



# THE HOUSTON VALLEY HERALD

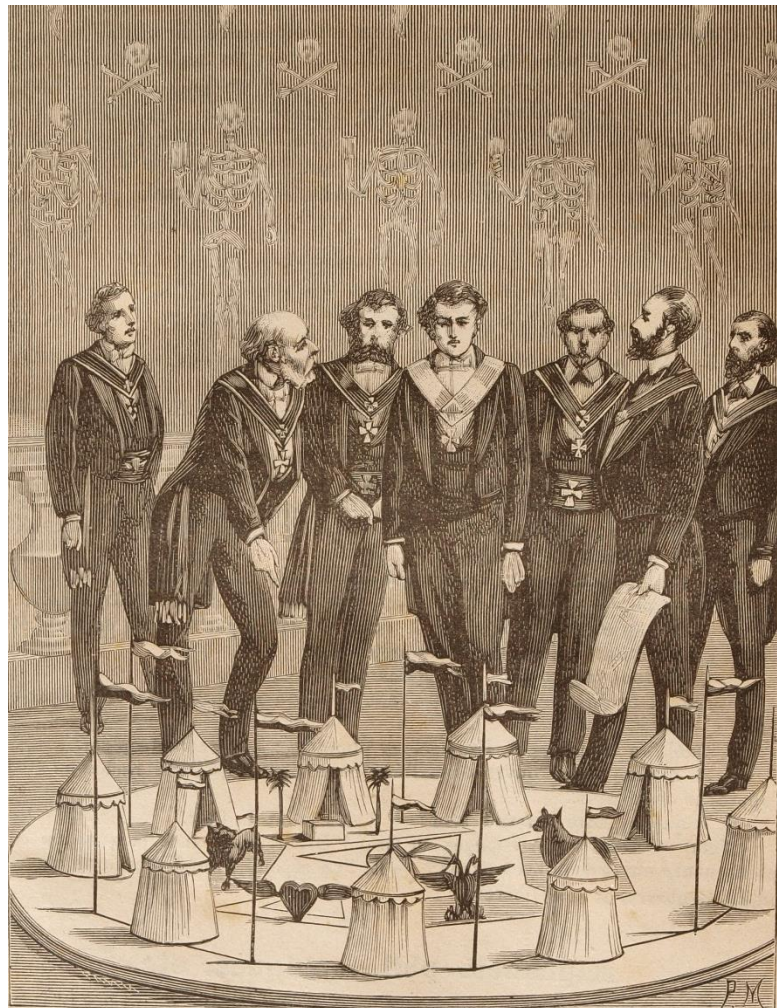
A MONTHLY PUBLICATION

MAY 26, 2022

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 04

## Why We Feast: The Feast of Consistory

By ADAM B. OLIVIER 32°  
Editor-in-Chief



*Initiation of a Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret (c. 1886) by Leo Taxil.*

New Scottish Rite Masons or the less observant or busy among us may not put that much thought into the four feasts that we celebrate every year. The purpose of Remembrance and Renewal is in the name and readily obvious (and very important) to anyone who attends. But, to some, the Feast of Kadosh, Feast of Consistory, and Feast of Tishri may sometimes seem like just another benchmark in the year.

As the name hints, the Feast of Consistory is held under the authority of the Consistory. We should be reminded that the Consistory includes the 31° and 32°. These two degrees are notably different than those that proceed them. They reflect on significant philosophy involving what it is to be a “good man,” and also the centerpiece of Scottish Rite esotericism.

Outside of Freemasonry, there is a common unfounded belief among some of the general public that our fraternity is directly descended from the Knights Templar or the Ancient Egyptians. Neither one of these misconceptions are based on any historical facts (at least none that we know of). While we know that there is no historical basis for those beliefs, it is easy to feel a certain thrill when the Knights Templar or the Ancient Egyptians are mentioned in Masonry because, in some ways, we may feel that we are their philosophical, speculative successors.

The 31° can easily excite any Mason with this frame of mind. The references to the Ancient Egyptians, the old gods of their time, and the setting in the Court of the Dead is exactly what some were hoping for.

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*Comedy and tragedy masks (2010) by Scott Freiheit.*

## Thespians and the Theater of Ritual in the Houston Valley

By ADAM B. OLIVIER 32°  
Editor-in-Chief

The Houston Valley of the Scottish Rite has an army of dedicated brothers who work in the kitchen, guard our building, educate our candidates, work behind (and above) the stage, organize the wardrobe, and whisper wise council. These brothers, who often labor without thanks or expectation of it, are all essential to ensuring that our valley works as it should. But, during valley reunions, there is one group who everyone has their eyes on: the actors.

Brother Wes Hamner 32° KCCH regularly acts in the 13°, 17°, 19°, 21°, 23°, 25°, 27°, 29°, and 32°. He is not a professional actor and was not in theater in high school or college.

“The blue lodge and the Scottish Rite were the first on-stage kind of acting I ever did,” he said. “When you memorize the lines for a role, you relearn the meaning of the degree. It is important for actors to really get into the role. We get to facilitate the meaning of the degrees to a candidate with our acting.”

Brother Hamner said that he does not have a perfect memory and that memorization is not something that comes instantly to him. “If I am given enough time I can pick up on things. It is easier in the Scottish Rite because you have a written script. The roles that had larger portions are roles that I really enjoy.”

He is the degree master for the 27° as well, and he has a role in it. Brother Hamner said that being degree master is not easy.

“Having good communication with props, wardrobe, and the booth is essential. Also, to get all of the roles filled or people covered for large degrees can be really complicated. Some degrees are always full while some need more actors, but there is always a lot of guys that are willing to step up.

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After a new candidate gets over any excitement he may have for the setting of the 31° itself, he eventually finds himself confronted with some uncomfortable realities. It is not simply enough to be a good man. Does he do the right thing because he is trying to maintain a certain façade among his family and neighbors? Is he actually righteous, or is he just making sure that he looks righteous?

While he ponders that, he must also consider why he obeys the law. Is it because obeying the law is the right thing to do or because the law is moral? Are there other places that have immoral law? Does that mean if he goes to those places, or if his homeland is ruled by lesser men who implement such immoral laws, it is still his moral duty to follow them?

These thought experiments should lead to a clear conclusion. As an Inspector Inquisitor he should be his own judge. This does not mean that he gets to choose what is moral or not moral, or that he can make excuses for himself (which is covered earlier in the degree). It means that he as a man should consult his conscious and assess his guilt – he does not need to be burdened with the judgements of others because he should know what is right and wrong.

The 32° degree and the encampment that is prominently featured within it may be overwhelming the first time our candidate sees it. While so many Scottish Rite degrees are like drinking from a firehose, as we often hear, this degree is like drinking from a waterfall. The 32° degree cannot be done justice here, but consider the bare minimum that a Scottish Rite Mason should consider during the Feast of Consistory below.

The obligations and duties prescribed to our candidate as a Master of The Royal Secret are ringing reminders of the Age of Enlightenment. Our fraternity should consider itself fortunate to have been refined in that era when men of reason began to prescribe to ideas like individual liberty, the right of men to govern themselves, the principle of self-reliance, and the idea of seeking Light. Ultimately, though, we are to contemplate one word revealed to us that is not written here but is the ultimate truth.

## Announcements

### 2022-2023 Capital Campaign

Join us in building the Next Chapter of the Houston Scottish Rite’s Library Story by contributing to the expansion of the main library shelves. Donations of all sizes welcome!

With a minimum donation of **\$500**: You will have a bookshelf dedicated to you or someone you admire. A nameplate will be engraved and placed on a bookshelf in the Main Library.

Minimum donation of **\$100**: You will receive an Architect’s Circle kit (limited supply!) including: Architect’s Circle Commemorative Book Bag, Architect’s Circle pen, Architect’s Circle Certificate, and a book from the Premium book list.

Minimum donation of **\$50**: You will receive an Architect’s Circle pen, and a Book from the Premium book list.

Minimum donation of **\$25**: You will receive a book from the Premium book list.

For more info visit [www.HoustonScottishRite.org](http://www.HoustonScottishRite.org) and click “Education Foundation” under the “Philanthropy” tab.

### Per Capita Program

Endowed life members and dues exempt members are encouraged to donate \$30 or more per year to offset their per capita membership assessment. Donations can be made through the Valley’s website at:

[www.HoustonScottishRite.org](http://www.HoustonScottishRite.org). Click “Dues Donations and Meal Fees” under the “Membership” tab.

### Program by RW Cody Webb on June 23

Right Worshipful Cody Webb 32° will give a presentation on the Rocker b Ranch which helps fund the Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children. The program will be delivered during the Houston Valley’s June stated meeting.

### Roles Available for the 11<sup>th</sup> Degree Team

The 11<sup>th</sup> degree team “Elu of the Twelve” has open parts for more actors! Contact Brother Andy Marcinkowska of Houston at: [Andrewm1390@gmail.com](mailto:Andrewm1390@gmail.com)

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“Really, it depends a lot on the degree that you are master of. The 27° is mostly lectures. However, because the terminal degrees must always be done there is a lot of pressure to make sure that they happen.

Illustrious Brother Clint Stevens 33° IGH also regularly acts at reunions. He acts in the 4°, 13°, 15°, 18°, and 32°. He has also done acting outside of Freemasonry and was in the Thespian Honor Society in high school.

Brother Stevens joined the Scottish Rite in 2004. He said that his first role was “Orator” in the 4°. “Back then it was more difficult to get on a degree team. I think that there’s a cultural shift. It seems like people are more willing to let others jump in and do things now.

“We do need to take the ritual and acting seriously. Masonry has avenues that help develop your inner-self and the ritual is a big part of it. It is important to pass it on to others. If you understand the ritual and you can teach it, it makes missing an ‘an’ or ‘that’ more trivial,” he said.

When asked if he still enjoyed acting in the degrees after nearly twenty years of being in the Scottish Rite he said, “It is my bread and butter. Acting in the Scottish Rite helps fulfill what I wanted in Freemasonry. There is an intellectual side to acting – as you work on memorizing the script and perform, you see things that the audience never gets to.”

Brother Andy Marcinkowska 32° KCCH is also well-known amongst the actors in the valley. He regularly performs in the 5°, 6°, 11°, 14°, 17°, 18°, 21°, 25°, and 27°. He offered the following advice for anyone who has trouble memorizing lines.

“I get a lot out of just memorizing the roles. I play King Solomon three times, and each time he is in a different headspace. Knowing my lines and the ritual makes it a part of my life – it makes it easier to live by the lessons when you know them,” he said.

“When you are trying to memorize lines it is important that you first grasp what tone your character has – what mood he is in and why he is saying what he is saying. Also, when I am performing on stage, I use my hands a lot when I talk. When I repeat these motions over and over it basically becomes muscle memory. Sometimes when I cannot recall a line, the muscle memory will help me remember what I was supposed to be saying,” Brother Marcinkowska said.

All three of the brothers mentioned above know each other and regularly act together. They said that many of the degrees put on by the Houston Valley could use more actors and that there are always non-speaking roles available. To see Brothers Hamner, Marcinkowska, and Stevens perform, be sure to attend the next reunion which will be in October.

## Photo From last Meeting



Photo by Adam B. Olivier 32°. Photo of Jason Rees 32° KCCH, Chuck Ivy 32° KCCH, and Seth Hudson 32° KCCH who received certificates of recognition for donating to the Capital Campaign from Right Worshipful Brian R. Dodson 33° IGH, Personal Representative of the S.G.I.G.

### Contributing to *The Houston Valley Herald*

Contact Brother Adam B. Olivier 32° at [HoustonValleyHerald@gmail.com](mailto:HoustonValleyHerald@gmail.com) if you are interested in contributing articles or pictures for future issues of the *Herald*.