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GRAND SECRETARY'S MONTHLY COMMUNICATION JULY 2024

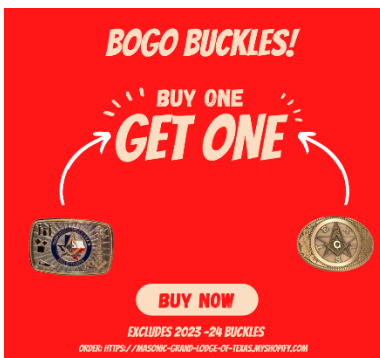
SECRETARIES and my Brothers All – Welcome to the July edition of the Grand Secretary's Newsletter. Including the following:

- Grand Lodge Store: 2 for 1 Belt Buckles
- Grand Master Decision No. 1 – OES and Article 225
- Grand Secretary Office: Closed for Independence Day
- Annual Communication – Hotel Block
- Service Awards – Art. 14
- Masonic Minute – What is Light? - Bradley Kohanke
- Numbers on NPD – Zach Haston
- Livingston Law – Article 284 Audit
- 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](#).



FEATURED ITEM



2 for 1 Belt Buckles are here for a limited time (excluding '23 –'24). \$25 for two small buckles or \$30 for two large buckles. Additionally, you can mix and match buckles for the same or lower cost. This means you can get two buckles from different years or the large and small belt buckles from the same year while supplies last. Please visit the Grand Lodge store to take advantage of this deal.
(Ends July 31st)

<https://masonic-grand-lodge-of-texas.myshopify.com/>

TX MASON APP

Please join the 4,628 Brothers currently using the TX Mason APP! This is separate from the GrandView App & has a searchable law book and monitor right at your fingertips. <https://grandlodgeoftexas.app/launch.html>

GRAND MASTER'S DECISION - 2024 -NO. 1

QUESTION: Is it permissible for a Lodge to allow an Order of the Eastern Star which is an appendant body of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas to use and meet in the Lodge under Art. 225?

ANSWER: Yes. The Order of the Eastern Star is an authorized organization under Art. 225. Additionally, Art. 225e permits lodges chartered by the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas to use lodge facilities, including anterooms and the lodgeroom, in compliance with Art. 225. Therefore, a lodge may allow a Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star which is an appendant body of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas to use the lodge facilities, including anterooms and the lodgeroom, under Art. 225.

GRAND SECRETARY OFFICE UPDATES

Closed for July 4th and 5th - In observance of Independence Day

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Brethren it is time to start making plans to attend the 189th Grand Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Texas January 16th – 18th 2025. The Visitors Bureau of the City of Waco has advised that there are a couple of competing conferences that are scheduled for the very same weekend as our Grand Annual Communication. We have blocked rooms at the Waco Hilton for \$169 a night and at the Courtyard Marriot for \$165. We recommend you make your reservations as early as possible and communicate this announcement with your Lodge.



SERVICE AWARDS

Requests for Service Awards for the 2024-2025 Masonic Year are closed and all unrequested awards are being mailed to the Home Lodge of eligible Members. This is to keep in line with Art. 14, "Prior to July 15th, the Grand Secretary shall forward to each constituent Lodge all Masonic Service Awards and certificates for all eligible members of the Lodge. The Grand Secretary will forward to the Grand Master and District Deputy Grand Masters a list containing the name, Lodge, District, and length of service of all Brothers who have earned a Masonic Service Award for the ensuing year. (Revised 2022)"

MONTHLY LAW READING

Article 284 requires the Worshipful Master to cause the "books and accounts of the Treasurer and Secretary" to be audited as soon after June 24th of June as convenient. This may be done either by a CPA or "a committee of three qualified members." If the Worshipful Master appoints a committee, who is "qualified" to serve on the committee is undefined. However, it is clear that neither the Treasurer nor the Secretary can serve on the committee since their books and accounts are being audited. Similarly, Grand Master's Decision - 1993 - No. 6 provides that "[a]lthough Article 284 does not specifically prohibit the Worshipful Master, Senior Warden or Junior Warden from serving on the Auditing Committee, it is my decision that it would be highly improper."

The written audit report must be read at a Stated Meeting and recorded in full in the minutes. Remember that Form No. 71 must be completed and delivered to the Grand Secretary no later than September 15th.

Chris Livingston, Chairman, Masonic Jurisprudence Committee

MASONIC MINUTE

What is Light?

A couple of years ago while browsing in the gift shop at my church I ran across a sticker that said, "Be The Light." Being a Mason, it held a profound meaning for me so I bought one and put it on the back of my truck. Every time I'd see it, I would be reminded of my Initiation, Passing, and Raising. But it did more than that. It got me thinking about "Light" and what it means to us as Masons.

Let me recommend a possible explanation. "Light" in Masonic terms means choosing to use knowledge for good instead of evil and using the power of knowledge to promote reason over tyranny. Tyrants constantly try to use hate, ignorance, and fear to control the masses. It is our duty as Masons to continue to learn, to fight the good fight, and to be a beacon of hope to humanity. A couple of years ago, I bought a bunch of these stickers. Each time we've Raised a Master Mason in our Lodge, I've pulled them aside after the Lodge was closed and presented them with a sticker. Along with it, I try to convey to them that as Master Masons that it is now their duty and privilege to continue their Masonic learning, to share what they learn with their brethren that we may all benefit, and to endeavor to learn the ritual and work in the degrees as much as possible. I ask them to put it in a place where they will see it and be reminded of this duty. I hope it has meant as much to them as it has to me. *Taken from the book "Light Reflections" by Bradley Kohanke*

LONE STAR APRONS

The window is now open (July 1) for orders to be delivered around Christmas of this year. Please take note that there WILL BE a price increase in 2025 so this is your last chance to get your very own Lone Star apron for \$210 (or with customized bib for \$260). Also please be aware and help us communicate that there is a knock off apron floating around eBay and other online sites. Not only does it not benefit the Grand Lodge of Texas, but it is defrauding the Brother who designed the original apron and is of a much poorer quality. Please follow this link to purchase the official Lone Star Apron today. [The Craftsman's Apron](#)

OFFICERS LEADERSHIP TRAININGS

Registration is now open for the 2023 Officer Leadership Trainings. All members wishing to attend can register through their member portal or by clicking [here](#). The dates and locations are as follows:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Register by</u>	<u>Link</u>
Lubbock	Aug 23 - Aug 24	08/17/2024.....	Lubbock
El Paso.....	Sept 28.....	09/26.2024.....	El Paso

TEXAS FREEMASON MAGAZINE

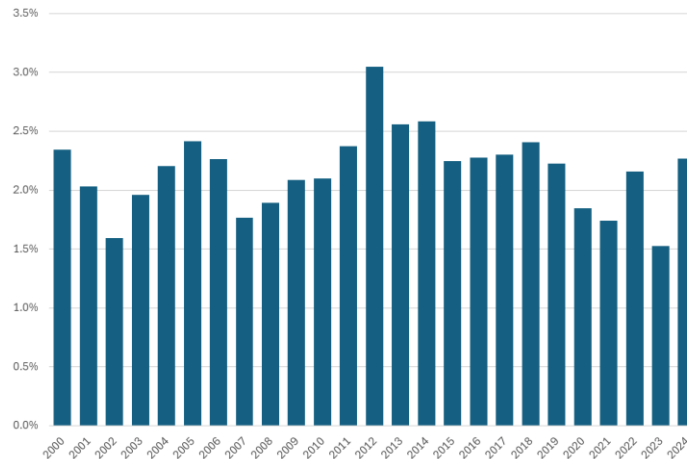
The most recent edition of the magazine: <https://grandlodgeoftexas.org/texas-freemason-magazine>.

The Texas Freemason Magazine is published four times a year and is available in PDF format on the Grand Lodge website under the "MEDIA/MAGAZINE" tab. In addition to the digital format, The Winter and Spring issues are printed and mailed before and following the Grand Annual Communication. If you are not receiving the magazine in the mail, it is likely your address is not correct in the Grand Lodge database. You can correct this by visiting the Grand Lodge website and logging into the member portal where you can edit your profile as needed.

NUMBERS ON NPD

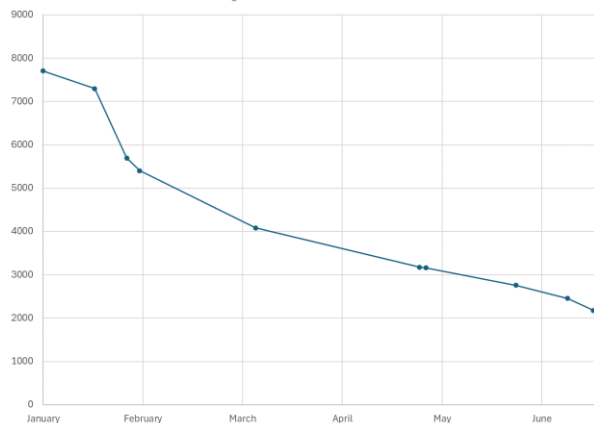
Brethren, the data is in for 2024 suspensions for non-payment of dues (NPD), and, in the end, the results are pretty normal. Figure 1 shows the percentage of our membership suspended NPD for each year since 2000. Typically, I will take out reinstatements on NPD charts; however, in this case, to fairly compare with this year where we haven't had time for reinstatements yet, I have just included the June 24th suspensions for each year. It should be noted that a few Secretaries have not yet marked their membership for NPD, so this final number may increase a little, but less than a percent.

Figure 1. Percentage of Membership Suspended on June 24th for Non-Payment of Dues (Reinstatements Not Included)



While the final results were fairly typical, that was not the case on January 1st. At the end of 2022, we had the highest percentage of our membership paid up for the following year that we've had in at least the last couple of decades. At the end of 2023, we had the lowest. On January 1st of this year, 7,706 members owed dues for 2024. That's 14% of our membership! Figure 2 shows how that rapidly decreased to eventually fall in line with previous years by June 23rd.

Figure 2. Members in Arrears in 2024



Another thing you can see from Figure 2 is when people in arrears paid. Over 2300 people paid by Feb 1st who had not paid by January 1st, and more than 1900 than had not paid by Jan 15th. That's a lot of people in just two weeks. After that, there was a steady stream of people paying all the way up to the deadline. Please note that this is the first year of the new rule which should induce people in arrears to pay faster:

Art. 319. Automatic Suspension.

Lodge dues are due and payable one year in advance on January 1st of each year (unless otherwise exempt) and if not paid on or before that date a member shall be in arrears for his dues. Any member in arrears shall be considered to be not in good standing and shall not be entitled to participate in any Masonic function predicated on membership.

So, who was suspended? Figure 3 shows the age of the suspended members, and Figure 4 shows how long they'd been in Masonry. Additionally, it should be noted that we lost 130 Past Masters to non-payment of dues this year. That's notably above the 81 PMs that we lost last year, but only slightly (6%) above the long-term average.

Figure 3. 2024 NPD Ages

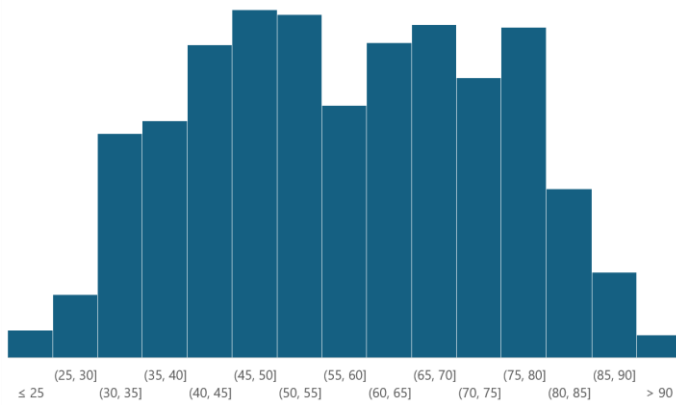
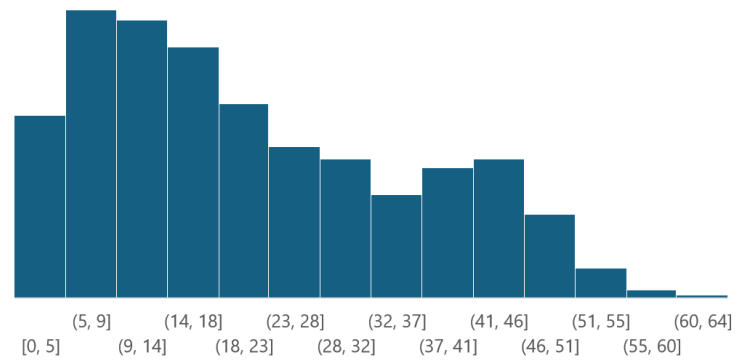


Figure 4. Years Since Raised for 2024 NPDs



Finally, I need to make a comment on consolidations. In 2023, we had 510 living, active Brothers where were members of lodges which consolidated into other lodges during the year. 23% of the annual dues-payers of that group went NPD this year, and that's just in the first year after their consolidation. **That's 23% that never paid a single dues payment to their new lodge.** The average age of the NPDs from last year's consolidations was 61, which is fairly typical, but 25% of them were Past Masters of their previous lodge. They simply didn't have the affinity to their new lodge that they did to their old. Consolidations will be necessary as we go forward, but it's not all roses. Loss of members will occur, and the absorbing lodges should make every effort they possibly can to make them feel at home, with all the Brotherly love and respect, and being part of the team, that they've had before.

NPDs will always exist; however, to offset this, half the lodges in Texas have raised more Master Masons since COVID than they've lost to NPDs, and some are even increasing the number they're raising each year. While we prefer less than 2% losses to NPD each year, a little over 2% is manageable, especially for those lodges which continue to raise more than they lose.

Zachary Haston

LAWBOOK AND GRAND LODGE PROCEEDINGS

The top five elected officers now have access to the 2023 Grand Lodge Law Book. You can access the book by logging into the member portal and clicking on the resources tab. *Proceedings of the M.: W.: Grand Lodge of Texas* from 2019 – 2021 can also be found in the Resources tab and are accessible by all members. Previous years' proceedings can be accessed through TX Mason App.

VANGUARD AWARD APPLICATION

The 2023 – 2024 Vanguard Application is available on the Member Portal for all Master Masons to view. You can find it by [clicking here](#). Please remember to follow the instructions before submitting. Lodges that are applying for the Vanguard Award must have their application submitted to their District Deputy Grand Master no later than 8/31/2024. District Deputy Grand Masters must have the application submitted to the Grand Secretary's Office no later than 9/15/2024.



Worshipful Master Leadership Coaching Program

This program will provide Worshipful Masters with real-time information, personalized support, and leadership coaching to ensure their success in leading their lodges effectively.

- Personal Leadership Coach
- Monthly Zoom Group Coaching
- Tools and Resources for Success

**1 Year of
Coaching
Only**

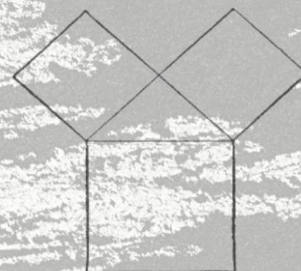
COST \$300

JULY 2024 – JUNE 2025

**REGISTER
TODAY ON
GRANDVIEW**



April & May 2024 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>
Kenneth Young						
Sat, 3 Aug 2024	Hubert	67	Chappell Hill	44	9:00 AM	following
Sat, 10 Aug 2024	Lovelady	539	Lovelady	23	9:00 AM	following
Sat, 17 Aug 2024	Bedias	651	Bedias	29-A	9:00 AM	following
Chuck Forsyth						
Sat, 3 Aug 2024	Concho	1260	San Angelo	77	9:00 AM	following
Sat, 10 Aug 2024	El Paso	130	El Paso	60	9:00 AM	following
Sat, 31 Aug 2024	Frontier	766	Alpine	81	9:00 AM	following
Steve Pepper						
None scheduled						
John Peters						
Sat, 3 Aug 2024	Victoria	40	Victoria	36	9:00 AM	1:00 PM
Sat, 10 Aug 2024	Cibolo	151	San Antonio	39-B	9:00 AM	1:00 PM
Sat, 17 Aug 2024	San Gabriel	89	Georgetown	47	9:00 AM	1:00 PM
Cody Stewart						
Sat, 3 Aug 2024	Duck Creek	1419	Garland	14-C	8:00 AM	following
Sat, 17 Aug 2024	Palestine	31	Palestine	117	8:00 AM	following
Sat, 24 Aug 2024	Dallas	760	Dallas	14-A	8:00 AM	following
Sat, 31 Aug 2024	Danville	101	Kilgore	10-B	8:00 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
Effective 7/1/2024

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Lodge</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Grand Lodge Representative</i>
Wednesday 7/17/2024	Coffee & Donuts @ 9:30 AM Open Rambo Lodge & Call from Labor to Refreshment @ 10:30 AM Open Grand Lodge Representation @ 10:45 AM Cornerstone Ceremony @ 11:30	Rambo 426 102 Old Fitzhugh Rd. Dripping Springs, TX 78620	New North Hays County EMS Building 31331 Ranch Road 12 Dripping Springs, TX 78620	Thomas F. Griffin Past Grand Master
Saturday 7/27/2024	Coffee & Donuts @ 8:00 AM Open Katy @ 8:50 Open Grand Lodge Representation @ 9:00 Cornerstone Ceremony @ 10:00	Katy 1439 3158 Katy Hockley Road Katy, TX 77493	Fulshear Simonton Fire Dept.	Raborn L. Reader Deputy Grand Master
Saturday 7/27/2024	Refreshments @ 8:00 AM Open Royse City @ 9:00 AM Open Grand Lodge Representation @ 9:15 AM Cornerstone Ceremony @ 10:00	Royse City 663 124-B. S. Arch St. Royse City, TX 75189	Paula Walker Elementary @ 10:00 New Police Station @ 11:00	Tommy F. Chapman Grand Master
Saturday 8/10/2024	Refreshments @ Noon Open Iowa Park @ 12:45 Open Grand Lodge Representation @ 1:00 Cornerstone Ceremony @ 2:00	Iowa Park 713 700 W. Washington Iowa Park, TX 76367	New Police Station & New Fire Station	TBD
Friday 8/16/2024	Coffee & Donuts @ 8:30 AM Open Alamo @ 9:30 AM Open Grand Lodge Representation @ 9:45 AM Cornerstone Ceremony @ 11:00	Alamo 44 308 Avenue E. @ 4th St. San Antonio, TX 78205	St. Philips College 1801 Martin Luther King San Antonio, TX 78203	Mike Gower Past Grand Master
Saturday 10/19/2024	Coffee & Donuts @ 8:00 AM Open Empire @ 8:45 AM Open Grand Lodge Representation @ 9:00 AM Cornerstone Ceremony #1 @ 10:00 Cornerstone Ceremony #2 @ 11:00	Empire 586 310 E FM 6 Nevada, TX 75173	2 Schools	TBD

Join the Texas Cornerstone State coordinator Kevin Binder's Facebook Group
<https://www.facebook.com/share/CiHNBv12zSaqwVhh/?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

Phone: 254-753-7395

Fax: 254-753-2944

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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 (ext. 5)

dave@grandsecretaryoftx.org

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

Cindy Huerta (ext. 4)

cindy@grandsecretaryoftx.org

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

Jeff Frayser

fraternal@grandsecretaryoftx.org

Out-of-State Correspondence
Dispensations

Jeremy Johnson

jrjohnson0821@gmail.com

Lodge Secretary Training

Bruce Mercer (ext. 3)

bruce@grandsecretaryoftx.org

Out-of-State Correspondence

Justin Hancock (ext. 2)

justinh@grandsecretaryoftx.org

Honesty & Integrity Awards
Lamar Medals
Forms and Lodge Supply Orders
Grand Lodge Service Awards

Denise Gilmore (ext. 1)

denise@grandsecretaryoftx.org

Lodge Officer Maintenance
Esoteric Record Maintenance
Form 71 Collection
IRS Form 990's Collection
Golden Trowel Awards
Community Builder Awards
Proxies for Grand Lodge

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. August 31 & 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.