



Chapter Notes

Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Kansas



Spring 2026

Patrick C. Carr, MEGHP 2025-2026



From the Grand High Priest

By the time you read this publication, we will be nearing the end of the Capitular year and our Grand Convocation is almost upon us. I would like to congratulate Right Excellent Companion Gary Benjamin Strout, who will soon be installed as Most Excellent Grand High Priest for the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Kansas for 2026-2027. I wish him, and all our Companions, good fortune as we move forward into another year together as Capitular Masons.

It has been a great year, and I would like to thank the Companions who elected me to serve as the Most Excellent Grand High Priest for 2025-2026. It has been one of the most rewarding moments in my masonic journey. Each of you has made this year not only special to me, but to all Royal Arch Masonry. When I travel, I hear from other Grand High Priests and Royal Arch Masons how much Kansas Capitular Masonry has grown and prospered. This is because of the diligent work of our Companions, and not of the Grand Chapter Officers or myself alone. We all work together to make Royal Arch Masonry in Kansas a success and to provide a quality Masonic experience to all our members.

We have had some success in the last year, and I would like to highlight those successes in my closing article:

1. Securing Our Future has been implemented and the initial response to the program has been well received. We will continue to monitor and adjust the program as needed;
2. Communications from the Grand Chapter to our membership has drastically increased and should continue into the foreseeable future; and
3. Energy is evident within our Chapters in Kansas! People are excited about Royal Arch Masonry and are providing a quality experience in many Chapters.

Thank you again, Companions! It has been an honor to serve you.

Companion Patrick C. Carr
M.:E.: Grand High Priest, 2025-2026



Masonic Week 2026—Knight Masons

The Grand Chapter of Kansas had 11 of our members make the annual pilgrimage to Alexandria, Virginia for Masonic Week 2026. Kansas has been well received and our members are active in many of the York Rite Appendant and Concordant bodies. These bodies each require membership within a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons for membership.

At the annual Knight Masons USA meeting, Most Excellent Companion Wayne H. Rolf was awarded the Knight Commander of



Zerubbabel award from the Grand Council. Most Excellent Companion Rolf is only the third person to receive the honor in Kansas. The other two are Excellent Companion Gary A. Mason and Most Excellent Companion Patrick C. Carr. It is an honor to receive this award from the Grand Council and only one can be given out each year.



Right Excellent Companion Justin D. Crippen was appointed, installed, and invested as the Very Excellent Grand Superintendent for Kansas and Oklahoma for the next year. This makes him the first ever Superintendent for Kansas and he follows Very Excellent Robert G. Davis of Oklahoma in that office.

Kansas Royal Arch Received in Other States

The Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Kansas has been well received outside of our own state it would seem. Right Excellent Companion Matthew J. Rutkowski, the Personal Representative of the Most Excellent Grand High Priest, moved to the state of Virginia shortly after the 2025 Annual Convocation of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Kansas.



This has afforded Right Excellent Rutkowski the opportunity to make visits to Grand Chapters in Virginia, Washington,

DC, Delaware, and other jurisdictions within the Northeast and Southeast Regions.

At the Grand Chapter Convocation for the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Virginia, Right Excellent Companion Rutkowski presented Most Excellent Companion James P. Nunn, Grand High

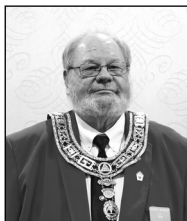




Priest of Virginia, with Most Excellent Companion Carr's coin, pin, and cufflinks. Later during the same session, he presented the Grand High Priest's pin to Most Excellent Companion Charles G. Harper, II, Grand High Priest of Florida. Great job on representing our Grand Chapter, Right Excellent Sir!

Change in Grand Chapter Officers

On November 30, 2025, Excellent Companion Robert D. Beardsley, the Grand Captain of the Host, informed the Grand High Priest of his intention to resign from his office on December 1, 2025. Excellent Companion Beardsley has served this Grand Chapter well for many, many years. His decision to resign from the office was one he chose to make for the best interests of his family for the time being. The Grand High Priest accepted the resignation of Excellent Companion Beardsley, and advanced the line and appointed officers to fill the vacancy. Excellent Companion



Andrew G. Mosley was advanced to the office of Grand Captain of the Host; Excellent Companion L. Kent Needham was advanced to the office of Grand Principal Sojourner; Excellent Companion Wayne D. Drake was appointed as the Grand Royal Arch Captain; and Excellent Companion Warren L. Hughes was appointed to serve as the Excellent Grand Master of the First Veil. Thank you to Companion Beardsley for his great service, and congratulations to the new officers for the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Kansas.



Grand High Priest Visits for 2025-2026

The Grand High Priest started the 2025-2026 Capitular year by attempting to make a visit to each and every Chapter within the jurisdiction. He made personal visits to 12 Chapters during the year, and made visits to several other Chapters by utilizing video conferencing.



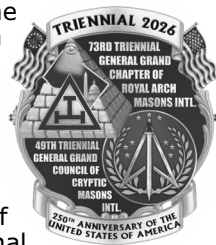
One of the highlights of the year was on his visit to Iola Chapter No. 8. The Chapter held an excellent meal and provided the Grand High Priest with a serenade of sorts. During his official visit, the Companion of Iola Chapter sang both the opening ode

and, after the Grand High Priest closed the Chapter in Ample Form, the Companions gathered around and sang the closing ode as well! Needless to say, this was an excellent moment and provided quite a shock to the Most Excellent Grand High Priest. Not only did they sing, but they did it well! Iola Chapter may be the only Chapter in the jurisdiction who sings both the opening and closing odes. Well done, Companions! You are setting the standard for our jurisdiction.



General Grand Chapter Triennial 2026

In 2026, the General Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons International, of which the Grand Chapter of Kansas is a member, will be hosting their 73rd Triennial Session in Washington, DC. This is an excellent selection for a city to host the Triennial because it coincides with the 250th Anniversary of the birth of our great nation. There will be delegates and attendees from across the globe at the session. Many want to see the beauty of the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the United States in the Capitol, and the Triennial Committee selected this location largely because of that.



The session will start on Saturday, August 29, 2026, with registration and tours of Mount Vernon. There will be a special presentation at the Scottish Rite House of the Temple and/or the George Washington National Masonic Memorial. Other events leading up to the actual Triennial Convocation on Monday, August 31, include a presentation on the legendary origin of the Holy Royal Arch degree, tours of the House of the Temple, and a special night-time tour of Washington, DC. There will be a joint public opening on Sunday, August 30, with the General Grand Council Cryptic Masons International, who will have their 49th Triennial session on Tuesday, September 1, 2026.

More information, and a complete schedule of events, can be found at yrtriennial.org. All Royal Arch Masons, and their ladies, are invited to attend the open events. Only Royal Arch Masons may attend the closed session. Even if you are not a voting delegate, please make plans to attend this historic Convocation in the nation's capitol. It will be a wonderful event!

Masonic Education of All Types

Did you know the Grand York Rite of Kansas has a special section of their website dedicated to masonic education? Visit the Grand York Rite website (kansasyorkrite.org) and select the "York Rite Education" link at the top of each page.

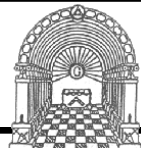
The site contains general masonic education and education on the Chapter, Council, and the Commandery. Each link will open a PDF file with the information and the article which can be read in your Chapter. Be sure to host a discussion after each paper is read, as this will add to the understanding of the topic being presented and yield an even better Masonic experience within your Chapter.

If you would like to submit a paper for inclusion on the site, send an email to the Grand Secretary with the paper and he will forward it to the website host to consider it for publication on the website.



Council Cliff Notes

Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Kansas



Spring 2026

Gary B. Strout, MIGM 2025-2026



From the Illustrious Grand Master

Ridgway Rees holds a permanent place in the history of Kansas Masonry as the first Most Illustrious Grand Master of the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Kansas in 1867. Born on December 23, 1812, Rees came to the Kansas Territory during the turbulent years before statehood and quickly became one of the region's leading civic figures. Trained as a lawyer, he was part of that generation of frontier professionals who served simultaneously as attorneys, judges, and community organizers, helping establish order in a place where formal institutions were still developing.

During the 1850s, Kansas was the center of national attention as pro-slavery and free-state factions struggled for control in what became known as the "Bleeding Kansas" period. Rees was deeply involved in territorial government and served in the Kansas Bogus Legislature of 1855. Although controversial in its time, this work placed him among the men responsible for shaping the legal and political framework that would eventually support Kansas statehood. He later served as a probate judge in the Leavenworth area, a position of great importance on the frontier where courts were essential for settling estates, land claims, and guardianships.

Like many civic leaders of his day, Rees was also an active Freemason. As communities formed across Kansas, Masonic lodges and York Rite bodies followed. After the Civil War, Kansas Masons began organizing the Cryptic Rite, and in 1867 they established the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Kansas. The brethren selected Rees as its first Most Illustrious Grand Master, a decision that reflected both his administrative experience and the respect he held among Masons throughout the state.

The office he accepted required far more than ceremonial leadership. Kansas was still a vast and sparsely settled region, and the Grand Master needed to travel, organize councils, standardize ritual work, and unify scattered members into a functioning jurisdiction. Rees brought the same qualities he had demonstrated in public life and laid the institutional foundation upon which Kansas Cryptic Masonry would grow.

Richard Ridgway Rees died on November 19, 1875, after a life spent in public service and fraternal leadership. By the time of his passing, Kansas had transformed from a violent frontier territory into an established state with functioning courts, civic institutions, and firmly rooted Masonic



bodies. His selection as the first Most Illustrious Grand Master connected the new Grand Council to the broader development of Kansas itself, and every Cryptic Mason in the state today traces the continuity of the order back to his leadership in 1867.

Fraternally,

Companion Gary B. Strout, Ed.S.
M.: I.: Grand Master

Great Plains Rendezvous 2026

The Annual Great Plain Rendezvous, a gathering of Cryptic Masons from Colorado, Kansas, and Wyoming, will be held on June 27, 2026, the last Saturday in June.

This year, it will be Kansas hosting the event. The 2026 Rendezvous will be held at Russell Lodge in Russell, Kansas. This means Kansas Cryptic Masons will be once again conferring the Super Excellent Master Degree. If you have a Cryptic Mason in your Council who has not yet witnessed the beauty, splendor, and pageantry of the Super Excellent Master Degree, then this is their time! Certificates will once again be given to those who have not taken the degree before.



This event allows each of the three Cryptic jurisdictions to witness the differences between the three degrees when conferred in Colorado, Kansas, and Wyoming. Colorado will confer the Royal Master, Wyoming the Select Master, and Kansas the Super Excellent Master.

Be ready! The Grand Council will be putting the degree team together and there are several parts which may need to be filled. Be sure to get this date on your calendar as you will not want to miss it.

Make Plans to Attend the South Central Meetings

The South Central Conference of Cryptic Masons will be held in Little Rock, Arkansas September 18, 2026. The host hotel is the Holiday Inn Little Rock Airport (3201 Bankhead Drive, Little Rock, AR 722026) and will be held after lunch which follows the closing of the South Central Conference of Royal Arch Masons.

There will be more information coming soon, but in the meantime you can visit the South Central Conference of the York Rite at southcentralyr.org.

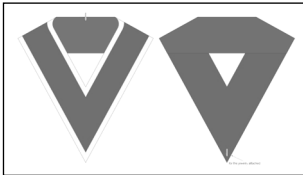




New Regalia for Ellsworth #9

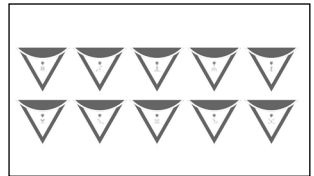
The Companions of Ellsworth Council No. 9 asked their Secretary why they did not have custom officer aprons like Salina Chapter No. 18 had in their meetings. The Secretary did not know why they did not have them in their inventory, but informed the Companions they were more than welcomed to spend the money to purchase them for the Council.

After that, the members of the Council decided they would like to have the new jewels which the General Grand Council Cryptic Masons International had been selling on their website. These jewels are unique and are replicas of the original jewels used in Council's many, many years ago.



The questions of collars was brought up, and the Companions stated they wanted something different than the normal bright silver chain collars with purple backing. It was decided to emulate the design used in English Councils and have the longer collar and hang the jewels underneath.

Aprons for the Council was the last item on the list before searching for a supplier or manufacturer. The Council decided to purchase aprons in the English style to match the collars. This meant the aprons would be triangular in shape and would have the correct logo for each office, and the Council would order 15 extra cloth aprons in the same design with the correct Kansas Council logo for visitors. The collars and aprons are purple with silver around the edges.



Their members and officers will be wearing their new aprons at the Grand Assembly in May so all Kansas Cryptic Masons can see the new designs, aprons, and collars.

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2026 Grand York Rite Session Schedule

The session will start on Thursday, August 31, 2026, at 8:00 AM with the conferral of the Order of the High Priesthood which will be followed by at 10:00 AM by the conferral of the Order of the Silver Trowel. Lunch will be served at 12:00 PM and after lunch, at 1:00 PM, the Kansas Association of Past Commanders will induct new members into the Association. The meeting of Kansas College No. 125 of the York Rite College will be held at 3:00 PM and Ashmole Court No. 17 of the Masonic Order of Athelstan will meet at 4:00 PM. The Past Grand Presiding Officers Association will have their annual meeting at 5:00 PM and will be followed by dinner at 6:00 PM. At 7:00 PM, all will gather to commemorate the lives of those who have passed to the celestial lodge above at the necrology service.

On Friday, May 1, registration starts at 7:30 AM and the 160th Grand Convocation of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons will have a public session at 8:00 AM which will be followed by the tiled session at 9:00 AM. Installation for the 2026-2027 Grand Chapter Officers will be held at 11:00 AM with lunch to follow at 12:30 PM.

The Most Illustrious Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Kansas will host their 159th Grand Assembly with a public session at 1:30 PM which will be followed by the tiled session at 2:30 PM. Installation for the 2026-2027 Grand Council Officers will be held at 4:30 PM. The Perpetual Life Committee will have their annual meeting at 6:00 PM, and the annual awards banquet will follow at 7:00 PM.

Saturday, May 2, will be the final day of activities for the 2026 Grand York Rite sessions and will start with a breakfast for the Past Grand Commander's wives at 6:30 AM and the Knights of the York Cross of Honor will have its annual meeting to elect worthy candidates at their 6:30 AM breakfast meeting. Registration will open at 7:30 AM and the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Kansas will reconvene its 158th Grand Conclave at 8:00 AM with a public opening session and the tiled meeting will start at 9:00 AM. Installation of the 2026-2027 Grand Commandery Officers will be held at 11:00 AM.

All members are invited to attend. Dais officers of the constituent Chapter, Council, and Commandery are highly encouraged to attend and vote on the business held at the sessions.

To register, or for more information, visit www.kansasyorkrite.org.