



THE OKLAHOMA SCOTTISH RITE MASON

PUBLISHED BY THE GUTHRIE OKLAHOMA VALLEY

ANCIENT AND ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE OF FREEMASONRY — SOUTHERN JURISDICTION — UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Number 2

October 2010

EDGAR CRUZ: GUITARIST EXTRAORDINAIRE!

Oklahoma's most famous guitarist will headline the entertainment for the Guthrie Scottish Rite Fall Reunion with a performance at 7:30 pm in the Auditorium of the Temple. Styled "The Best of Edgar Cruz," we very much look forward to having Cruz and will open the reunion up to the public for the evening performance. It has been over a decade since the Scottish Rite Masons have hosted Cruz. He played to a standing ovation then, and he is far better today. He is one of those performers who never quits performing and never stops studying his art. Each year adds a new dimension to the breadth and depth of his unique artistry with the guitar.



Edgar Cruz has been named Oklahoma's top performing artist for over 10 years by the Oklahoma Gazette. He has received numerous civic acknowledgments for his contributions to various charitable events. Each year, Cruz performs over 200 concerts and has played throughout America, Europe and South America. He has been the headliner at the Chet Atkins Festival In Nashville, TN since 1995 and is a strong icon at most festivals in Oklahoma, including the Festival of the Arts, Paseo Festival, Sunfest, Global Oklahoma and more.

Cruz offers an incredible range of music for guitar, including Classical, Latin, International, Rock, Jazz, Mariachi and Romantic, as well as original pieces. Those who have witnessed Cruz's performances immediately become entranced at the precision, speed and complexity with which his fingers strike the strings to create a symphony of sound that is unusual to just one instrument.

Be sure and mark Saturday evening, October 9, 7:30 pm on your calendar now! You won't want to miss this well overdue return performance in Oklahoma's most beautiful building. Tickets are \$5 and can be reserved or purchased any time by calling the temple at 405-282-1281.

Sir Christopher Wren Reunion October 9-10, 2010

Friday, October 8, 2010

Candidate Reception, 7:00 p.m.

Introduction to the Scottish Rite 8:00 p.m.

Knights of St. Andrew Processional 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 9, 2010

Breakfast, Snack Bar.....	7:00 - 8:00 am
Registration of Candidates.....	7:00 - 7:30 am
Election of Class Officers-Egyptian Rm.....	7:30 am
Opening Ceremonies.....	8:00 am
The Journey of the Master Mason/Intro. to the Lodge of Perfection.....	8:45 am
4° Secret Master (Guthrie-Johnston).....	9:15 am
5° Perfect Master (Kay-Reuber).....	10:05 am
7° Provost and Judge (Altus-King).....	10:45 am
*8° Intendant of the Building (Dunaway-Cushing).....	11:25 am
Lunch—Snack Bar.....	11:45 am
9°, 10° Elu of the Nine, Fifteen, (OKC-Robison).....	12:45 pm
Who are the Ruffians in Masonry?.....	1:25-1:55 pm
13° Royal Arch of Solomon (Choctaw-Smith).....	2:15 pm
14° Perfect Elu (Moore-Hanna).....	3:10 pm
Obligation of the 14°.....	4:00 pm
Important Elements of the Lodge of Perfection Journey.....	4:05-4:35 pm
*15° Knight of the East (Lawton-Zura).....	4:55 pm

Banquet 6:00 p.m.

Edgar Cruz Concert

7:30 pm

Masonic Discussion 9:00 pm

Sunday, October 10, 2010

Breakfast, Snack Bar.....	6:00 am
18° Knight Rose Croix (OKC-Weed).....	7:00 am
Obligation.....	8:10 am
Commentary on the Rose Croix Journey and Introduction to the Council of Kadosh.....	8:15-8:45 am
20° Master of the Symbolic Lodge (Woodward-Logan).....	9:00 am
*24° Prince of the Tabernacle (W Cent Ok-Sheppard).....	9:55 am
Elements of the Council of Kadosh Traditions.....	10:35-11:05 am
28° Knight Commander of the Temple (Enid/OKC-Heaton).....	11:25 am
Lunch—Snack Bar.....	12:30 pm
Class Memorial.....	1:20 pm
Class Picture.....	1:30 pm
*30° Knight Kadosh (Okla City-Berry).....	1:45 pm
Obligations 19°-30°.....	2:45 pm
32° Master of the Royal Secret (OKC-Dixon).....	3:05 pm

*Passport Degrees

SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN REUNION SET FOR OCTOBER 9-10!

The man who served under six English monarchs, a founder of the Royal Society in London, secretary of the prestigious Royal Order of the Garter (author of the restoration of its ritual), and architect of St. Paul's cathedral in London, was elected Master of his Lodge for a second time in 1710.

The 2010 fall Reunion of the Guthrie Scottish Rite Bodies is named in honor of the Sir Knight Christopher Wren, and the 300th anniversary of his second term as Worshipful Master of his lodge. It was a post he would hold until 1716. In fact, his tenure as Master of one of the four London Lodges which organized the first Grand Lodge of the world was fateful to the kind of Freemasonry we ultimately inherited.

To honor the memory and significance of Wren as both an operative and speculative Freemason in the pre-Grand Lodge era is appropriate because, it was in the circles of operative and speculative Masons working together that Wren ran; and from which Freemasonry became the noble order that it is. According to ancient Masonic tradition, Wren should also have been the first Grand Master of the first Grand Lodge.

His story is worth learning about, even 300 years later, as we embrace a weekend of knowledge, education and insight into so many things Masonic. Wren, being the most noted architect of his time, would surely be proud of the overall architectural integrity of the Guthrie Temple, although he would likely see it as being less than it could have been. He designed edifices with the specific purpose of aspiring mortals to become more than they are; to take on the perfected life.

Join your brothers in October as we discuss the life of Sir Christopher Wren, reflect on the beginnings of Freemasonry, and muse over what early Freemasonry must have been like for the men who founded it.

All candidates are encouraged to come in early on Friday evening for a candidate reception at 7 pm and an introduction to the Scottish Rite. The impressive Knights of St. Andrews processional will follow at 9 pm, and is open to all family members.

The degree work will begin Saturday morning immediately following the opening ceremonies at 8 am and will continue throughout the day. The fall reunion is noted for its focus on candidate education and several breaks are scheduled during the day so that everyone will have an opportunity to reflect and discuss the degrees they have already seen.

The day will be capped off with a banquet in the old legislative hall and the Edgar Cruz concert. After a hearty breakfast on Saturday morning, the 18° will start things off. A discussion will follow regarding the Rose Croix journey. We will then proceed with the Council of Kadosh degrees. The class picture will take place at 1:30 pm and the reunion is expected to conclude at 4 pm on Sunday.

It will be a great time for all our members to join us and get reconnected to the legacy of the Guthrie Scottish Rite. We look forward to seeing you as we celebrate the life of one of our founding inspirations, Sir Christopher Wren.



“Education on the Rite Nite” serves Masonic Education Needs

Every month from March through November, the hidden secrets of the Scottish Rite Degrees are being transmitted to a small group of men in the Guthrie Valley. During 2010 alone, the legend, history and arcanum of nine of the 29 degrees of the Rite have been presented in nine different communities across the Valley. You should ask yourself the question: Have I been to any of these? After all, this information is available to all Masters of the Royal Secret.

The “Education on the Rite Nite” program is the one opportunity our members have to really dissect a degree; get inside the belly of it, and find out what is hidden there that a degree team has not the time to reveal during the typical reunion weekend. The program is presented out in the Valley monthly and is usually held in a Blue Lodge from which the members of the particular degree being presented on that evening reside.

Sometimes it is done in conjunction with a regular Scottish Rite Lodge meeting; sometimes it occurs on other evenings of the month. But each time the Education on the Rite Nite is held, you can be sure you will see a degree performed at least in part, and will receive the esoteric and philosophical meanings of the degree. You will also share in a dialogue with your brothers on how the teachings of our degrees relate to a man's life today. Indeed, one of the primary purposes of the Scottish Rite education nights is to learn how to make contemporary applications to its ancient teachings.

Here are just ten examples of the kinds of questions which get debated at our monthly education meetings:

“What is the difference between fact and truth?”

“How can ordinary people make a difference in the future?”

“What is the difference between anger and outrage?”

“What may be seen as an evil in one culture is considered good in another. Who is right? How do we know?”

“How can we each contribute to the development of learning, and not be critical of

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PAYNE EDUCATION CENTER CONTINUES ITS FOCUS ON QUALITY TEACHER TRAINING

Since its inception, the focus of the Payne Education Center has been to train teachers at a high level of performance so they can offer multisensory alphabetic phonics instruction and therapy to students who struggle with dyslexia and other reading challenges. Trainings for the summer of 2010 were no exception.

The Scottish Rite sponsored training program was held in Oklahoma City, Ardmore, Durant, Enid, Lawton and Moore. The teaching curricula includes classes in Introductory and Advanced Alphabetic Phonics for any age student; Reading Readiness for 4-yr olds, kindergarteners and transitional 1st graders. In addition, the Payne Master Instructors teach language basics to the teachers who teach 1st – 3rd grades; along with

reading and writing techniques for students who are reading inefficiently and have difficulty with spelling and written language.

The Payne curricula is rounded out with Discovery Spelling for all grades; along with Building Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Power Grammar and Written Composition for elementary school and special education teachers.

This past summer, the Oklahoma Masonic Charity Foundation assisted the Scottish Rite in Oklahoma by offering scholarships to those teachers whose school districts were not able to provide the tuition funds for the training. Classes can range in cost from \$90 to \$3,200.

As a result of this year's teacher training program, 97 teachers re-

ceived direct assistance from the Masons. This year marked the 25th year the Payne Education Center has partnered with the Scottish Rite Masons and/or the Masonic fraternity in Oklahoma to train teachers to prevent reading difficulties in children and remediate dyslexia. The curriculum was originally created at the Texas Learning Center housed within the Texas Scottish Rite Hospital. We are proud of the vision of our Texas brothers, and even more proud that we have brought this training to literally thousands of teachers in Oklahoma. We are making a real difference. Donations made to the Guthrie Scottish Rite Foundation make this important program possible. Thank you for your support.

VALLEY MEMBERSHIP TEAM WORKING HARD!

It didn't take MW Bro. Bobby Laws long to get busy in his new role as membership chair for the Guthrie Valley. Calling on Valley Lodge representatives who have been serving as liaison officers between the Scottish Rite and their local Blue lodges to see if they would commit to a more focused attention on membership recruitment and retention; as well as appointing new representatives to replace those who need a rest, Bro. Laws has already come a long way toward getting his team in place for the upcoming fall reunion of the Guthrie Valley.

During the month of August, Bro. Laws, along with Secretary Davis, conducted four area-wide meetings for the purpose of focusing the membership committee's attention on the task at hand and review the components of the Valley's adopted plan for membership development and retention.

The meetings were well received by those in attendance and the lodge representatives were given the tools essential for introducing the Scottish Rite to the Master Masons in their lodges. It is truly an act of brotherly affection to encourage one's friends to make the journey through the degrees of the Scottish

Rite. The Degrees represent the college course in Freemasonry. To the sincere Mason, it is the path to self improvement and spiritual development. These noble ambitions resonate strongly in the hearts and minds of men today.

One of the wonderful benefits of working in the membership area of the Rite is that it is not as difficult as it may seem to encourage men to become 32° Masons. The Guthrie Valley has a legacy with its building and its degree teams which enables it to stand out from the crowd as an organization that effectively fulfills its mission. Guthrie is one of the few Valleys remaining that still stage all 29 degrees of the Rite. And it has been doing so since 1901. Since the degree team casts hail from community lodges across the Valley's entire geographic area to accomplish this feat, the result is that there are a lot of active Scottish Rite members in the local lodges. Bro. Laws encourages the membership team to remember the legacy we have and to promote it among friends and prospects.

The Guthrie Valley is currently the 4th largest Valley in the Southern Jurisdiction, behind Dallas, Knoxville and Houston. It also ranks 5th in the production

of new Scottish Rite Masons, with only Knoxville, Dallas, Memphis and Joplin bringing in more candidates in 2009.

Brother Laws reminded the team of how the Temple helps facilitate interest in the Rite by direct invitations to prospects before each reunion. He informed them that follow up personal contact is the key to membership success. He also reviewed the duties and responsibilities of the district chairmen and lodge representatives and outlined a targeted program for conducting friends nights in certain areas of the Valley where special opportunities exist and where special help is needed to educate the Mason about the Scottish Rite.

The overall Valley goal of the Scottish Rite in the Southern Jurisdiction is that 50% of the Master Masons in every state can proudly say they are 32° Masons. The Guthrie Valley has achieved this goal more years than not, and is currently only a few percentage points below it. Those who know MW Bro. Bobby Laws also know he fully intends to get us back to that point as soon as possible. He needs only for you to help him when he asks for your help.

TEMPLE TOBACCO ROOM EMBRACES AN OLD ICON OF MANLINESS

In response to requests by a significant number of our members, the Guthrie Scottish Rite Temple now has a tobacco room set aside for the enjoyment of those who savor the sacred fire. The cigar lounge opened on September 1 and provides 1100 square feet of space adjacent to the billiard room for smoking, reading, conversation, pool and refreshments to those attending events in the Temple. It also provides a time of quiet contemplation for the individual brother who just drops in occasionally during the week to savor the manly art of cigar and pipe smoking.

Paid for entirely by our smokers and those non-smokers who embrace a brother's right to smoke, the cigar room is equipped with an exhaust system which changes the air in the room 6 times each hour. By the time the fall Masonic events take place in the Temple, it is hoped enough money will have been raised to complete the furnishing of the room with leather sofas, chairs, and the other adornments that will make it a special place for those who love the sacred leaf.

Gone are the days when 3,000 brothers journeyed to Guthrie six times each year and stayed at the Temple Inn five consecutive days to participate in the degrees of the Rite, make new acquaintances, meet old friends, and experience the fellowship, study and conviviality that occur only in such great pilgrimages of men. It was an earlier time, of course, but the enjoyment of tobacco played an important role in such gatherings. All one has to do is watch any pre-1950 movie to understand the popularity tobacco use enjoyed as a cultural icon of the American society. Tobacco has been the quintes-

sential pastime of men since it was first introduced by our Native America forefathers during the 1500s.

Admittedly, the present day anti-smoking culture makes it increasingly more difficult for men to enjoy one of the oldest icons of manhood. To be sure, we know a lot more about the health issues associated with smoking than did the men of old. The government has forced tobacco companies to pay billions to states for the purpose of influencing folk to stop smoking. Our contemporary politically correct world creates a fertile ground for anti-tobacco pundits to rant incessantly toward a total ban on smoking. In spite of this, cigar and pipe smoking continue to enjoy increased popularity. As Masons, we learned a long time ago there is little tolerance in the mind of a zealot.

Like many other places in the private and public workforce, the Guthrie Scottish Rite Temple prohibits smoking inside its walls. But, in our case, the prohibition does not relate to the usual reasons offered for such bans. Yes, we are just as sensitive as the next guy in protecting the rights of those who do not smoke to be able to enjoy pure air when they spend time in the Temple. But, as Masons, we recognize our smokers have the same right to enjoy their hobby. Fortunately, the Temple is a big place and it is easy enough to accommodate the needs of both the smokers and the non-smokers.

The smoking ban in the Temple is the result of wanting to protect the fragile nature of our many artistic rooms, and preserve the fabric of the artistic rugs, beautiful furnishings, and ornate paintings in the rooms. Gone are the days when hundreds of men poured into the

artistic rooms during breaks between degrees to enjoy a cigarette, cigar or bowl of tobacco. Some of us who have been around a while can still remember the ashtrays that once adorned all the rooms and public spaces within the Temple. Prohibiting smoking in the artistic environs of the building was a good decision.

The cigar/tobacco room is a long way off the beaten path, and will hardly be noticed by the stranger on a public tour or the first time visitor at our reunions. But it will alleviate a problem that is currently noticed by everyone during Temple events. There is always a porch full of smoking men during the breaks between degrees. This creates a real inconvenience for those who wish to exit the Temple for a breath of outside air. With the installation of the tobacco room, smoking on the porch is now prohibited. Those who wish to smoke outside during reunion breaks will have to move down onto the landings or sidewalks to enjoy their favorite pastime.

The decision by the Temple board to provide a tobacco room is the kind of reasoned approach that may seem second nature to those of us who are fraternal men. And it is one in which our greater society could well take a lesson. The Temple's decision in this regard was not one of jumping on a current fad of what is politically correct; but simply using common sense to balance the needs of two special interests. If our greater world could be regularly managed by such judgment, it would be a much kinder place.

“Education on the Rite Nite” cont. from page 2

ignorance? What is Masonry's role in this process?”

“What changes would you suggest be mandated to insure that we can select only the very best in our society to govern us?”

“Truth is not always popular, but it remains the truth, even if the public disagrees. What are some Truths which are controversial in the public's view?”

“What is knowledge designed to do for an individual? What price must we always pay for knowledge?”

“How do we know that crime and injustice do not pay when inhumanity, wickedness, partiality and vice seem so prevalent in the world?”

“We are not usually confronted with choices between good and evil, but with choices between good and nearly as good, or good enough. In what areas of life are we tempted to do what's “good enough,” rather than what is best?”

Imagine knowing that there are over 250 such questions which the degrees of the Rite address. Then imagine how much different the world might be if everyone had the opportunity to join together to discuss such important and timeless matters?

In the Scottish Rite, we have an opportunity to do this every month. It's an extraordinary privilege. But, to the thoughtful Mason, it is just one of the many responsibilities we take on in our pledge to improve ourselves.



**Guthrie Scottish Rite Reunion
The Sherlock Holmes Reunion
April 30, May 1 & 2, 2010**

Row 1 (from left): Richard Massad, 33°, Class Director; John Easttom-Secondi, Class Chaplain; Fox Whitworth, Class Secretary/Treasurer; Guy A. Brigman, Class Vice-President; Aaron Diment, Class President; Joe R. Manning, Jr., 33°, Deputy in Oklahoma; Bedford F. Rowland, Jr., 33°, Personal Representative to the Deputy in Oklahoma; Robert G. Davis, 33° G.C, General Secretary; Kent Callahan, KCCH, Class Director; John Stahl, KCCH, Class Director; Steve Hanna, KCCH, Class Director.

Row 2: Kurt Charles Schmid; Jose E. Saenz; Walt Wehr; Jeff Rowland; James R. Burns; Steven L. Messer; Vincent Costante; Steve McMall; Christopher Miller; Kevin Mills; Odas J. Williams.

Row 3: Joe Elam; Charles E. Rose; Francis W. Hurst; Laurens L. Newsom; Ryan C. Birdsong; Dennis C. Swanda; Jerald E. Calvert; A.G. Wood; Eric Yarborough; Steven Thompson; Joel Quinn; Darryl G. Knowles.

Row 4: Matthew Bailey; Michael Munn; Morris V. Lovett; James L. Selders; Matthew Walter; Dwayne Dollar; Bill E. May, Sr.; James C. Rogers; Scott Vincent; Jason Rosebecke; D.W. Kelly; James A. Molledahl.

Row 5: Michael D. Frazer; David S. Key; Donald K. Puckett; Sheldon A. Hoyt; Rollie Benson; Justin Janz; Bobby Hewitt; Joshua Logan; John N. Logan; Jacob Logan; Burt Logan; Russell Rhea.

Row 6: Charles Stuckey, 33°; John L. Logan, 33°.

© Photograph by Jerry L. Cornelius, 32° KCCH - Tulsa

THE TEMPLE NEEDS MASONIC RINGS; ARTIFACTS

It's been a while since we have asked for specific items for the Temple. But we are presently out of 32° rings and always get requests from Brothers wanting to purchase a ring. There are few jewelry stores that routinely offer Masonic rings. If you know of a Masonic widow who still has her husband's Masonic jewelry and doesn't know what to do with these items, let her know that the Temple will be happy to sell her Masonic rings for her. We do not charge for this service. All the money collected goes to the widow. Have her contact the Temple at 405-282-1281 to find out how she can make her rings available to the membership for purchase.

If you have any Indian artifacts that you would like to donate to the tobacco room, the Temple is looking for items that can be displayed on the walls of the tobacco room located within the Indian Room of the Temple. We are looking for bows, arrows, peace pipes, hunting items, weapons—anything with an Indian motif that will be appropriate for adornment in our Indian decorated rooms.

2011 DUES BILLED; 2010 DUES ARE DUE!

By the time you get this newspaper, the Temple will likely have sent the billing notices to the membership for the 2011 dues. The dues next year remain unchanged from this year and are set at \$80. This is just a gentle reminder that dues in the Scottish must be pre-paid, just as in your Blue Lodge. Dues for 2011 are due on or before December 31, 2010. We send out notices early so that our members will have plenty of time to pay the various dues that come due at the same time each year.

For those of you who have not yet paid your 2010 dues, please note that there is a one year suspension in the Scottish Rite. You will need to take care of your 2010 obligation as soon as possible.

If any brother has questions or problems regarding his dues to the Scottish Rite, please contact the Valley Secretary and find out options that may be available to you for taking care of your late dues. We don't want to lose any member in the Guthrie Valley. We know you are proud to be a part of the heritage of the Scottish Rite and the Guthrie Temple. Please call at 405-282-1281 if you are having problems which prevent you from paying your 2010 assessment of \$80.

SUPERHEROES AMONG US

We all know of and perhaps have our own favorite superheroes. TV and movies have long made them attractive figures to admire and aspire to be like. However, in our hearts we know they're not real.

Truth is, "real" superheroes are around us everyday, if we just take the time to look. Take for example, Mark, a small boy with a big mission-to overcome the difficulties he faces every single day as a child with autism. In his mind, no battle is too large, no enemy too daunting. That courage and enthusiasm come from having the love and support of family and friends and from the help he receives along the way through the Guthrie RiteCare Language Clinic.

Mark has been a patient at the clinic for approximately two years.

Initially, his expressive language and social skills were limited. He preferred to "hide in the shadows" and behind his many favorite action figures. That's easy to understand when taking into account his limited abilities to communicate and relate to others.

While still faced with challenges, today, Mark is a new boy! Lisa, his clinician, has guided and instructed Mark on expanding his expressive abilities, including speaking in longer, more complete sentences, understanding and using basic concepts, organizing his world and relating to others. His family reports that he now approaches other children and adults, engaging them in play and discussion. In fact, Mark is now comfortable enough to greet new



people and introduce himself.

If you're looking for a new superhero, come visit the Guthrie Rite-Care Language Clinic. We see them everyday! Mark, his family and the staff thank you for your continued support!

NEW SATELLITE CLINIC OPENS IN WEATHERFORD

A satellite is something placed into orbit by human endeavor. That sums up the efforts of the Guthrie Scottish Rite Charitable and Educational Foundation pretty well. Continuing in its endeavors to improve the lives of the children of Oklahoma, the foundation has opened up its fourth satellite clinic in Weatherford. The satellite is housed in the Western Star Masonic Lodge #138 and is supported by the Lodge's members. The clinic is designed to help preschoolers with communication difficulties and who do not qualify for services through public sources.

Mendee House, M.S., C.C.C. has contracted with the foundation to provide the services in Weatherford. Mendee earned her Master's Degree in Speech Pathology from the University of Central Oklahoma in 2008. She became certified and licensed to practice this spring. Luckily, we were able to see Mendee at work firsthand, as she completed an internship at the Guthrie Clinic during her schooling. Not only is she a talented clinician, but she has great people skills, relating well with both children and their parents. She has that rare ability to make learning fun for many children who are frustrated by their communication problems.

Currently, Mendee is employed by the Weatherford Public Schools and will be providing after school services for our outreach program. She resides in Watonga with her husband and toddler son Cooper. Welcome aboard Mendee! We are excited about our clinic outreach in Weatherford. It is just one of several important partnerships the Masonic fraternity has with this western Oklahoma economic and education hub.



DEPUTY MANNING'S INSIGHTS ON THE SCOTTISH RITE

Your editor was working on articles for this issue of the Oklahoma Scottish Rite Mason and happened upon Illustrious Brother Joe R. Manning, Jr., the Deputy of the Supreme Council in Oklahoma. I thought it would be interesting to ask our new Scottish Rite Deputy his insights on some of the issues affecting the Rite at this time.

Ill. Bro Joe, we have had some of Oklahoma's finest men serve as our presiding officer of the Scottish Rite in Oklahoma. We live in a time when it is more important than ever that we have a local voice in our national affairs. Do you feel you can be proactive as a member of the Supreme Council and can comfortably fit in with its leadership from the very beginning?

Manning—I'm very much looking forward to my service on the Supreme Council. Hopefully, my decades of leadership in various Masonic organizations across the country, often at a national level, has given me a depth of understanding of the condition of our fraternity, and what needs to be done for Freemasonry to succeed in the future. For example, I am aware there is a new generation of young men coming onto the scene who are very interested in our fraternity. This is the first time any of us have experienced this much potential growth as Masons. It is a unique opportunity for us. My lifelong involvement in DeMolay has enabled me always to hear the voice of generations below me. We live in a time where we must pay attention to the young men joining us. They are our future.

I also have had the advantage of meeting so many men who have been, and are, leaders in so many different branches of the fraternity. Many of these men are on the Supreme Council, and have also been involved in many other Masonic organizations, as have I. I have a good relationship with these men. I have known them a long time. I think they have confidence in me and I know I have a lot of confidence in them. The voice of Oklahoma will be heard.

What do you see as the two highest priorities as the leader of Rite in the Orient of Oklahoma?

Manning—Like the fraternity as a whole, we have suffered from more than 50 years of membership decline. This means that we are now taking care of the business of the Scottish Rite with a lot fewer men than in the past. While it speaks well of our active volunteers and their commitment to service that we have managed to do so well over the years, each pool of volunteers must ultimately replace itself.

It is more difficult to accomplish this with each passing generation. For this reason alone, membership development is always a high priority for the Scottish Rite. To attract, we must be attractive. This is why it is so important that whatever we do, we do it in an extraordinarily impressive manner.

The long decline in membership has affected the very fabric of our organization. Since we teach our lessons to classes of men, we can be more effective when we do our jobs in large performance facilities. Oklahoma endorsed the theatre tradition of the Scottish Rite even before we were a state. Our large facilities have always helped us accomplish our mission of bringing a number of men into the Rite at the same time. But these buildings cost a lot of money. I am proud that Oklahoma has two of the oldest and most beautiful Temples anywhere. But as every year passes, the importance of having our Temples endowed becomes more essential to our long term success.

So I would have to say at this time I see membership and financial stability as our two highest priorities.

You have outlined very well important priorities which we hope are on the minds of every thoughtful Masonic leader. Setting aside the obvious economic considerations of our business, what do you see as the most important mission of the Scottish Rite in general?

Manning—The conferral of the Degrees we are chartered to confer. The Scottish Rite best serves its mission by making more Masonic Light available to Master Masons. Its purpose is to always stand ready to provide for the intellectual and spiritual needs of its members. It has long been our tradition in Oklahoma to confer all or most of the degrees of the Rite. Men who join the Rite in our Orient witness enough degrees to see how the themes and ideas of the four lodges of the Rite relate to each other; as well as to the degrees of the symbolic lodge. This is vital to success in the Scottish Rite. Valleys who present only a few of the 29 degrees of the Rite risk not giving their members enough knowledge and information about our overall system of degrees to engage them in the importance and significance of the Rite as a university course in Freemasonry.

The other important mission of the Scottish Rite is that it so often introduces to a new Mason an exposure to Masonry beyond the confines of his own lodge. He discovers for the first time that there are men like him in every community

and he is not a stranger to them. He sees for the first time his identity as a Freemason in the world. This gives him a sense of how Freemasonry improves society as well as the individual. He can see that we are all working together for the same good end.



What role do you think the Scottish Rite can best play to advance the overall goals of Freemasonry in Oklahoma?

Manning—We cannot be successful in the Scottish Rite unless we are successful at the Blue Lodge. The strength of Freemasonry begins in the local lodge. Our opportunity to fulfill our mission is directly tied to how well the local lodge fulfills its mission. Every Blue Lodge depends on a community for its own success. One of our responsibilities as Scottish Rite men is to see to it that the local lodge in which we belong offers a good experience for the men in our community. Whenever possible, Scottish Rite men need to be active in their communities and in their lodges. We are taught in Masonry to serve both.

Once we have each done our share to help our communities and our lodges, then there is no question we advance the overall goals of Freemasonry by the lessons we teach in the Rite.

Is there anything you would like to convey to those members who, for whatever reason, have not been able to be actively involved in the Rite on a regular basis?

Manning—First, I want to thank them for their financial support of the Scottish Rite. Without them, it would be impossible for us to operate. I consider them active if all they do is pay their annual dues to their Valley. They are very valuable to us.

I meet many Scottish Rite brethren who tell me they have not been back to their Valley since they joined. I marvel at the enjoyment our 50 year men get when they come back to their Valley after so many years. There is no memory work required in getting back in the Scottish Rite. One only needs to bring his current member card. We call our gatherings reunions for a very important reason. We are re-uniting with men who think like us every time we are together. They are our brothers. And we feel good when we are with them. My prayer is that our inactive brethren will commit to return to a reunion of their Valley, and re-live the reunion experience again. They will be welcomed by brothers they have never met, and they will thoroughly enjoy it.

LODGE MEETINGS RETURN TO TEMPLE AFTER SUMMER ON THE ROAD

Beginning with September, the four Lodges of the Guthrie Valley will conduct their Stated Communications in the Blue Room of the Guthrie Temple for the remainder of the year and through the winter months of 2011. The Lodge, Chapter, Council and Consistory are returning to the Temple after having conducted their monthly meetings on the road since last May.

The Guthrie Valley decided several years ago to take the Stated Communications of the Guthrie Scottish Rite Bodies on the road during the summer months and that decision has proven very popular. Unlike those Temples where the geographic boundaries of the Valley are limited to one large metropolitan area and its surrounding communities, the Guthrie Valley encompasses more than 35,000 square miles. That makes coming to the Guthrie Temple a 2-4 hour trip for many of our members. Attending the monthly Lodge of Perfection meeting is a matter of some inconvenience for essentially every member.

Yet, unless a member actually attends a monthly Stated Communication, it is hard to understand that the administrative structure of the Scottish Rite is no different than a Blue Lodge. The Scottish Rite may be styled a Lodge, Chapter, Council and Consistory, but these four Bodies all function as lodges. Each has a ritual ceremony for opening and closing just like any other Lodge. The Guthrie Lodge of Perfection reads and authorizes the payment of monthly bills, votes on petitions for membership, reinstatements and applications for affiliation by ballot just like any other Lodge. The four Lodges together are responsible for conferring the degrees of the Rite. The only noticeable difference is in the arrangement of the officers' stations and places. And there can be as many as four presiding officers sitting in the east at the same time.

As the officers tour around the Valley conducting their meetings in Blue Lodges, members in attendance are often asked if this is the first time they have ever witnessed a ritual opening of the Scottish Rite. It is not unusual to see hands go up from more than 50%

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of those present. Witnessing a monthly communication of the Rite adds a new dimension to how the business of the Rite is accomplished.

The traveling meetings offer a number of benefits to the Valley. First, everyone in attendance hears the profound ritual words spoken during the opening and can reflect on the solemn and important meanings of why we come together as Scottish Rite men. These ritual ceremonies of the four Bodies tie directly to the teachings of the degrees they represent. Second, all members present actually vote on matters which come before the Lodge. It becomes powerfully apparent that men are elected by a unanimous ballot to become Masters of the Royal Secret, just as they are earlier elected to become Masons. In addition, members hear reports from the Valley Secretary as to what is going on between reunions. They get a feel that the business of the Rite is much bigger than only the reunion experience.

Third, everyone is generally stunned to hear that the monthly cost of operating and maintaining the Valley and the

Temple ranges between \$35,000 and \$90,000! It is a sobering reminder of the awesome duty we each have as owners together in protecting our significant fraternal assets. It is the reason why the revenue base of the Valley must increase with rising costs. It brings home a sense of reality from the fantasy so commonly associated with our beautiful temple that it is just there for us; as it has always been.

Finally, being on the road allows brothers to wear their Scottish Rite caps at a Scottish Rite function which is local to them. One of the challenges of Scottish Rite Masonry is that there are not enough opportunities for brethren to do things together as 32° Masons in their home community or county. Taking the Rite to the hinterlands is one way we can reconcile this matter.

The schedule for our Lodge meetings each year is published on the Valley website. Make a note to yourself that next year you will commit to attending one of the monthly meetings in your area. You'll be glad you did.