

Oklahoma Scottish Rite Is Not Immune To Recession

We have heard chamber of commerce pundits claim the first seven months of the nation's recession has had little affect on Oklahoma. For many business owners, directors of non-profits, and corporate partners who have to make ends meet every month, this is nothing more than provincial thinking—very much the same way a father tells his injured child it's not as bad as it seems. Never mind that the child's arm is hanging from its shoulder at an angle not normally possible.

The real test of whether an individual, family, business, or government is impacted by recessionary pressures is pretty easy to measure. It's a matter of money. Here are a couple of for instances.

We all know the bottom has fallen out of energy prices, dragging down the price of natural gas with it. The result is that Oklahoma's leading industry group is not as flush with cash as it was a year ago. This stifles new production, threatens jobs and talent, and increases unemployment. In fact, Oklahoma's unemployment rate increased another .3 percentage points in April, bringing the rate to 6.2%, the highest level since July, 2003. The financial sector is faring no better. Over 4,000 mortgage foreclosures have been filed since the first of the year. Bankruptcies, both individual and corporate, have increased each quarter since 2007. State revenue collections from income taxes are down 23% from last year. Personal income figures won't come out for a few more months, but we can expect these also to show a decline.

The bottom line is that Oklahoma is not recession proof. Like everyone else, we are in the throes of an economic and financial crisis. And the situation is affecting thousands of Oklahoma families. One has only to observe the monthly enrollment increase in public benefit programs to know many in our State are feeling the financial crunch on a deeply personal level.

Unfortunately, fraternal organizations are not immune to economic bad times. In the Scottish Rite, we are feeling the recession in a couple of ways. Dues income and charitable giving are running below normal levels. These line items affect operating income to the Lodge of Perfection and to our RiteCare clinics. This year, charitable giving from the heart, rather than in response to specific appeals, has thus far been almost non existent. Rare is the brother who makes a monthly charitable contribution to the Rite just because that is what he has always done. The Valley Almoners are being called upon more frequently to relieve distress. Requests for significant financial assistance are more common.

Now, to most brethren, this may seem like a purely

administrative matter. But in the Scottish Rite, every line item source of income is important. We don't have the large membership pool we once had. It has been a long time since our members have been the primary support of their Valley's liabilities. Our forefathers built large and elaborate fraternal buildings during a time when it seemed there would never be a decline in membership. As stately and beautiful as our facilities often are, they cost far more every year to operate and maintain than the membership can afford. In fact, in all three Valleys, 70-80% of the financial requirements to keep our temples open must come from sources other than dues!

That is an enormous ongoing burden we are strapped with that our members often never think about. And it brings up another real and significant problem.

Every Valley must depend on growth in their reserve funds to make ends meet. This means that investment returns from stocks and bonds must not only be positive every year. They must also meet (and exceed) certain percentage goals to balance the Valley budgets and provide for each subsequent year's increase in costs. If they don't, then there is nothing else to make up the difference except the wallets of our members.

This is the reason the current recession is very much on the minds of your Valley leaders. Investment income is way down. To assess every member the amount actually needed to meet the annual expenditures of his Valley Lodge of Perfection would require dues of \$160. And that would only represent a snapshot in time. As long as membership continues to decline, the annual dues we pay should rightfully increase every few years. Our records show the last dues increase directed toward expenses other than Supreme Council per capita tax increases occurred in 1998. This makes getting beyond this recession critically important.

One thing is sure. All this attention on our economy has brought something important to light. What we currently pay to belong to the Scottish Rite is a bargain almost beyond measure. We enjoy the benefits of being 32° Masons at a deeply discounted price.

APRIL 2009*	Unemp. rate	Labor force	Employment	Unemployment
Oklahoma	6.2%	1,770,900	1,661,450	109,450
United States	8.9%	151,731,000	141,007,000	10,724,000

* data adjusted for seasonal factors

OKLAHOMA*	Unemp. rate	Labor force	Employment	Unemployment
Apr '09	6.2%	1,770,900	1,661,450	109,450
Mar '09	5.9%	1,769,200	1,650,650	104,620
Feb '09	5.5%	1,757,710	1,661,080	96,640
Jan '09	5.0%	1,760,690	1,672,190	88,530
Dec '08	4.8%	1,767,780	1,687,200	80,580
Nov '08	4.4%	1,753,970	1,686,330	77,650
Apr '08	3.5%	1,739,900	1,679,410	60,550

* data adjusted for seasonal factors

Rite Sponsored Teacher Training Celebrates 25 Years in Oklahoma

The one thing you can depend on in Masonic philanthropy is that when we find a cause which applies directly to an improvement in the lives of children, we are a passionate and committed partner with those who are engaged in the battle to make it happen. This is the story of the Scottish Rite and the Payne Education Center in Oklahoma City. And it is a wonderful story of success.

The Payne Center was founded by John and Ann Henry of Oklahoma City because they were unable to find a teacher who knew how to teach their daughter with dyslexia to read, write and spell. The Rite was the Payne Education Center's first partner in Oklahoma and, after 25 years of service to Oklahoma public schools, we remain the most important benefactor of this statewide childhood literacy program.

The Center was not established to directly serve dyslexic children, but to train teachers to prevent reading difficulties in children, particularly those who suffer from dyslexia. Because of its focus on training, the Payne Center has been improving literacy in children since 1984. The methods utilized by the Center's teacher trainers were originally verified at the Learning Development Center of the Texas Scottish Rite Hospital in Dallas over a 15 year research period. The Payne reading programs are all Alphabetic Phonics-based, that is, teachers are taught scientific multi-sensory reading techniques that have an 85% proven success rate in teaching dyslexic children how to read, write, and spell.

In the past 25 years, the Payne Education Center has trained over 12,000 teachers, each touching approximately 20 students' lives each year. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of students have become literate because their teachers implemented the Payne curricula and strategies. Reading, writing and spelling test scores using multi-sensory methods show significant gains after only 6 weeks. We know the programs work.

They are effective not only for students who have reading difficulties, but also for students who are not challenged readers. This means the reading methods can be taught under a

A small boy sits at his desk, looking down at his open book as his classmates read aloud. He wrinkles his forehead and squints his eyes but the letters and words he sees are jumbled, twisted and senseless. He grips the book tighter, holds his breath and makes a silent wish that the teacher will not call on him...

This child has dyslexia, a common learning disability that is estimated to affect more than 2 million school age children in the United States. He needs help to overcome it before it sets him back emotionally and educationally. Programs to treat dyslexia are few and far between. That is why our support is so important.

wide variety of teaching situations, including a full range of language arts programs used in Kindergarten classes through adult literacy programs.

The Scottish Rite and the Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma provide annual grants to the Payne Center which can be used as scholarships for teachers to pay for the costs of the training and/or materials needed for training in the several programs offered through the Center. In the first 25 years of Masonic philanthropy, we have helped the Center produce 20 Master Instructor level trainers who undergo an extensive four year training program and are required to demonstrate over 1,400 hours of exemplary teaching with students before they become accredited to teach other teachers. These instructors are the teachers of the Oklahoma classroom teachers who take the training.

Through the years, teachers all across the state have received one or more of the ten different programs offered through Payne. Trainings are offered regularly in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Moore, Ardmore, Enid, Durant and Lawton. In addition to the regular training venues, the Scottish Rite has, over the years, provided funding for special training programs in Oklahoma City, McAlester and Tulsa.

We are proud of the goals and the past performance of our statewide sponsored teacher training program and look forward to many more years of partnering with the Center as the teachers it trains continue to improve the reading skills of all children in Oklahoma; and especially the one in five children who suffer from dyslexia.

Congratulations on their Silver Anniversary!



The Rite Connection. You Can Make a Personal Difference!

The Scottish Rite has been supporting the mitigation of speech and language disorders in children since 1951. It is our national philanthropy. In fact, we now have 178 clinics, centers, and special programs serving children throughout the Southern Jurisdiction. With our partners in the Northern Masonic jurisdiction, the Scottish Rite supports 221 such programs in the United States. All of our clinics are staffed with speech-language pathologists and other professionals specially trained to help children overcome our nation's leading childhood disease. Childhood language disorders affect more children than all other childhood diseases combined.

Almost all speech-language disorders are treatable. Most can be overcome in a fairly short period of time. This is where you come in.

Under a new program offered in all three Valleys in Oklahoma, our members can now make a personal commitment to changing the life of children enrolled in one of our clinics. It is called The Rite Connection, because it joins our members together with our RiteCare clinics to give a helping hand to children with communications problems. Here's how it works.

The Rite Connection sponsors children currently enrolled in therapy at the Guthrie, Tulsa, and McAlester clinics, as well as one of the satellite clinics located in Lawton, Ponca City, Woodward and Elk City. The average length of time a child receives services in 3 years. During that period, a lot of material must be purchased that is specific to that child and his/her diagnosis.

These include special programs and books, along with notebooks, paper, markers, stickers, and a host of aids which make our therapy programs possible. It is estimated that one child in therapy for 3 years requires \$500 in disposable materials. When he/she uses them, they are then used up. They can't be re-used in the program.

You or your lodge can sponsor a child in one of our clinics by investing in the materials cost of \$500! For your one time gift, you will receive personal information, photos, letters, invitations to special clinic parties, etc., from the child you sponsor. The information may differ from Valley to Valley because it will be tied to the programs each clinician or therapist has designed for the child you sponsor. But the important thing is that you will be directly participating in the services we provide. You will be personally connected to the national cause of the Scottish Rite. You will be making a difference in getting a child started off on the right foot so he can compete with his peers in school.

It's all about teaming up with our professionals and having the satisfaction of knowing that one more Oklahoma child has a bright future because of you.

To learn how you or your lodge can be a sponsor of The Rite Connection, call your Valley Secretary or Clinic Director today!

Oklahoma Retains Position in Overall Member Numbers

The membership statistics for the Southern Jurisdiction have just been released by the Supreme Council and once again the Orient of Oklahoma has held its own in the production of new members over the past year.

The report shows that the three Valleys in Oklahoma produced 190 new 32° Masons in 2008. Overall, the Valley of Guthrie ranked 5th among the 217 Valleys in the Southern Jurisdiction in the production of new candidates. McAlester followed closely behind Guthrie, ranking 7th overall. Tulsa was ranked 12th among all Valleys. This places the Orient of Oklahoma in the top 5% in the Southern Jurisdiction in attracting Master Masons to the Rite.

The Scottish Rite's success in new member numbers is always tied to the number of Master Masons raised in any given year in the symbolic Lodges. Craft Masonry in Oklahoma has seen some very lean years over the past two decades, but a recent trend in joining interest, particularly among young men, has resulted in some Oklahoma Lodges showing positive gains in membership for the first time in 50 years. This has the potential of being the seed of a renaissance in Masonry in our time. It will all depend on how our craft lodge leaders perceive and handle the needs of the young men entering the fraternity over the next few years.

The Orient of Oklahoma presently ranks 7th in overall Scottish Rite membership, following behind states that have a Masonic population at least 67% higher than ours. The top ten Orients in membership numbers include:

Texas	29,832	Missouri	11,273
California	21,248	Oklahoma	10,778
Florida	17,532	Virginia	9,015
Tennessee	14,659	West Virginia	8,494
N Carolina	11,497	Kentucky	8,200

The Southern Jurisdiction is comprised of the 35 states west of the Mississippi and south of the Ohio Rivers, along with the Panama Canal, Puerto Rico, Okinawa/Guam, Japan/Korea, and the NATO Bases. It comprises 217 Lodges of Perfection and 197 Consistories.

There are presently 237,806 Scottish Rite Masons in the Southern Jurisdiction. When this number is added to the approximate 188,000 Scottish Rite Masons in the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction (15 northeastern states), the total Scottish Rite membership in the United States currently stands at 425,806. That membership represents slightly over 30% of the total Masonic membership in the United States of 1.4 million Master Masons.

Oklahoma Scottish Rite fares much better than the national average, with slightly over 43% of our Master Masons being Scottish Rite men. This is down slightly from a high of 47% a decade ago, but in the big picture, confirms that the Rite in Oklahoma is a popular destination for brethren desiring more light in Masonry.

SPRING CLASSES OF THE GUTHRIE-MCALESTER-TULSA REUNIONS



GUTHRIE SCOTTISH RITE REUNION
Oklahoma A.F. & A.M. - A New Century
April 3,4,5, 2009

Row One: (left to right) John Stahl, KCCH, Class Director; Charles V. Webster, III, Class Chaplain; Calvin J. Jones, Class Secretary/Treasurer; Kelly Bob Carter, Class Vice-President; Robert Louis Duncan, Class President; Joseph C. Jennings, Jr., 33°, SGIG in Oklahoma; Richard Massad, 33°, Grand Master; Joe R. Manning, Jr., 33°; Personal Representative of the SGIG; Robert G. Davis, 33° G.C., General Secretary; Kent Callahan, KCCH, Class Director.

Row Two: William A. Jenkins; Joseph D. Walker; Gary W. Perry; Jeffery Ferguson; Christopher B. Rattan; Guy M. Haskell; Craig E. Smith; William R. Newell; Terence L. Vernon; Michael Hernandez; Randall Kohl, Phillip Pemberton; Larry Davis.

Row Three: Jon F. Lenander; Thomas T. Cook; Jim V. Smith; Harry E. Nichols IV; Lucas A. Grounds; Ken C. Leverett; Travis C. Roberts; Brian S. Peterson; Paul D. Richards; Michael S. Walsh; Gary R. Kowalski; John D. Ahrens; Cecil W. Duke.

Row Four: William Randall Ellis; Charlie A. Parrez, Jr.; Curtis Todd Moore; Jaymie Britt Jordan; Daniel A. Lemons; Roy Glen Canup; James M. Monsees; Dustin E. Schmidt; Timothy Nobles; James T. McDavid; Michael Crowl.

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McAlester Scottish Rite
Grand Lodge of Oklahoma Centennial Reunion
April 25th & 26th, 2009

Left to Right

Row 1: Mark Halyard, KCCH; Jeffrey W. Stevens, Class Secretary; Joseph W. Bishop, Class Treasurer; Scott R. Smith, Class Historian; Sherman B. Elder, Class Chaplain; Ronnie D. Davis, Class President; Joseph C. Jennings, Jr., 33°, SGIG in Oklahoma; William C. Cox, 33°, Personal Representative to the SGIG; Donald G. Jones, 33°, General Secretary; John Wayne Clagg, KCCH, Membership Chairman; Brian L. Hooper, Class Vice President; Todd C. Hunter, Class Orator; Earl N. Nicodin

Row 2: Brent Been, 32° Class Supervisor; Stacey J. Cole; Nicholas A. Valenta; Tommy L. Love; M. Todd Conley; Clint A. Black; C. David Ward; Donald L. VanAlstine; Jerry L. Sills; Steven Saunders, KCCH, Class Supervisor

Row 3: Don Whitman, 32°, Class Supervisor; Rayford W. Bratcher; Travis W. Bagwell; Andy C. Atteberry; John F. Neely, Jr.; Orville R. Monroe; Johnnie D. Grimes; Joe D. Younger; Nathan J. Broderick; Walter C. Freeman; Bryan J. Pumphrey; Richard L. Radloff, 32°, Class Supervisor

Row 4: William McCaa, KCCH, Class Supervisor; Donald C. Stringer, 32°, Class Supervisor; Chris S. Ingle, 32°, Class Supervisor; William E. Haney; Roger L. Deen; Aaron J. Oliver; Trevor T. Dunbar; J. Buck Hooper; Chuck Downing, KCCH, Class Supervisor



Tulsa Scottish Rite Spring Reunion

April 18 & 19, 2009

Seated, from left: Wesley W. Little, Lynn S. Burgess, Samuel J. Newport, Frank B. Wolfe, III, Joseph C. Jennings, Jr., 33°, Sovereign Grand Inspector General in Oklahoma, Richard D. Sewell, 32° KCCH, Chairman - Advisory Conference, R. Keith Madden, 32° KCCH, General Secretary, H.A. "Al" Wilson 32° KCCH, John D. Miller, Jr., 33°.

Standing, from left: Kenneth L. Smith, Jeff W. Rhodes, II, Floyd D. Boggs, Russell R. Smith, Oscar K. Geiffuss, Robin M. Durland, Ralph W. Neice, III, Varley "Dean" McClure, Jr., John E. Foley, Dennis Q. Llewellyn, Donald G. Draper.

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2008 Membership Awards Presented in Tulsa Valley

At the 2009 Spring reunion, Lodges and individuals were recognized for their efforts to promote membership in the Tulsa Valley. Richard D. Sewell, 32°, KCCH, Personal Representative, presented the awards.

Lodges were recognized for their efforts based on the number of new Scottish Rite Masons from that Lodge compared to the number of candidates from other Lodges with similar membership. Akdar Lodge #555 was recognized among Lodges having fewer than 150 members. For those Lodges having 151 to 300 members, Sand Springs Lodge #472 was recognized for their efforts. Pilgrim-Rock Lodge #522 was recognized among Lodges having 301 or more members.



Richard Sewell, KCCH, Personal Rep honors Lloyd A. Parker, Sr. 32° for having sponsored 20 candidates. Brother Parker received a hat pin and a Perpetual Endowed Membership for his efforts.



Gary Beisley, 32° had 7 candidates in 2008 and is the Membership Man of the Year. Bro. Beisley earned a 2009 membership card at no charge in recognition of his efforts.



Class Officers: Frank B. Wolfe, III, President; Samuel J. Newport, V. President; Lynn B. Burgess, Secy/Treas; Wesley W. Little, Almoner



Bro. Russell R. Smith receives the award for Sand Springs Lodge #475



Bro. R. Keith Madden receives the award for Pilgrim-Rock #522.



Bro. Sewell presents the award for Akdar Lodge #553 to Barry Wickett, WM.

Johnny D. Allford, 32° appointed McAlester Valley Masonic Education Director

In order to fulfill the promise of additional Masonic knowledge to the 32nd Degree Masons of the Valley of McAlester, Brother Johnny Allford has accepted the office of Masonic Education Director.

Brother Allford's responsibilities as director will include: the establishment of programs to provide ongoing knowledge and skill development in coaching and mentoring, standards of Masonic knowledge for all members, provide resources for continued learning from a basic to advanced level and to head up the Master Craftsman program.

He is a member of South McAlester Lodge #96 and is active in the blue lodge. Bro. Allford became a Master of the Royal Secret in the statewide one-day reunion at Tulsa on June 25, 1994. He has been active on the Valley Development Committee and worked on several fund-raising projects. He is a member of the Fifth Tuesday Masonic Study Club.

Brother Allford is excited about the new position. He is currently working on an education program for the Scottish Rite degrees for the months between reunions. For the reunions, he will arrange for topical programs for candidates and members.

He may be reached by e-mail at: superj1182@yahoo.com

Tulsa Valley Reinforces Supreme Council Program with Monthly Events

Knock and it shall be opened unto you. We all heard these words early in our Masonic careers... we knocked, and the door of the Lodge was opened to us. That door, which leads to a greater understanding of the core values of our beloved fraternity, also stands open in the Scottish Rite! But, it is up to us to cross this threshold regularly.

There are many reasons that Master Masons decide to continue their Masonic quest by receiving the degrees of the Scottish Rite. Frequently, when asked why he became a Scottish Rite Mason, a new member of the Rite responds along the lines of "I wanted more Masonic Light."

We all recognize that there is no member of the fraternity "higher" than one who has been raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason; in fact, the word "sublime" means elevated. However, those who receive the degrees and study the lessons of the Scottish Rite will be better educated Masons.

We are fortunate to have multiple resources available to us in that quest.

Join us at the Tulsa Temple on the 5th Wednesday for dinner, a presentation on a Masonic subject, and a discussion of that presentation. Br. Michael "Mick" McConnell has taken the responsibility of leading this group; he can be contacted by email at arepo9999@netscape.net or by phone at (918) 906-9649.

Do you think every Masonic business meeting is dull? If so, I urge you to attend a monthly Tulsa Lodge of Perfection meeting at 7:00 on the first Thursday of every month. Yes, there are business items that we must address; but when the business is done, we benefit from a brief educational presentation! These presentations cover subjects ranging from the history and development of the Scottish Rite degrees to the lessons of various degrees, and our presenters have included degree actors, directors and assistant directors, as well as our Sovereign Grand Inspector General.

Would you prefer to work at your own pace and on your own schedule? If so, the Supreme Council's new Master Craftsman program might be just right for you. This program consists of 6 reading assignments, with "open book" objective questions and an essay question for each section. All information necessary for completing the course is contained in the *Scottish Rite Ritual Monitor and Guide* (a \$65 value) included with purchase of the program, and *A Bridge to Light*, which all Scottish Rite Masons receive upon completion of the reunion at which they receive their degrees. When he has completed the course, the member is presented a certificate of completion and a lapel pin from the Supreme Council. The course is \$35 plus shipping, and is available from the Valley office, or on line at www.scottishrite.org; just click the online store button!

The Scottish Rite has often been termed the University of Freemasonry. And, as one can only master a university level course of study by regularly attending class, mastering the body of knowledge of the degrees of the Rite requires witnessing all of the degrees. Unfortunately, due to time and logistics constraints, it is impossible to present all degrees during a single reunion. To witness all 29 degrees of the Rite will take time and perseverance. Recognizing that, those who complete the requirements of the Passport Book program by witnessing all 29 degrees, are recognized by being presented a very nice pocket jewel and ribbon. The jewel and ribbon will be appropriate to that member at the time he completes the program: 32°, 32° KCCH, or 33°.

Finally, consider becoming a member of the Scottish Rite Research Society. Members of the Society receive a copy of each year's Heredom, a hardbound volume containing a collection of scholarly essays about Masonry, an annual bonus book, a quarterly newsletter, and discounts on Research Society publications and other items. Membership in the Society is a great value...the books are worth more than the annual membership fee of \$51! Membership is available online at the Supreme Council website.

The door to greater knowledge and understanding is open to you...all you need do is begin your journey!

McAlester Scottish Rite 2009 Scholarship Recipients

The McAlester Scottish Rite Charitable and Educational Foundation scholarships are made available from the proceeds of the Eleanor Litka Trust in the name of her father, Bro. John T. Liebrand, who was a member of the first class in 1901, from the Valley of McAlester.

Recipient Name	High School
Oklahoma City University	
Nikala Marie Shenold	Putnam City West High
James Demar Campbell	Del City High School
University of Oklahoma	
Nan Katherine A Landes	Tecumseh High School
Jacob Dakota Boren	Waurika High School
Maygen JaDon Enoch	Roland High School
Whitnee Maree West	Eisenhower High School
Brett Tyler Winton	Roland High School
Shelby Jo Richison	Pocola High School
Luke Dean Graves	Atoka High School
Katelyn Davis Calder	Putnam City High School
Olivia Renee Bowlan	Shawnee High School
Oklahoma State University	
Aimee Elisabeth Kite	Warner High School
Nikita Dawn Miller	Weleetka High School
Allyson Marie Jones	Pocola High School
Ariel Jayde LeForce	Broken Bow High School
Shannon James Mallory	Tecumseh High School
Heather Kathaleen Glass	Elgin High School
Sean Thomas Mallory	Tecumseh High School
Lisa Michele Bray	Strother High School
East Central University	
Amanda Kaylyn Westbrook	Broken Bow High School
Derek Anthony Reed	Pauls Valley High School
Katlyn Marie Shepherd	Antlers High School
Trista M Pitts	Allen High School
Kevin Thomas Feuerhelm	Atoka High School
Northeastern State University	
Jason "J.C" C Lowe	Warner High School
Fred John DelaRosa	Roland High School
Jamie Lee Thomas	Eufaula High School
University of Central Oklahoma	
Katie Ann Maxey	Atoka High School
Billy Jack Elles	Marietta High School
Vashti Onva Williams	Wright City High School
Kristin N Rose	Plainview High School
Alyssa Gabriel Juarez	Marietta High School
Connors State College	
Ariel Alisa Allen	Oktaha High School
Oklahoma Baptist University	
Caleb Austin Sanders	Eufaula High School
SW Oklahoma State University	
Katherine Elizabeth Spencer	Seminole High School
Cameron University	
Britany Shinay Pyfer	Elgin High School
SE Oklahoma State University	
Jeremiah Christian Light	Lone Grove High School
Michael Wayne Brese	Coalgate High School

McAlester Masonic Center Scenery Restoration Begins

For seventy-nine years new 32nd Degree Masons have enjoyed the Scottish Rite degrees on the McAlester Masonic Center's stage with the use of scenery painted by the noted scenery artist, Thomas Moses. Time, dirt and use have taken its toll on the original beauty of the scene sets.

The Temple's Restoration Committee, chaired by Bill Kinkead, KCCH, has led the way in Masonic Center preservation and work is now scheduled to begin on The Thomas Moses stage scenery.

With the help of a grant from the McCasland Foundation, the scenery restoration project will begin in July 2009.

Last January, Ms. Wendy Barrett of Bella Scena, LLC, arrived in McAlester and began a week of exhaustive evaluation of the project. With the aid of volunteers Clem Peppers, Bill Erkin, Bill Kinkead and others, Ms. Barrett measured, examined, and took pictures of front and back of the 113 backdrops and every scene used in the Scottish Rite degrees.

At the end of the week, an evaluation meeting was held with the committee and the priorities were set for the later work of restoration.

The talented Wendy Waznut-Barrett is currently completing her thesis for a doctorate in the Theater Arts Department of the University of Minnesota. The title of her thesis is: "Scenic Shifts Upon the Scottish Rite Stage of Freemasonry: Designing for the Masonic Theatre." For her Master's degree, she worked under C. Lance Brockman who was the curator for the famous exhibit: "The Theatre of the Fraternity."

On her arrival at the Masonic Center, she observed that our scenery matches those represented by the early sketch work of Sosman & Landis Scenery Company in Chicago. Bro. Thomas Moses, 33°, a principal artist with Sosman and Landis painted the sets in 1929 and 1930.

Ms. Barrett plans to return for several weeks this summer to oversee the maintenance and repair of all our scenery. Most of the scenery is in good condition, but generally in need of conservation and repair.

The Valley of McAlester is fortunate to have

Wendy, with her expert knowledge in painting, restoration and archival process to help us preserve our McAlester heritage. Ms. Barrett is married to Andrew Barrett, an operatic tenor. Together they have two children.



More Light in Masonry is the Focus

One of the nice benefits of publishing an occasional Orient Newsletter is that all of our members in all three Valleys can see what the overall emphasis of the Rite is at the time of the publication. It is evident that Masonic Education is the central focus of the Scottish Rite in Oklahoma at this time.

Other articles herein have explained what is happening in McAlester and Tulsa. Guthrie's emphasis includes the Supreme Council's *Master Craftsman* program, along with additional education in conjunction with the degree work presented during our Reunions.

In addition to these, three other education programs in the Guthrie Valley are worthy of mention, and any member in the Orient is welcome to participate:

Guthrie College of the Consistory - The Guthrie College of Consistory is currently growing faster than at any time since its inception in 2001. It is a national program which has the Guthrie name on it only because the Valley facilitates the study that is undertaken by members who are enrolled in the College.

At the end of 2008, the College of the Consistory had 820 members in 43 states and ten foreign countries. The Board of Adept, who examine and grade the work of all College students, continues to grow as men progress through the self study program of the four Scottish Rite lodges and prove themselves for adept-ship. The Valley presently has a Board of 16 Adept. These brothers review essays submitted to the College every week through a yahoo group created for their regular communication. Presently, 454 of the 820 members are actively writing essays on the degrees of the Rite.

If you want to participate in your own self study of the degrees of the Rite, you are welcome to enroll at the Guthrie website at www.guthriescottishrite.org. There is no charge.

Education on the Rite Nite - In January, the Guthrie Valley initiated a monthly degree conferral, explanation and discussion program for Scottish Rite men interested in the deeper meanings of the degrees. Styled "Education on the Rite Nite," the program presents the secret work of the degrees and explores the esoteric meanings of the Rite. A series of discussion questions are presented after each degree is presented, with participants discussing contemporary issues the degrees address.

The monthly calendar for the education program, giving the time and place of each presentation, is available on the Guthrie website.

Academic Essay Contest - An academic essay competition is held each summer wherein a contemporary Masonic issue is brought up and contestants submit a written argument for or against the issue. Winners are chosen in the Fall for the best arguments on both sides of the issue and the papers are electronically published. It is a good way to offer a balanced debate on controversial issues facing the fraternity today. This year's question is: "Traditional observance lodges will have a positive effect on lodges in Oklahoma and the United States." The deadline for submission is September 5, 2009. If you are interested in participating in this summer program, contact Brian Westmoreland or Colby Dick at bwestmoreland@citizensedmond.com or colby.dick@hotmail.com.

Temple Becoming Popular Venue for Bridal Portraits

A few years ago, a professional photographer came by the Guthrie Temple and asked if we would consider allowing brides-to-be to have their bridal portraits taken in the various artistic rooms of the Temple. It seemed like a good idea. When one considers all the possible artistic dimensions available in the Temple to an eye trained in the art of photography, the setting seemed like a natural accompaniment to the beauty of a bride in a magnificent gown.

Little did we know just how popular the Temple would become for bridal photography; and the range of possibilities available to those who know what they are doing! Last year, the Guthrie Temple hosted 85 different bridal portrait settings. We have had as many as six brides in the Temple at the same time. And the popularity is growing. Not only are photographers from across the state now coming to the Temple, we have even had out of state requests.

The rules are simple. The fee is \$50. You must call for an appointment; and the photos must be taken during normal business hours.

If your daughter, granddaughter, a friend, or someone you know is looking for a special venue for portraits, the Guthrie Temple may be just what they are looking for. Have your photographer give us a call at 405-282-1281.

