



COLORADO SUPPLEMENT

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Angel on the Rio

It is once again that time of year when I look at the calendar and my mind becomes filled with the logistics of our annual Commandery Festival. It is a wondrous time for our candidates with the personal reflection that occurs in the room of reflection, the passing of the torch in the fifth libation, and impressiveness of the crisp execution of the Commandery Orders. I was grateful for this opportunity to reflect upon the origins and goals of Salida Commandery No.17's commitment to the Angel on the Rio festival when so often we (as members of Salida Commandery) become fixated on all the behind-the-scenes logistical details that we hope are never noticed by the attendees. Because, as it has been ingrained in myself from my first year as a member of Salida Commandery, we want our festival to be the crowning event of the masonic calendar.

The story of the Angel on the Rio begins decades ago with the event's founding fathers of Sir Knights; Larry Blanchard (REPGC of Wyoming), David Salberg (REPGC, MEPGHP, and MIPGM of Colorado). Larry had recently inherited the Blanchard Ranch outside of Salida, Colorado with a spectacular view of Mt. Shavano, and retired there from Wyoming. Upon moving to the area, Larry, being an active York Rite Mason chose to become active with the Salida York Rite bodies, leaving a lasting impression on the organization for which we as members will always be grateful, over leading a quiet retirement earned after years of dedicated service to masonry. Dave drug Larry out to the Pasture Degrees in Akron and the Council degrees at the Fort after Dave had suggested that there was a need for a Commandery Festival and that Salida could pull it off, to which Larry was convinced we could not. After seeing the work performed at the Pasture Chapter Degrees and the Council Degrees Larry was convinced that it was in the wheelhouse of possibility and set out to not just do it but do it better than any other festival anywhere. The festival was christened "Angel of Shavano" in honor of the view from the Blanchard Ranch and allowed to be conducted on the ranch with the stipulation that we would never serve frozen beef.

Though it was a rough start, overly simplistic in its design the Commanderies of Colorado stuck with Salida Commandery through the growing pains of reserving port-a-potties, purchasing tents and the organization of lady's programs until the Angel of Shavano grew into the success that so many of us had the privileged of experiencing. After SK Larry's passing Salida was allowed to continue using the Blanchard Ranch as the festival venue up until his widow Lady Sharron, who was so instrumental in organizing the lady's events chose to sell the ranch. Though we never could bring ourselves to serve frozen beef.

Today the festival has been moved to Masonic Park in South Fork, Colorado on the banks of the Rio Grande. The Commandery chose to keep the "Angel" in honor of the history of the festival, to show that the spirit of the day has only changed locations. A proud history of over 200 companions being knighted at this event. The lady's program has become just as important as the Orders themselves because as it has been said so many times by Lady Sharron, "we are a masonic family, the good memories we create are rooted in our togetherness....and the ladies bring the men". Please join us in welcoming our new fraters on July 10, 2021 at this year's Angel on the Rio, where we still will not be serving frozen beef!

Fraternally Submitted,

SK Kevin Hintz, EC Salida Commandery No. 17, Grand Standard Bearer, Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Colorado

