



Denver's RiteWorks

JANUARY 2025 vol. 18 #1



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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.**

Parking Permit Required - A Denver Consistory parking permit **MUST** be displayed on the lower left of your vehicle windshield. (Where the emission certificate is 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 for members are available in the Consistory office.

PLANNING CALENDAR

January 2025

Wed, JAN 01	Consistory CLOSED for New Year's Holiday
Fri, JAN 03, 10, 17, 31	11:30 a.m. Consistory Lunch (\$13 - Fried Chicken on JAN 03)
Sat, JAN 04	9:00-11:00 a.m. Consistory UN-Decorating Party (all members, officers, and wives are invited)
Mon, JAN 06	7:00 p.m. KSA Meeting in Lodge Room
Sat, JAN 18	8:00 a.m.-noon Officers' Breakfast Meeting and Installation Practice 6:00 p.m. KSA Burns Dinner (Whisky College @ 5:00 p.m.) Parking Garage Available
Mon, JAN 20	Stated Meeting - Parking Garage Available 5:30 p.m. Red Room Business Meeting 6:00 p.m. Dinner 7:00 p.m. Awards and Announcements 7:30 p.m. Split Meeting Annual Meetings of Corporations, Open Installation
Fri, JAN 24	CONSISTORY CLOSED - NO LUNCH—Grand Lodge Session

February 2025

Mon, FEB 03	7:00 p.m. KSA Meeting in Lodge Room
Fri, FEB 07, 14, 21, 28	11:30 a.m. Consistory Lunch (\$13 - Fried Chicken on FEB 07)
Mon, FEB 17	Stated Meeting: Feast of Kadosh Parking Garage Available 5:30 p.m. Red Room Business Meeting 6:00 p.m. Dinner 7:00 p.m. Entertainment (Presidents Day, Valentine's Day) 7:30 p.m. Split Meeting (Almoner & Life Membership reports to CLOP) 5 min oration by Orator, CLOP

March 2025

Mon, MAR 03	7:00 p.m. KSA Meeting in Lodge Room
Fri, MAR 07, 14, 21, 28	11:30 a.m. Consistory Lunch (\$13 - Fried Chicken on MAR 07)
Thu, MAR 13	7:00 p.m. Degree Council Meeting
Mon, MAR 17	Stated Meeting: <u>Sports Team Shirt Night</u> Parking Garage Available 5:30 p.m. Red Room Business Meeting 6:00 p.m. Dinner 7:00 p.m. Awards & Announcements; Past Presiding Officer Recognition 7:30 p.m. Split Meeting; 5 min oration by Orator, Rose Croix
Sat, MAR 29	9:00-11:00 a.m. KSA Spring Cleanup

Drink Like A Pirate



This year's Whisky College before the Burns Supper is themed "Drink Like A Pirate" because the whiskies will be those aged in Rum barrels for a comparison. Professor Stan Holzwart will again regale us with background and interesting facts about the chosen whiskies, and you're sure to have an enjoyable and information filled evening ... BUT ... **YOU NEED TO MAKE RESERVATIONS!** The Classroom is limited to a maximum of 60 persons by fire code, so ... you snooze, you lose.

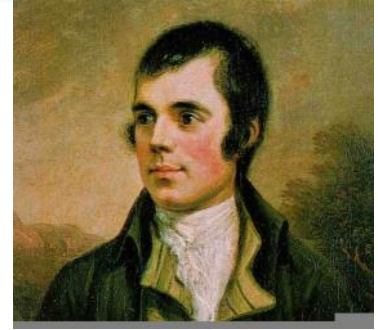
[Denver Knights of St Andrew](#)



K.S.A. Burns Night Supper and Whisky College

Bag pipes ☒ Silent auction ☒ Burns poetry

Saturday January 18th, 2025, 6:00pm



BEEF WELLINGTON FOLKS!

Dinner: 6:00pm

Caesar Salad, Rolls, Haggis, Beef Wellington, Mashed Potatoes,
Roasted Tri-Color Carrots, Chocolate Mousse

\$60 - Adult (13 and over)

Prepaid online reservations required

Whisky College: 5:00pm

\$45 - Adult (21 and over)

Prepaid online reservations required



Theme: Drink Like A Pirate

Whiskies aged in Rum Casks!

For reservations:

Advanced prepaid reservations are available online only.
(DO NOT contact the Consistory office).

Denverburnssupper.com

Featured entertainment.



&

El Jebel Pipe Band

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

*Proceeds to benefit RiteCare, (<https://scottishritefoundation.org>)
and Scottish Rite Masonic Center*

EDITOR'S RESTLEBOARD



BY: **BILL HICKEY, 33°**

EMAIL: WA3H@HOTMAIL.COM

The ZOOM Effect



It's kind of hard to believe it's been 3-4 years since the COVID pandemic turned our world upside-down. Suddenly, we had to stay at home—couldn't go to work, interact personally with anyone outside our homes, no driving, and so on. What a nightmare and strange way to live. No more in-person Masonic meetings. WHAT? How could we possibly survive that?

Well, we did survive—most of us anyway. Yes, we lost a few lodges because they were already struggling to begin with and when the “all clear” was sounded, everyone of their members had gotten used to staying home (watching TV, reading books, whatever) and we all know breaking a habit doesn't take long but making a habit takes at least a month or more.

What did we do? Well, many lodges and organizations and businesses turned to what is called “peer-to-peer” communications. ZOOM, TEAMS, and a host of other similar virtual technology programs that allowed us to stay “connected” to each other even while we were isolated in our homes.

Here's what happened: when we started having “zoom” sessions, it turned out that many of our Brothers (and friends) that we hadn't seen or heard from in years suddenly turned up. It was GREAT to get together with them again. Some of them could no longer drive at night, some had moved out of the area (state), and some would have long commutes to make it to a meeting at Denver Rush Hour—so they opted to stay home...but...with ZOOM they could at least be seen and heard and participate in some discussions.

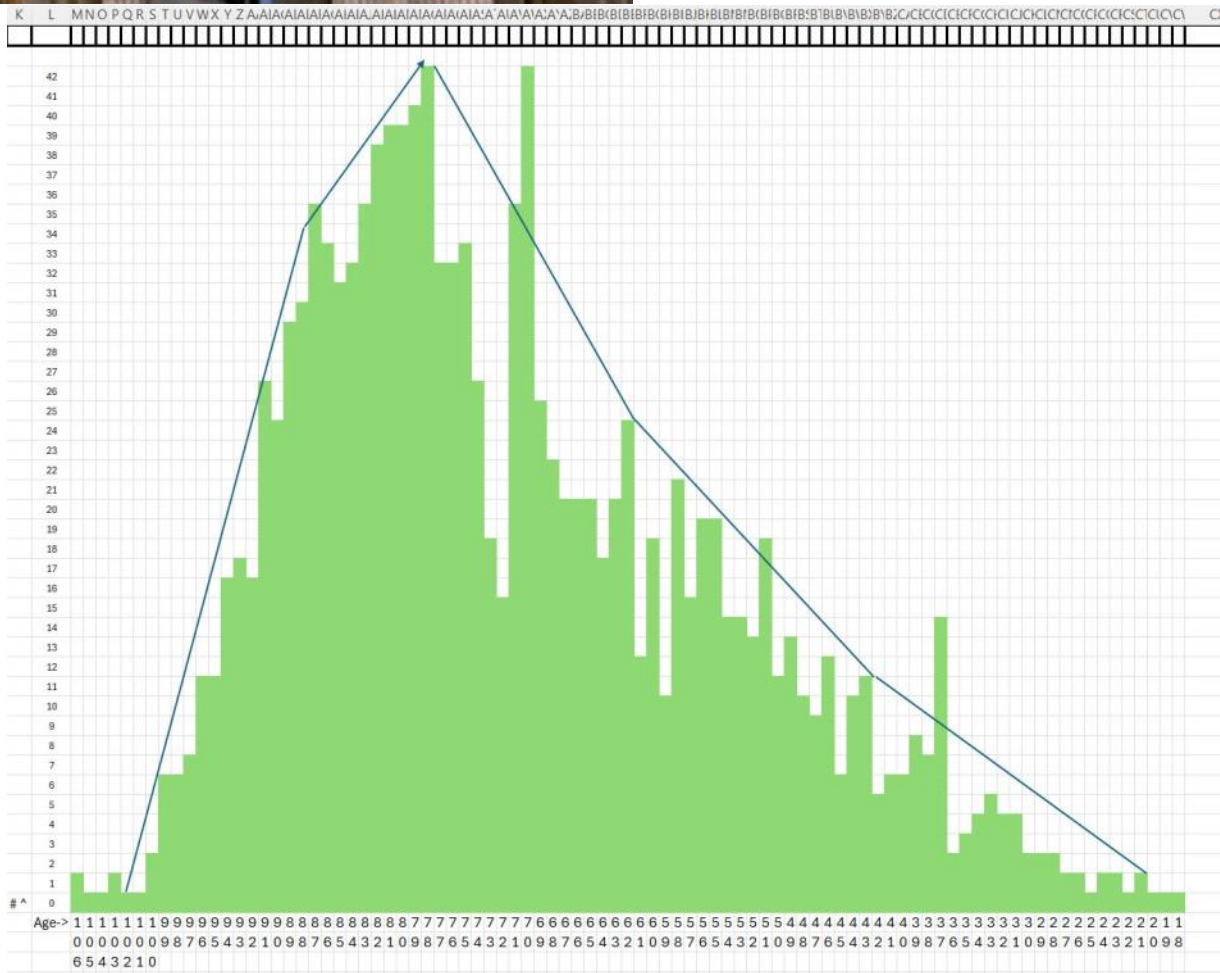
Did zoom “replace” our in-person meetings? Nope, no way. There are certain things that just MUST be done in person and we all know that. BUT, a great deal of our meetings simply are not “ritualistic” or “secret” and do not need to be sequestered outside of an “open” zoom session. This is a “management” issue and is easily and properly addressed.

But now, a couple (few?) years since COVID, we seem to be forgetting the lesson(s) we learned from that event. Zoom sessions are a “pain in the posterior” and some of those forgotten members seem to be forgetting about us as well. It's easy to make a “management” decision about zoom when no one uses it—or we spend a lot of time, effort, and in some cases money, to put on a zoom session and then 1 or 2 or maybe 3-4 members show up. So, it's incumbent on ALL OF US to remember WHY we started having ZOOM sessions to begin with and if you can't come to a meeting, at least show up to a zoom and say hi. If you don't stay, we understand. But if you don't come at all, then we don't know if you're OK.

Bill



Yep. I typically look over our member statistics and try to make some sort of sense out of the sobering numbers. This year, the shape of the curve hasn't changed, but the key parameters appear to have shifted a bit from previous years. Have a gander at the data, draw your own conclusions. More importantly, use the numbers (they don't lie) to take ACTION in your lodge or York Rite, Scottish Rite, or Shrine bodies to reflect on membership.



At first glance, what strikes your eye? In my case, I see a number of interesting facts. The age with most members in it is 78 (tied with 70, by the way, but with a huge dip between the two). In the past, that peak was in the mid-60's. (Translation: this means we are getting older ON THE AVERAGE which doesn't really come as a surprise to many.) The 71-100+ age group has 772 members for 59% of our total membership of 1302. The 80+ cohort has 469 members for 36%. The "average" size of any age group is close to 15, but with a statistical deviation of 12.4 (one-sigma). I daresay, if you take member numbers for El Jebel, Grand Lodge, or other bodies in general, you'll see a similar shaped curve when plotting age versus numbers.

Continued on next page

Take a sobering look at the numbers for members under the age of 40...72 (6%). Brothers, your GROWTH and STABILITY do not come from the 60+ crowd—it comes mostly from those entering the craft earlier and staying longer. That's a simple fact of life. Deny it if you wish, but that won't change the facts. Recall that in a past analysis published in RiteWorks, I mentioned that around 2003 or so Denver Consistory had ~5000 members, of which ~600~700 participated in the 29 exemplified degree reunion for my class. Let's call that 12% of the membership working in some capacity at the reunion. 21 years later, we're sitting at 1302 members. If we assume a 12% participation in the reunion, that would be 156 Brothers actively helping to put on the reunion. I do not know what our current participation numbers are ... I'm not sure anyone really does know that. But, I do know that the smaller that number gets, the harder it will be to put on a reunion with the 5 mandatory + 12 optional degrees. Too many Brothers will end up having too many major parts—and be what we call “single point failures” - if they get sick or can't make it (weather, whatever), you're in a world of hurt. At one of the SGC Fellows conferences, it was revealed that there are Consistories out there that can't even do the 5 mandatory degrees with full cast—they end up reading the parts and skipping or communicating the rest of the degrees. They simply don't have the bodies to put against the tasks needed to make it a memorable experience. Wonder why they struggle?

Some of you know that I have a long time friend who was SGC in the NMJ and who also provided me with the opportunity to witness their virtual reunion degrees. During those reunions where I was present, there were more than 1000 Brothers logged in (overwhelmingly from the 15 NMJ states)! Now, were all those logins NEW Brothers? Probably not. But, it seemed as though the majority were definitely new candidates. The NMJ process is completely different from ours, and the outreach they use is likewise completely different. But, it appears to be having some success that we lack in attracting new members to our Consistory. Does that mean we should adopt their system/techniques? Not necessarily. But to ignore their success and pretend that our approach is heading in the right direction flies in the face of the facts (data).

There are many ways to hold a reunion, the way we do it today is but one of them. At one time (back when I came in 2003) we did all 29 degrees, started at 7am, had a continental breakfast, full lunch and full dinner, and went home around 9 p.m. It was exhausting for the candidates—and I'm absolutely SURE it was more than exhausting for the Brothers putting it on. Over time, we changed from all 29 degrees to the mandatory 5 plus 12 optional degrees because simply the logistics of 29 degrees was too much. At some point, those 12 optional degrees may end up suffering a similar fate due to logistics and personnel availability.

Ask yourself how many of our new Masters of the Royal Secret we typically see at dinner and the stated meeting following a reunion. (Usually 1-2 if that. More is an exception.) WHY aren't they coming? Are we asking them? Are we asking them about their experience during the reunion and seeing if MAYBE there might be a better alternative to the way we present those degrees to them? If we don't ask, we're simply trusting that we know the answer(s), and that ... sadly ... is rarely the case.

THINK ABOUT YOUR REUNION EXPERIENCES—both when you first went through, and those where you participate today. Have all the changes been positive? If not, why not?



From the Secretary's Desk

[Matt Raia, 33°](#)



CONSISTORY OFFICE HOURS

Monday—Thursday 7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

***WHEN YOU SAVE FOR A LONG TIME TO BUY SOMETHING, THEN FIND OUT
YOU CAN'T AFFORD IT—THAT'S INFLATION!***

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 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 Bob Applegate, 33°; Illustrious Brother Keith Anderson, 33°; Illustrious Brother Joe Kier, 33° and Debby; Brother Bill Achbach, 32° KCCH; Brother Jerry Edwards, 32° KCCH; Brother Tom Lincoln, 32° KCCH; Brother Mike Tims, 32° KCCH; Brother Forrest Curtis, 32°; Brother Scott Haldi, 32°; Brother Mark Hogan, 32°; Brother Bruce Miller, 32°; Brother Mike McMinimee, 32°; Brother William Simon, 32°; Brother Kevin Trabert, 32° and Brother Russell Zingelman, 32°

Receive a free Stated Meeting dinner - Prepay for an entire years' worth of stated meeting dinners and **receive one dinner free**. Prepay for nine dinners and receive the tenth dinner free. To receive the free dinner, you must prepay for all nine dinners at one time. It does not matter when during the year you decide to prepay. The time frame will run consecutively and not on a calendar year basis.

No refunds or credit will be given for prepaid dinners not used during the 12-month period.

Donate Your Car - Do you have a car you no longer need? You are not required to be a member of Denver Consistory to participate in this program—anyone can participate. Tell your family members, friends, and neighbors about donating their car for the benefit of the Scottish Rite Masonic Center and be eligible to receive a tax-deduction for their donation. It is easy to donate your vehicle to charity for the benefit of the Scottish Rite Masonic Center. Go to www.carsforcharity.net and click on Donate My Car. Scroll down the list of charities and click on Scottish Rite Masonic Center. After completing the form you will be contacted with information about picking up the car. When the car has been sold by Cars for Charity, the

Scottish Rite Masonic Center will receive payment. This is a great way to support the Scottish Rite Masonic Center in obtaining funds for the ongoing operations and maintenance of our building. 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 Scottish Rite Masonic Center.

THANK YOU—to everyone who helped put up Christmas decorations on November 30th.

SRF Children's Christmas Party - was held on December 7th - It was wonderful to see the children enjoying the party.

December 16th Stated Meeting - Our December Stated Meeting was Member Appreciation Night. Those attending dinner received a discount on the cost of their meal equal to the number of years they have been a member. The number of combined years of service of those attending was 1,278 - VERY IMPRESSIVE !!! It was also Ugly Christmas Sweater Night. Some very colorful sweaters were on display.

Election of 2025 Officers - was conducted by **Illustrious Brother Ron Birely, 33°**, Personal Representative. Congratulations to our elected and appointed officers for 2025:

Brother Jered Minter, 32° KCCH - Venerable Master, Centennial Lodge of Perfection

Brother Dillon Brickhouse, 32° KCCH - Wise Master, Rocky Mountain Chapter Rose Croix

Brother Lee Miller, 32° KCCH - Commander, Colorado Council of Kadosh

Brother Bill Achbach, 32° KCCH - Master of Kadosh, Denver Consistory

Welcome to our newly appointed officers:

Brother Jaymie Vaughn, 32° - Captain of the Host, Centennial Lodge of Perfection

Brother Ric Dena, 32° - Guardian of the Temple, Rocky Mountain Chapter Rose Croix

Brother Russ Magyar, 32° - Lt of the Guard, Colorado Council of Kadosh

Brother Michael McMinimee, 32° - Master of Ceremonies, Denver Consistory

Brother Shawn Calder, 32° - Captain of the Guard, Denver Consistory

January 18th ALL-OFFICER MEETING: Breakfast served at 8:00 a.m. with meeting at 9:00 a.m. followed by installation rehearsal at 10:00 a.m. **ALL officers are REQUIRED to attend.**

Burns Supper January 18th - Whisky College at 5:00 p.m followed by the Burns Supper at 6:00 p.m. Reservations are REQUIRED—no ticket sales at the door.

January 20th Stated Meeting - The PUBLIC installation of our 2025 officers will take place after our business meeting. In addition to our regular business, we will have the annual reports of the four corporations.

January 24th - Office closed for Grand Lodge Communication. **NO FRIDAY LUNCH.**

Life Memberships are an ideal way to avoid paying future dues increases. A Life Membership guarantees that you will never be suspended for nonpayment of dues 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 nonpayment of dues because your Scottish Rite Membership is of little or no significance to the individual handling your finances. By purchasing a Life Membership you leave a continuing legacy to Denver Consistory after your death.

Life Membership Fee:

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

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

Younger than 62 – a single payment of \$2,500

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

2025 MEMBERSHIP FEE INCREASE - The Denver Consistory membership fee will be \$140 effective January 1, 2025. Denver Consistory is not immune to the effects of inflation and the increased cost of doing business, which has necessitated the membership fee increase. \$140 is a real bargain for membership in Denver Consistory. Just \$0.38 per day. WOW! That's less than the cost of one cup of coffee. Isn't your Scottish Rite membership worth more to you than a cup of coffee? 2025 membership fee notices have been mailed by the Supreme Council. Please pay your membership fee when you receive the notice, and not lay it aside and forget about it and then become delinquent. Please do your part to help sustain the operation of Denver Consistory by paying your membership fee in a timely manner. 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. BUT, you MUST contact me. We can't help you if you don't ask.

When paying your dues, **PLEASE consider making a tax-deductible donation to your Scottish Rite Masonic Center.** Your contributions help us maintain our historic building.

Automatic Membership Renewal Program

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

The automatic payment will occur in August annually for those who sign up for the program, and the payment will be applied to the following year. Members who sign up for the program will receive an email reminder a few days prior to the debiting of their credit or debit card. Supreme Council staff will mail a membership card to all enrollees directly from the House of the Temple approximately three weeks after the annual payments are processed. This program will give Members the option to avoid the end-of-the-year Masonic membership fee crunch as well as help ensure Members are always in good standing.

COMING EVENTS

February 3rd 7:00 p.m. - Knights of St. Andrew meeting.

February 17th Stated Meeting - Feast of Kadosh, Annual reports of the Life Membership Fund, the Almoner, and the SRMC Endowment fund. We will have an oration by **Brother Tony Clark, 32° KCCH**, Orator for Centennial Lodge of Perfection.

Spring Reunion May 8, 9, 10 (take notice of change in dates): If you normally work in a degree during the Spring Reunion cycle, start studying up on your part. **We will have the Degree Council meeting on March 13th at 7:00 p.m.**

It is not too early to turn in petitions. We had 15 in the 2024 Fall Reunion Class. It would be nice if we could have at least that many in the Spring Reunion Class. Membership is the life-line of Denver Consistory. We cannot survive without (active) members.

WAYS TO KILL ALMOST ANY ORGANIZATION

1. Don't attend meetings, but if you do, arrive late.
2. Be sure to leave before the meeting is closed.
3. Never have anything to say at the meeting—wait until you get outside.
4. When at the meeting, vote to do everything, then go home and do nothing.
5. The next day, find fault with the officers and other members.
6. Take no part in the organization's affairs.
7. Be sure to sit in the back, so you can talk freely to another member.
8. Get all the organization will give you, but don't give the organization anything.
9. Never ask anyone to join the organization.
10. At every opportunity, threaten to resign and try to get others to do so as well.
11. Talk cooperation, but don't cooperate.
12. If asked to help, say you don't have time.
13. Never read anything pertaining to the organization.
14. Never accept an office - it is easier to criticize than to do things.
15. If appointed to a committee, never give any time or service to it.
16. If there are finances to pay, just ignore it.
17. Don't do any more than you have to, and, when others willingly and unselfishly use their ability to help the good cause alone, then complain that the organization is run by a clique.

I would like to thank the members of the Denver Consistory for all their donations, monetarily and materially for Judi's House.

This is our chosen charity for the Rocky Mountain Chapter of Rose Croix. It is truly an honor to be your Brother. I wish each and every one of you and your families and loved ones the greatest of holidays. May next year bless all of you with the grace of the Supreme Architect.

Fraternally and Sincerely, yours in Humilitas et Caritas
Gregory Harris, Wise Master 2024

The Success of Important Small Steps

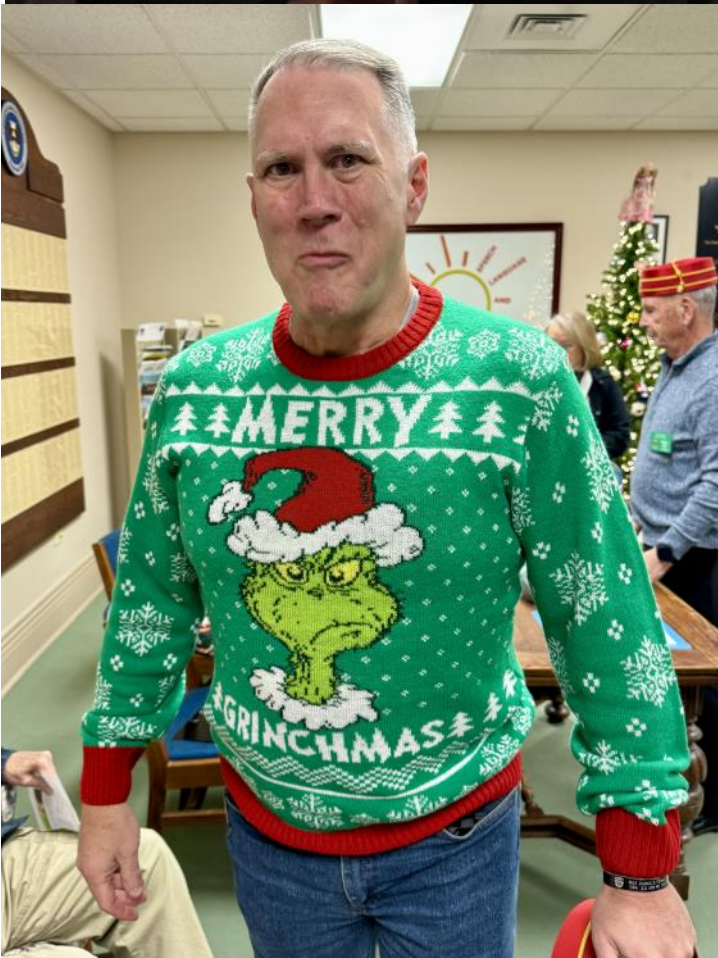
By Bartley A. Corfee, 33° 2024 Venerable Master CLOP

What are the small “steps” we all have given by belonging to and participating at our Blue Lodge(s), Denver Consistory, York Rite, Grand Lodge, Shrine and Supreme Council? I have participated in many of these small “steps” and I have observed fellow Brothers and Family cast these small “steps” before us. What fun we have had on our journey sailing the boat of brotherhood and fellowship and it would be hollow if it were not for these small “steps”. Note we have had to adjust our sails on our sailboat slightly when the wind changed and we were careful not to overtighten the rigging by keeping the sails flexible to self-adjust. Thank you, Brothers and extended family, for participating in these small “steps” like driving brothers to meetings, attending events, organizing events, greeters at doors, lobby greeters, cooks at Blue Lodge kitchens, servers, administration, lights/sound/properties/costumes teams, special events teams, committees of focus, committees of fortune, committees of charity. What I have been taught by this unique Masonic fellowship is like reading a great book that is exceptionally written with no end chapter in sight and as the story continues with your small “steps” we are keeping the sails of your sailboat loose and not over tight ... continue on Brothers ... we are making a positive difference in our fellow Brother’s and their family’s lives. We are making a difference in our World ... continue Brothers. God Bless during this Holiday Season and Merry Christmas. It has been my privilege and honor to serve this year. Thank you for your small “steps”.

Brethren,

Thank you for allowing me to provide some remarks at the close of my year heading up the Council of Kadosh. First, I would like to express my appreciation to the brethren of the Consistory for honoring me with this office the past year. It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve. Next, I would like to say thank you to my Line Officers for their support of the membership and outreach activities, and of the Entertainment Committee. That Committee, headed up by Mike Rudloff, worked tirelessly and ingeniously to arrange this year’s entertainment: from Air Shows and Museum visits to Steely Dead and a fabulous Christmas pianist finale! The Officer Line also manned the Calling Committee to get a call out to each Consistory member. 1st Lt. Commander Lee Miller did a great job writing the articles in the “Member Spotlight” in the Riteworks. Brethren really enjoy getting personal background and life stories of their Consistory brothers. The articles are always informative and entertaining. I am sure Lee found that, sometimes, by simply reaching out to the subject brother, the articles virtually wrote themselves. Lee will no doubt continue this tradition. The Kadosh Line also helped with a very successful Ladies Luncheon where, compliments of Brother Bart, we enjoyed a “Taste of Provence” and where the berets were a big hit!. I also need to mention the huge efforts of Larry Tygart and the Cornerstone Committee, whose work resulted in an outstanding Cornerstone Commemoration Ceremony including a special and fine performance of “The Traitor”. To you all, my thanks for an eventful year.

Tom Gaffney, 32° KCCH, Commander, Colorado Council of Kadosh







Masonic Ritual is of Great Importance Within Freemasonry

By Blake Simmons, 32°
Wise Master, Southern Consistory
Chapter of Rose Croix

The below article was printed in the Southern Colorado Consistory newsletter. The author has granted permission for it to be reprinted in our RiteWorks.

Masonic Ritual is of Great Importance Within Freemasonry^{1,2}

It serves as a vehicle for moral instruction, using allegories and symbols to convey lessons related to virtues such as honesty, integrity, charity, and brotherly love.³ Rituals fulfill functions of initiation, transmission of knowledge, and investiture in specific roles.⁴ Through its richly moral rituals, Freemasonry aims to make good men better by altering their level of consciousness through a gradual process of internal change.⁵

Often, excellence in ritual work is not considered in regular meetings and only when special circumstances happen do we strive to do our best work. In many ways, Masonry has become casual. Informality is often the norm and Formality in our work becomes lax. I understand that the stories of men being dedicated to lectures and work with perfection is often looked at as un-needed. The often-told story is of a Brother, usually one who has been in the craft for many years, who is a stickler for every word just right, and every move just so, and how he is ready to correct errors. This is often seen as just someone who is difficult and critical. Let us look at this differently. Masonic Ritual, is the vehicle through which we transmit our most valuable lessons and knowledge. If the meaning is diluted, or changed by the way we perform it, then our teachings also change and the ancient teachings which are as valid today as they were in ancient times are no longer consistent.

Remember the Fellowcraft G lecture where it tells us that the secrets of Freemasonry are transmitted from the instructive tongue to the attentive ear and then stored in the faithful breast, and thus, through a succession of ages, are transmitted, unimpaired, the most excellent tenants of our institution.

If we do not make the effort to keep the ritual we perform accurate, then it is no longer unimpaired and becomes, not only more casual, but changes. Over time, this change could result in our teachings having different meanings than what they originally meant. This would change Masonry from what it truly is. I am not one who needs every word perfect, or perfect squared corners and such, but we all must always strive to do our best and stay true to the ritual and most importantly to convey the meanings of the teachings to our Brethren.

Give honor and reverence to Ritual and inspire others to do the same as it not only teaches new members, but also each one of us to improve ourselves and Masonry. After all we must all build the finest temple of ourselves and showing our finest work in the craft is one part of that excellent life we all are striving to create.

As always, this is the opinion of this Brother from his experiences. Agree, or disagree, either is fine, but discuss it and compare perspectives, so we can all learn and grow in knowledge.

Sources:

1 - www.nhgrandlodge.org

2 – The Masonic Trowel

3 - www.thesquaremagazine.com

4 - Oxford Academic

5 - The “Magic” of Masonic Ritual By Brother Akram R. Elias



Danny Tomlinson, 32° KCCH

Wreaths Across America



Wreaths Across America is an annual event held the week before Christmas with the goal of placing a Christmas wreath on the grave of every veteran. WAA was started at Arlington National Cemetery more than 20 years ago and today there are more than 4,000 participating cemeteries across the country.

The Clear Creek County Veterans Coalition annually places nearly 800 wreaths at the five cemeteries in Clear Creek County - Idaho Springs Cemetery, Alvarado Cemetery (owned by Georgetown #12), Silver Plume Cemetery, Empire Cemetery, and Mill Creek Cemetery at Dumont. As well, we place wreaths at the Central City Masonic Cemetery (jointly owned by Central #6, Black Hawk #11 and Nevada #4) and the Russell Gulch Cemetery - both located in Gilpin County.

The day begins with a brief program at the United Center in Idaho Springs, put on by the Clear Creek High School Honor Society. The young folks pay tribute to each of our military branches and share personal stories from veterans and family members. Music is always provided by a piper from the El Jebel Pipe Band. This year we were honored to have Brother Dean McConnell join us as the featured piper. After the program, volunteers are then dispatched to the cemeteries for the placement of the wreaths.

The Lodge Brothers of the Gold Country Masonic Lodges - Nevada #4, Central #6, Black Hawk #11, Georgetown #12, and Idaho Springs #26 - are always a huge part of the volunteer group. The early day pioneers in Colorado, many of whom were Masons, are resting in these mountain cemeteries and it is fitting that we participate in this respectful and dignified event to honor those who have served our country.

Wreaths are purchased each year through the generosity of the Masonic lodges, their friends and other individuals and organizations. Black Hawk #11 and Georgetown #12 have been especially generous in their support and we thank them greatly for this. When the wreaths are retrieved in late January or February, the Veterans Coalition works with Colorado Parks and Wildlife to re-purpose the wreaths as fish habitat in several Colorado lakes.

Continued on next page





Member in the Spotlight

By Jeremy DeBard, 32° KCCH

1st Lieutenant Commander (elect)
Colorado Council of Kadosh

Thomas Abbott, 32°



Tom Abbott decided to write in his own words, so I've left it as is for this column.

I was born in Colorado Springs and lived by Black Forest until I was about nine. That is where I learned to ride horses and take care of animals. When I was around 8 years old my dad told my brother and I that when we turned 21 he would give us money to pay for our initiations into the Masons. We could do with the money what we wished.

My parents bought a ranch between Center and Del Norte, at the base of the San Juan Mountain range, in the San Luis Valley and we moved there. I attended Center High School during the race riots time during the 70's. It was a small town but we had a lot of out-of-town agitators and violence there. I played sports and graduated with honors as president of clubs and vice president of my class. I was a member of DeMolay and served as Master Councilor there. My brother and I worked breaking horses and tending the animals we had. There were horses, cows, sheep, pigs, rabbits, etc. If anyone wonders why I don't like chicken, it's because we had too many growing up. Rabbit tastes like chicken too. It was a great place to grow up for fishing, hunting, shooting, dirt biking, riding horses, etc.

My dad worked for the telephone company so my brother and I did the farming and ranch work. We had one field where we grew alfalfa to feed the livestock. We had to hand irrigate it, meaning we used siphon tubes to pull water from irrigation ditches. We had horses we would break, meaning tame them to where you could ride them without them bucking you off. We'd get one where it minded real well and my dad would trade for a couple of others and we'd start over. We had to round up the livestock at night to feed them and keep them from wild animals. There were days when we'd get home from school and saddle up to go round them up but you couldn't see the horse's ears from the saddle due to the heavy snow. When we'd get back it would make a ripping sound as your icy jeans pulled away from the leather saddle. Then when it was time to milk the cow, she would get mad because your hand were cold and would kick you in the head. In the spring we'd go clean out the irrigation ditch, clearing it out with shovels and pitchforks, and burning weeds. We also had to replace fence posts. The area we lived in had A LOT of rock to dig through. Fun times were had by all. I did teach my sister how to chew tobacco then, but she puked and that was the end of that for her.

I worked farming for a few years, rotating between jobs plowing fields, planting, harvesting, and loading semis with 100 pound bags of potatoes in the winters. I also put up and

serviced those big center pivot sprinklers you see in fields, and drove fertilizer trucks. I left to go work at the Climax mine above Leadville and lived in Buena Vista. I turned 21 and my dad gave me a check for the Masonic initiation. I asked for a petition. That was about 44 years ago. I was initiated into Temple Gate Lodge in Center, where my dad was a member. I had assistance with my proficiency work from Brother John Payson from Mount Princeton Lodge in Buena Vista. After becoming a Master Mason I also joined Mount Princeton Lodge (which is now in Salida). I got in line and made it to Senior Deacon and the mine closed. At Climax, when I started working underground, I looked around at the old guys. I made note of which ones still had all their body parts and requested to be partnered up with them. I ended up working my way to the top paid position for underground non-supervisor work. I also had the most dangerous job in the mine, but it was fun and they paid me very well. I also worked as a part time supervisor. The mine closed though and I needed a job so I left the area and went back to farming.

One night my younger brother, who also had worked Climax, and I were sitting around drinking beer. I said we needed to find a job with some security, where we didn't have to change jobs with the seasons, had good pay and benefits, and with a low chance of being laid off. He suggested we both become cops. We both had a good laugh, as we were kind of more Dukes of Hazard type brothers than cops. He joined the military and became Military Police and I continued farming for a while. My brother, after being in the military for a bit told me not to join the military. He said I'd end up locked up there, because I'd end up telling off the wrong person. While serving as an MP in Germany my brother finally used the money my dad gave him to join the Masons there. He also ended up a cop stateside, working Border Patrol in Florida until he retired.

I worked putting up steel buildings, hanging iron, for a while. I also worked as a lumberjack for a bit but that didn't last long because that is a miserable job, walking around in 2 feet of snow, cutting down trees and limbing them. Maybe it would be a better summer job. The construction work was OK but it's not that much fun looking down, or when the wind blows. The steel beams get really slick when it rains too, just in case you ever find yourself in that position.

I decided I was tired of breaking my back for little pay so I signed up to go to college in Trinidad, Colorado.

While in Trinidad I attended lodge there, but very infrequently, due to school and working full time. I worked construction, bartending, and school grounds maintenance and security mostly. I was also the assistant director of the Trinidad Teen Club, which offered kids activities to keep them out of trouble and assist with homework. I graduated from Trinidad with honors and an Associates degree in Criminal Justice. I went to Metro State in Denver and received my Bachelors degree in Criminal Justice, again with honors. While I was attending Metro I worked as security at the Denver courthouse and then in warrant verification.

I got a job as a police officer with Commerce City and worked there for 7 years. I worked patrol, gang unit, SWAT, hostage negotiations, and detective, eventually ending up as a homicide detective. I received numerous awards there, but one of the best was when the cops there voted me to be the most inspirational officer on the department. It's always nice to be

acknowledged by your peers. My partner there convinced me to transfer with him to Aurora. It was working for some great people here that I learned to really be a cop. "Always treat everyone (including the bad guys) as you want your mother or grandmother to be treated." "Always do what is right, even if it doesn't end up in an arrest or ticket for the bad guy." I didn't always arrest or ticket people. If I could talk to them and felt the situation was resolved or the bad behavior was going to stop, I felt I had done my job and didn't need to involve the courts. My arrest stats were always way higher than most everybody else's anyway, so I didn't catch much grief over it. And when I did, I didn't care because I knew I did what was the right thing. My time as a homicide detective was eventful. Lots of strange stories there.

I worked at the Aurora Police Department for 20 more years, and received a few more awards. I did patrol, background investigations, School Resource Officer, some homicide detective work, and was assigned to more committees on gangs, mental health, community issues, etc. than I can remember. I also founded and became director of the police department Peer Support Unit. It was designed to give assistance to other officers who needed support. We were automatically called out to counsel any officer involved in a major incident. We also supported officers who were having stress issues, like divorce or substance abuse, etc. One of the parts I didn't enjoy was having to be present when an officer was fired. Most times they deserved it, but nobody wants to be there for that. The Peer Support unit was met with skepticism at first, but grew into a very large and well received unit. The thing about police work is there is always something new and different each day. When you think you've seen it all, somebody comes along to shock you with something bizarre.

While working as an SRO I met my wife, who was a school administrator. We dated for 14 years. She moved to Alamosa to be Principal there. She was there for a year and then convinced me to retire. She was tired of worrying about all the death threats, and seeing me unhappy with the way the job had become. I got married, retired, and moved to Alamosa in 2016, all within a couple of weeks. Talk about a lot of life changes at once. I was ready to retire though. I thoroughly enjoyed my job for about the first 25 years but the last two or so were horrible. The political climate had changed and everyone, it seemed, hated police. Every day when I went to work we had new directives on what NOT to do. The department was so afraid of bad press or being sued that they didn't want us to do anything. I decided if I couldn't be a cop, I'd take my toys and go home. During my time as a police officer I made sure to develop outside interests, so I had friends outside of law enforcement and other stories to tell when I left. We moved back to my house in Aurora in 2017 to help our kids out.

OK, about the hair and braided beard...

After working 27 years having to shave and keep my hair short, I decided I was done with that. And wouldn't you know it? As soon as I retired APD decided officers could have facial hair. I probably wouldn't have grown a beard if I kept working. It was more of a response to the political atmosphere when I left. Defiance or something. I do like decorating with Celtic hair clips and Celtic and Masonic beads, and even lights, in my beard though. I also have Celtic tattoos that APD made me keep covered.

My wife, Denise, retired as a school administrator. She is one of those people who can't stay

still though. She got a job with the post office after retiring, and worked there a couple of years. Now she works for the US Census in recruiting. She is my rock. I am the head of the house but she is the heart.

I am a member of the Knights of Saint Andrew (and I like rocking a kilt), Denver Consistory, Jacques DeMolay Lodge (primary) and Kiowa Lodge. I also attend all of Aurora Revelation's meetings although not a member. I am a member of Loyalty Chapter OES but am demitting and joining Dawn Chapter in Aurora because it's a lot closer. My dad and I tend to visit other lodges pretty frequently too. When I started through the line at Jacques DeMolay Lodge I requested the Senior Deacon position, since that's where I was at in Buena Vista. They agreed, so I am currently the Senior Warden and (hopefully) will be Master in 2026. I am Junior Warden in Kiowa Lodge and I will (hopefully) be Master of Kiowa Lodge in 2027. I am or have been involved in degrees 1-3 in Blue Lodge, and degrees 4, 20, 29, and 30 in Consistory. I like all of them, but if I had to pick a favorite it's probably the 29th since I'm pretty big on Celtic culture and history.

I have 4 grown children. Jonathan is Denise's son and is a judge. He has given us 3 grandchildren, Claire, Noah, and Zoe, the miracle baby. She was born prematurely but is doing fine and is a real firecracker now. Annette is Denise's son and works in corporate insurance. They both live in Denver. Justin is my son who is a mechanic and lives in Kalispell, Montana now. He has given me one grandchild, Wyatt Ray Abbott. Wyatt was named "Ray" after his grandfather, my dad. Tyler is my other son, who works putting up buildings and is an evangelist on the side. It actually might be the other way around with him. I think he's more evangelist than builder but he's good at both. Tyler just moved back to Denver from LA, where he was going to Bible college. Tyler was a member of DeMolay. None of the others have joined any Masonic organizations. Just when Tyler moved back here then Justin moved away. But I was happy to have all my kids in one place. I am very proud of my family.

Many of you probably already know my dad, "Ole Ray Abbott" from lodge or Consistory. It seems like everywhere I go people know him. My mom, "Bobbie" (Roberta) Abbott was Grand Martha for Ruth Richards in Eastern Star and my dad was her Grand Escort. He was Grand Representatives for OES to Montana. My mom can't get out and around anymore. My dad wears one of the white hats at Consistory and I'm pretty proud of him. He spent many years as a district lecturer though so whenever I have a speaking part I have to make sure I know it. They both live with my wife and me.

My Grandad on my mom's side was a Mason. I had a great uncle on my Dad's side who was a Mason. My dad and brother are Masons. My mom and sister are both members of Eastern Star. I have many more brothers that I'm not blood related to and I hope you know who you are.

My non-Masonic pass-times and hobbies include watching horror movies, reading, gardening, attending church, riding motorcycles, shooting guns, camping, sports (although my body doesn't agree anymore), cooking new dishes, music, and spending as much time as possible with family.

What I like best about the reunions, both Spring and Fall, is getting to see the friends I've made, and making new ones. That is also what I like best about Masonry; making friends with

really good people. Those are the main lessons I learned and gained from Masonry and Scottish Rite. We are all one, even if we aren't all the same. I look forward to seeing you all at the next reunion.

Things people might not know about me include: I used to be a musician and played keyboards for years. Jacques DeMolay, Ronald Reagan, and Audie Murphy are my heroes. My favorite band is WASP (yes, the heavy metal band). I once helped clear out and tear down a haunted house. UFOs are all over the place where I grew up. Favorite quotes are: "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God" (Ben Franklin), and "You can't truly call yourself peaceful unless you're capable of great violence. If you're not capable of violence, you're not peaceful. You're harmless" (Stefan Grant). I was an extrovert for years as a cop and now am an introvert because people wear you out. I was happy as heck when they told us we had to stay home for COVID. I also have a really dark sense of humor. I can find the humor in about any situation, so some people don't understand me. As a cop we dealt with some pretty horrific situations and humor was the only thing that kept us going, so we used it as a defense mechanism. My wife is my biggest support. I'd be lost without all she does for me. I act all self-sufficient but really depend on her.

At the risk of being politically incorrect, which I proudly always am, I'd like to wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year!

MASONIC TRIVIA

1. Where did the Reverend John M. Chivington preach his first sermon in Colorado?

In a Masonic Lodge in Denver, shortly after his arrival on May 8, 1860. He wrote: "Henry Allen founded a Masonic Lodge in Colorado long before there was a church or school?"

2. What first informal meeting was held in the Territory of Colorado?

Seven Freemasons, claiming they were tired of being too long associated with "adventurers of dubious background," met in the settlement of Auraria, at the junction of Cherry Creek and the Platte. This became the first meeting of Masons in the Territory.

3. When was the first Masonic building erected in Colorado?

It was built in 1859 at Gregory Gulch, 40 miles northwest of Auraria in the high Rocky Mountains. About 100 Freemasons leveled the ground with ox teams dragging in logs for the hall. Four "tilers" with rifles and revolvers stood guard for the meetings. Over 200 names were entered on the rolls as visitors.

4. Which Grand Lodge was organized during the early days of the Civil War?

A Grand Lodge was formed in Colorado on August 2, 1861.

5. Northern and Southern sympathizers caused a Lodge in Colorado to take an unusual action. What was it?

In Denver Lodge #5, the members appeared to be evenly divided in their affinity for the opposing sides in the war. This appeared to be a problem that couldn't be overcome, so the Lodge recommended to the Grand Lodge that a charter be granted for the formation of Union Lodge. It was granted. But not a single member of Denver Lodge demitted to affiliate with the new one! They had learned it is not necessary for all Freemasons to think alike to remain friends and Brothers.

- Masonic Trivia and Facts, Allen E. Roberts 1994, Anchor Communications, Highland Springs, VA



Special Birthdays

90 Years "YOUNG"

Larry Steller

James Anthony Vastardis

80 Years "YOUNG"

Charles Calvin Cook

Henderson Edward McIntyre

Bardwell Claiburne Moss

David Jay Rowley

Edgar Richard Watrous III

70 Years "YOUNG"

Raymond Alan Magnuson

50 Years "OLD"

Jonathan David Aderhold

Lance Laverne Maynard

Riccardo Mazzeo

Andrew Lee Newby

Our January Youngster

Dillon Ray Brickhouse (33)

Interesting Facts about January

In the ancient Roman calendar, January was not always the first month of the year. January 1st became the official start of the new year in 45 BC when Julius Caesar introduced the Julian calendar.

The Anglo-Saxons called January "Wulfmonath" meaning "wolf month."

In Scotland, "first-footing" is practiced on New Year's Day, where the first person to enter a home brings gifts for luck.

Eating 12 grapes at midnight on New Year's Eve is a Spanish tradition believed to bring good luck.

In Japan, people eat toshikoshi soba (year-crossing noodles) on New Year's Eve for good luck.

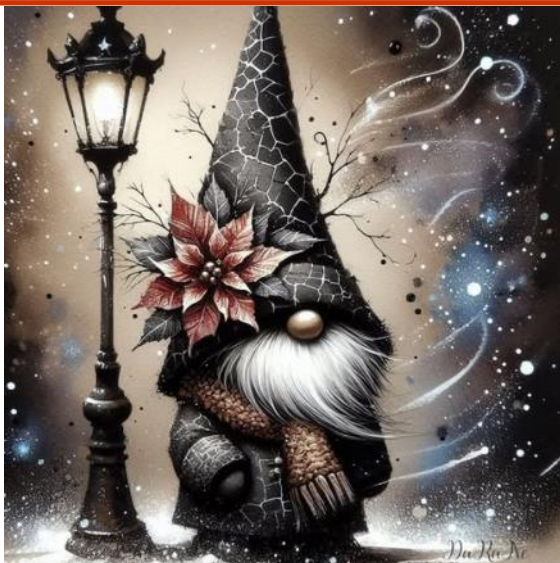
Many cultures believe that what you do on January 1st sets the tone for the entire year.

In some parts of the United States, eating black-eyed peas on New Year's Day is thought to bring prosperity.

January is [National Soup Month](#) in the United States.

The popular New Year's song "Auld Lang Syne" was adapted and partially written by Robert Burns from traditional Scottish folk songs in 1788.

January is named after Janus, the Roman god of doors, gates, and transitions.



MEMORIAL SCROLL

Ott-Vidrik (Fred) Aring, 32°	11/05/2024
Dwight Morgan Heffner, 32°	11/13/2024
Edgar Louis Munson, Jr., 32°	11/03/2024
Jack Davy Patten, 32°	11/18/2024
Louie L. Singleton, Jr., 32°	09/26/2024
Ray Lyman Speaker, 32°	11/15/2024
Gerald Edward Walker, 32°	05/02/2024



All Scottish Rite Masons in good standing are entitled to have a Rose Croix Funeral Service at the time of their passing. Members should advise their families of their wishes to have this beautiful service. It is a very dignified service intended to help bring comfort to the family.

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AND RSVP HERE**



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Please drop items off in the bin located in the building.
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They need things like art supplies, toys, non-perishable snacks, and
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Any questions? Contact Pablo Colomban
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QUESTIONS/COMMENTS: [Pablo Colomban, 32° KCCH](#)



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This publication is produced monthly by and for the benefit of members, staff, and interested parties associated with the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction of the United States of America, and more particularly the Denver Consistory in the Valley of Denver, Orient of Colorado. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Denver Consistory or its officers.

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