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GRAND SECRETARY'S MONTHLY COMMUNICATION MAY 2025

SECRETARIES and my Brothers All – Welcome to the May edition of the Grand Secretary's Newsletter. This edition includes the following:

- Form 23 – By-Laws (updated), Suspensions NPD, Service Awards, New Dues Card Process
- New Insurance Program
- Statistics – Consolidations – Zachary Haston
- Monthly Law Reading – Qualifications for Elections
- Lodge Spotlight – El Paso Masons – Adopt a Highway
- and more.....

PLEASE COMMUNICATE THIS INFORMATION TO YOUR MEMBERS, AS APPROPRIATE. I recommend you print this communication and bring it to your stated meeting for discussion. This communication is automatically provided electronically to all lodges with the capability to use the Grandview system. Individual Master Masons of The Grand Lodge of Texas can sign up by contacting the Grand Secretary's Office at (254) 753-7395 or gs@grandsecretaryoftx.org, or by registering your membership through [the Member Portal](#).

PLEASE READ

GRAND SECRETARY OFFICE UPDATES

FORM 23 - BYLAWS

With the adoption of Resolution No. 23, the positions of Senior and Junior Stewards have become optional. The updated Form 23 is now available.

If your Lodge currently utilizes Form 23 or has similar language in its by-laws that does not reference Form 23, these documents must be amended in order to make the Stewards positions optional. If the Lodge decides not to implement this change, no amendment to the by-laws is required.

To amend your by-laws, you must submit them in writing, signed by the proposer, and presented at a Stated Meeting. Discussion and potential amendments may occur during this meeting. At a subsequent Stated Meeting, or a specially called meeting for this purpose, the amendment will be considered and voted upon without further revisions. Once the vote is completed, the secretary must sign and seal the updated Form 23 and submit it to the Grand Secretary's Office for approval.

INSURANCE PROGRAM AND SURVEY

We are aware of the exponential increase in insurance costs, and we are working on trying to find a property insurance solution for the Lodges of Texas. We are already on our 4th attempt, but we are determined to find something that utilizes our economies of scale to produce real savings for your Lodge. In order to get real quotes, we need real information about your property. Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey. This is not committing you to anything at this point. It will be used to obtain a quote which you can later choose to accept or reject, but by grouping hundreds of lodges across the State, we hope to receive substantial savings over your individual policies. The due date to fill out this survey and be considered in the initial round of this program is May 16th.

Please use the following link or QR code to complete the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KKRD9J9>



SERVICE AWARDS OPEN

Service Awards Requests are about to be opened for requests! You will be able to request any Service Awards that are for the 2025-2026 Masonic Year and any past awards that have not been presented.

Secretaries will see "Request Service Awards" on the left side of their dashboard.

Once there, it will automatically show you the upcoming awards.

You can then request to have them mailed to the Lodge, the Member's Home, or held to be presented at the 2026 ANCOM by the Grand Master.

NOTE 1: Any awards for the 2025-2026 Masonic Year not requested by June 30, 2025, will automatically be mailed to the HOME LODGE of the eligible members.

NOTE 2: If you do not see a member's award available, they are either ineligible or their award has already been requested by another Lodge.

SUSPENSIONS FOR NON-PAYMENT OF DUES

The window for suspension will Begin May 1st to midnight June 23rd. Suspensions made after midnight June 23rd will not be accepted.

DUES CARD PROCESS

We will be updating the procedure for obtaining replacement Dues Cards. In the coming weeks, all replacement cards will be purchased through the online store using the link below.

A new member's card will automatically be requested once they have been updated as a Master Mason in Grand View. This will streamline the process and make it to where Secretaries no longer have to request cards.

[Replacement Membership Cards – The Grand Lodge of Texas](#)

OFFICER LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Mark Your Calendars: 2025 Corpus Christi Officer Leadership Training!

Join us for an unforgettable weekend of leadership, learning, and brotherhood in Corpus Christi!

Saturday, September 20, 2025

11:00 AM – Lunch

12:00 PM – 6:00 PM – Officer Leadership Training (OLT)

6:00 PM – Dinner

8:00 PM – Special Event: Master Mason Degree aboard the historic USS Lexington

Sunday, September 21, 2025

8:00 AM – Breakfast

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM – Officer Leadership Training (OLT)

Don't miss this incredible opportunity to sharpen your leadership skills, enjoy great fellowship, and experience a once-in-a-lifetime degree on the "Blue Ghost" of the gulf!

READ PORTIONS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR LODGE

MONTHLY LAW READING

As we prepare to install our new lodge officers, there are several qualifications for Worshipful Masters and Wardens, these are set out in Articles 276 and 276a.

Article 276. Qualifications – Any member of a Lodge in good standing, and who has previously served as Worshipful Master of a regular Lodge in another Grand Jurisdiction, or as Worshipful Master or Warden of a Lodge in this Grand Jurisdiction, and who is qualified according to the provisions of Article 276a of these laws, is eligible to be elected Worshipful Master. Such previous service may be either: (1) under election; (2) under appointment by the Grand Master in a Lodge Under Dispensation; or (3) under designation by the Grand Lodge in a newly chartered Lodge. The above provisions regarding service do not apply when a Worshipful Master is appointed by the Grand Lodge or designated by the Grand Lodge under the above circumstances, but previous requirements as enumerated in the following Article 276a apply to all such circumstances. (Revised 2011)

Article 276a. Additional Qualifications – Prior to his installation as Worshipful Master or Warden, a Brother shall in all circumstances first be qualified as follows:

1. To the satisfaction of the members of his lodge, he shall be proficient to properly open and close an Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, Master Mason's Lodge, and a Master Mason's Lodge of Sorrow in the manner prescribed by the Committee on Work and approved by this Grand Lodge, and
2. To the satisfaction of the members of his Lodge, he shall have completed a Grand Lodge approved course in the administration of his duties or the Lodge Instruction for Effectiveness program (L.I.F.E.) under the supervision of the Masonic Education Committee. The L.I.F.E. Program is to be administered by a Lodge Counselor appointed by the Worshipful Master, whose term expires upon the appointment of his successor in office. Any person who has previously served as Worshipful Master of a Lodge under the Jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Texas is exempt from the requirements of this article.
3. In all cases, unless otherwise exempt as hereafter provided, by attending at least one forum conducted under the auspices of the Committee on Work during the twelve months prior to his installation as Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, or Junior Warden. Brothers who hold a Class A, B, or C certificate, or are certified as proficient by the District Instructor for the Masonic District in which the lodge is located, a District Instructor at Large, or a member of the Committee on Work, are exempt from the requirement imposed by this paragraph. If an officer is being installed as a Worshipful Master or a Warden in multiple lodges located in different districts, the officer is only required to be certified as proficient by only one District Instructor, District Instructor at Large, or a member of the Committee on Work for exemption.

LEGACY BUILDER AWARD

This award can be achieved by adding \$500 to your endowment all at once or by adding increments each year until you reach the \$500. Please see your Lodge Secretary and fill out form 77b (linked below). There is no additional form, once you've added five units, the office will print your award and hold it for the Annual Communication. NOTE: this award is not retroactive so only units added after the 2025 Annual Communication are eligible.

<https://tx.grandview.systems/resources/d01a024e-4cff-4786-baaa-a48d16038c2a>

CONSOLIDATIONS

The number of lodges in Texas has not decreased at the same rate as the number of members. Last year we lost 3% of our membership (mostly to deaths), but only 1% of our lodges consolidated, and that trend has continued for decades. For a number of, often good, reasons, lodges are slow to consolidate. Fifty years ago, when we had nearly a quarter million members, we averaged 245 members per lodge, with some lodges having over 1000 members. Today we average 86 members per lodge, and, honestly, that number is inflated as we now have endowed memberships which keep some people on the rolls that we haven't seen in years. Fewer members per lodge doesn't just mean that you're supporting a building on fewer people. It also affects the Masonic experience.

In 1970, with lodge rooms comparatively packed, it was much more competitive to get a lodge office. As seen in Figure 1, of the members raised in 1970, only 28% ever got an office. Year-by-year, that percentage has steadily grown such that it's now near 70% (please note that the last few years shown haven't had as much time to be appointed, so those percentages will increase a little with more time).

Going from 28% to nearly 70%, a huge difference, is a change from most Master Masons practicing Masonry from the sidelines to most Masons practicing Masonry from the chairs. It's a change of focus from mostly helping with degrees and proficiencies to helping with leadership and administration. Make no mistake, leadership skills are something that people gain from Masonry, but it's not what makes Masonry "Masonry," or really what most people join for.

As seen in Figure 2, despite having more of our new masons taking leadership roles, we have fewer first-time Worshipful Masters. What was less than 13% repeating as WM has now become half of our WMs being repeat Masters. That goes along with fewer members per lodge. Yes we're pushing those we raise into the chairs, but 31% of our lodges aren't even raising one person per year (over the last three years), making it impossible to add a new guy to the line each year. Obviously, those lodges tend to be the smaller ones.

In the 1970s, the top 50 lodges averaged 5 degrees per month, every month. Today that's 1 per month. Now you might say, "Hey, why don't we just divide the number of lodges by 5, going from 736 lodges to 147

Figure 1. Percentage of Members Ever Taking A Lodge Office

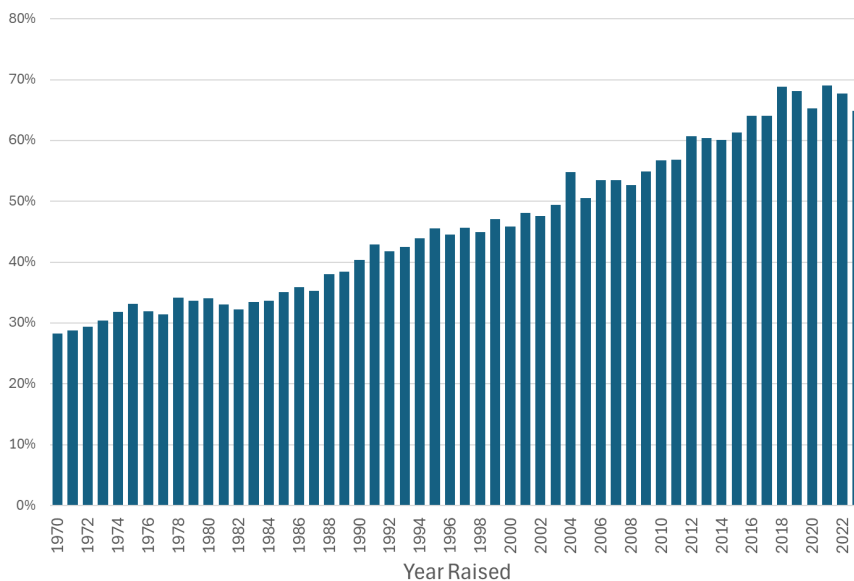
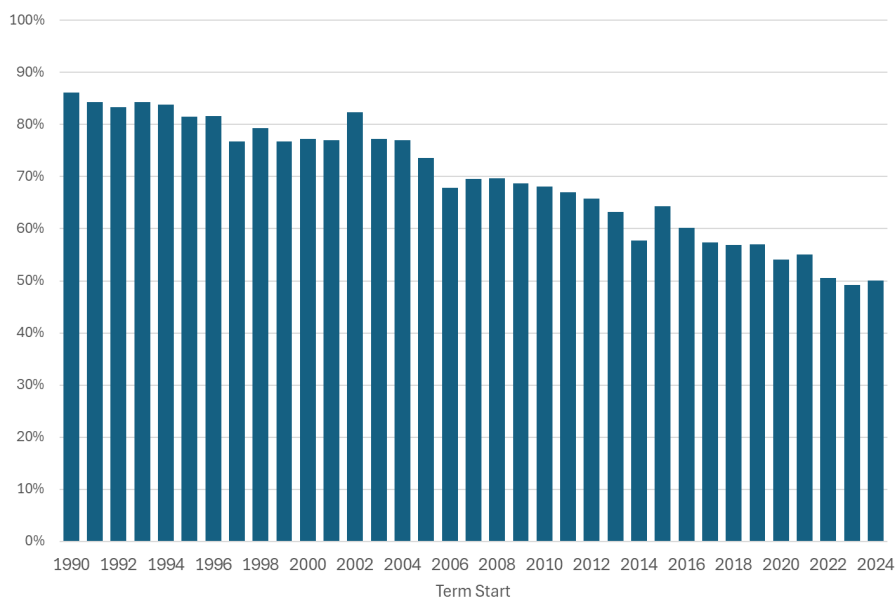


Figure 2. Percentage of WMs Who Are First-Time WMs



lodges? Then we'll have more degrees, less administration, and more focus on Masonry." Well, as most of you know, it doesn't just work that way. There's a lot to factor in there.

One thing we need to try to mitigate with consolidation is the immediate loss of members. In 2023, seven lodges merged into other lodges. Following those consolidations, 19% of the dues-paying members failed to pay a single dues payment to their new lodge and are now suspended. Mergers may make us stronger in the long run, but they lose members at the start. I get it. People have an emotional attachment to their home lodge. If you're the WM of a lodge that just gained a lot of new members via consolidation, please do more than an email or letter inviting them to the next Stated Meeting. Try to get them to one of your lodge's big events, maybe do some kind of program at your next Stated regarding their old lodge and merging over, or at the very minimum, call and talk to each of them personally. We periodically have Grand Lodge membership programs. Maybe a few minutes at OLT, a GM Conference, or DDGM training about smoothing consolidations would be in order as well.

Another issue to consider with consolidations is loss of coverage. Most Masons live within 10 miles of their lodge, some a little farther out, but in practice, there's a limit to how far people will continually drive to lodge and be active. In the big cities, travel distances may not change much with a merger, but that's not the case when you get rural. In some areas we're already down to key lodges serving those counties, and if we lose them, we'll have no lodge left to serve the men in that area, a loss of coverage, and a loss of Masonry's influence. Divide the number of lodges by five, and you won't multiply the number of degrees per lodge by five. We'll lose influence in areas.

Overall though, we can help mitigate the loss of members and coverage from consolidations, and there are a great many benefits to having more members in a lodge. In addition to shifting the focus back to Masonry, there are also huge financial benefits. Not only do you have less overhead to maintain one building instead of two, but you also have a huge boost to your investments when you sell one of them. Consolidations are not just coming. They're here. Let's guide them to help make us better. - **Zachary Haston**

TEXAS MASONIC CHARITIES FOUNDATION

With your individual and Lodge partnerships, the TXMCF has exceeded its 2025 Scholarship, Community Grant, and Teacher Honorarium campaign. A summary will be provided soon. The TXMCF will be launching the Grand Master's Givebutter Fundraising campaign in mid-to-late May. Our plan is to send text messages and emails to each Texas Mason who has included their mobile telephone number and email address on the Grandview portal. We are currently planning a second solicitation in the fall timeframe. As in 2024, you will have the option to donate to TXMCF's non-restricted account (used for scholarships, community grants, and teacher honorariums), natural disasters or Masonic Youth. Join us as we strive to better the lives and communities of Texans.

MONTHLY QUOTE

"Success is not final; failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts."

— Winston S. Churchill

LODGE SPOTLIGHT:

El Paso Masons Adopt Highway in Community Service Effort



Under the inspiring leadership of R. W. Saad "Shake" Sheikh, District Deputy Grand Master (D.D.G.M.) for District 60 of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas, the Masonic brothers of El Paso have taken a significant step toward community involvement and environmental stewardship.

The brothers have proudly adopted a **2-mile stretch of Highway 54 Section 32-34 of TxDOT in El Paso, Texas** as part of the *Adopt-a-Highway* initiative. This commitment includes organizing cleanup days at least **four times a year for a minimum of two years**, ensuring this vital roadway remains clean and welcoming for all who pass through.

This initiative is more than just picking up litter—it's a powerful statement. The Masons are showing the El Paso community that not only are they still present, but they are **more active and united than ever before**. It's also a great way to reinforce the core Masonic values of **service, leadership, and civic responsibility**.

A heartfelt *thank you* and *congratulations* go out to all the brothers in El Paso who are making a visible difference. Your dedication is a shining example of what it means to live the values of Freemasonry.

If you're inspired by this initiative and would like to get involved in a similar program in your own area, please visit the following website to find the coordinator nearest you:

👉 <https://www.txdot.gov/about/campaigns-outreach/adopt-a-highway/coordinators.html>

Let's keep working together to make our communities cleaner, stronger, and better for all. — Mike Mistry P.M.

TX MASON APP

The TX Mason app is over **5,000** users! Please join the 5,189 Brothers using the TX Mason APP! This is separate from the GrandView App & has a searchable (updated) law book and monitor at your fingertips.

<https://grandlodgeoftexas.app/launch.html>

TEXAS MASONIC RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

RARE OPPORTUNITY at Texas Masonic Retirement Community!
Cottage Duplex 2-bedroom + 2 bath now available! NO DEPOSIT! Call 817-275-2893 to schedule your personal tour. Includes chef-inspired meals in main dining hall, housekeeping, fun activities, Masonic events, full-size kitchen with refrigerator, full-size washer & dryer, plush carpet, ceramic tile, hardwood cabinets, garage, patio. See floor plan and learn more at <https://yourtmrc.org/our.../apartments-duplexes/duplexes/>

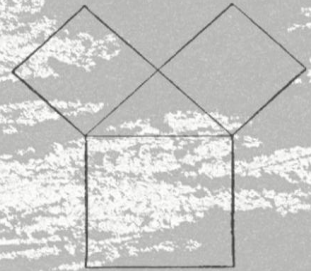


Grand Master's Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Time	Location	Address
Thursday 5/1/2025	Official Visit to John Sims Lodge #458	6:00 P.M.	John Sims Lodge #458	465 FM 1375, New Waverly, Texas 77358
Saturday 5/3/2025	Grand Master's Conference – Amarillo	8:00 A.M.	Khiva Shrine	305 SE 5 th Avenue, Amarillo, Texas 79101
Saturday 5/3/2025	Grand Master's Conference – Lubbock	3:00 P.M.	Yellowhouse Lodge #841	5015 Gary Avenue, Lubbock, Texas 79413
Tuesday 5/6/2025	Official Visit to Silsbee Lodge #927	TBD	Silsbee Lodge #927	390 N. 6 th Street, Silsbee, Texas 77656
Friday 5/9/2025	27 th District MWSA Banquet	6:00 P.M.	Tarkington Prairie Lodge #498	1209 Southline Street, Cleveland, Texas 77327
Saturday 5/10/2025	175 th Anniversary Jefferson Lodge #38	12:00 P.M.	Jefferson Lodge #38	305 E Henderson Street, Jefferson, Texas 75657
Saturday 5/10/2025	150 th Anniversary Garland Lodge #441	5:00 P.M.	Garland Lodge #441	125 E State Street, Garland, Texas 75040
Wednesday 5/14/2025	Official Visit to St. John's Lodge #5	6:30 P.M.	St. John's Lodge #5	313 W Jackson Street, West Columbia, Texas 77486
Friday 5/16/2025	Masonic Oak Weekend	All Weekend		Brazoria, Texas
Saturday 5/18/2025	Masonic Oak Ceremony	9:00 A.M.	Masonic Oak Park	223 E Pleasant Street, Brazoria, Texas 77422



Committee on Work Schedule



<u>Date</u>	<u>Lodge</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Forum</u>	<u>Exam</u>
Cody Cockroft						
Sat, 3 May 2025	Liberty	48	Liberty	107	8:00 AM	Following
Sat, 10 May 2025	Tarkington Prairie	498	Cleveland	27	8:00 AM	Following
Sat, 17 May 2025	Milam	2	Nacogdoches	20	8:00 AM	Following
Sat, 24 May 2025	Galena Park	1290	Houston	30-E	8:00 AM	Following
Sat, 31 May 2025	Albert J. Delange	1403	Houston	30-G	8:00 AM	Following

Chuck Forsyth						
Sat, 5 Apr 2025	Stephenville	267	Stephenville	67	9:00 AM	Following

Steve Pepper						
Sat, 17 May 2025	WF Faith	1158	Wichita Falls	88	9:00 AM	Following

Cody Stewart						
Sat, 10 May 2025	Athens	165	Athens	17	8:00 AM	Following
Sat, 17 May 2025	Travis	117	Sherman	4-A	8:00 AM	Following
Sat, 24 May 2025	East Fork	650	Wylie	9-B	8:00 AM	Following

John Peters						
Sat, 10 May 2025	Oso Naval	1282	Corpus Christi	37-A	9:00 AM	Following
Sat, 17 May 2025	Valley	175	Burnet	49	9:00 AM	Following

For more information go to: <https://grandlodgeoftexas.org/committee-on-work>

The Grand Lodge of Texas Cornerstone Leveling Ceremonies 2024



For Information Contact:

**Kevin T. Binder - State Cornerstone Coordinator
832-489-7778 - kevinbinder30@gmail.com**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Lodge</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Grand Lodge Representative</i>
Thursday 5/8/2025	Open Sam R. Hamilton Lodge at 10:00am Open Grand Lodge at 11:00am Light Lunch at 11:20am Cornerstone Ceremony at 1:00	Sam R. Hamilton #1031 110 1/2 Center St. Grand Prairie, TX 75050	Grand Prairie Fire Station 11	Wendell P. Miller Past Grand Master
Tuesday 5/13/2025	Lunch or Refreshments at Noon Open Tomball Lodge at 1:00pm Open Grand Lodge at 1:15pm Cornerstone Ceremony at 2:00pm	Deer Park #1362 2809 Center St. Deer Park, TX 77536	New Fire Station	TBD
Saturday 6/14/2025	Coffee & donuts at 8:00am Open East Fork Lodge at 9:00am Open Grand Lodge at 9:15am Cornerstone Ceremony at 10:00am	East Fork #650 508 Parker Rd. Wylie, TX 75098	Kreymer Elementary School	Wendell P. Miller Past Grand Master
Tuesday 7/8/2025	Coffee & donuts at 8:00am Open Palestine Lodge at 9:00am Open Grand Lodge at 9:15am Cornerstone Ceremony #1 at 10:00am Cornerstone Ceremony #2 at 10:30am	Palestine #31 401 W. Debard Palestine, TX 75801	Westwood ISD Administration Building & new School	H.N. "Chip" Green, Jr. Grand Jr. Warden
Wednesday 8/13/2025	Coffee & donuts at 9:00am Open Forrest Lodge at 10:00am Open Grand Lodge at 10:15am Cornerstone Ceremony at 11:00am	Forrest #19 1030 12th St. Huntsville, TX 77340	New City Hall	Raborn L. Reader, Jr. Grand Master

Join the Texas Cornerstone State coordinator Kevin Binder's Facebook Group
<https://www.facebook.com/share/CiHNBy12zSaqwVhh/?mibextid=K35Xfp>

Checkout the new Grand Lodge Cornerstone page in the
TX Mason APP - <https://grandlodgeoftexas.app/launch.html>

GRAND SECRETARY OFFICE STAFF DIRECTORY

Hours of Operation:

8:30 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday – Friday

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715 Columbus Ave
Waco, TX 76701

Mailing Address:

PO Box 446
Waco, TX 76703

Brad S. Billings - Grand Secretary

gs@grandsecretaryoftx.org

Legal Advice – Please DO NOT call our office asking questions on Masonic Jurisprudence.

That is a question for your DDGM.

The Internet Committee is partnering with the Grand Secretary's office to offer technical support in the following areas:

- Access to the Grandview Member Portal or password reset
- DDGM, DCO, & DEO access to District-wide tools
- TX Mason APP - including registering or downloading

To seek help with the preceding, send an email to internet@grandlodgeoftexas.org and please leave a mobile number and your ID so they can reach you.

Dave McHam

dave@grandsecretaryoftx.org

In-State Affiliations
Specialized Reporting
GL & Lodge Procedures
Vanguard Application Collection

Cindy Huerta

cindy@grandsecretaryoftx.org

Annual Returns
Lodge By-law Revisions
Relief Assistance Request
Endowed Memberships

Jeff Frayser

fraternal@grandsecretaryoftx.org

Out-of-State Correspondence
Dispensations

Justin Hancock

justinh@grandsecretaryoftx.org

Honesty & Integrity Awards
Lamar Medals
Forms and Lodge Supply Orders
Grand Lodge Service Awards
Golden Trowel Awards
Community Builder Awards

Zachary Haston

zhaston@grandsecretaryoftx.org

Membership
Lodge Officer Maintenance
Esoteric Record Maintenance
Form 71 Collection
IRS Form 990's Collection

Jeremy Johnson

irjohnson0821@gmail.com

Lodge Secretary Training

SECRETARY INSTRUCTIONS

The following information is intended primarily for the Secretary but may be meaningful to many of your members.

Lodge Suspense System:

Suspense Dates – Lodge Secretaries should create a suspense system (a reminder system) to alert the Lodge that certain documents are due. This list is offered as a “starter kit” for your consideration:

- a. January – The Worshipful Master should appoint a Committee on Members in Arrears (Article 319a).
- b. May 31 – W. B. and Brandon Carrell Award nominations may be submitted to the Grand Lodge Committee on Public Education for evaluation and recommendation to the Grand Lodge Trustees (Article 14b).
- c. Mid-June – Look for the Annual Returns Format from GL. (Downloaded from the Grand View System after June 24th. Notify the GS staff if you need the returns mailed as a printout).
- d. June 23 – Lodge elections must be completed at the last stated meeting prior to midnight of June 23 (Art. 292). Notify us of the new Lodge Officers immediately so they can be printed in the Directory of Constituent Lodges (do not wait for installation). Submission will be available on the Grand View System from May 24 through midnight June 23.
- e. June 23 – Endowed Membership checks must be in the Office of the Grand Secretary by June 23 to start earning interest in order to receive returns by the next year (Art. 318a). Changes to the amount of endowments must be voted on at the same meeting as the Lodge elections, and notification to the Grand Lodge must be before June 24th. Endowed Membership applications received at the Grand Lodge on or after June 24 must be for the amount that the Lodge reported.
- f. July 15 – Statements of Availability due GS Office. (6a).
- g. July 31 – Lodge installations must be performed from June 24 to prior to midnight July 31 (Art. 298).
- h. August 15 – Annual Returns Report due to Grand Lodge (Art. 493).
- i. August 15 – Resolutions due in GS Office (Art. 172).
- j. September 15 – Lodge Minimum Audit Report 71 is due to the GS Office NLT September 15 (Art. 284).
- k. September 15 – Vanguard Applications are due to the DDGM NLT September 15 and to the Grand Secretary NLT September 30 (refer to Vanguard Application Instructions).
- l. October 1 – Lodge By-Laws that must be reviewed by the GL Committee on By-Laws due the GS Office NLT October 1 (Art. 219).
- m. Nov 15 – Form 990-N, Electronic Notice (e-Postcard), must be filed with the IRS by Lodges that have gross receipts of \$50,000 or less or do not meet the requirements for filing the IRS 990 or IRS 990EZ. (Lodges must file the appropriate Form 990 no later than the 15th day of the fifth month following the close of the organization’s fiscal year.)
- n. Dec. 28 – Proxy Certificates are due the GS Office NLT December 28 (Art. 4). You should always appoint a Proxy (in case of an emergency) but he would not vote if any of the top three officers were available. Remember, each brother can have no more than four votes. Therefore, a sitting Worshipful Master cannot be a proxy for another Lodge.