

Letters from York

A Quarterly Publication of the Grand York Rite of Kansas

2023 Has Been a Success!

The year 2023 has brought much positive light upon the Grand York Rite of Kansas.

The Grand Master's classes were a huge success and our numbers of new York Rite members grew because of this new program. There are still Virtual Past Masters who would like to complete their York Rite journey and in the next year there will be opportunities for them to do just that.



New York Rite orders have been approved by our Grand Master to be started within our jurisdiction. There are at least two new York Rite appendant bodies which will be created in 2024 for Kansas.

A new Council of Knight Masons has been created and a new Council of the Allied Masonic Degrees is planned for Kansas in 2024.

We have seen at least one of our York Rite bodies grow and become more prosperous as we move into 2024 thanks to the energy that each of you have brought to the York Rite of Kansas.

Thank you to everyone who ha worked, and continues to work, to make the York Rite bodies of Kansas an integral part of Kansas Freemasonry.



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Special Interests

- New Knight Masons Council
- AMD is growing in 2024
- New Masonic Orders in Kansas
- South Central Meetings
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- 2024 Grand YR Meetings

News of the Ark



There is still work to be done within the quarries of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Kansas!

While the Grand Master's classes were a great success for the membership of the Grand Chapter, there are still Brothers who desire to become Companions. We will be working in 2024 to offer opportunities for the advancement of these candidates to receive the Holy Royal Arch.

Keep an eye on the 2024 schedule. There are several new and exciting opportunities for our

members to be involved which are just now in the planning stages. The year 2024 will be another exciting year for Royal Arch Masonry within the jurisdiction of Kansas and we want all our members to take part in the fun, excitement, and the fellowship our body offers.



Grand Chapter Officers

Grand High Priest: Michael Terry
Grand King: John Staton
Grand Scribe: Roger Walls
Grand Treasurer: T. Michael Fegan
Grand Secretary: Allan Jackson
Grand Chaplain: Kelly Long
Grand Capt. Of Host: Gary Strout
Grand Prin. Sojourner: Patrick Carr
Grand Royal Arch Capt.: Tom Krauss
Grand Mast. 3rd Veil: Justin Crippen
Grand Mast. 2nd Veil: Robert Haynes
Grand Mast. 1st Veil: Daron Woelk
Grand Sentinel: Frederick Kemp
Asst. Grand Sentinel: Dale Morrow

DDGHP Dist. #1: Andrew Mosley
DDGHP Dist. #2: Warren Hughes
DDGHP Dist. #3: Wayne Drake
DDGHP Dist. #4: Ron Mozingo
DDGHP Dist. #5: Patrick C. Carr

The 2023 Grand Master's Classes were a huge success for the Kansas York Rite!

Grand Council Officers

Grand Master: Gary Mason
Deputy Grand Master: Kent Needham
Grand PCW: Gary Strout
Grand Treasurer: T. Michael Fegan
Grand Recorder: Allan Jackson
Grand Chaplain: Roger Walls
Grand Capt. Guard: Robert Haynes
Grand Cond. Council: Wayne Drake
Grand Marshal: Patrick Carr
Grand Cust. Work: Tom Krauss
Grand Steward: Justin Crippen
Grand Sentinel: Mark Stephenson
Asst. Grand Sentinel: Frederick Kemp
Grand Organist: Dennis Reed

Arch Master: Wayne Rolf
Arch Master: Wayne Rector
Arch Master: Jamie Carswell

From the Ninth Arch



The Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Kansas has just completed celebrating an active and engaging year with its membership. This means it is time for us to get ready for 2024 and the excitement a new year brings to Cryptic Masonry.

At the General Grand Council session in Branson, it was announced there would be a new program for each Grand Council to participate in with its membership. This program involves having a European jurisdiction to work with and communicate with in the future. Kansas was selected to work with the Grand

Council and Chapter of Portugal. This is an exciting time to learn how this foreign jurisdiction operates and for us to explain to them how our Grand Council operates as well.

Be on the lookout for more degree work and engaging events as we move into 2024 and beyond. There is a lot happening within your Grand Council and we would love to see you at some of these special events.



The Chivalric Orders



The sun never sets on the Commandery! Whether you are in Kansas or somewhere else in the world, there are always good Sir Knights who are willing to step up and travel the forty miles to assist their fellow Christian knights.

We realize how busy we all were in 2023 with the Grand Master's classes and the special knighting events. The Grand Chapter and the Grand Council still have members in waiting to receive their respective degrees. That means there will be more work to be done in the way of knighting for 2024! These dates will be announced as they become available.

There are several new events being planned for 2024. The Knight Templar Feast will be held for the third annual year. The difference for 2024 will be a change in the location. While Stratata has been a success, it is time for us to move to a new venue to continue to create excitement within our membership. The location will be announced soon.

The Grand Commandery of Kansas is in the planning stages of putting together an Easter Sunrise Service somewhere near Salina, Kansas, for 2024. The time and location will be announced soon so be sure to keep an eye on the Grand York Rite of Kansas website and publications for more information as it becomes available.



The Triennial Session for the Grand Encampment of the Knights Templar for the United States of America will be held in August of this year in Salt Lake City, Utah. This will be an exciting time of fellowship, drill competition, and education for those members who are able to attend. The session is open to any member of a subordinate commandery and the Grand Commandery of Kansas will be there in full force to support our Grand Encampment Officers.

It appears 2024 will continue to be busy with new and more exciting opportunities for our membership to be engaged with each other and to enjoy the benefits of fellowship our Order provides.



Grand Commandery Officers

- Grand Comm: William Leonard
- Dept. Grand Comm.: Gary Mason
- Grand General.: Frederick Kemp
- Grand Capt. Gen.: Patrick Carr
- Grand Sr. Warden: Justin Crippen
- Grand Jr. Warden: Gary Strout
- Grand Prelate: Roger Walls
- Grand Treasurer: T. Michael Fegan
- Grand Recorder: Allan Jackson
- Grand Std. Bearer: Ivan DeTevis
- Grand Sword Bearer: Tom Krauss
- Grand Warder: Dale Morrow
- Grand Sentinel: Juanito Ernacio
- Grand Musician: Kelly Long
- Grand Guard: Andy Mosley
- Grand Guard: Warren Hughes
- Grand Guard: Herb Merrick

- Aide-de-camp: Kent Needham
- Aide-de-camp: T. Michael Fegan
- Aide-de-camp: Wayne Drake

- Honor Guard Members:
- Commander: Justin Crippen
- Commander: Patrick C. Carr
- Member: Fred Kemp
- Member: Michael Smith, REPGC
- Member: Kent Needham, REPGC
- Member: Robert Haynes
- Member: Gary Mason
- Member: Bill Koonce
- Member: Andy Mosley

What is the South Central?

The South-Central region of the York Rite is composed of five member states (Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, and Oklahoma) and one non-member state (Texas). The Companions of this region have been gathering together annually for well over sixty years.

The Southwestern Conference of Grand Chapter Officers was founded in 1958 by the Grand Chapters of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas, "as a means of exchange of ideas, matters of mutual interest, and problems concerning the several grand jurisdictions." These four founding Grand Chapters were soon joined by the Grand Chapters of Kansas and Missouri and subsequently by the Grand Councils and Grand Commanderies of the six states to form the South-Central region that we know today.

The annual meetings are a time for the national leadership (General Grand Chapter, Royal Arch Masons International, General Grand Council of Cryptic Masons International, and the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar, USA) to visit the region and to communicate their programs and assist with the needs of the members.



W. Ron McKenzie Council UD, KMUSA

On Saturday, October 7, 2024, at Wyandotte Lodge NO. 3, the 2nd Annual Knight Masons In-Gathering was held. This was a special ingathering of the Knight Masons in Kansas. Not only were the degrees of Knight of the Sword, Knight of the East, and Knight of the East and West conferred in full form on three new Cousins, but a special event was held.

The newest Knight Masons Council in Kansas, W. Ron McKenzie Council UD, was constituted. A gathering of 13 Knight Masons was held in January of 2023, and the need for a third Council of Knight Masons was discussed. It was decided the Cousins in Junction City would be the best fit to place a new Council. After several discussions, and meetings with the Grand Council of Knight Masons for the USA, the petition was granted.

The dispensation was sent to the Recorder, and the Great Chief sent his representative to constitute the Council. Most Worshipful Brother Robert "Bob" Davis, traveled from Oklahoma to perform this duty. Cousin Davis is the Grand Superintendent for both Oklahoma and Kansas.

Once the institution of the new Council was completed, and the new officers installed into their respective office, Cousin Davis made a presentation concerning what Masonry does for each of us and what we can continue to do to make the masonic experience superior to what it has been in the past.

Cousin Davis presented Cousin Gary Mason with the honor of the Order of Zerubbabel for his work within his Knight Masons Council in Wichita.

A banquet with several toasts was held to conclude the day. It was a great ingathering for the Knight Masons of Kansas and we welcome this new Council to our jurisdiction.



South Central York Rite Meetings

The South Central York Rite meetings were held in Branson, Missouri on September 15 & 16, 2023. This was an excellent time of learning and fellowship with the Companions and Sir



Knights from the South Central Region. During the session, Most Puissant Companion William "Bill" Schneider adopted a new program of creating mutual communication



between United States and European jurisdictions. Kansas was selected to work with the Grand Council of Portugal. Most Excellent Companion Teko Foly adopted the same program and the same jurisdictions. Kansas was well represented and a good time was had by everyone in attendance. Next year the conference will be held in Tulsa, Oklahoma and should be another great South Central meeting!

New AMD Council Coming to Junction City



With the recent successes of the Allied Masonic Degrees In-gatherings in Kansas, it has been noted there is not enough AMD Councils within the jurisdiction to take care of all the Companions who desire for more light by membership in the Allied Masonic Degrees. Because of this unique situation, several Companions from Wichita and Junction City came together to discuss how to move forward. It was decided to seek a fourth charter for Junction City. This new Council will meet alongside the newly created W. Ron McKenzie Council, UD of Knight Masons USA which was constituted at the Knight

Masons and AMD In-gathering on October 7, 2023, at Wyandotte Lodge No. 3.

The new AMD Council will be named the Charles David Williams, III Council. This is a tribute to another of our great Brothers who gave so much to the York Rite of Kansas and left our presence much too soon.

The Council will consist of six current members of the Allied Masonic Degrees, with four of them being Past Sovereign Masters. Each AMD Council is restricted to membership of only 27 Royal Arch Masons. This Council will start with six current members and will add an additional 11 members to consist of 17 members when it is constituted in 2024. The paperwork has been completed and remitted to the Grand Secretary of the Allied Masonic Degrees USA. The paperwork has been approved by the Most Sovereign Grand Master of the AMD and we look forward to the knowledge and wisdom these new AMD members will receive through the research and degree work of the AMD.



The date of the institution of the C. David Williams Council of the AMD will take place at 10:30 AM on Saturday, January 20, 2024. The event will happen at Union Lodge No. 7 in Junction City. It is a great time to be a Kansas Mason and especially a York Rite Kansas Mason! There is an energy which has been unmatched within our lodges and orders which we have not witnessed in many years. Come and be a part of it!



Visit
kansasyorkrite.org
for more info.



New York Rite PPLM

At the 2023 Grand York Rite Sessions, the delegates approved a measure allowing the Grand Recorder to present a new program for perpetual life memberships which could be paid over time rather than as one large lump-sum payment. The Grand Recorder met with the PPLM Committee and they are happy to report there is a new program allowing our members to pay their PPLM for the three York Rite bodies (Chapter, Council, Commandery) over a time period.

For a member to take part in the Perpetual Life Membership Payment Plan, they must be current on dues for the term or year for which the payment plan is started or requested.

The Payment Plan payment amount will equal thirty-five (35) times the amount of the annual dues for the constituent York Rite bodies (Chapter, Council, and Commandery) plus \$35.00 for a Life Sponsorship in the Knight Templar Eye Foundation.

The dues for the member will be frozen at the current amount during the active payment period of the Plan.

The Payment Plan monthly amount will be collected for a period of sixty (60) monthly installments. The installment amount will be determined by multiplying the annual dues by 35, plus \$35.00 for an Eye Foundation Lifetime Membership.

The Member's annual dues will be paid by the Payment Plan during the time the installments are collected. Once the installment payments are completed, the member will receive a Perpetual Life Membership in the bodies on the original Installment Application.

The Payment Plan may be paid off at any time. There will be no penalties applied for early payment to the Plan.

See the Grand York Rite website for more detailed information and the application to apply.

Yeoman of York

A new Masonic Order is being organized and preparing to be opened within the grand jurisdiction of Kansas. Yeoman of York is an honorary and invitational body which is open to those who are members of the Knight York Cross of Honor (KYCH) or are eligible to be invited to the KYCH.

The KYCH is an honorary body which invites masons of the York Rite who have served with distinction as the Worshipful Master of a Blue Lodge, the High Priest of a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, Illustrious Master of a Council of Cryptic Masons, and as Eminent Commander of a Commandery of Knights Templar.

The Yeoman of York's membership is intended to invite those who have received the KYCH and are continuing to serve within the York Rite by honoring them with membership. It is designed to promote York

Rite masonry, including the Blue Lodge, within its membership. Members of the York Rite are expected to be active if they are to be considered for membership within the Yeoman of York.

There is a current Preceptory in Liberty, Missouri, and several of these members will be the founding members of the new Preceptory to be housed at Newton.



V.E. Dennis Taylor Holy Land Pilgrimage Jewel

Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander of Kansas Dennis Taylor was instrumental in sending pastors to the Holy Land and supported this program with his time, efforts, and purse. The creation of the jewel is intended to memorialize a program Sir Knight Taylor was passionate about.

The creation of this jewel for the membership to wear is intended to garner further support for the Knight Templar Holy Land Pilgrimage fund. These monies will be remitted to the Grand Recorder for the Grand Commandery of Kansas and is intended to only be used for the purpose of sending ministers to the Holy Land Pilgrimage.

The jewel will be awarded to any Sir Knight who has contributed the minimum of \$250 to the Knight Templar Holy Land Pilgrimage. The funds will be submitted to the Grand Recorder for the Grand Commandery of Kansas, and he will use them to fund the Holy Land Pilgrimage for qualified and selected ministers. The amounts given to the Grand Recorder for the program will be cumulative. The Grand Recorder will send the jewel to the chairman of the Kansas committee for the



Holy Land Pilgrimage, and they will present the jewel to the Sir Knight at an appropriate place and time. Additional recognitions will be presented at each \$250 level to the Sir Knight who have received the jewel. These additional recognitions will be a small Maltese cross, which will be placed on the ribbon for the jewel. Visit the Grand York Rite website to receive this jewel.

Astronomy and Masonry

The seven liberal arts and sciences have been recommended to our ancient brethren since the early beginnings of speculative masonry. The Regius Poem, purported to have been written around 1390 in the fourteenth century, is the first mention of the seven liberal arts and sciences. Within this mention of the sciences necessary for the speculative mason, we find astronomy.

Astronomy teaches us how the planets and the stars move and display their light and is important because it is the science which shows when the seasons change and what one can expect from a certain season. Astronomy has grown in its width and breadth since the ancients first observed the skies without the aid of telescopes. The science of astronomy reveals the very existence of the Great Architect of the Universe through the myriad changes in the heavens and the seasons. How can man observe this vast construct and not realize there is a supreme being who created and adorned the universe?

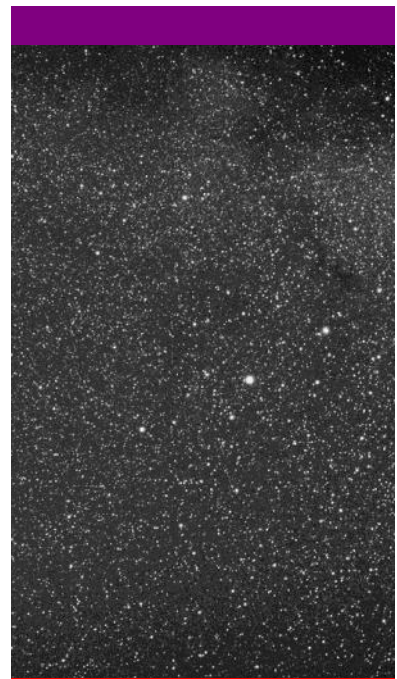
Astronomy is mentioned within the Craft on several occasions. At the beginning of each lodge opening the duties of each of the officers are defined and the expectation of what they should accomplish within their offices is brought forth. We realize the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. This is the first common presentation we see of astronomy within the rituals of the Craft. An understanding of the regular rising and setting of the sun allowed our ancient operative brethren to better understand the changes within the seasons. This was important for the optimum time for sowing and reaping grains, but also for knowing when the days would be longer and allowed for more work, and shorter which meant there was less time each day for accomplishing their designated tasks.

The fellowcraft is taught about the vast proportions of the machine which is the universe. This alludes to how the planets move within their various orbits and how they each spin on their own axis. This is how the seasons are accounted for and demonstrates to the young fellowcraft the reason the study of astronomy is of such importance. Without the correct understanding of astronomy, one cannot account for the change within the seasons. Without this understanding there can be no accurate prediction of the seasonal changes which we witness upon the earth, and this could cause chaos within the craft for there would be no reaping of the necessary plants which supplied their food.

The trestle board for the various degrees display astronomical items. On the Entered Apprentice trestle board, the sun is present, as is the moon, and the stars are presented in several other ways. One way is the effulgent star which is composed of seven points. This star is intended to point the mason to the guiding light of the Divine. It is intended to lead the mason throughout his journey within this life. Another example is the asterism of seven stars gathered near each other on the trestle board. This gathering of stars is known as the Pleiades, or the seven sisters. Again, we see the mysterious and perfect number seven represented within our degrees. This asterism is in the constellation of Taurus the bull. Taurus is known as being at the vernal equinox and the solar new year began when Taurus was overhead. The Pleiades represents the spring, and it reminds us of the immortality of the soul. This is inferred because the vernal equinox is an event which continues regardless of time and continues to renew itself each year.

The brazen pillars of Jachin and Boaz found within the lodge are adorned by both the celestial and terrestrial spheres. This teaches the mason to observe not only the heavens but the rotation of the earth as well. When a closer examination is made of the celestial sphere, we readily identify the various zodiacal signs of the night sky. Each of the constellations, which represent the signs of the zodiac, have a certain and fixed position in the night sky and possessed meaning to the ancient operative stone masons.

Taurus, Leo, Scorpius, and Aquarius held great meanings for the Craft. Taurus was the bull or the ox, Leo the lion, Scorpius was associated with the eagle, and Aquarius represented the man. This corresponds with the banners of the four principal tribes of Israel and is represented within the Holy Royal Arch degree. These represented the Judaic tribes of Ephraim, Judah, Dan, and Ruben. A conflagration of these four entities were seen in Ezekiel's vision of the Cherubim, and in John's vision of the four living creatures. These constellations contained the both the equinoxes and the solstices during the year 4000 BC, or as we know it now Anno Lucius, the year of light.



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2024 Grand York Rite Sessions

The York Rite of Freemasonry

The York Rite, or more correctly, the American Rite, is based on the early remnants of Craft Masonry that were practiced in the early 1700's. The formation of the first Grand Lodge of England in 1717 specified that the lodges were to confer only the first three degrees of Craft Masonry.

Three bodies were later formed to work the degrees no longer controlled by the lodges. The Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, Council of Royal and Select Masters, and the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar. All three bodies are technically autonomous Masonic entities, only the requirement of membership in the Royal Arch connecting the Cryptic degrees and Chivalric Orders together.

The 2024 Grand York Rite sessions will be held in Manhattan, Kansas, at the Bluemont Hotel. This is the same hotel which hosted the 2023 Grand York Rite sessions. The sessions will be held on May 2—May 4, 2024.

This is a new format for 2024 and one which will include less down time and more time working within the bodies to further the causes of York Rite masonry. The honorary and appendant bodies (York Rite College, Athelstan, Order of Anointed Kings, Silver Trowel, Past Commander's Association) will hold their meetings on Thursday, May 2, 2024, before the evening's memorial service. The KYCH meeting will be held at the annual breakfast on Saturday.



The Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Kansas will open their annual session at 9:00 AM on Friday, May 3, 2023. After lunch, and the close of the session, the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Kansas will open their annual communication at 1:00 PM. The annual banquet will be

held on Friday evening. The Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Kansas will open their annual communication on Saturday, May 4, 2023 at 9:00 AM. Upon the completion of their business, and the closing of the Grand Commandery, the installation of the Grand York Rite officers of all three bodies will be held.

The final schedule, and more information, will be available soon. Be sure to watch the Grand York Rite website for updated information as it becomes available.



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