 2025 after our Stated Meeting (Details to follow)

Fall Reunion Preparation - Attend our OCSR Stated Meeting on September 8, 2025 (Monday) - 6:00 – 9:00pm

Comedy Show - Presented by the Knights of St. Andrew - Brothers and spouses are welcome! Saturday, September 13, 2025 (Details to follow)

Fall Reunion – Two Days: October 3, 2025 (Friday) - 6:00pm – 10:00pm, and October 4, 2025 (Saturday) 8:00am – 4:00pm

Feast of Tishri - Presented by the Lodge of Perfection - Attend our OCSR Stated Meeting on October 13, 2025 (Monday) - 6:00 – 9:00pm

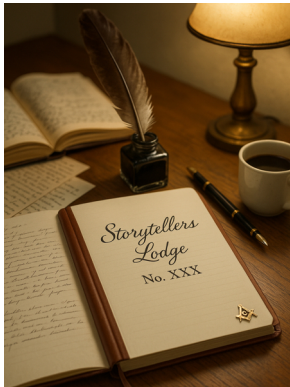
Yacht Party - Presented by the Knights of St. Andrew - Saturday, October 18, 2025 (Details to follow)

Orange County Childhood Learning Center Haunted House FUNdraiser - Saturday, November 1 · 6:30 – 11:15pm (details to follow)

Cap and Ring Ceremony - Presented by the Consistory - Attend our OCSR Stated Meeting on November 10, 2025 (Monday) - 6:00 – 9:00pm

Super Breakfast - Presented by the Council of Kadosh - November 22, 2025 (Saturday) - 7:30 – 11:00am

Philanthropy Night & Holiday Dinner & Celebration - Attend our OCSR Stated Meeting on December 8, 2025 (Monday) - 6:00 – 9:00pm



Storytellers Lodge: A Masonic Affinity Lodge for Writers of Every Genre

Shawn E Bell, 32°

Inspired by coverage in *California Freemason* about affinity lodges, I'm exploring a new kind of Masonic community—one built around the craft of writing, broadly defined. **Storytellers Lodge** would welcome brothers who put words to work on Masonic topics or any genre—fiction, memoir, history, poetry, essays, scripts, personal reflection, journalism, or beyond. The idea is to create a space where brother writers can gather in fraternity to share work, give and receive feedback, mentor one another, and sharpen their voices while drawing strength from our shared values.

Like other affinity Lodges, this wouldn't replace existing lodges or programs; it would run in parallel to home Lodges, complementing them by nurturing the storytellers among us and turning their craft into a source of connection, education, and outreach. If you write—whether you've been putting pen to paper for years or are just starting to tell your story—let's talk. Together, we can shape the focus, sketch a charter, and see if Storytellers Lodge can become a home where Masonic brotherhood and the love of writing fuel each other's passion.

shawn@shawnebell.com



Personal Representative of the SGIG Orient of California

III. Ralph C. Shelton II, 33°

It's a busy time for the Scottish Rite, and especially for our Valley. As I write this we are preparing for upcoming events and developments, as we also work to improve the Valley infrastructure. We have completed the transition of our internal communications, converting from one platform to another, which will provide significantly better communication. Outwardly, there will not be an apparent difference, but behind the scenes, this was a necessary though complicated task, and we owe thanks to Bros. Barry McKinley and Russ Hennings for their hard work.

In a couple of weeks, Hon. Jamie Hopkins, our General Secretary, and I will travel to Washington D.C. where Hon. Jamie will be coroneted a 33° Inspector General Honorary. We will join our new Deputy, III. Arthur L. Salazar, for the Biennial along with Venerable Master Russ Hennings, 32°, so rest assured that Orange County Valley will have a presence at the Biennial.

As I have mentioned many times, I firmly believe that while the PR is responsible to the Deputy for the proper operation of the Valley, it is the Heads of Bodies and executive staff who run the show. One issue we have dealt with has been conflicts with other organizations that impact our attendance and engagement. When we met on the first Monday of the Month, we conflicted with the El Bekal Shrine monthly Divan meeting, as well as lodges that held stated meetings on the first Monday. The second Monday has worked fairly well, but we now find that once each quarter we conflict with the Shrine's stated meeting, and with the two organizations sharing several officers, this has been a problem. Your Heads of Bodies have proposed that we consider moving our monthly meeting to the fourth Monday, which would not conflict with any Masonic organizations at all, and I endorse this decision. So, we will consider a resolution to amend the bylaws, moving our meeting night to the fourth Monday of each month, commencing with the October meeting. Reminders will be provided in future editions of this newsletter as well as email reminders.

I thank you all for your continued support of the Valley and the efforts of your leadership to continue improving and evolving Orange County Valley Scottish Rite, and, as always, look forward to seeing you at the next gathering.

UPCOMING SCHEDULE CHANGE

Our Valley has some of the strongest leaders in Orange County Masonry, and naturally, several are leaders of other Masonic organizations. It is in the best interest of the Valley to meet on a day that is not in conflict with any other organization, and the Heads of Bodies have recommended moving our meeting night to the fourth Monday of the month. So, at the September stated meeting, we will consider

the adoption of a resolution by which our bylaws will be amended to reflect a meeting date that is the fourth Monday each month. If you have questions or wish to express your thoughts in advance, please reach out to Ill. Ralph Shelton at rshelton@ocscottishrite.org.

Sincerely and fraternally,



INSPECTOR GENERAL HONORARY
Ill. Ralph C. Shelton II, 33°
Personal Representative of the
Sovereign Grand Inspector General in California
In the Valley of Orange County
71 Plaza Square
Orange, CA 92866
T: 714.543.7277 | M: 714.269.8359

Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction



III. James D. Cole, 33°
Sovereign Grand Commander



III. Ralph Shelton, 33°
Personal Representative of the
Sovereign Grand Inspector General, Orient of California



Jack C. Hennings Jr., 32°
Assistant to the Personal
Representative

Orange County Valley Scottish Rite of Freemasonry

Lodge of Perfection	Chapter Rose Croix	Council of Kadosh	Consistory
Venerable Master Russ Hennings, 32°	Wise Master Alejo Velarde, 32°	Commander Barry McKinley, 32°	Master of Kadosh Joshua S Price, 32°
Senior Warden Larry Griffin, 32°	Senior Warden vacant	1st Lieutenant Commander vacant	Prior vacant
Junior Warden Ross Hernandez, 32°	Junior Warden vacant	2nd Lieutenant Commander vacant	Preceptor vacant
Orator Christian DeDios, 32°	Orator Christian DeDios, 32°	Orator Christian DeDios, 32°	Minister of State Christian DeDios, 32°
Almoner David Harrington, 33°	Almoner David Harrington, 33°	Almoner David Harrington, 33°	Almoner David Harrington, 33°
Secretary Hon. Jamie Hopkins, 32° KCCH	Secretary Hon. Jamie Hopkins, 32° KCCH	Recorder Hon. Jamie Hopkins, 32° KCCH	Registrar Hon. Jamie Hopkins, 32° KCCH
Treasurer Bro. David Gilman, 32°	Treasurer Bro. David Gilman, 32°	Treasurer Bro. David Gilman, 32°	Treasurer Bro. David Gilman, 32°
Prelate James Olivier, 32° KCCH	Prelate James Olivier, 32° KCCH	Prelate James Olivier, 32° KCCH	Prelate James Olivier, 32° KCCH
Master of Cermonies vacant	Master of Cermonies vacant	Marshall of Ceremonies vacant	Marshall of Ceremonies vacant
Expert vacant	Expert vacant	First Deacon vacant	Expert vacant
Assistant Expert vacant	Assistant Expert vacant	Second Deacon vacant	Assistant Expert vacant
Tiler Christian DeDios, 32°	Tiler Christian DeDios, 32°	Sentinel Christian DeDios, 32°	Tiler Christian DeDios, 32°