



Valley of Alexandria, Orient of Virginia
AlexandriaScottishRite.org

Scottish Rite Bulletin

September - October 2026



Personal Representative Message

Ill. Peter E. Terrill, 33° Personal Representative of the SGIG in Virginia

As the summer begins to finally wane and we enter our 'shoulder' season of fall, I usually think of this time as the true start of a new annum of activity. For many of us, September marks a return to schedules, classrooms, and regular labor after the leisurely pace of July and August. In our Lodges and Valleys, September also signals the resumption of more active degree work and preparation for our fall Reunion. It is a time when Brethren return to the quarries, tools in hand, ready to resume the labors of building after a season of rest, reflection, and renewal (see my last bulletin article about this!).



As we step back onto the mosaic pavement, it is worth pausing to reflect on the nature of the journey we have undertaken as Masons. In a modern culture obsessed with acceleration—where instant gratification, rapid promotions, and quick fixes dominate our daily lives—it is easy to drag those same expectations into our fraternity. We often hear Brethren express a desire to advance rapidly through the degrees, or to achieve high office as quickly as possible. Many Masonic bodies, lacking a surplus of leaders-in-waiting, also seek to move members to the East to fill critical leadership roles. But this dynamic undermines the fundamental purpose of Freemasonry, which by its very design rejects the metrics of the sprint.

Masonry is not a race with a finish line, and our Degrees are not hurdles to be cleared in record time; Masonry is a marathon through life. The degrees of the Scottish Rite, from the entry of the petitioner in the 4° to the sublime culmination of the 32°, are profound, layered philosophical milestones designed to be lived, experienced, and absorbed over decades. When we join a new Masonic body just to rush through the chairs or earn another jewel, we risk missing the very transformation the Craft intends to work upon our hearts. Masonry embodies the age-old tenet: it's not the destination, it's the journey.

Consider the runner in a marathon. If a runner sprints out of the starting blocks with full power, burning all their energy in the first mile, they will inevitably hit a wall of exhaustion long before the race is finished. They miss the rhythm of their breathing, the beauty of the landscape, and the general enjoyment of the experience. Similarly, the Mason who treats the fraternity as a checklist of titles and degrees burns out his enthusiasm, reducing a lifelong spiritual and intellectual awakening into a hollow exercise in badge-collecting.

To do the work of Freemasonry requires patience and deliberate intention. "Doing the work" extends far beyond memorizing ritual or occupying a station in the East. Real Masonic labor happens in the quiet spaces of introspection: examining our own biases, subduing our passions, practicing brotherly love, and extending relief to those who suffer.

This kind of labor cannot be rushed: it requires patience, constant toil, and the passage of time.

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Personal Representative Message

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When a candidate receives a degree, he is given a seed. It is unreasonable to expect that seed to blossom into a mature, fruit-bearing tree by the next stated meeting. The tools of our Craft—the square, the compasses, the plumb, and the level—must be lived with. They must be tested against the trials of personal and professional challenges and occasional disappointment and sorrow. Over years, these tools shift from abstract philosophical concepts into lived realities that anchor us when the storms of life beat against our house.

Moreover, in our hurry to reach some imagined destination, we frequently overlook the exquisite value of the journey itself and the company of the Brethren walking beside us. The true magic of our Craft happens in the dining hall over coffee, in the quiet conversations before Lodge opens, and in the shared laughter during travels to neighboring Lodges. These moments of genuine human connection are the lifeblood of our Fraternity. One recent evening while traveling in Taos, New Mexico I was able to attend a Lodge meeting, which proved an enjoyable and fun occasion due to the hospitality and welcoming spirit of the local Brethren. In that evening, it occurred to me that one of the most remarkable and pleasurable attributes of Masonry is the ability to walk into a Lodge in any city or medium sized town in this country and meet a group of men who immediately call me “Brother,” and literally treat me as one.

We must remind ourselves that we are part of an unbroken chain of tradition stretching back centuries. The brethren who built the cathedrals of Europe or created the foundations of our Craft did not do so with an eye on a calendar deadline. They labored patiently, knowing that their individual hands would only lay a few stones, but that the cathedral itself was a monument to eternity. There is no greater reward in Freemasonry than the realization that, step by steady step, we are helping to build a better world—one thoughtful, patient Mason at a time.

The Nearly Deleted Scenes of the 31°

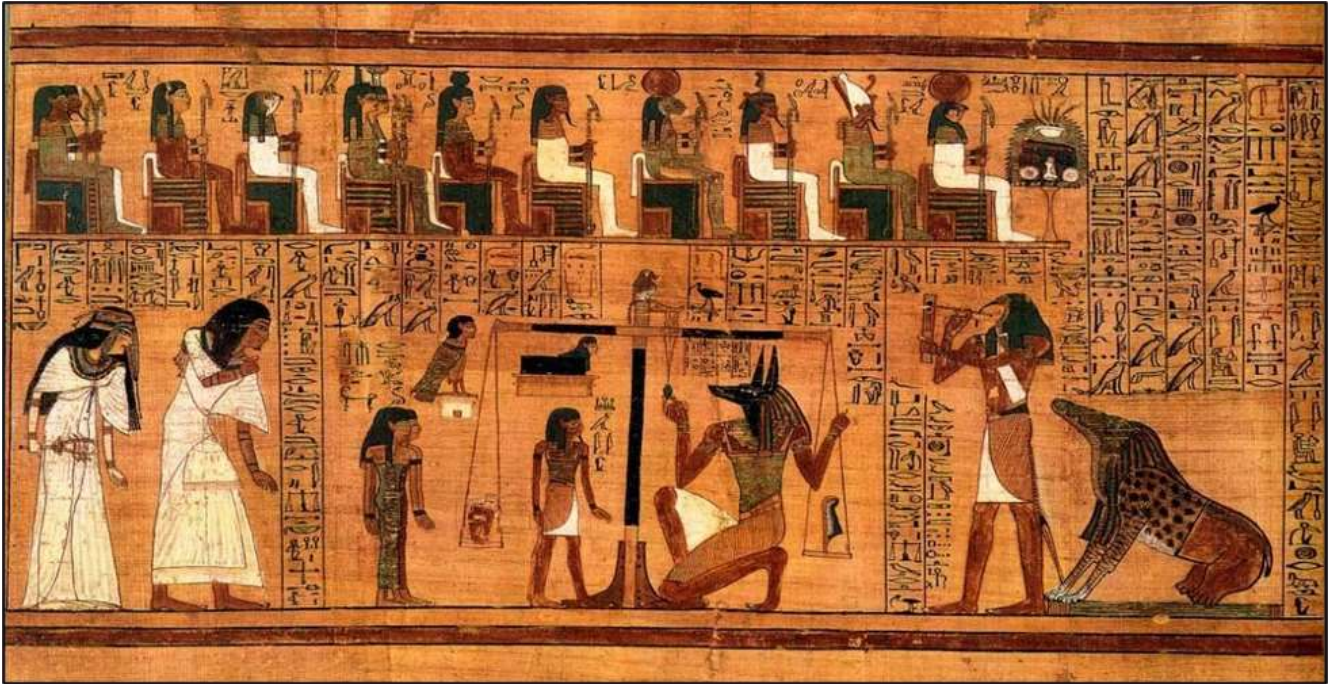
Brother Ron Craft, KCCH

The 31°, Inspector Inquisitor, or Initiate of the Egyptian Mysteries, centers on a collection of ancient Egyptian funerary texts known as The Book of Coming Forth by Day, better known today as The Book of the Dead. The Book of the Dead was a set of instructions meant to help a newly deceased soul navigate the dangerous journey awaiting it in the afterlife and finally reach eternal life. Part of that journey was the final judgment, where the gods of the Egyptian pantheon debated the merits of how the soul had spent its time on Earth. In the degree, the candidate is Cheres [Key-rees], a man who has recently died and is made to answer for his actions before the gods. The central theme of the degree is that humans are not perfect and temptations surround us every day. We will fail, and are probably meant to, but what matters is that we overcome those failings and learn from our mistakes.

A second theme is more subtle and easily overlooked: judgment of the soul is a thread common to many of the world's religions. But this secondary theme covers more than judgment alone. It reminds us that religions share similar characteristics, and that their differences should be valued rather than dismissed.

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As Scottish Rite Masons, we are called to live by the values of tolerance and the protection of rights, meaning the religious convictions held by another should never be cast aside. According to many traditions, the wisdom of the Great Architect of the Universe is unknowable to those of us on the material plane. We can only scratch the surface of what lies beyond this life, and rigid religious dogma often stems from that very ignorance.



Albert Pike, who studied comparative religion extensively, saw great value in learning from other faiths, both in their commonalities and their differences. After all, our ancient forefathers and our future grandchildren all came, or will come, into life under the exact same sun and stars as we did. We are all made from the same star stuff, and we are all on the same journey.

Upon becoming the degree master of the 31°, I had to get my bearings on a degree I had never seen performed. What I found was a rather large cast calling for extravagant costumes and props. The central theme of the final judgment was clear to me, but I nearly missed the secondary theme entirely. That lesson lives in the first and last scenes, a conversation between a Knight of the Crusades and his Squire. The Knight has come upon an Egyptian tomb bearing hieroglyphs from the Book of the Dead, particularly the scene of final judgment. I initially considered cutting this portion, since it didn't seem directly tied to the central drama of the gods debating the merits of Cheres. Fortunately, I raised the idea with a friend and mentor, Brother Tim Dahlman, 32°, who explained that removing those scenes would leave the degree's lesson incomplete.

In the scene, the Knight has discovered the tomb and is contemplating its meaning when his Squire enters. Young and inexperienced, the Squire sees no value in the religious beliefs of the ancient Egyptians and suggests they destroy the tomb and use its stone as mortar for a church.

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The Nearly Deleted Scenes of the 31°

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The wise Knight tells him, "Men too often seek to destroy that which they do not understand. Where is the glory in destruction? Christ taught us that there was glory in good works." The drama of the degree is the Knight's attempt to open the Squire's mind by reading the hieroglyphs aloud from the tomb wall. By the final scene, the Squire comes to understand that ancient wisdom has much to teach future generations and should not be so easily cast aside.

After seeing the degree performed in full, I understood just how important that lesson was. I no longer wanted to cut those scenes; instead, I wanted to strengthen them. The two scenes needed updating, since it wasn't always clear that the Knight and Squire were standing in a tomb. I was inspired after watching the degree performed in the Valley of Guthrie, which used a large wall depicting the "judgement" scene. With the help of Brother Greg Valker, KCCH, and Meghan Duley (daughter of Brother Matt Duley, 32°), the degree will now feature our own tomb wall as the centerpiece of the Knight and Squire scenes. Brother Valker built the wall itself, and Meghan, a Graphic Design major at James Madison University, is painting detailed freehand hieroglyphs and scenes drawn directly from the Book of the Dead. It's my sincere hope that candidates will connect with this scene more clearly and come to appreciate the value of religious and cultural differences. These differences are too often a source of strife in society today, but Masons should be equipped to rise above them, regardless of their own personal convictions.



To see more of Meghan Duley's work, visit her Instagram: www.instagram.com/meghansgallery07

2026 Alexandria Scottish Rite Fall Reunion

III. Scott Springer, 33° Director of Work

The 2026 ASR Fall Reunion is not that far away. Day one will be on Saturday, October 17th. Day two will be the following Saturday, October 24th, with a cookout/picnic afterwards. We will confer 12 degrees and communicate 17 using the Missouri Cinematic Degrees. I encourage everyone to come out and, at the very least, sit in the audience to show your support for the candidates. This also shows your support for and appreciation of the Brethren involved in conferring the degrees.

While attending as a spectator is always appreciated, getting involved in the degrees is where the real fun is at. It takes A LOT of people to put on a Reunion, and we are ALWAYS in need of additional help. So, if you'd like to get involved beyond simply attending, there are many different ways that you can help out:



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- Let your inner thespian out and take a part in a degree. There are a large number of roles with varying degrees of difficulty. If you enjoy a ritual challenge, consider taking on one of the larger parts. If a lot of memorization isn't your thing, there are plenty of parts that have minimal lines that anyone can memorize. If there's a particular part in a particular degree that really speaks to you, don't hesitate to reach out to the Degree Master and volunteer. Even if the part is already being performed by another Brother, Degree Masters are always looking for "bench depth" and would gladly welcome you as an understudy.
- If acting isn't your cup of tea, not a problem. The Reunions can't go on without a great deal of production support and there are a variety of different tasks that you can volunteer for:
 - **Set Build:** Every conferred degree has its own set of furniture and props that must be set up and taken down for each performance and extra hands to help with that will always be welcome.
 - **Lighting and Electrical:** Responsible for handling the various stage lighting and electrical tasks during the degrees
 - **Projection Booth:** Responsible for spotlighting selected cast members during degrees and projecting the required screen images at the appropriate times during the degrees.
 - **Sound:** Responsible for micing up cast members with wireless microphones, setting up and staging any necessary stand mics, and controlling sound levels throughout the degrees.
 - **Wardrobe:** Handles and organizes the Valley's extensive costume inventory and ensures that all cast members are properly clothed for their respective degrees
 - **Prompting:** Responsible for following along with the degree scripts during conferrals and providing any necessary prompting if a cast member can't remember his lines and calls for assistance. Also acts as an offstage "disembodied voice" in some degrees as called for by the script.



This isn't a complete list of all of the ways in which you can help, so feel free to reach out if there's a way you feel you could contribute that you don't see here. I promise you that the time and effort you spend getting involved and helping out will be paid back in spades with fellowship, camaraderie, laughs, and fond memories. Please reach out to me at pm.acacia16@gmail.com and let me know if you want to join the fun, and I'll connect you with the appropriate person to match your interests.

And don't forget to get those petitions in!!

Spirit of '76 (September - October during our nation's founding)

Celebrating and Contemplating the United States of America's 250th birthday.

*"Resistance to tyranny becomes the Christian and social duty of each individual...
Continue steadfast and, -- Thomas Paine*



- **October 7, 1763** – Proclamation of 1763 – King George III band colonists from settling beyond the Appalachian Mountains
- **October 7-25, 1765** – Stamp Act! Congress meets in New York to discuss the crisis
- **September 5 – October 26, 1774** – First Continental Congress – Carpenter's Hall, Philadelphia
- **October 13, 1775** – US Navy Established
- **September 22, 1776** – British Execute Nathan Hale
- **October 19, 1781** – General Cornwallis officially surrenders at Yorktown
- **September 3, 1783** – US and Great Britain sign the Treaty of Paris

Being American

III. Paul Evancoe, 33°

What does it mean to be American and where did our founding principles come from? America is fundamentally distinct from all other countries in its founding, in its national culture, and in the values, rights, and privileges it confers upon us. We are generally taught that our Founding Fathers devised the democratic form of modern government, the doctrine of checks and balances, the idea that liberty is best secured if political power is both divided and shared among three distinct branches of government. Contrary to popular belief, the origins of the democratic principle reside in antiquity and began long before America was even discovered.

Throughout the course of this article, I will attempt to connect some dots in history that directly contributed to the genesis of our Constitution. It is a story we need to appreciate, especially at this moment in our nation's 250-year anniversary.

Our story begins over 2,000 years ago in ancient Greece, somewhere between 384 BC and 322 BC, with a Greek philosopher by the name of Aristotle and his theory of a "mixed constitution"; a form of government that integrated elements of democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy.

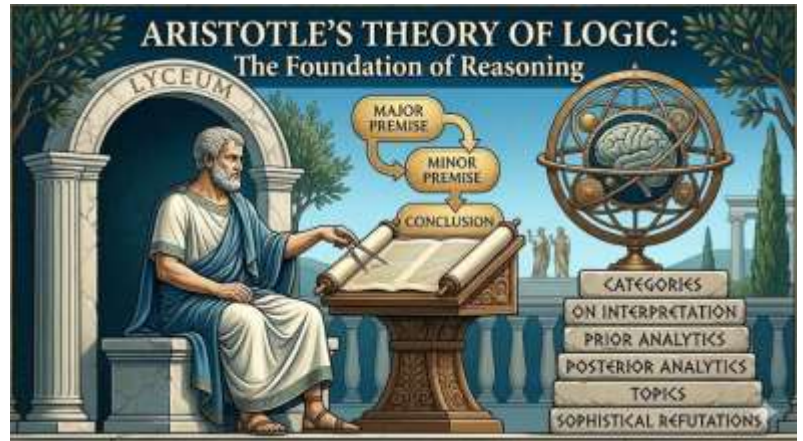
Aristotle was a student of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great. His writings cover many subjects, including physics, metaphysics, poetry, theater, music, logic, rhetoric, linguistics, politics, government, ethics, biology, and zoology.

Together with Plato and Socrates (Plato's teacher), Aristotle is one of the most influential figures in American Constitutional philosophy. Aristotle's writings on mixed constitution were the first to conceptualize a comprehensive system encompassing morality, aesthetics, logic, science, politics, and metaphysics.

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Aristotle's works contain the earliest known formal study of logic, which, 2,000 years later, morphed into today's "modern formal logic."

In metaphysics, Aristotelianism had a profound influence on philosophical and theological thinking in the Islamic and Jewish traditions, and today, his thinking continues to influence Christian theology, especially the scholastic tradition of the Catholic Church. Aristotle was also well known among medieval Muslim intellectuals and revered as "The First Teacher." His ethics gained renewed interest with the modern advent of "virtue ethics," which became a "square" working tool for us Masons.



America's next chapter was written by a Roman historian, Polybius, in his 6-volume characterization of the ancient Roman constitution. Polybius's 6-volume work titled "*The Histories*" starts in 264 BC and finishes in 146 BC. These works mainly examine the years in which Ancient Rome rose to superpower status from 220 BC to 167 BC, describing Rome's efforts in subduing its arch-enemy, Carthage, thereby becoming the dominant Mediterranean force. Polybius concludes the Romans became the (known) world's pre-eminent power because they maintain customs and traditions which promote a "deep desire for noble acts, a love of virtue, piety towards parents and elders, and a fear of the gods."

I hope this is beginning to sound familiar to my brother Masons.

Polybius was followed by Marsilius of Padua, an Italian medieval scholar, who, in 1324 AD, wrote *Defensor pacis* (meaning The Defender of Peace). Marsilius wrote this treatise during a power struggle between Pope John XXII and Louis of Bavaria, the elected candidate for Holy Roman Emperor. Marsilius's *Defensor pacis* laid the foundation of modern doctrines that separate the State from religious authority. Today, we call it the "separation of church and state."

Coming next were Sir John Fortescue's 15th-century writings about the English political institutions, especially his emphasis on the unique role of judges in a law-respecting regime. Between 1394 and 1480, Sir John Fortescue was Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales and the author of the celebrated work "*De laudibus legum Angliae*" (meaning "concerning the praises of the laws of England"). In this work, Fortescue made the first expression of what would later become known in today's criminal law as "Blackstone's formulation." Blackstone's formulation holds that it is better that 10 guilty people go free than one innocent person suffer. Fortescue's theories provided a basis for the notion that you are innocent until proven guilty. And the prosecution has the burden of proof to prove that you are guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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The next critical stride occurred in the 16th century in a document titled "Paeon of praise," penned by Gasparo Contarini, which was added to the Venetian constitution. Contarini was the first great political thinker who described a governmental system of checks and balances; a system in which government power is not simply separated, but countervailing. It implies a balance of power where one factor neutralizes another (Equal and Opposite), and that is the framework our Founders used in designing our constitutional republic.

And that brings us to the 18th century in pre-revolutionary British America, where a champion of British liberty by the name of Montesquieu famously proposed the idea that political power should be divided among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. Montesquieu was the most frequently quoted authority on government and politics in colonial pre-revolutionary British America and was cited more by our American founders than any other source - except for the Bible. Following the American Revolution, Montesquieu's work remained a powerful influence on many of the American founders, most notably James Madison of Virginia, the "Father of the U.S. Constitution."

Montesquieu's philosophy that "government should be set up so that no man need be afraid of another" reminded Madison and others that a free and stable foundation for America's new national government required a clearly defined and balanced separation of powers.

John Adams wrote the concluding chapter when he developed the political architecture of an independent judiciary in his 1776 pamphlet, "Thoughts on Government."



"There is no greater tyranny, than that which is perpetuated under the shield of law and in the name of justice" - Montesquieu

The epilogue was penned by the framers of the U.S. Constitution when they memorialized Adams' political architecture in Article III, and by John Marshall and other early American judges when they engaged in the ultimate expression of judicial independence in their "Judicial Review."

A quick clarification: The U.S. Constitution was not signed in 1776; it was signed on September 17, 1787, in Philadelphia. The document signed in 1776 was the Declaration of Independence, which was adopted on July 4, 1776, and signed on August 2, 1776.

And so – our Constitutional Republic form of government, while unique, was molded on the shoulders of many great thinkers that spanned most of recorded human history, and it has served us well for the last 250 years.

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From a historical point of view, Masonry and America are surgically attached at the hip. We share philosophy from many of the same historical roots. Like the proverbial chicken or the egg, some may question which came first, Masonry or America? In our case, we know which came first. Masonry is a modern idea that claims an ancient pedigree by adopting and adapting many of the philosophies generated by keen thinkers over the past two thousand years. While we rarely hear them mentioned or credited, Masonry and America share a conceptual pedigree from thinkers like Aristotle, Plato and Socrates, from Polybius, Marsilius and Dante, from Sir John Fortescue, Contarini and Montesquieu, to James Madison and our Founding Fathers. While we share many of the same roots with other nations, American Masonry is different, because America is different. America is fundamentally distinct from all other countries in its founding, in its system of government, in its national culture, and in the values, rights and privileges it confers upon us. As American-Masons we place our trust in the Supreme Architect of the Universe, and we pledge our unwavering allegiance to the United States of America for which we all stand.

Be proud of being American. Be proud of who we are. Be American!

James Madison University Scottish Rite Day

Rite Care Camp Visit

On Tuesday, July 14th, Brethren from Alexandria Scottish Rite Valley drove and carpooled down to James Madison University to meet other brethren from the Orient and visit the Rite Care Summer Clinic for Childhood Language Disorders.

The Childhood Language Disorder clinic at James Madison University was started in 1985. They support training and treatment to help children overcome language disorders. Rite Care funds fellowships and scholarships for students studying to be speech pathologists, and fund clinics and treatment programs for children



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General Secretary's Corner

Ill. Michael P. Bible, 33°, General Secretary

ALEXANDRIA VALLEY OFFICE

Our regular hours, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 10am-2pm.
Please call the office first at 703-998-9044.

2027 DUES NOTICES

Dues notices have been mailed out recently by Supreme Council. You can pay your dues on our website by clicking the *Pay Dues* button, you can mail a check to the Alexandria Scottish Rite, 1430 West Braddock Road, Alexandria, VA 22302, or you can call the Secretary and pay with a credit card over the phone. You can also sign up for the “**Automatic Renewal Program**” through the Scottish Rite portal if you pay online. You will get an email reminder a few days before payment is processed and you can opt out at any time.



FEAST of TISHRI

On Tuesday, September 22, we will have our Feast of Tishri banquet, followed by the celebration of the Feast of Tishri, which will be open to all. Families are encouraged to attend. Our Sovereign Grand Commander James D. Cole, 33°, will be our guest speaker that evening so you will not want to miss it. **Reservation deadline is COB Wednesday September 16.**

THE 102nd VIRGINIA SCOTTISH RITE CONFERENCE- SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2026

At Caesars's Virginia Casino, 1100 West Main St., Danville, VA. Here is the link for the conference schedule:

https://www.alexandriascottishrite.com/files/ugd/a4388a_a334653cfe9e4b6a95ead0673c8ad7c1.pdf.

Emails have gone out earlier concerning registration requirements. They are due no later than August 28th to our Valley Secretary. If you have any questions, call or email the office.

2026 FALL REUNION – SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17 and SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

We have set a goal of 20 new petitions this Fall. We are more than halfway there!

Let's get those petitions in now and let's have a great Reunion!

OFFICERS FOR 2027

Would you like to serve as an Officer in one of our Four Bodies, for 2027?

Please contact the Valley Secretary at secretary@alexandriascottishrite.org or one of the current Heads of Bodies.

James Madison University Scottish Rite Day

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The Scottish Rite Foundation provides start-up funding for new Scottish Rite Childhood Language Program (SRCLP) facilities and lends support to operations of existing facilities. James Madison University hosts one of these facilities.



Calendar of Upcoming Events

September 2026

September 7- Holiday

Labor Day

September 16- 7:00pm

Loudoun SR Club

Social Hour 6:30pm

Ashburn-Sterling Lodge

September 22- 6:00pm

Feast of Tishri

Sovereign Grand Commander

Cole Guest Speaker

Banquet- 6:00pm

Valley Meeting- 7:30pm

(Lodge of Perfection)

(RSVP by COB Sept. 16)

September 27-29

VA Scottish Rite Conference

Danville is Host Valley

Caesar's Virginia Casino Danville, VA

[https://www.alexandriascottishrite.com/2025](https://www.alexandriascottishrite.com/2025vasrconferenceinfo)

[vasrconferenceinfo](https://www.alexandriascottishrite.com/2025vasrconferenceinfo)

October 2026

October 12- Holiday

Columbus Day

October 17- 7:00am

2026 Fall Reunion

First Day of Reunion

October 21- 7:00pm

Loudoun SR Club

Social Hour- 6:30pm

Ashburn-Sterling Lodge

October 24- 7:00am

2026 Fall Reunion

Second Day of Reunion

12:30pm- Picnic Hot Dogs/Hamburgers

October 27- 6:30pm

Executive Council Meeting

Valley Meeting- 7:30pm

(Consistory & LOP)

November 2026

November 4-8

Grand Lodge of Virginia

Grand Annual Communication

Hilton at Short Pump

November 11- Holiday

Veterans Day

November 24- 7:30pm

Valley Meeting

Elections in Council of Kadosh,

and Chapter of Rose Croix

(Council of Kadosh, Rose Croix, LOP)

November 26- Holiday

Thanksgiving Day



Gregory M. Valker, KCCH, Editor
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Illustrious David H. Smith Sr., 33°, Assistant Editor

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CHANGE OF CONTACT INFORMATION

Please notify the Secretary immediately of any change of address,
phone number, or email address. This is very important so that
you may receive The Scottish Rite Journal and other publications
and correspondence without delay.

THE SCOTTISH RITE CREED

Human progress is our cause, liberty of thought our
supreme wish, freedom of conscience our mission, and the
guarantee of equal rights to all people everywhere our
ultimate goal.

ILLUSTRIOUS JAMES DEAN COLE, 33°
Sovereign Grand Commander

ILLUSTRIOUS ALAN WAYNE ADKINS, 33°, G.:C.:
Sovereign Grand Inspector General in
the Orient of Virginia

ILLUSTRIOUS PETER E. TERRILL, 33°
Personal Representative of the SGIG of Virginia in Alexandria

STATED MEETINGS

Alexandria Lodge of Perfection

Fourth Tuesday of each month
Farley W. Warner, KCCH
Venerable Master

Alexandria Chapter of Rose Croix

Fourth Tuesday
February, March, July, November
Andrew O. Marotta, 32°
Wise Master

Alexandria Council of Kadosh

Fourth Tuesday
February, April, July, November
J. Javier Amaya, 32°
Commander

Alexandria Consistory

Fourth Tuesday
April, August, October, December
Brad A. Fox, 32°
Master of Kadosh



ALEXANDRIA SCOTTISH RITE