



TEXAS

# FREEMASON



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**SPRING 2024** 



### The 188th Grand Annual Communication

With over 3,000 Master Masons in attendance, it was a spectacular weekend at Grand Lodge.

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Tommy F. Chapman, Most Worshipful Grand Master

# FREEMASON

The Texas Freemason Magazine is an official publication of the Grand Lodge of Texas A. F. & A. M. It is published four times a year for the members of Texas Lodges and subscribers. Spring and winter issues are available in print. Summer and fall issues are available in PDF format at https://grandlodgeoftexas.org. Opinions expressed by the editors and contributing writers do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Grand Lodge of Texas Copyright 2024, by the Trustees of the Grand Lodge of Texas. All rights reserved.

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The Texas Freemason Magazine encourages submission of articles and photographs of general interest to Masons in Texas, reserving the right to edit and use the articles and pictures as needs and policies dictate.

News and articles from around the state will continue to be published in a web-based format on the Grand Lodge of Texas website The Grand Lodge website is accessible at http://www.grandlodgeoftexas.org

Please continue to send your articles and Lodge events and news to the Editors of The Texas Freemason Magazine.

The preferred method of submission is via email with an attached Microsoft Word document. Pictures should be separately submitted in JPEG format to TexasFreemason® grandsecretaryoftx.org. If you do not have email, submissions may be sent to the Grand Lodge of Texas, Attn.: The Editor of The Texas Freemason Magazine, PO Box 446, Waco, Texas 76703. All materials become property of the magazine and cannot be returned.

### Submissions

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### Subscriptions

\$12.50 per year U.S. and Canada, \$31.25 for three years; \$20.00 per year in foreign countries, \$50.00 for three years

### Permission to Reprint

Permission to reprint original articles appearing in The Texas Mason Magazine is granted to all recognized Masonic publications, provided that credit is given to the author and attribution to The Texas Freemason Magazine.

### Archives

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# Grand Master



My hope for this year is unity and for peace, harmony, and brotherly love to prevail.

Brethren.

As we begin the 2024 Grand Lodge year, I want to thank you for the honor you have given me to serve you and the Grand Lodge of Texas as Grand Master. I am very humbled by this opportunity, and I will serve to the best of my ability.

Our theme this year is "Freemasonry: A way of life." Freemasonry is a way of life for me, and I recommend the same for all Texas Masons. We all have an integral part in the functioning of our fraternity. Every member is important, but we must all do our own part in making Freemasonry function.

As stated in our Installation Ceremony "I therefore trust that you will have but

one aim and that will be, to try to please each other and unite in the grand design of being happy and communicating happiness." My hope for this year is unity and for peace, harmony, and brotherly love to prevail.

I look forward to seeing you as I travel around the great state of Texas. Let's work hard and enjoy Masonry. "Let us cultivate the noble tenets of our profession – Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth." I sincerely wish you and your Lodges much success and happiness this year. May God Bless the United States of America, the Great State of Texas, Freemasonry, and each and every one of you.

Fraternally,

Tommy & Chapman

Tommy F. Chapman Most Worshipful Grand Master 2024







Cosmopolitan Lodge No. 872 1901 Lakeshore Drive Port Arthur, Texas 77640

### **Attire for Banquet**

Texas Tux, suit or sport coat and jeans. Ladies chruch dress.

The conference will be open to everyone.

### Tickets for Banquet

\$40.00

PayPal and Venmo are available.

### **Contact for Tickets**

Don Willis (409) 656-3844 Jim Meadows (409) 284-9139

# Registration

1:00 pm

### **Conference Begins**

2:00 pm

### **Social**

5:00 pm

### **Banquet**

6:00 pm

# INTRODUCTION TO THE

# **Grand Junior Warden**



Justin B. Duty was born in West, TX to Roland and Mary Duty. Being a lifelong resident of McLennan County Justin attended Midway High School Graduating in 2001. He attended Tarleton State University and graduated with a bachelor's degree in "Business Occupations." Justin married Neeley

Danielle Burleson on July 27, 2012, and they are the proud parents of Declan, Jonah, and Piper. They reside just south of Waco in Bruceville. Aside from his passion for Masonry and family Justin's passion is flying. He is an Instrument rated Private Pilot and enjoys flying on the weekends with friends and family.

Justin was Initiated, Passed and Raised to the Sublime degree of a Master Mason in M. Denton Stanford Lodge No. 594 in 2004. He served as Master of the Lodge in 2010, as Secretary from 2011-2015 and as Treasurer from 2017-2019. He was honored to receive the Golden Trowel Award from M. Denton Stanford Lodge No. 594 in 2016. He also served as Worshipful Master of Z. S. Teague Moody Lodge No. 568 in 2013. He holds plural memberships in Z. S. Teague Moody lodge No. 568, Crawford Lodge No. 585, Ocean Lodge No. 230, Union Lodge No. 82, Sweet Home No. 576, Tranquility Lodge No. 2000, and the Texas Lodge of Research.

Justin's service to the Grand Lodge began in 2014 with his appointment by Grand Master Jerry Martin to serve as District Deputy Grand Master of Masonic District 61-A. He served as District Education Officer in 2018, Chairman of the Credentials Committee in 2020, Vice Chairman of the 185th Grand Annual Communication Special Committee and as District Instructor for District 45 in 2020 and District 61-C, in 2021.

Justin served as a board member of the Texas Masonic Charities Foundation from 2020-2023. His service in the Grand Secretary's office began in 2020 when together with Bro Craig Enderli, he was tasked with assisting in developing and implementing the Grand Lodge of Texas Online Merchandise Store and online registration for the annual communication.

Justin holds a Class A esoteric certificate and is currently serving as District Instructor for District 61-C. He is a member of the Sam Houston Hall of Fame and is also a Gold Seal Patron of the Grand Lodge Library and Museum. Justin received the DeMolay Legion of Honor in 2022. He is a member of the Waco Scottish

Rite Bodies, Waco Chapter RAM. No. 45, Waco Council RSM No. 33, Robert Morris Elgin Council RSM No. 415 and Waco Commandery No. 10. Noble Duty was the Potentate for Karem Shriners in Waco, TX in 2023.

### **Grand Junior Warden Message**

Brethren, it is with a profound sense of gratitude that I address you as your Grand Junior Warden. The love and support I received from so many of you from across the state throughout last year culminating at our annual communication is something that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. I want to thank all the Masons of Texas who have treated me so graciously and hospitably over the past year as I traveled the state.

Serving as the chief administrative officer for the past four Grand Masters has placed me in the unique position of observing firsthand some wonderful ideas and learning from dynamic leaders. There have been some truly exceptional programs that have been introduced by previous administrations. Programs like "Between Friends" or "Bring a Brother Back" just to name a couple. Due to a lack of continuity from administration to administration some of the momentum from these programs has been lost and the advantages gained were only for that year rather than compounded over several years. I am committed to working with my fellow trustees to establish new programs or revamp previous programs that we can build upon year after year and make them better.

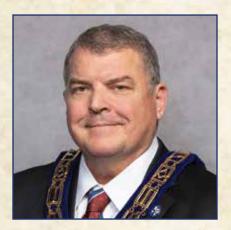
Finally, Brethren, I want to hear from the Masons of our state. I want to know what you think should be a priority of our Grand Lodge. I intend to do a fair amount of traveling this year so that I can have that face time with the masons of Texas. If you see me at an event, please don't be shy. Come up and shake my hand and introduce yourself (if we don't already know each other). And feel free to share with me your thoughts for Texas Masonry. Again Brethren, I thank you all from the bottom of my heart, and God bless Texas Masonry.

Sincerely & Fraternally, Justin B. Duty Grand Junior Warden



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# A WORD FROM THE **Deputy Grand Master**



My Brothers,

I am humbled and honored to be entrusted to serve as the Deputy Grand Master by the Brothers of the Grand Lodge of Texas for the upcoming year. Your Trustees will be moving to unify the fraternity through transparency and fellowship. Making a profound impact on Freemasonry involves going beyond ritualistic aspects and focusing on core principles like brotherhood, charity, and personal growth.

Fostering genuine fellowship is essential. Actively engaging with our Brothers, understanding their perspectives, and building connections beyond ritualistic ceremonies create a lasting positive influence. As Freemasons, we should be a supportive presence, offering assistance and encouragement as members navigate through the challenges of life.

Charity is a cornerstone of Freemasonry. Impacting others involves not only contributing to philanthropy but embodying a charitable spirit in everyday interactions. We must extend a helping hand to those in need, within and beyond our Masonic community, through acts of kindness and compassion.

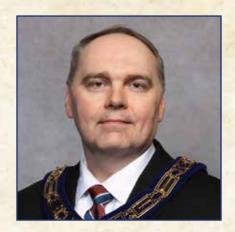
Participating in lodge activities should create an environment that nurtures personal development. Serving as mentors, guiding newer members, and encouraging the pursuit of knowledge, moral virtue, and spiritual enlightenment contribute to individual growth.

Embracing Masonic principles of equality and tolerance ensures every member feels valued, regardless of background or station in life. Upholding these ideals contributes to an inclusive Masonic community where diversity is celebrated.

In 2024, let's make a lasting impact within Freemasonry by embodying its teachings in both word and deed. Through genuine brotherhood, charitable actions, and a commitment to personal development, we can leave an indelible mark on the lives of our fellow Brothers, enriching the Masonic experiences we share.

Sincerely and Fraternally, Raborn Reader Deputy Grand Master

# A WORD FROM THE Grand Senior Warden

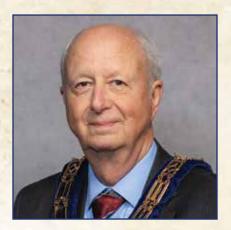


Brethren,

I am both honored and extremely humbled to have been entrusted with the privilege of serving our Grand Lodge as your Grand Senior Warden. As we refocus, we must be prudent and not insolently charge into the 2024 Grand Lodge year. We are faced with challenges today, and we must focus on the present. We must heal our fraternity, we must forgive, and we must forge ahead. I am committed to you, and our fraternity, and diligently endeavoring to lead us through these challenges and into tomorrow. We will persevere. The path, however, may not be a straight line. I will do all within my power to steer us toward a prosperous future, but it will take all of us. I implore each of us to personally reflect upon the lessons taught us in the beautiful allegories of the Texas Masonic Ritual. We all avowed to conduct ourselves distinctively, to perform unambiguous duties, and to acknowledge the expectations by which our Brothers and our Lodges charged us. As we ponder and contemplate these philosophies and principles, we should all be reminded that our obligations and charges were not presented in the past tense. These are decrees that we, as Master Masons, live by and what distinguishes us from the rest of society. Live in the present and live the life of a Master Mason. Be the Brother that you would need or want to have on a bad day. May each of you and our fraternity arrive at an abundant future by focusing on our actions in the present. Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth will keep us on our path.

Fraternally, Jim Rumsey Grand Senior Warden

# A WORD FROM THE Grand Treasurer



### Brethren,

First let me thank you for re-electing me to the office of the Grand Treasurer. Your confidence is much appreciated, and I will work hard this year to validate the trust you have shown in me. I am excited about our new group of Grand Lodge trustees and feel confident that we will work together in harmony to take care of the business of Grand Lodge. One indication of this confidence is our Grand Master's pledge to open trustee meetings to all Master Masons who are interested.

### Financial results for 2023

GLOT is in good financial shape. 2023 Operating revenues exceeded operating expenses for last year. Net worth exceeded \$21,000,000 at year end.

### Investments

Investment returns for 2023 were outstanding. Exceeding 15% for the three funds belonging to Grand Lodge and the \$30 million Endowed Membership Fund which belongs to the lodges. They were invested in a variety of mutual funds to achieve a broadly diversified portfolio of equities and fixed income. We achieved substantial savings in investment fees and our total investments should be easier to monitor and follow in the future. I want to thank David Ashley, Chairman of the Investment Committee, for his efforts last year. I believe we are well positioned for the long term, which is the real investment goal for our money.

### Treasurer schools

I encourage lodge treasurers to attend one of the Zoom meetings put on by the Masonic Education Committee. During the last two years, I believe these meetings have provided treasurers with valuable tools and guidance to perform their duties to their lodge.

Sincerely and Fraternally, Rick Townsend Grand Treasurer

# A WORD FROM THE Grand Secretary



To the Grand West & My Brethren All,

The amount of work that follows a Grand Annual Communication is daunting. I want to publicly thank Grand Junior Warden Justin Duty for all he has done during this transition. His service has been invaluable.

One of my first tasks as Grand Secretary has been to revamp the Grand Secretary's Newsletter. The January communication was enhanced by contributions from Brothers Zach Haston, Jeremy Johnson, Chris Livingston, and Craig Enderli. In adding "Livingston Law" and an education piece in every newsletter, we hope to provide added educational moments available to each Lodge. Any Master Mason may sign up to receive the newsletter by sending an email to internet@grandlodgeoftexas.org and asking to be enrolled in the Grand Secretary's Newsletter.

In the coming months, our focus will be on finalizing procedures regarding the new dues cards. This was always intended to be a multi-year process, and there are always some hiccups along the way. Ultimately, the new process will lead to a cost savings while still providing the membership with the documentation they need to travel within and outside our great State.

I have had initial meetings regarding the Secretary's School of Instruction, and a schedule should be released around the time of installations. The schedule should be similar to last year, but the content will be new and informative. If you have not attended a school in a while, please consider joining us this year.

Finally, I want to thank Brother Jason Coffelt for his many years of service to the Grand Lodge. Over the last seven years, he has been a tremendous asset to the Brethren of Texas, and we wish him well as he has decided to join the Texas Masonic Retirement Community.

Sincerely and Fraternally, Brad Billings Grand Secretary

# 2024 Summary of Proposed Resolutions



A resolution relating to a program to initiate, pass, and raise a Mason in one day.

Not Adopted



A resolution relating to the prohibition of Masonic charges after dismissal or acquittal.

**Adopted As Amended** 



A resolution relating to reconfiguring the number of blackballs required to reject a petition for the degrees.

**Not Adopted** 



A resolution relating to the call of Special Communication of the Grand Lodge upon petition of the subordinate lodges. Adopted



A resolution relating to the responsibilities of management of the Memorial Masonic Grand Lodge Temple.

Adopted



A resolution relating to the distribution and approval of minutes of the lodge.

Adopted



A resolution relating to the production of a summary of the proposed resolutions and their effects.

Withdrawn



A resolution relating to a vote for reinstatement after definite time suspension for Masonic offenses. Adopted

# **2024 Election Results**

**Grand Master**Tommy F. Chapman

**Deputy Grand Master**Raborn L. Reader, Jr.

**Grand Senior Warden**Jim Rumsey

**Grand Junior Warden Justin B. Duty** 

Grand Treasurer

Richard C. Townsend





A resolution relating to the possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages on lodge premises.



A resolution relating to the Grand Lodge's jurisdiction over certain individuals accused of un-Masonic conduct.



A resolution relating to the paraphernalia used in the subordinate lodges.



A resolution relating to subordinate lodge sponsorship of other organizations.



A resolution relating to requirements for lodge instructors for the L.I.F.E. Program.



A resolution relating to an apron for Golden Trowel recipients.



A resolution relating to disposition of funds of certain Endowed Memberships in demised lodges.



A resolution relating to the disqualification of felons to receive the degrees.



Grand **Secretary** 

PGM Bradley S. Billings

Committee on Work

John L. W. Peters

**Grand Lodge Library and Museum** 

**Don Comedy** 

The Masonic **Home and School** 

**PGM Ken Curry** 

# **2024 Grand Lodge Officers**



Most Worshipful Tommy F. Chapman Grand Master



Right Worshipful Raborn L. Reader, Jr. Deputy Grand Master



Right Worshipful Jim Rumsey Grand Senior Warden



Right Worshipful Justin B. Duty Grand Junior Warden



Right Worshipful Richard C. Townsend Grand Treasurer



Right Worshipful Brad Billings Grand Secretary



Right Worshipful Danny Bowden Grand Chaplain



Right Worshipful T. Chance Chapman Grand Orator



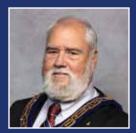
Right Worshipful Billy Rhea Grand Marshal



Worshipful Raul Scully Grand Senior Deacon



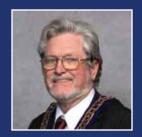
Worshipful Ronnie Wise Grand Junior Deacon



Worshipful Terry Metreyeon Grand Senior Steward



Worshipful Seth Alston Grand Junior Steward



Worshipful Stan Parker Grand Pursuivant



Worshipful Michael Cote II Grand Musician



Worshipful Charles Broussard Grand Photographer



Worshipful Ricky Cox Grand Tiler

# The 188th Grand Annual Communication

By Dean Bryant, Staff Writer

**♦** he Grand Lodge of Texas 188th Grand Annual Communication in Waco, completed in January 2024 with an attendance of well over three thousand Master Masons. The mid-50s outside temperature felt much cooler with the cold front that we were experiencing, but this did not appear to affect the fun and fellowship enjoyed within the Grand Lodge building. It was so good to see many familiar faces enjoying another spectacular weekend at Grand Lodge. Feeling the excitement during the weeks preceding Grand Lodge, then meeting old friends, and making new acquaintances, is something that many Texas Freemasons really enjoy. After all, this was Grand Lodge weekend.

A lot of preparation is required to ensure that the facilities are ready to receive the many Brothers travelling from across the state for the Grand Annual Communication. Registration, fine planning, and setting up, is essential to ensure that all Brethren are checked in and packets handed out with speed and efficiency. Thanks to those who worked so hard to ensure Brethren had all the requirements for the days ahead.

### First Session: Thursday Afternoon

On Thursday afternoon, January 18th, Brethren had an opportunity to settle in, relax, and enjoy the Grand Musicians Musical Prelude and the fellowship among themselves.



The Opening Ceremony was conducted by Right Worshipful Wendell P. Miller, Past Grand Master of Texas Masons, followed by the opening prayer by Grand Chaplain R. W. Clarence Layney, Jr.





The introduction of 2023 Grand Lodge Officers and their ladies was, as always, very impressive. The accompaniment of Royal Arch Sir Knights of Texas made for a great entrance. It is always impressive to have the Knights Templar in attendance. We were fortunate to witness another spectacular Honor Guard under the direction of Sir Knight Ric Jernigan, Right Eminent Past Grand Commander, Knights Templar of Texas.



The support from several Texas Sir Knights in the Honor Guard was well appreciated: all looking sharp with their distinctive uniforms, shining swords, and unmistakable Chapeaus. The Grand Lodge Officers then commenced: opening with District Deputy Grand Masters from the several Masonic Districts, followed by the Grand Lodge Appointed Officers and their ladies, Past Grand Masters, and their ladies, and finally, Elected Grand Officers and their ladies. Sir Knights then formed an arch of steel as Most Worshipful G Clay Smith, Grand Master of Texas Masons, and his Lady Teresa were presented to those assembled.







With M. W. G. Clay Smith presiding in the Grand East, the reception of distinguished guests commenced, followed by the presentation of the colors by the National Sojourners, Heroes of '76.

Pledges of Allegiance to the United State Flag and that of Texas were led by R: W: Raborn Reader and R: W: Jim Rumsey, Grand Senior, and Junior Wardens, respectively.

During the afternoon we were witness to the several "Roll Calls and Welcomes" with associated responses from the various dignitaries and appendant bodies in attendance. Thank you all for supporting our Grand Lodge.

### **Second Session: Friday Morning**

It was a prompt start for the Opening of the One Hundred Eighty-Eighth Grand Annual Communication of The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas by M. W. Smith. Proceeding with the report of the Committee on Credentials by Chairman Mike Spears in which the collation of this information must be timely to ensure an accurate headcount. As expected, another excellent performance by Brother Mike and his team.





Has anyone ever wondered, or totally understood, the role of the Committee on Credentials and its importance?

In the words of Chairman Spears, "These reports are required at the initial (Friday Morning) opening of the Grand Lodge of Texas. There are initial reports given at the request of the Grand Master anytime during the Grand Annual Session. Therefore, the Credentials office is constantly updating our information should a request be made. The Final Report is given just prior to the election of officers.

The report is calculated by the following information:

- All Past Masters who pre-register, have their packet preprepared with a voting device included. To determine the Past Masters' Vote, from the pre-registered list we have a count of the total beginning number of pre-registered packets that are available for pick up, LESS the packets that have not been picked up. We also add to this number the number of walk-up Past Masters who register at the counter. This number is shown on the report as the Past Masters count.
- All Lodges votes (voting devices) are issued at the Credentials counter. The person requesting the device must be either the Master, Senior or Junior Warden, and if none of these are present then the Proxy is authorized to pick up the Lodge's voting device. There is only one device per Lodge but when used, it calculates three votes to the final ballot. Only one device is issued to each Lodge.
- On the report we show the total number of Lodges and Total Lodge Vote which is the number of Lodges x 3. The total Past Master votes is the same as the total number of PMs since each PM only has one vote. A Past Master who is also a current Master / Sr. Warden / Jr. Warden or Proxy of a Lodge could have four votes."

### ART. 117. Credentials.

The Committee on Credentials shall meet at the Grand Lodge Temple the day preceding the Annual Communication, receive and examine such credentials as may be presented by the Brethren, and report thereon at the opening of this Grand Lodge. (Revised 2002)

"The Grand Lodge Secretaries Office starts well in advance of Grand Lodge taking Pre-Registrations. Volunteers from Lorena Lodge start about twelve days in advance of Grand Lodge to assemble pre-registration packets and members of Crawford Lodge are on site during Grand Lodge to hand out pre-registration packets.

We also have three ladies who assist at the registration counter. We are on duty from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. on Thursday & Friday and 7:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. on Saturday."

### Preliminary Report: Friday, January 19, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Past Masters - 1,594

Lodges represented - 475

Total Lodge Votes - 1,425

(one Lodge represented x 3 = Total Lodge Votes)

Past Master Votes - 1,594

For a Grand Total Votes of 3,109

### Final Report: Saturday, January 20, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Past Masters - 1,884

Lodges Represented - 545

Total Lodge Votes - 1,635

(one Lodge represented x 3 = Total Lodge Votes)

Past Master Votes - 1,884

For a Grand Total Votes of 3,519

Additional reports were made including a Report by the Grand Master, Grand Treasurer, Grand Trustees, and Grand Secretary. These were followed by the Reports of the several Committees. The electronic voting devices were again a success and ensured a steady pace of the events was maintained. After a full morning of discussion and voting the Grand Lodge was called from Labor, giving attendees an opportunity to get some refreshment while enjoying the fellowship with Brethren across the state.

### **Third Session: Friday Afternoon**

There was work to be done so, with refreshment completed, we returned to the Auditorium and commenced with the third session. Another fine musical prelude helped settle the Brethren in place and relax prior to the afternoon events. The Grand Lodge was called to labor, followed by another prayer from our Grand Chaplain.

It was a privilege during this session to observe the presentation of the well-earned and respected Vanguard Award. Hats off to the Lodges listed for the hard work, dedication, and commitment, you have shown to be honored with this prestigious award. Thank you to R: W: Cody Cockroft, Chairman of the Committee on Masonic Education, for presenting the awards.







### Vanguard Recipients:

Miliam No. 2 – Nacogdoches
Morton No. 72 – Richmond
Knob Creek No. 401 – Temple
Sugar Land No. 1141 – Sugar Land
Katy No. 1439 – Katy
St John's No. 5 – West Columbia
Saint John's No. 51 – McKinney
Rio Grande No. 81 – Brownsville
Blanco No. 216 – Blanco
Onion Creek No. 220 – Austin
Gray No. 329 – Houston
Ennis No. 369 – Ennis
Northern Star No. 377 – Dallas
Hill City No. 456 – Austin
East Fork No. 650 – Wylie

Waller No. 808 - Waller Dayton No. 216 - Dayton Lebanon No. 837 - Frisco Rosenberg No. 881 - Rosenberg League City No. 1053 - League City Brookshire No. 1066 - Brookshire Tomball No. 1096 - Tomball Irving No. 1218 - Irving Bellaire No. 1336 - Bellaire North Houston Morning No. 1360 - Conroe Carrollton No. 1400 - Carrollton Clear Lake No. 1417 - Clear Lake Huffman No. 1428 – Huffman Allen No. 1435 - Allen Webb No. 1454 - Arlington Mina No. 1456 - Bastrop

This is what Brother Mike Mistry, a Vanguard Award recipient has to say:

"I take pride in preserving League City Masonic Lodge's longstanding tradition by receiving the Vanguard Award – a prestigious honor granted to only a select few Lodges. Out of seven hundred plus Lodges in the state, approximately thirty earned this coveted recognition this year.

Worshipful Masters, I urge you to consider making the Vanguard Award a personal and collective Lodge goal. While the requirements may seem daunting, many Lodges, including ours in League City, are likely already engaged in activities fulfilling these criteria.

Achieving Vanguard status is not easy, but it's certainly attainable, especially when leveraging existing Lodge activities. I hope this insight helps you establish a successful system for your Lodge. I look forward to seeing more Lodges on stage at the 2025 Grand Annual Communication receiving the Vanguard Award."

The afternoon events concluded with a prayer from the Grand Chaplain followed by the Grand Lodge being called from Labor to Refreshment.

### **Fourth Session: Saturday Morning**

The fourth session, on Saturday morning, proceeded with Grand Lodge being called to labor, followed by the conclusion of the outstanding business. The election of Grand Lodge Officers was completed and witnessed by a full auditorium - hardly a spare seat to be found.



The elections resulted in R. W. Tommy F. Chapman being voted in as Grand Master elect. R. Raborn Reader Deputy Grand Master elect, R. Jim Rumsey Grand Senior Warden elect, and R. Brad Billings as Grand Secretary elect. Appreciation for continued dedication and commitment to our Grand Lodge goes to R. W. Richard Townsend, Grand Treasurer, for making himself available for another year.

Congratulations to M. W. Tommy F. Chapman on becoming the 2024 Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas. M. Chapman is serving as Grand Master for the second time. His first election to the position was in 2018.

Finally, congratulations to all the newly elected and appointed Grand Lodge Officers, we wish you all the very best for the ensuing Masonic Year.

### Fifth Session: Saturday Afternoon

The fifth and final session on Saturday afternoon saw the installation of the newly elected and appointed Grand Lodge Officers. Right Worshipful Tommy F. Griffin, Past Grand Master, and Right Worshipful Ken Curry, Past Grand Master, worked together as the installing Officer and Marshal, respectively. A wonderful team, thank you Right Worshipful Griffin and Right Worshipful Curry for a job well done.

The installation of the Grand Lodge Officers was followed by the several presentations to Right Worshipful G. Clay Smith, Past Grand Master, and Most Worshipful Tommy F. Chapman, Grand Master. After the remarks by our Grand Master, Grand Lodge was called to Labor. The One Hundred and Eighty Eighth Grand Annual Communication of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas was then closed by Most Worshipful Tommy F. Chapman.





### **GOOD HUMOR**



### The Profound Pontifications of Brother John Deacon

# The Vi-ber-ator And The Dream

By James C. "Chris" Williams IV, Staff Writer

got the call about 11:30 last Thursday morning and he interrupted me as soon as he heard my voice. "I already know where you are taking me to eat," he said in a gruff voice. "And how are you doing today my Brother John," I asked in a cheery tone. "Please enlighten me as to where we are going so, I can call my banker and get a loan to pay for it." "You do realize that's not funny," he growled. "But no matter. You need to meet me at "Olive Garden" because I saw a TV commercial the other day about all you can eat soup and salad and bread sticks." Uh oh, big red flag. "John, I don't know if that is a really good idea. You remember we almost got thrown out of the last place that had all you can eat. I don't want to go through that again." "Don't you worry yourself about it Brother Chris," he said happily. "I plan on ordering a bunch of other stuff, so they won't get upset." Wow, I thought, shaking my head in disbelief, I have never known anyone who could solve a problem and create a whole new one at exactly the same instant like John could. I wondered if it was his duty in life to run me into bankruptcy. I decided to just go with it, hoping we could have lunch without him making a scene. I wanted to be able to eat there again since it was kinda close to my house. But ... alas... it was not to be.

I told him to go ahead and get there and put our name on the list cause it is almost always a thirty minute wait at least and I only have an hour for lunch and even though Leonard is pretty much ok if it goes every once in a while to an hour and a half we still wouldn't have enough time.

I waited for about twenty minutes after he left before I started heading down there, and found him, hands on hips, with a big scowl on his face, standing with a whole bunch of other people waiting for a table. I eased between a couple of ladies who seemed to be as unhappy as John was about waiting and asked him, "How much longer is the wait?" He actually had his lower lip stuck out like a pouting ten-year old kid and said, "Brother Chris, nobody knows nothing. They gave me this little contraption (and he showed me a six-inch square piece of plastic) and said it would start a flashing and a viberating (yes he said vib-er-rating) when we could eat. I ain't never seen anything like this. I am hungry big time." "Well," I said. "They ought to know how much longer we will be. I don't have all day." "Well, I'll see if I can find out," he said, and I followed him to the hostess station where there were two attractive and pleasant young ladies who were being badgered one by one by the whole room. He asked one of them how much longer we were going to be, and she told him it shouldn't be much longer and that is when I did it.



Had I known what a big drama it was going to be beforehand I would have kept my mouth shut but I opened my mouth, and I asked the hostess, "How do we know that this thing works?" She kind of cocked her head and gave me a serious look and without saying anything punched a code onto her panel which set off John's vi-ber-rator which set off a chain reaction neither I nor anyone else could have predicted. As soon as that flasher thing went off in John's hand, he let out a roar and yelled "HERE WE GO," and before anyone could stop him started for the dining room. The hostess yelled, "Sir.... Siiirrrr. You can't... "but he was already gone. She looked back at me with a glare that I could actually feel the heat from and took off after John with me right on her heels.

By the time we found John he was already sitting at a table and Lynn was taking his...uhh... our drink order. The hostess marched right up to him and told him that HIS table was not ready yet and to come back to the front. He said, "Hold on there, little lady. My vi-ber-rator thingy went off so it was our turn." Well, she turned around and glared at me again and all I could do was mouth the word SORRY which didn't seem to help her mood at all. As she turned to lay into John again a guy who apparently was one of the managers walked up and said to the hostess, "It's ok. I will take it from here."

Visit <a href="https://grandlodgeoftexas.org/texas-freemason-magazine">https://grandlodgeoftexas.org/texas-freemason-magazine</a> for the rest of the story.



IN EVERY ISSUE 🖈

# **A Look Back**

### **Death of President Harding**

From the Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Texas 1923

'n the late evening of August 2nd, of the present year, our entire Nation was plunged in grief at the sudden and very unexpected death of the President of the United States, Warren Gamaliel Harding, a Master Mason, and member of Marion Lodge No. 70, of Marion, Ohio, the city that his Excellency, Brother Harding, called his home.

Believing it entirely appropriate that the Grand Lodge of Texas and Texas Masons should express their sorrow at the loss of the Chief Executive of the Nation, who was as well a dearly beloved brother, I wired a message of sympathy and Godspeed to then Vice President Coolidge, and also one to the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Ohio, to be transmitted to Brother Harding's lodge.

My message to President Coolidge is as follows:

Hon. Calvin Coolidge, Vice-President,

Washington, D. C.

The Masons of Texas deeply mourn the death of our President and brother, Warren G. Harding, and with the Nation are deeply grieved at his untimely loss.

While our precepts teach us the all-wisdom of the rulings of our Supreme Grand Master and Ruler of the universe, it is with a tear that we submit to his will.

In this message of sorrow we also extend to you the assurance of the support of the Masons of Texas to constituted Government and extend good wishes to you for successful conduct of the responsibilities of our Government, and to state that we consider our Nation fortunate in having such a man ready to assume these responsibilities which fall upon him in such a sorrowful manner.

Mike H. Thomas, Grand Master



Grand Master of Masons in Texas, Mr. Mike H. Thomas, Dallas, Texas.

The President has received your kind telegram, and has My Dear Mr. Thomas:

asked me to express to you his sincere appreciation. Such a message is a source of both encouragement and

help at this time, and only the urgent press of other matters prevents a personal acknowledgment.

very truly yours, E.T. CLARK, Secretary





# **President's Day**

By Jerome Weilmuenster, Staff Writer

f the forty-five presidents of the US, fifteen have been Masons, if we include Lyndon Johnson who was initiated as an Entered Apprentice but did not complete the degrees. Masonic presidents include the following:

George Washington. . . . . . . . . . . . 1789-1797

James Monroe . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1817-1825

Andrew Jackson . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1829-1837

James K. Polk. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1845-1849

James Buchanan . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1857-1861

Andrew Johnson. . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1865-1869

James A. Garfield . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1881 for 6 months . . . . . . . . . . . assassinated

Theodore Roosevelt . . . . . . . . . . 1901-1909

William H. Taft . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1909-1913

Franklin Delano Roosevelt . . . . . . . . . 1933-1945 . . . . . . . . . . died in office

Harry S. Truman . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1945-1953

### Some Interesting Masonic Facts

George Washington was the charter Worshipful Master of Alexandria Lodge No. 22 and the only president to serve simultaneously as president and Worshipful Master. During the American Revolution, thirty-three of Washington's Generals were Masons.

James Monroe was initiated when he was seventeen years and six months old.

Andrew Jackson was the founder of the Democratic party and the first president to have served as Grand Master (Tennessee).

James K. Polk was president when Texas was annexed by the United States.

William Taft was made a Mason at sight.

Warren Harding was raised twenty years after his initiation, was the first president to be a Shriner, and was the first president to receive the 33rd degree.

Harry Truman was the Worshipful Master of his Lodge and Grand Master of Missouri. Truman was the first president to receive the 33rd degree.

Gerald Ford's birth name was Leslie Lynch King. He changed his name to honor his stepfather when he was in college. He is the only president not elected to either the presidency or vice-presidency.

Two Masonic presidents (James Garfield and William McKinney) were assassinated and two (Warren Harding and FDR) died in office.

Two Masonic vice-presidents (Harry Truman and LBJ) assumed the presidency after the deaths of the president.

While 30% of our presidents were Masons, they served approximately one hundred years, or over 40% of the period since George Washington's time in office.

There were fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence. Nine of those were Masons. There were thirty-nine signers of the constitution and thirteen of those were Masons.

All the presidents and vice-presidents of the Republic of Texas were Masons. Until the 1920's, nearly all the governors of Texas were Masons. The last Masonic governor was Mark White. Texas has had a total of thirty-two Masonic governors. Two of those governors also served as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Texas.

Masons played important roles in the formation of American ideas and ideals. Masonry believes that elected officials represent all constituents and not all constituents are Masons.

Masons have not formed a government, produced a bill of rights, or fought and won wars. But men who were Masons have done these things.

Masonry is as important in this age as it was in those before us and will be in ages to come because it unites; it does not divide. It respects all people and does not seek to replace the religious beliefs of any of them, nor to claim that some are superior to others. We practice toleration.

America was born out of a demand for liberty of thought, people, speech, and worship, and these are all Masonic ideals. America was won from a wilderness by men imbued with courage, resourcefulness, daring, and vision. Some of the men were Masons, but many were not. We should revere the efforts of all these men, but at the same time we should be proud of those that were Masons.



# The Lost Years

By Samuel N. Saenz, Contributing Writer

n June 22, 2023, I would like to have been honored with my Fifty-Year Service pin, but such was not the case. Here is the story of my Masonic journey:

Back in the early 1970s, I was a young ambitious public-school teacher in a small middle school in central Texas. My wife and I lived in an apartment for a while that was across the street from our school, where she also was a teacher. In fact, we were the 'science department' of that middle school as we both taught Life Science to all the 7th graders. I knew nothing about Masonry other that it was either related to the construction industry or something that good Catholics did not mess with. Don't know why, but that is the way it was.

I noticed that one of our faculty members, who taught social studies, was rather 'different'. He was an older fellow, at least from my perspective, and he had this aired disposition towards his students and the faculty. He came across as a person who really cared about how I was doing when he asked the proverbial question, "how are you doing?" Over a period of about two years, I watched him and listened to him speak eloquently to others as he reflected with his caring demeanor. I can't remember the circumstances, but one day, I asked him why he was the way he was. Without hesitation, he responded with, "I am a Mason", and that conversation led me to a new world of understanding. That was in the fall of 1972.

In the previous spring of 1972, my mother-in-law suddenly passed away and the following year it became apparent that we would have to leave central Texas and move to Katy, on the outskirts of the sprawling Houston metroplex. My father-in-law was fifty-five years old when my wife was born, and he was now in his eighties and in need of care. We scheduled our move for the summer of the following year, and it meant that I would have focus on Masonry to be raised before we made the move. I completed my work and was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in April 1973, about ninety days after and I began my Masonic journey. My wife bought me a solid gold Masonic ring which I wore with pride.

Moving to Katy, Texas brought me to the nearest Masonic Lodge in Brookshire some seven miles away. I joined Brookshire Lodge No. 1066 in 1973 and began to move through the chairs in short order. By 1978-79, I was seated in the East at thirty-two years of age. I was by far the youngest Mason in the Lodge. Following my year in the East, I moved into the Arabia Scottish Rite and began to take part in their activities. Working with the Shrine and having two children to raise took a toll on my time and work with Brookshire Lodge No. 1066.

In those early years of the 1980s, our country began an economic debacle, and my family was caught up in a downward spiral of economic instability. Those years were dark as we endured

Within a few months, I was re-engaged with my Brotherhood and felt such an inward relief as I began to feel the impact of the loss I had suffered over those decades of Masonic absenteeism.



It wasn't long before I asked him, "So, how do you become a Mason?" and he told me, "Well, it is simple. Just ask." And so, I did. I followed through with asking for a petition, then came the investigation, and became an Entered Apprentice in January of 1973.

Chapter 7 and Chapter 13 bankruptcy proceedings and were reduced to living in low-cost rental properties. We moved three times, and all Masonic activities ended abruptly. I never heard another word about Masonry from any Brother.



Twenty-eight years later, while I was shopping at a grocery store, a Brother Mason commented on the gold Masonic ring I was wearing, the same one my wife had presented to me over four decades ago, and he asked me if I was a traveling man. I told him that I had traveled to the East, and we began a conversation. He invited me to come back to Lodge and I accepted that invitation.

Within a few months, I was re-engaged with my Brotherhood and felt such an inward relief as I began to feel the impact of the loss I had suffered over those decades of Masonic absenteeism. The next fall, I accepted the honor of being seated in the South and this year, fifty years after being raised, I am once again in the East serving my Brothers.

We took an oath "to befriend and relieve every Brother who shall need your assistance." In my mind, I must wonder how that is interpreted. What comes to mind is seeing a Brother with a flat tire on the side of the road, or perhaps in the hospital, or maybe suffering the loss of a loved one. But, what about those who have been away from Lodge due to other circumstances? Like I was, so far beyond the reach of my 'cable tow'. I needed help and support and perhaps, I was just too proud to admit it, and yet

a Brother, in a grocery store check-out line reached out and grabbed the frayed end of my cable tow and I am now back enjoying the rich Brotherhood of my Lodge. Now, in a short twenty-eight years, on June 22, 2051, when I am only one hundred five years old, I will be eligible for my Fifty-Year Service pin.

Are you wearing your Masonic brand? Would I know you in a grocery store or any other place? Would you let me reach out to you and take hold of your cable tow? How shall I know you? Will you have lost years, too?



# Helping Kids and Families in Need

### **DESTINY**

Destiny has not had an easy life.
She suffers from a kidney disease and has had several surgeries already. Her big brothers came to the hospital to give her all the love and support she needs to get well.
MCFS provided rental assistance to this most deserving family, and helped ease a burden so they could focus on their precious little girl.

### **CHRISTIAN**

Young children often become anxious or frightened of dental procedures. Christian was one of those children. MCFS assisted by helping to fund the sedation so Christian would not feel pain. His Mom happily reports that he feels good again and is back to himself.

### **MAVERICK**

Maverick is a happy little guy that is curious about the world around him. He was born with a misshapen head, something that can happen to thousands of babies. His parents reached to us for support after Maverick's pediatrician prescribed a cranial helmet. This will help to gently form his head into the correct shape.









# Start a New Chapter in 2024 Move to Texas Masonic Retirement Community!

With a big grin and booming voice, Don Cox, 89, welcomes friends and visitors to a late breakfast in the dining hall.

"Hey, how's it going?" and "Where've you been all day?" he asks from his table near the entrance.

They respond with laughter, poke fun at him, and ask about his plans for the day.

A few years ago, Don lived a starkly different life.

"My wife passed away. I found myself in a big house in Fort Worth, with a big yard, and a lot of ghosts from 34 years of living there. I thought I could stay, but everywhere I looked made me sad.

I've started a new chapter in my life by moving to Texas Masonic Retirement Community. I'm totally happy here. I've made friends, have a beautiful apartment in The Keystone, and sit down to three meals a day. This place is one of the best kept secrets in Masonry."

Don transformed his apartment into a garden home. Rose bushes,





Don Cox, 89, at home in his new apartment at Texas Masonic Retirement Community.

succulents, and pots of flowers fill his balcony. From his fourthfloor location, he looks down on a flowing water feature and gardens. Open sky, clouds, and gorgeous sunsets float above him.

If your life has changed or downsizing makes sense, Texas Masonic Retirement Community offers luxury high-rise apartments (one and two-bedroom), cozy efficiency apartments, and cottage duplexes.

You'll enjoy a familiar lifestyle with residents limited to eligible Texas Masons and their qualified wives, widows, mothers, and daughters.

### **Move In Today – Enjoy!**

- No Deposit
- 1 Bdrm, 2 Bdrm, or Efficiency
- Fun Activities & Masonic Events
- Chef-Inspired Dining
- · Weekly Housekeeping
- Onsite Security

Watch a video tour, check out apartment availability, and learn about payment options at YourTMRC.org.

Schedule an onsite tour today, as available units move quickly. Contact us at 817-275-2893 or send an email to Info@YourTMRC.org.

# **TEXAS FREEMASON**

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2018 / 2024 Tommy F. Chapman Lapel Pin



2024 Grand Master's Lapel Pin



2024 Tommy F. Chapman Charm

These are just a few of the items you can find in the store. Shop today!

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