



Orange County Scottish Rite

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September Gathering: What's Inside the Orange County Scottish Rite This Month



September's shaping up to be a big month for the Valley. Our August Open House was a hit; great turnout, an excellent talk from Leora A. Shaffer, and a special Cap and Ring for Bro. John Frederickson - and it's already bearing fruit with multiple new petitions and a Fall Reunion class that's growing fast. Several of your brothers also traveled to Washington, D.C. for the Supreme Council Biennial, celebrating Ill. Art Salazar's service and connecting with brethren from across the Southern Jurisdiction - proof that our Valley's momentum is on the map. If you've been away for a bit, this is a perfect time to jump back in!

Looking ahead: join us for the September stated meeting, help us gear up for the Fall Reunion, and don't miss the KSA "Comedy Knight" on September 13 and invite all friends and family! Please watch for your dues notice and take a moment to pay so you can keep enjoying everything we're building together. One more heads-up: to reduce conflicts and boost participation, we'll vote this month on moving stated meetings to the fourth Monday starting in October. See you in lodge, there's a lot of good work (and good fun) ahead!

– Shawn E Bell, 32°, Editor



From Open House to Supreme Council: Celebrating Brotherhood at Every Level!

**Russ Hennings, 32°
Venerable Master**

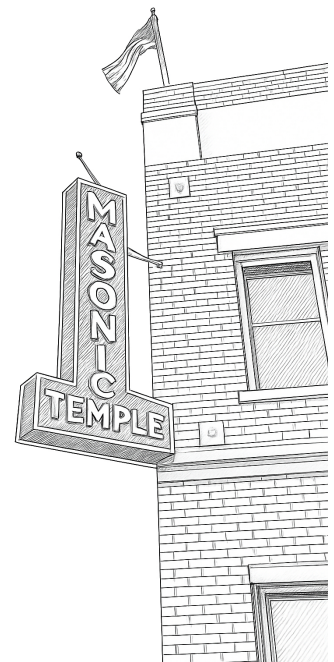
We opened the doors to our brothers and their spouses, and they saw how good and how great the Valley of Orange County is. Last month's Open House was a phenomenal success. Not only were we treated to a beautiful speech by Leora A. Shaffer, M.A., CCC-SLP, Clinic Director of the RiteCare Childhood Language Center of Orange County (Chapman University, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders), we were able to confer our Cap and Ring Ceremony to one of our newest brothers, John Frederickson. He was able to travel from his home in Las Vegas with his family to be with us that evening and celebrate his achievement of becoming one of our newest 32-degree masons.

The outcome... well we received three applications the week after our event, and we have had a couple more since then. So far, our Fall Reunion will have 9 new initiates! This is an accomplishment that we should all be very proud of. It shows us that our experience is meaningful. We know how great it is to come to the Valley meetings to see our friends from all walks of Orange County. Masons and their spouses, that we would not necessarily see, if it were not for the experience we have in our Scottish Rite Valley. We know how great it has been to dine together after our stated meeting. The food has been so wonderful and compliments to our Junior Warden, Sir Ross Hernandez, KSA, are always so deserved.

Our blue lodge brothers saw what we experience monthly, and they want in! We should all be proud of that fact and understand that the valley is offering a newer and enriched experience for everyone.

So, if you are one of our brothers or significant others that hasn't come to see us lately, let me assure you, life in our valley is good! We miss you and would love to have you back. Don't worry about not knowing your signs or if you lost your cap. We have more caps, and we don't really sweat knowing the signs and those things can be learned again. Come be with us. Come enjoy the excitement.

Speaking of excitement, I had the pleasure of traveling to the biennial of the Supreme Council of the 33° in Washington D.C. with our Deputy of the Supreme Council of the 33°, Illustrious Arthur Salazar Jr., III. Ralph and newly invested Illustrious Jamie Hopkins! The week in DC was so amazing! Not only did we get to celebrate with Jamie, but we also celebrated Ill. Art's duties as the Deputy for California. We also toured the House of the Temple, the George Washington Masonic Memorial and visited with Scottish Rite Masons from every state in the Southern Jurisdiction as well as the Orients from outside of our nation. It was a true eyeopener as to how unified our craft is and a reminder that we have a beautiful network of like-minded individuals all around the world that we can rely on as our family.





Growing Together in the Scottish Rite: The Power of Communication in Freemasonry

Alejo Velarde, 32°
Wise Master

As we continue to grow in the Scottish Rite, I feel an overwhelming sense of happiness and gratitude. It's truly inspiring to witness new Brothers joining our ranks, and just as heartening to see familiar faces return to the fold. There is something deeply fulfilling about watching our valley thrive—not just in numbers, but in spirit, fellowship, and purpose.

Growth is more than attendance. It's measured by how well we engage with one another, how effectively we pass on our teachings, and how deeply we connect to our mission. And at the heart of all this lies one essential element: communication.

Communication: The Lifeblood of the Craft

In Freemasonry, and especially in the Scottish Rite, communication is more than just conversation. It's the language of symbolism, the unspoken understanding between Brothers, and the medium through which we transmit timeless values.

Our degrees are, in essence, extended acts of communication. They convey lessons through allegory, drama, and symbol. They stir emotion, invite reflection, and challenge us to become better men. Without strong, intentional communication—whether verbal or written, formal or fraternal—these lessons can become diluted or misunderstood.

Strengthening the Bonds Between Brothers

Effective communication keeps our fraternity vibrant. It ensures no Brother feels disconnected. It's the phone call to check in. The email reminding us of a stated meeting. The warm handshake and attentive ear during refreshment. It's also being honest when we struggle, sharing ideas when we're inspired, and listening when others speak.

The Scottish Rite offers countless opportunities for these moments: rehearsals, reunions, charitable work, or even casual coffee with a Brother. Let's not overlook them. Let's lean into them—because these small interactions are what build strong ties and enduring trust.

Transparency Builds Trust

As leaders and stewards of this Rite, we must communicate openly. Transparency in decisions, finances, and direction gives our members confidence in the future. When we invite input, welcome questions, and provide clarity, we empower every member to feel a sense of ownership in our shared journey.

Let us be clear in our purpose and open in our dialogue. The more we talk, the more we understand. And the more we understand, the stronger our fraternity becomes.

Brothers, as we continue to grow, let's remember it is not just about gaining numbers it's about deepening relationships. It's about ensuring that every new face, and every returning one, knows they are part of something meaningful.

Let us recommit to strong, sincere, and frequent communication. In doing so, we strengthen not just our Rite, but the very fabric of Freemasonry itself.



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,

September signals the beginning of a busy and exciting stretch for our valley. On September 8th, we will gather for our stated meeting, which will also include the KSA Knighting Ceremony, and dedicate part of the evening to preparing for our Fall Reunion, scheduled for October 19th and 20th. These reunions are central to the growth and strength of our valley, and I'm grateful for all who are already putting in time and effort to make it meaningful for our incoming brethren.

And on September 13th, get ready to laugh and unwind at the KSA Comedy Show! This lighthearted evening promises entertainment and fellowship in true Scottish Rite spirit. Events like this remind us that Masonry includes not only learning and service, but also the joy of shared laughter and camaraderie.

Thank you all for your continued support, and let's keep working together to make the Orange County Scottish Rite a place of inspiration and brotherhood.



Reflections from the Consistory

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

As we move into September, the Scottish Rite Valley continues to thrive with renewed energy and fellowship. This month offers us not only the opportunity to gather together but also to celebrate the growth of our valley and the bonds that make our work so meaningful.

Our next Stated Meeting on September 8th, we are anticipating several new petitions, many of which are the direct result of the incredible success of our Blue Lodge Open House in August. This event showcased the vitality of our valley and the spirit of brotherhood that draws good men to our doors. I am excited to witness these candidates progress on their journey, culminating in their becoming Masters of the Royal Secret at our Fall Reunion.

While it may seem a little early, I cannot help but share my excitement for one of our most cherished traditions—the Annual Halloween Celebration on Nov 1st, which is also All Saints day. More than just an evening of fellowship and fun, this event unites us with our families, friends, and the community at large.

Most importantly, it serves as a fundraiser for the RiteCare Language Center, helping us support children and families in need of vital services. I encourage all of you to mark your calendars, invite guests, and take part in this meaningful celebration.

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



From the General Secretary

Jamie Hopkins, 32° KCCH
General Secretary

Brethren:

Welcome to September. This summer was very productive for the Valley of Orange County. At our August Stated Meeting, we held an open house dinner for Master Masons interested in the Scottish Rite. The event was an outstanding success with 3 new petitions for membership received the day following our meeting. Our Fall Reunion is taking place at Orange Grove Lodge on Friday night, Oct 3rd and Saturday day, Oct. 4th. Please come by to catch a degree or two. Also in August, I had the opportunity to attend the Scottish Rite Biennial in Washington, D.C.. This year, particular emphasis was placed on the Rite's program for Masonic education; the Master Craftsman courses online. More Masons than ever before (both Scottish Rite members and Blue Lodge members) are participating in the Master Craftsman program. The Supreme Council wants to see every Scottish Rite Mason exercising this option to receive more light in our Craft. Also, the Biennial presented an excellent video showing how our RiteCare Scottish Rite Childhood Language Program is positively changing young people's lives. Our Orange County Childhood Language Center is a great example of this success.

With a strong class of candidates for our October Reunion, this Fall looks like more growth for our Valley. With better dinners, Masonic Speakers and the Blue Slipper Club for the Ladies, the Orange County Scottish Rite has become a very popular option for Master Masons interested in a concordant group. Let's all keep up the good work!



Hi Ho, Hi Ho, It's Off to Work We Go!

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

As the final weeks of Summer approach and we prepare for our Fall Reunion, Hon. David Soliven has taken his place as Director of Ritual and is now overseeing the rehearsal processes with help from me and Bro. Cris DeDios. Like my own time in that chair, I've given him pretty free rein to craft and reimagine some of the ways we do things when it comes to our ritual presentations. Over the next few upcoming reunions, I am excited to see the ways that he improves upon and the changes we've made over the years to make the experience for our new Candidates even more impressive! So mark your calendars for October 3rd and 4th, 2025!

With that in mind, we also have an exciting development coming next August. On August 21-23, 2026, our friends and brethren at the Valley of Pasadena have the honor of holding our biennial state-wide reunion! Mark your calendars for this event, where, over the course of three days, all the Valleys of the Orient of California will confer all twenty-nine degrees of the Scottish Rite. What used to require a trip to places like Guthrie, Oklahoma to see is now coming to our own backyard. These reunions are a wonderful opportunity to not only see all of the degrees, but to meet brothers, new and old, from all over the Orient!

For all of these reunions, it is so important to be present. Even if you're just on the sidelines, we're all gathering for one purpose: to greet our new brothers and welcome them into the Scottish Rite. Please make the time to come out on Friday night (between 5 PM and 10 PM), or Saturday (8 AM - Approximately 3-4 PM), and be present to meet your new brothers and see the degrees again, it always helps to reinforce the teachings we hold so dear. Remember, Masonry is not a passive experience! We only gain from it when we are a part of it! See you at the reunion.

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.



From Poolside Bliss to Casino Fun: The Blue Slipper Club's Pechanga Escape!

Erin McKinley

The BSC ladies had an absolutely amazing weekend at Pechanga this August! Saturday was pure bliss — we soaked up the sun, lounged in our private cabana, sipped delicious cocktails, and enjoyed plenty of laughter while getting to know each other even better. That night, the fun turned up a notch as we tried our luck at the tables and slots, savored a mouthwatering dinner at the steakhouse, and ended the evening with side-splitting laughs at the comedy show.

We wrapped up the weekend with a cozy Sunday breakfast before heading home — and I think it's safe to say, we all came back with smiles, memories, and plenty of laughs that will be retold for years!

We're already buzzing with ideas for next year's BSC getaway, and we'd love your input. Share your dream destinations or activity ideas with us!

As for our September meeting, get ready to unleash your inner artist — we'll be decorating our own stemware! Bring any glass of your choice — a wine glass, champagne flute, or beer mug — and we'll provide all the fun decorations.



Armor Up for Laughs: KSA Comedy **K**Night Fundraiser!

Sir James Cates
Knight Orator

The Knights of Saint Andrew (KSA) have been quite busy and a lot has happened!

Firstly, there will not be a Knighting Ceremony in September. We had to move it to a later date. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Secondly, we do have our "Comedy **K**Night" fundraiser on September 13th at our building in Orange (Masonic Center 71 Plaza Square, Orange CA on the Orange Circle). (see flyer elsewhere in this **K**Newsletter) You can register for it at <https://www.simpletix.com/e/ksa-comedy-night-tickets-230851>

In other news, we have Squires waiting to be dubbed Knights, and we are happy to have anyone else who is interested get in touch with us. We now have a PDF with information, a direct email and a QR code you can flash on and send your interest directly to us. We look forward to hearing from you!

I hope all have had a good summer and look forward to seeing you in the Fall!



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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°.

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.

Knights of St. Andrew present

Comedy Night

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 13

6:30
\$35

**Two time
Emmy nominee**



MICHAEL GELBART

& Special Guests

Hosted by



Keith-Byron Jones

Tickets at the door or use QR code or web address below



<https://www.simplerix.com/e/ksa-comedy-night-tickets-230851>

**71 Plaza Square
Orange, CA
on the Orange Circle**

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

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 (Saturday) – 6:30pm

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

Dues are Due!

You'll be receiving your dues bill soon—many of you already have. Please take a moment to get those dues paid so you can keep enjoying everything your membership offers: fellowship, quality programs, special events, and the good work we do together in the Valley and community.

Paying is quick and easy. You can submit your dues online, by mail, or in person at our next meeting—whatever works best for you. If you have questions or need a little extra time, reach out and we'll be glad to help. Thank you for supporting the Valley and keeping our momentum strong.

Upcoming Schedule Change

Just a Reminder: Your Heads of Bodies have proposed that, to avoid conflict with any other Masonic organizations that impact our attendance, we change our meeting night to the fourth Monday of each month. This will come up for a vote by the members at the September stated meeting. Notice has been published previously.



Personal Representative of the SGIG Orient of California

III. Ralph C. Shelton II, 33°

I have just returned from the Biennial session of the Supreme Council, where I was joined by several members of our Valley - Bro. Russell Hennings, Illustrious Jamie Hopkins, Illustrious David Kussman, and our Deputy of the Supreme Council, Illustrious Arthur L. Salazar. It was a busy time, and I am excited to report back.

Our Valley was selected to arrange the dinner for the Orient delegation. I am pleased to report that it was a well attended event, with 53 members of the delegation in attendance. I am even more pleased to let you know that the Valley had no expense associated with the dinner, but was well recognized by the attendees.

While at session, several members of the Supreme Council staff expressed their positive reactions to our membership growth. You all know that I have been excited, as have your HoBs, but it's nice to be positively on the radar of Supreme.

Finally, I am pleased to report that we are in a new phase of transition. For the past two years, we have had areas of responsibility within the Valley assigned to individuals. As we have evolved, those responsibilities are now being shouldered by teams - this enables us to have breadth of knowledge, information sharing and, of course, redundancy. In short, your Valley continues to improve.

I remain thankful to be in a position to serve the Valley of Orange County, and look forward to seeing you at our next meeting. Remember that starting in October, our new meeting night will be the Fourth Monday.

Sincerely and fraternally,

INSPECTOR GENERAL HONORARY
III. 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
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Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction



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



III. Arthur Salazar, Jr., 33°
Deputy of the Scottish Rite
Orient of California



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°