

GRAND COMMANDERY KNIGHTS TEMPLAR OF TENNESSEE

Tennessee Knight Templar News

SIR KNIGHT JOHN W. SIMMONS II, RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER

August AD 2024 / AO 906

Edited by: Jesse J. Harper, KYCH



Order of Malta conferral by DePayens Commandery #11

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Sir Knights,

If you are aware of any members who are not currently receiving this monthly newsletter, then please have them send an email to Steve Guendert with their name, email address, and Commandery number: sguendert@ieeee.org

Currently only about half of our membership is receiving this newsletter on a monthly basis. Assist us in getting this newsletter distributed to every Sir Knight on our rolls.



JOHN WISEMAN SIMMONS II
RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER
Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee



August Message from the Grand Commander

Sir Knights,

July has been a busy month. On July 4th, I marched with Park Avenue Commandery #31 and Lynn Skinner DeMolay and Squires in the High Point Terrace parade here in Memphis. Our Eminent Commander, Kris Kirby, has written an article about this, so I'll leave the description to him. He reported that the DeMolay boys were impressed that they got to march with "guys with swords." This shows how much our participation means to our youth. I encourage all our Commanderies to be involved with the youth organizations in your areas. You never know what positive influence you are having on them.

My travels on behalf of our order continue. On July 5-6, I represented you at the DeMolay State Conclave in Franklin. I was honored to be able to present to the DeMolay, on your behalf, a ceremonial sword named "Big John" in honor of Executive Officer John Whitaker and our own Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander John Palmer.

On July 14-16, I attended the Great Smokies Summer Assembly in Maggie Valley, NC. This is always a fun time with interesting speakers and entertainment. One item I will bring to your attention is that the North Carolina Masonic Monument near Maggie Valley was vandalized twice earlier this summer. They are in need of money to repair it. If you are so inclined, you can make a donation to:

Summer Assembly Fund
6328 Surratt Country Rd
Denton NC 27238-9082

Before a memorable August, I shall also be representing you at the Grand Commandery of Illinois on July 26th. The 69th Triennial Conclave of the Grand Encampment will be August 17-21 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Your grand line officers and I will be representing you. I am looking forward to the drill competition on August 17th, and I hope to work with Sir Knight Brian Song on bringing back ideas to get drill teams going again in Tennessee. Maybe next triennial we can send our own drill team (or teams!).

Inspection season will be starting in September. I look forward to seeing each of you at your inspection. As we confer the orders, let us remember that the main point is to impress the candidate and inspire him to become involved with us in living a chivalrous lifestyle. We do this by our demeanor while conferring and also by excellence in our ritual work.

Speaking of ritual work, here is an idea for educational programs in your Commanderies and other York Rite bodies. I thought of this after hearing some Sir Knights say that the only time they had ever seen the ritual was when they received the degrees and orders. At a stated meeting, say, or an educational meeting, take a few minutes to exemplify a short portion of the ritual. Then, discuss the significance of that portion and what it teaches. For example, start with one of the hermits in the Order of the Temple. What does the hermit do? He offers hospitality. He meets physical needs with food and spiritual needs with Scripture. He helps the traveler prepare for the future journey. Why three hermits? Our journey continues, and we need assistance again and again. To go deeper, you might study the passages of Scripture that each hermit reads. I encourage you to study the ritual, see what lessons you can draw from it, and use it as a source of inspiration and education in your meetings.

Courteously,

John Simmons

Right Eminent Grand Commander

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**From the Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander
John L. Palmer, KGC**

Unintended Consequences Continued

Sir Knights,

It is amazing how many times we choose to do good things only to discover that after they are implemented, they have triggered unrelated results that are harmful to our mission. While studying Templary in Tennessee and trying to see how we can assist our Commanderies in making a comeback, we have discovered two instances of this phenomenon which have surprised and dismayed us. I told you about the first instance last month.

When I first became a Templar, I joined the local York Rite Association. This Association consisted of Chapters, Councils, and Commanderies in the area as well as individual York Rite Masons. The stated purpose of this association was to aid and support the local York Rite bodies in the area. At that time, the Association had three main functions. First, if a local body, such as a Chapter, was planning to confer a degree, such as the Royal Arch degree, and their High Priest was out of town or ill, several of us from the association, including at least one proficient as High Priest, would drive to the Chapter in question and participate in the conferral as needed. This function was by far the most frequent activity of the association in those days.

The second function of the Association was to sponsor and provide the cast for fun nights, such as the conferral of the Royal Arch Widow's degree upon the ladies of recently exalted Companions. This annual event always included a meal and was by far the most fun thing we did.

The third function was to sponsor an annual two-day York Rite festival where the Companions and Sir Knights came in, conferred all the Chapter, Council, and Commandery degrees, had some fabulous meals, and really enjoyed spending time with each other. This affair was held in the Grand Lodge building where all the sets, costumes, and lighting were available as well as dining facilities. At some point, we were enjoying the festival so much that it was expanded to twice a year, and the spring festival was done at Franklin because they also had two lodge rooms to confer in.

Then, subtle changes began to occur. The attendance began to go down, possibly because we were having two festivals rather than one each year. The Grand Lodge needed renovation and began charging the association to use the building, so the festival moved to a local lodge hall which did not have the settings, lighting, or dining hall we were used to. This downgraded the experience considerably. Some of the more experienced cast members died, and younger guys did not take their

places because our local bodies had become lazy and had begun to send all their candidates to the festival, so the local guys gradually lost the ability to do the work. The performances at the festivals began to deteriorate, and finally the casts were being filled at the last minute with whatever warm body was available, regardless of whether he could do the work. Nobody came who was not working at the festival or a candidate. Candidates began to show up without any members of their local body to vouch for them.

The candidate's initiatory experience was degraded until it could be best described as "sitting with a group of strangers watching someone else get a slipshod degree." After the festival, some of the candidates did not even know where they were members or who the other members of their bodies were. This uninspiring experience induced many of the candidates to never attend even one Chapter, Council, or Commandery meeting after they were initiated. It was sort of like paying for a poorly performed show rather than joining a meaningful and interesting organization.

We are now in a state where few York Rite bodies can even confer their own work. I suppose part of the cause was laziness and part was apathy. The Associations even stopped doing the Royal Arch Widow's degree. The York Rite Associations and York Rite Festivals seemed like a good idea at the time but delivered disastrous and unintended consequences.

So, there you have it. Two noble ideas, the York Rite Festival and the Knights of the York Cross of Honour, both well intended, and yet, they are the two greatest enemies of Templary in our state. We seem to have lost the pride which the Rite deserves.

Maybe next month, I will share with you why I am so passionate about being a Templar.

John L. Palmer, KGC, VEDGC
Grand Commandery of Knights Templar, Tennessee

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From the Eminent Grand Prelate

Sir Knight James O. Weir II

I recently had the privilege to attend the Prince Hall Affiliation Grand Lodge in Nashville. One of the guest speakers was the Deputy Grand Master from West Virginia, and he told a story that I will probably never forget.

A crow, in an effort to get where he was going without exerting any effort, landed on the back of an eagle to hitch a ride. The eagle took off ignoring the nuisance, and started soaring. The crow sat there happy with his free ride until he realized the eagle was not going in the direction the crow wanted. So, the crow started jabbing the eagle in the back of the head and yelling out directions. The eagle ignored the demands and stayed on course. The crow became angry and kept stabbing the eagle in the back of the head causing blood to spill. The crow cursed at the eagle, called the eagle stupid, and accused him of flying wrong. The eagle continued to ignore the crow, and kept flying higher, and higher, and higher. All the while the crow pecked at its head and complained. The eagle kept the course and went higher and higher, until the crow felt light headed and fell off the eagles back. It was so tired from pecking and yelling and the altitude became to much that it had no energy to fly, the crow died on impact when it hit the ground.

Galatians 6:6-10

“Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

The eagle’s silence did not mean he was allowing himself to be bullied, or taken advantage of. The eagle was ignoring the crow because its vision was on soaring high, doing good, and achieving his goal. As Templars and as Christians we have the same goal of not growing weary of doing good, no matter who or what is constantly causing us grief and pain. The goal is before us, and we must hand cuff ourselves to the wrist of God’s plan and throw away the key. The time and energy we spend worrying about things and people causing drama is only a mere distraction, not a road block or even a speed bump. Spend the time and energy not on them but on doing good.

We are called to a much higher calling and to altitudes that make most people gasp for air. Because we are made different, we are not crows, we are Knights Templar, and no matter how dark the night or weary the road, no matter how much we fret over membership, remember, “we reap what we sow,” is biblical, not just a southern idiom. It is true.

So, hold your heads up high and keep doing good, do not grow weary and keep soaring high. Sow optimistic and constructive words. Sow encouraging thoughts and invitations to others, and reap a good harvest. Stop sowing seeds of doubt about the future of Templary; we do not want to harvest weeds in a dust bowl. Not just in the lodge or asylum but in work, and at home, let us do good to everyone especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Always do good, always soar high, not because it’s easy, but because it’s who you were made to be, a Knight Templar, and a Christian.

Freemasonry and the Divine Feminine

by Ian GM Kirkpatrick

Generalissimo, Cyprus Commandery #23

Disclaimer: The ideas presented in this series are meant to challenge existing norms within our fraternity. Whether you agree or disagree with the thoughts presented here, please take the time to reflect on why you feel that way. If your takeaway is a more informed opinion on these topics, then yes or no is not important. You have succeeded in the task of introspection that was requested. Thank you for taking the time to read these thoughts! I hope they give you such an opportunity.

Continuing the story of the question in the Red Cross, this third and last article will consider the answer of woman. Fascinatingly, the answer of this brother is that “the super-eminency of woman is yet above all this... but when all is said, neither they, nor wine, nor kings, are comparable to the almighty force of truth.” This is a very different answer to what we have seen so far, for this is the first brother to answer in a way that exceeds the initial prompt. The question was wine, king, or woman. Truth is an out-of-the-box answer from the start.

So, what does Masonry say about women? Fortitude, Prudence, Temperance, and Justice are depicted as women by the ancient Greeks and Romans. The Queen of Sheba is referenced at one point, and that is about it. The murder of Hiram, the pursuit of the Lost Word, and the pilgrimage are very active, masculine actions. Where in Freemasonry is the passive, divine feminine?

There are 3 main Masonic systems in the world:

1. (A)F&AM/PHA (male only)
2. The Order of Women Freemasons/The Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons (female only)
3. Universal Co-Masonry (co-ed).

In our system, the women join groups such as the Order of the Easter Star, Amaranth, Daughters of the Nile, Daughters of Mokanna, and the Social Order of the Beauceant. Each of these orders have their own light and knowledge to provide, at least the ones I am allowed to join do. I can only assume orders such as the Social Order of the Beauceant and Daughters of the Nile do, as well. Noticeably, within our own system we have male only, female only, and co-ed groups.

So, why does this brother recognize the super-eminence of women from the original prompt? Most religions existing today recognize a Trinity of some sort: for Christians, it is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost or Shekinah (a female hearth spirit). The Virgin Mary is crucial to the Catholic faith. For the ancient Egyptians, it was Osirus, Isis, and Horus. The Romans called them Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. For a fraternity with religious ideals being discussed throughout the initiatory system, it

astounds me that women are barely mentioned at all. We claim we want families more involved in Masonic events, and most of our wives know more about Masonry than we do. Yet, our organizational structure prevents them from being too involved.

Remember that we are portraying Zerubbabel in this Order, who in the Historical Lecture is labeled "a Guard of the Royal Bed Chamber." For the Valentinian Gnostics in the *Gospel of Phillip*, we see a ritual sacrament sequence in the following order: rebirth [baptism], anointing [chrism], redemption, and the bridal chamber. George W. MacRae, an Old Testament Scholar, claims that "The writer is talking about an outer court, a middle court, and the inner court which is the Holy of Holies... The initiatory rite of baptism is the outermost one. The rite of redemption, whatever that may have consisted of, is the second one, and it is the bridal chamber, the rite of which was the supreme rite for the Valentinian Gnostic, which is the approach into the presence of God himself." Sound familiar? It reminds me of the Fellowcraft degree in particular. It also has some themes reminiscent of passing through the Veils in the Chapter and the Arches in the Council. And, of course, there are the five banners of Malta.

The Blade and Chalice, which we use for the Eucharist in the Mediterranean Pass, are presented in such a manner for a reason. They are ancient symbols of the Divine Male and Divine Female in religious and mythological texts, perhaps most renowned in the tales of King Arthur. The virginal Lady of the Lake has Excalibur, and the impotent Fisher King has the Holy Grail. Together, they represent the conjunction of these energies in a balanced state. We cannot perform an action without a corresponding reaction. "As above, so below" is a core tenant of Freemasonry that runs deep in the roots of our ritual but only if you are willing to see it.

It is my personal opinion that we need all three Masonic systems in place to maintain balance in the larger scheme of things, and the United Grand Lodge of England seems to agree. On June 29, 2024, the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) announced the creation of a Council for Freemasonry in England and Wales. "This new Council aims to enhance further existing and longstanding collaboration and promote the fundamental principles of Freemasonry, including merit, tolerance, diversity, and inclusion, between the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE), the Order of Women Freemasons (OWF), and the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons (HFAF)." I would recommend each Mason look into this historic and pivotal step, and I would like to call for the Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America to follow this example in the United States. Perhaps we might find more light on the Divine Feminine in Masonry by speaking with the members of these other systems and learning what they have to teach us. After all, women are super-eminent above wine and the king, only second to the almighty power of truth.

Reflections from the Eminent Commander of Park Avenue Commandery #31

As the Eminent Commander of Park Avenue Commandery #31, it was my distinct honor to join my fellow knights as we marched alongside the young men of the Lynn Skinner and Tipton Chapters of DeMolay in the Highpoint Terrace 75th Annual Fourth of July Parade. This event was not only a celebration of our nation's independence but also a powerful demonstration of the unity that define our Masonic families.



This year's parade was particularly special as we were graced by the presence of our Rite Eminent Grand Commander of the Knights Templar of the State of Tennessee, John Wiseman Simmons II. His participation underscored the significance of the occasion and reinforced our shared commitment to the values of chivalry, leadership, and service.

The Park Avenue Commandery #31 is devoted to upholding the timeless values of honor, courage, and brotherhood. The enthusiasm and dedication displayed by the DeMolay brothers were truly inspiring as well and demonstrate why these values are so critical for all knights to inculcate in our daily lives. Watching these young men embody the principles of patriotism and community spirit filled me with pride and helped to shine a spotlight on the overlapping principles of our different orders. Marching in our distinguished regalia, we aimed to inspire and support these future leaders, demonstrating the enduring importance of our principles to those that marched with us as well as the community at large that spectated the parade.

Reflecting on this memorable day, I am filled with gratitude and optimism. The parade was a vibrant celebration of our nation's independence and a testament to the strength and unity of our Masonic and DeMolay families. It highlighted the essential role of fostering relationships that bridge generations, ensuring the perpetuation of our cherished values.



I extend my heartfelt thanks to the young men, parents, and advisors of the Lynn Skinner and Tipton Chapters of DeMolay for their participation and to all who supported and cheered us on. Your energy and commitment are commendable, and I am deeply honored to march alongside you. Thank you for being a part of our journey!

With great pride, your brother in Knighthood and Christ,

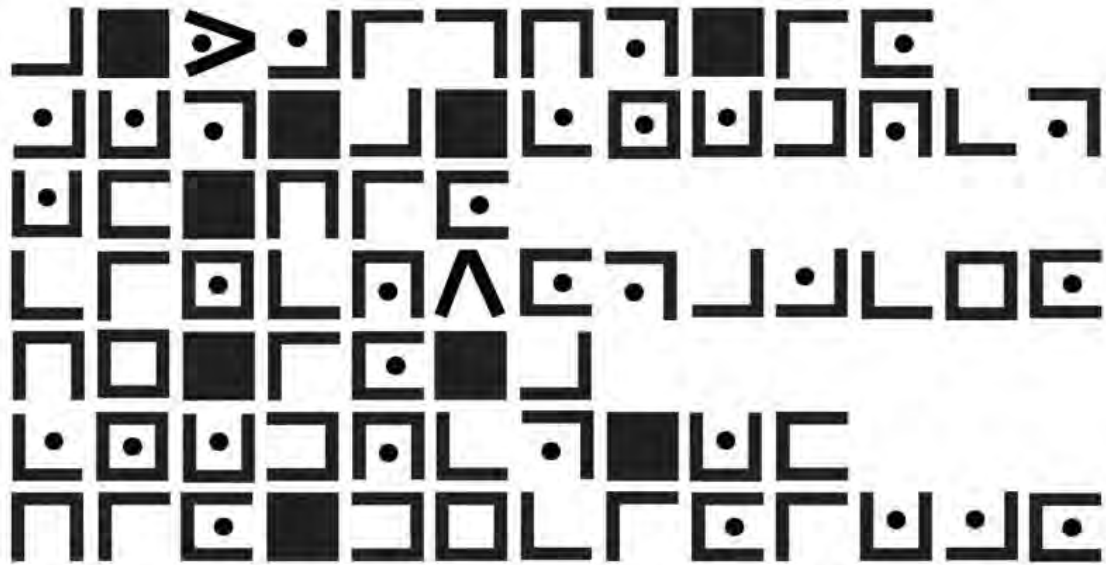
Kris Kirby, Eminent Commander
Park Avenue Commandery #31

2024 COMMANDERY INSPECTION SCHEDULE

Below is the schedule for Commandery Inspections. Meals begin one hour before Inspection time (6:00 pm, 8:00 am, 2:00 pm.) For more information, contact your Recorder.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>		<i>Commandery</i>	<i>Location</i>
Thurs., Sept. 5	7:00 pm	ET	Greeneville 43	Greeneville
Fri., Sept. 6	7:00 pm	ET	Cyprus 23	Maryville
Sat., Sept. 7	9:00 am	ET	Coeur de Lion 9	Knoxville
	3:00 pm	ET	Appalachia 45	Fountain City
Fri., Sept. 13	7:00 pm	ET	Athens 34	Athens
Sat., Sept. 14	9:00 am	ET	Cyrene 42	Dayton
	3:00 pm	ET	Lookout 14	Chattanooga
Thurs., Sept. 19	7:00 pm	ET	Campbell Co. No. 44	LaFollette
Fri., Sept. 20	7:00 pm	ET	Chevalier No. 21	Oak Ridge
Sat., Sept. 21	9:00 am	CT	Plateau No. 38	Crossville
	3:00 pm	CT	Cumberland No. 26	Cookeville
Fri., Sept. 27	7:00 pm	CT	Clarksville No. 8	Clarksville
Sat., Sept. 28	9:00 am	CT	Dickson 41	Dickson
	3:00 pm	CT	DePayens No. 11	Franklin
	7:00 pm	ET	St. Omer 19	Bristol
Thurs., Oct. 3	7:00 pm	ET	St. Omer 19	Bristol
Fri., Oct. 4	7:00 pm	ET	Watauga No. 25	Johnson City
Sat., Oct. 5	9:00 am	ET	Carter No. 37	Elizabethton
	3:00 pm	ET	Kingsport No. 33	Kingsport
Thurs., Oct. 10	7:00 pm	CT	Manchester No. 40	Manchester
Fri., Oct. 11	7:00 pm	CT	Murfreesboro No. 10	Murfreesboro
Sat., Oct. 12	9:00 am	CT	Baldwin No. 7	Lebanon
	3:00 pm	CT	Nashville No. 1	Nashville
Thurs., Oct. 24	7:00 pm	CT	Union City No. 29	Troy
Fri., Oct. 25	7:00 pm	CT	Paris No. 16	Paris
Sat., Oct. 26	9:00 am	CT	Lexington No. 36	Lexington
			Jackson No. 13	
	3:00 pm	CT	Park Ave. No. 31 (HC) Rosemark No. 39	Memphis

Due to Phillip Lacy Commandery #46 being newly chartered and being composed of primarily new Sir Knights, they will not be holding an inspection for 2024.



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Request for Submissions!

Sir Knights – We need submissions for the *Tennessee Knight Templar News*. Is your Commandery going to confer any of the orders soon? Did you have some sort of unusual or fun event? Send us an article to share with the other Tennessee Knights and include photos if you have them.

We would also like to have your thoughts and ideas about how we can make Tennessee Templary more fun and exciting. Send us an article!

Please send news and events going on in your Commandery to:

TNKTNewsEditor@gmail.com