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## GRAND SECRETARY'S MONTHLY COMMUNICATION MARCH 2024

**SECRETARIES** and my Brothers All – Welcome to the March edition of the Grand Secretary's Newsletter. This day-after-leap-year edition includes the following:

- Last minute orders for the "Lone Star Apron"
- TX Mason App
- Sharing Freemasonry (Part 1) – with guest contributor Brother Fluff
- Get to Know your Grand Lodge, Part 1 – Zach Haston
- Secretary Training: A Primer – Jeremy Johnson
- Masonic Minute – Why do we say "Blue Lodge"?
- Livingston Law – Art. 405a
- Resolution No. 9 (as amended)
- 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 (254753-7395 or [gs@grandsecretaryoftx.org](mailto:gs@grandsecretaryoftx.org), or by registering your membership through [the Member Portal](#).

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**ONE MONTH LEFT TO ORDER THE LONE STAR APRON IN TIME FOR INSTALLATION (SEE BELOW)**

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### **THE TX MASON APP**

We now have 4,351 Brothers using our TX Mason App. For those not familiar, this is separate from the Grandview app and allows access to everything from the Law Book and Monitor at the base level up to access to all the Grand Lodge Proceedings. All in the palm of your hand and all searchable. The plans are as follows:

Hiram Abiff - \$9.99

Law book, Monitor, calendar, social platform

Hiram King of Tyre - \$16.99

Abiff Plan + Access to funeral services and more

King Solomon - \$25.99

King of Tyre + Proceedings & Historical Refs

## **LIKE, FOLLOW, AND SHARE FREEMASONRY**

In today's world, where so much communication is done online, we must rethink how we connect with people who are looking for more meaningful relationships and values like those found in Freemasonry. The traditional image of gathering in town squares for daily business and noticing Freemason symbols on buildings almost seems obsolete. So, we find ourselves asking: "Where have all the good men gone who are looking for brotherhood, relief, and truth?" Believe it or not, they are online.

The numbers tell the tale. Texas has around 28 million people, with about half being men at an average age of 34. Over half (56%) profess to be men of faith. If even a quarter of those might be interested in what Freemasonry has to offer, this Fraternity has the potential to connect with well over a million men daily using online tools.

Social media is one of the most affordable ways to promote a business or organization. In most cases, making a post or setting up an event is free, and it immediately increases the awareness of your lodge within your community. Whether via Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (Twitter), Threads, or a new trending platform, it is important that each lodge maintain a social media presence.

The best part about social media is that every brother can play a part. Individual Freemasons who are active on social media expose the values and tenets of the Fraternity to hundreds and thousands of their followers. That presence can be a double-edged sword, however. It is important to remember those values when you post or interact with others online. Avoid posts that do not reflect well on Freemasonry. Vulgarity, profanity, and feuding do not have a place in the lodge. Why should they have a place online? You may be someone's first interaction with Freemasonry. Always be mindful of the light you represent.

Social media is not the only avenue to bring in new members, of course, but it is a powerful tool for showing the world what Freemasonry is really about and for connecting with those looking for what we offer. With the right approach, we can show the positive impact of Freemasonry in our communities and maybe inspire more good men to reach out and knock upon our doors. It may just start with a simple Like, Follow, and Share!

*Zakary Wyatt JW  
Mackenzie Lodge No. 1327*

*Brother Fluff is a social media savant with 90,000 followers on TikTok, including 1.4 million views and 500,000 people tuning in monthly, as well as 45,000 followers on Facebook.*

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## **GET TO KNOW YOUR GRAND LODGE PART I**

Brethren, our Grand Lodge is the third largest Grand Lodge in the U.S., following Pennsylvania and Ohio. As of today, we have 56,339 Master Masons in Texas holding 65,758 memberships. We currently also have 833 Entered Apprentices that are less than a year since being initiated and 75 Fellowcrafts less than a year since being passed. Figure 1 shows the Master Masons of Texas mapped by their lodge location. While we naturally have more members in the big cities, Dallas, Tarrant, Collin, Harris, Bexar, and Travis Counties comprise 47% of the state's population but only 28% of our Masonic population. Figure 2 shows this on a density map, by county, with Dallas County having 0.10%, Tarrant County, 0.16%, Harris County 0.09%, and Travis County 0.06% Master Masons, while 91 counties of the 254 in Texas have over 0.5% Master Masons by population and 19 counties have over 1% Master Masons. That's of all men, women, and children in the county, so the percentage of eligible men would be higher.

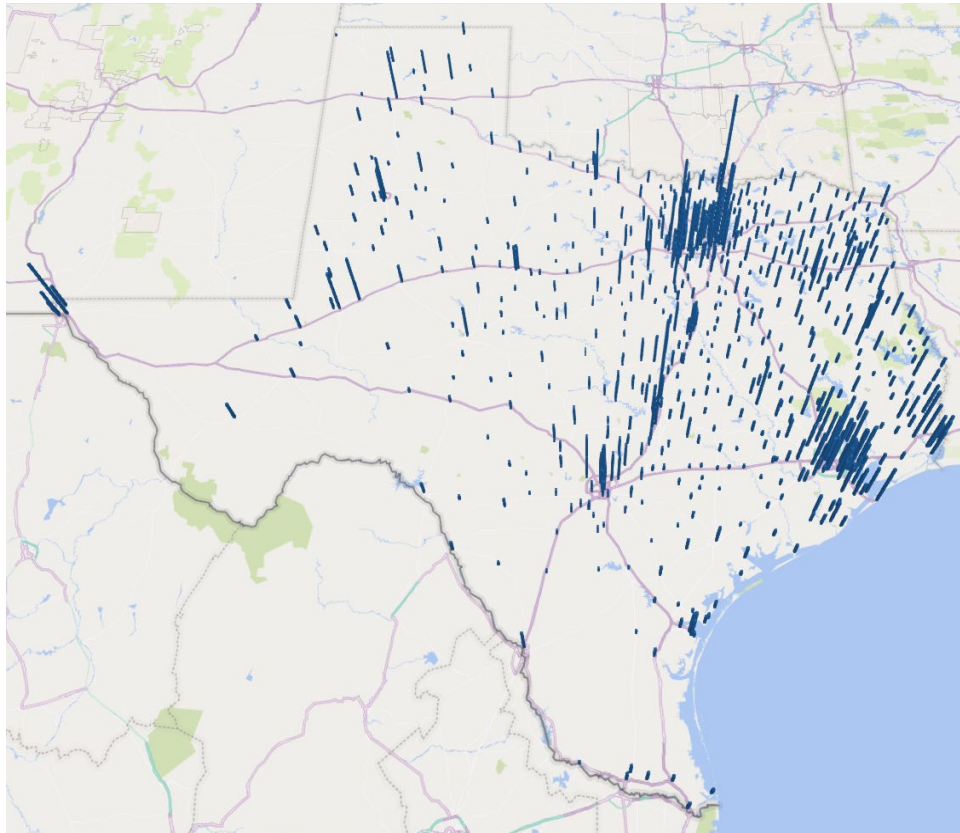


Figure 1. Texas Master Masons by Lodge Location

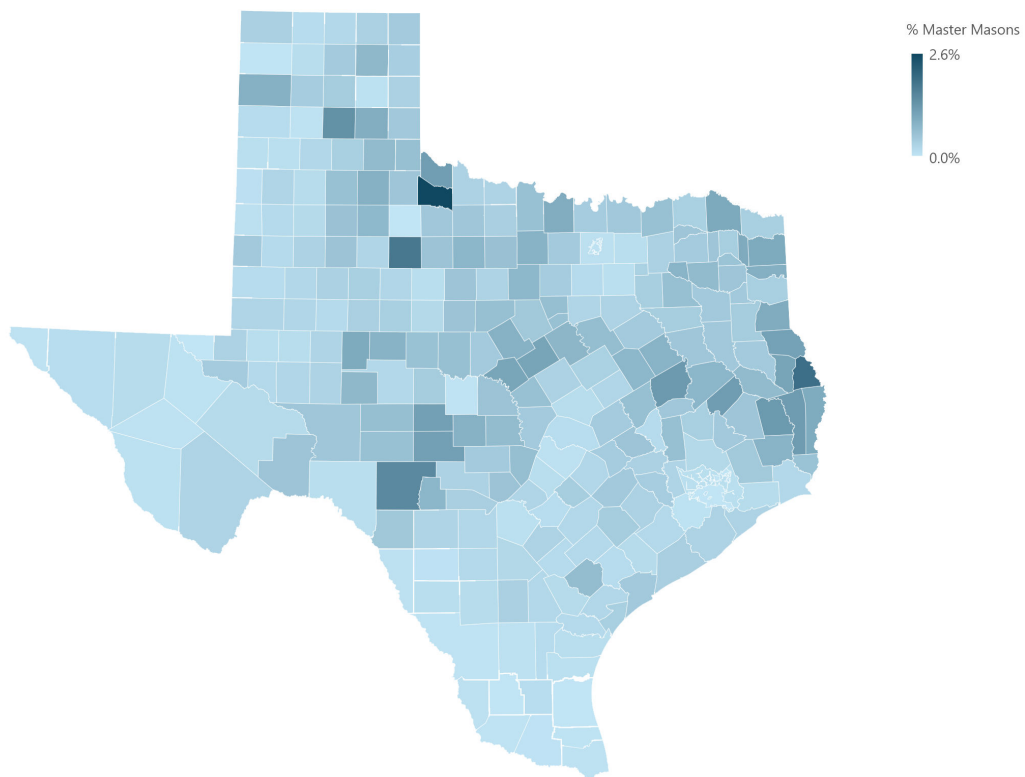
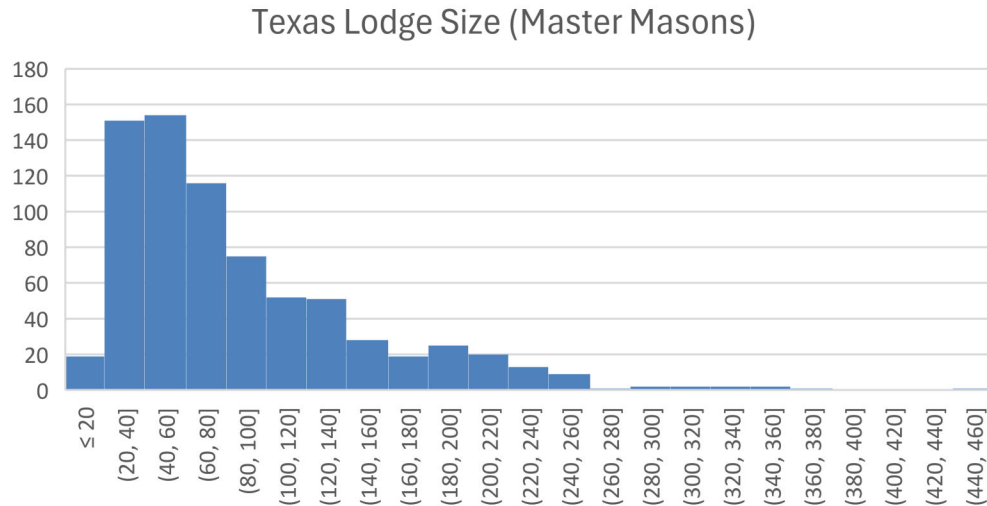


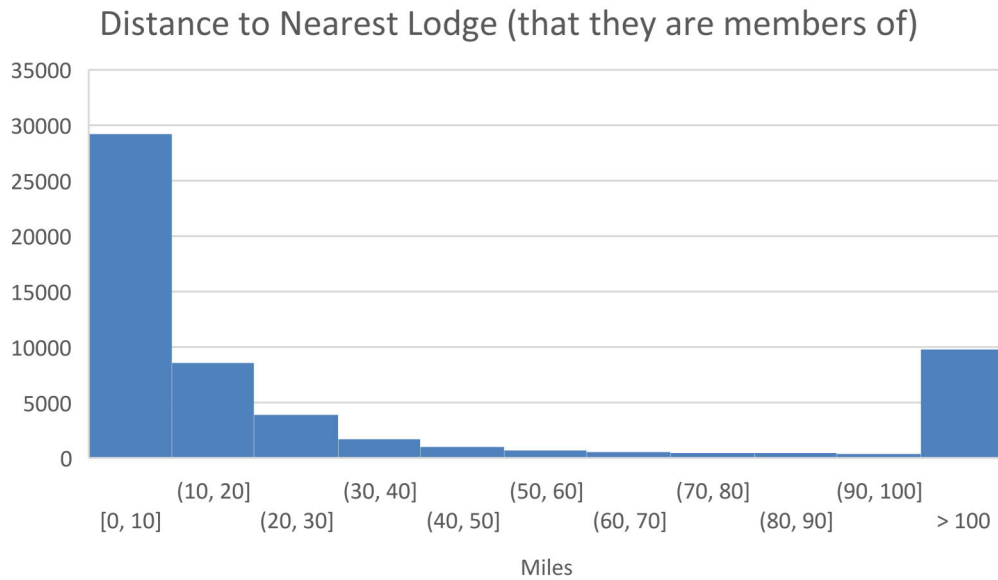
Figure 2. Density Map of Masonry in Texas. In the darkest county we represent 2.6% of that county's population. In DFW and Houston, we're 0.1% of the total population.

Texas has 745 active chartered Lodges, not counting Texas Lodge of Research and Tranquility 2000. 70 Lodges meet in the same building as other Lodges, giving us 675 meeting locations across the state, some of which are owned not by a Blue Lodge but by the Scottish Rite or some other entity.

The median Lodge size in Texas is 67 members (see Figure 3). Over half our members live within 10 miles of their lodge (Figure 4). As a side note, of those that have moved away and are now over 100 miles from their lodge, 59% continue to maintain their membership as current dues payers and 41% are endowed.



*Figure 3. Texas Lodge Size (Master Masons)*



*Figure 4. Member Distance to Lodge (miles)*

Figure 5 shows the current age of Master Masons in Texas. Overall, our median age is 69. The median age that a Texas Master Mason passes to the Celestial Lodge is 85, which is reflected in the decreased numbers of Masons in their 80s and 90s. Figure 6 shows the median age of current local Lodge officers, which is 62.

### Age of Current Texas MMs

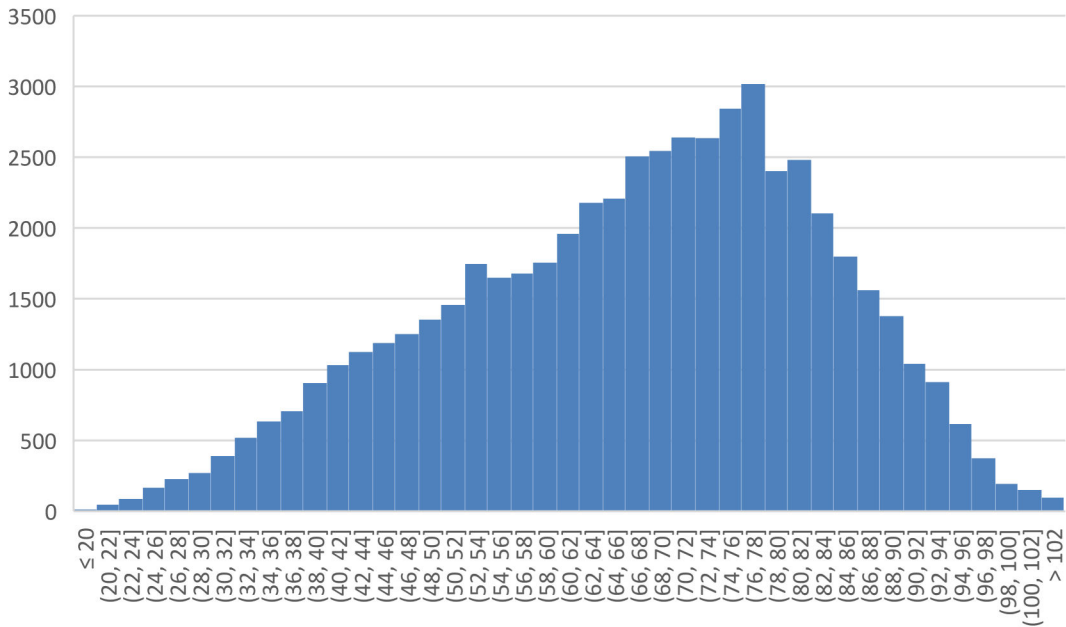


Figure 5. Age of Current Texas Master Masons (median = 69)

### Current Local Lodge Officer Age

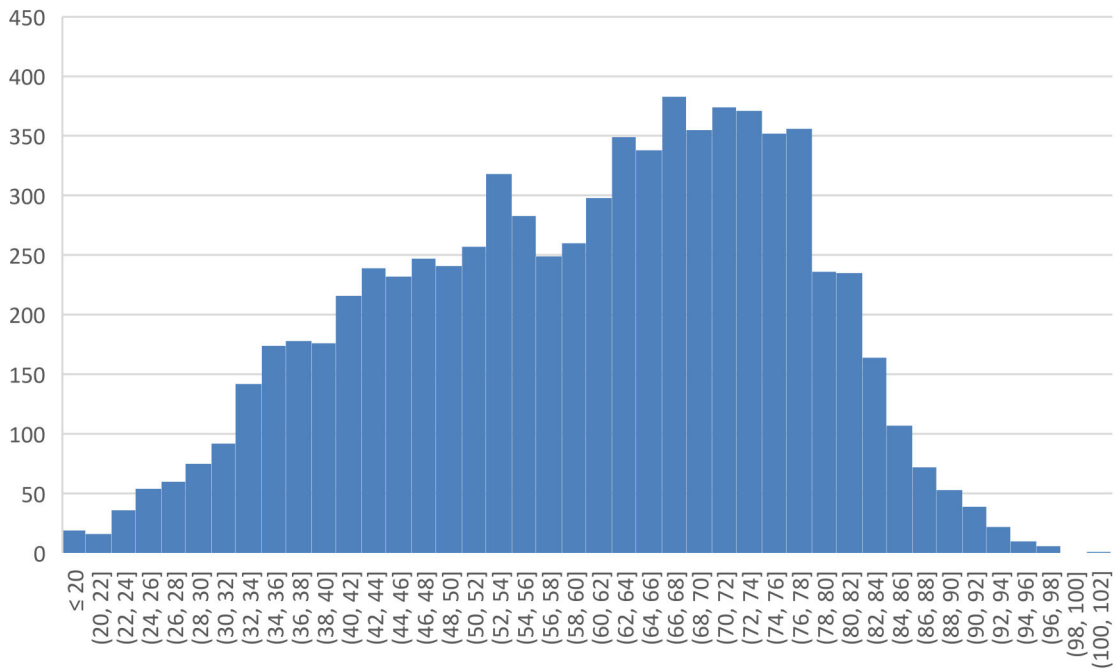
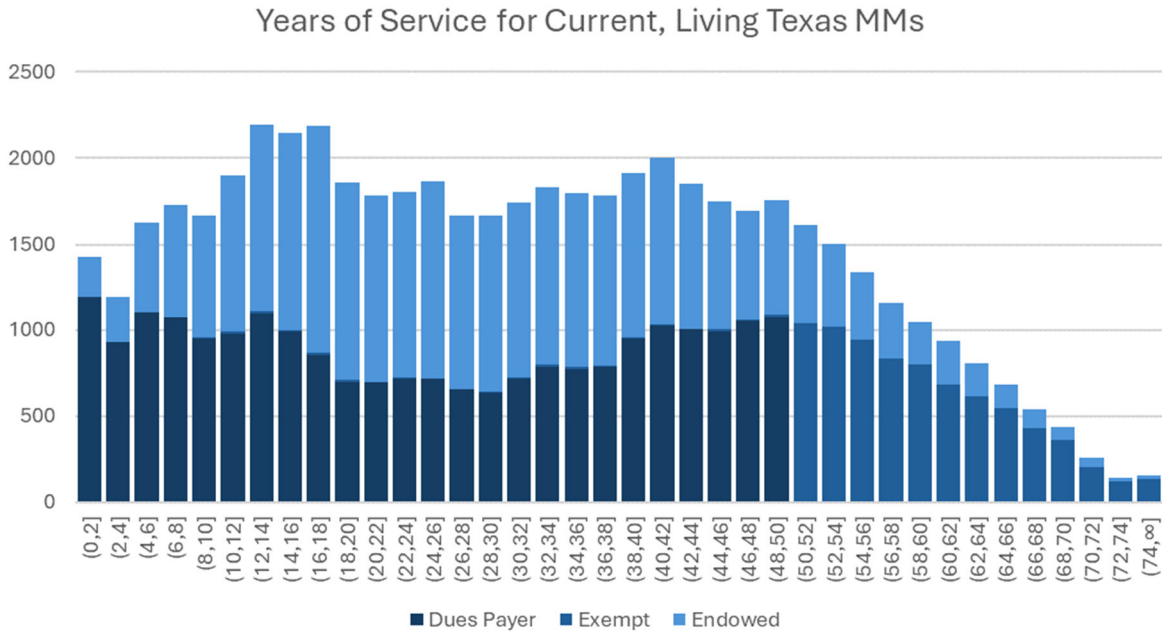


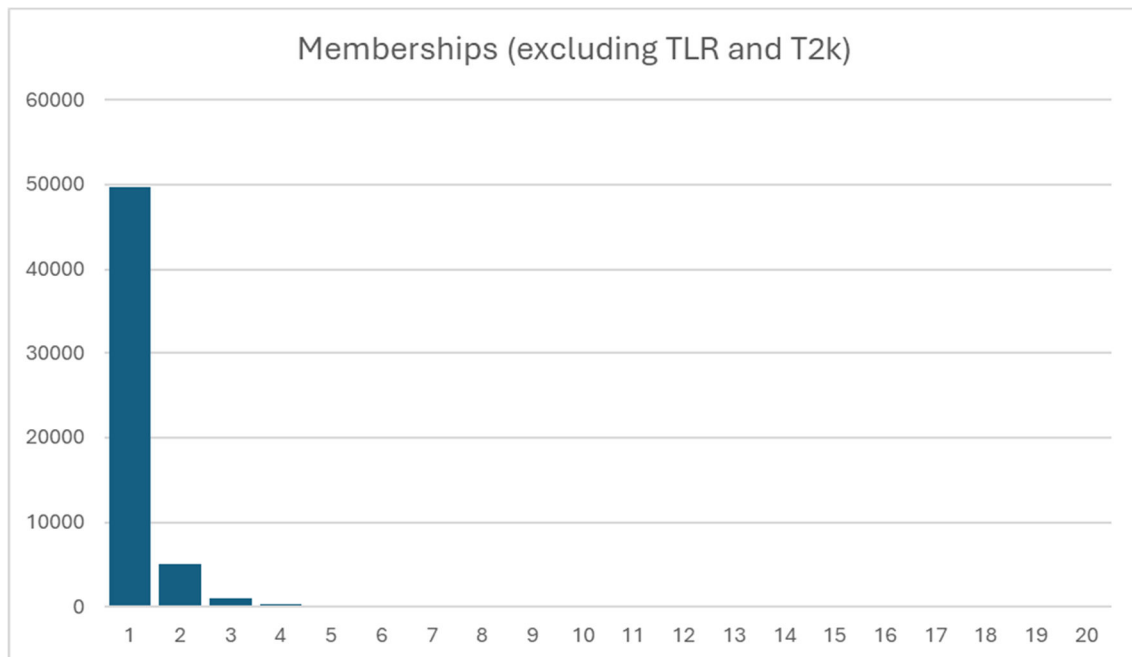
Figure 6. Age of Current Local Lodge Officers (All Offices) (median = 62)

Figure 7 shows the years of service to Texas Masonry for our current Master Masons. From 10 to 50 years, the line is a fairly flat, with nearly equal numbers of Masons per year. Those with more than 50 years of service, of course, decrease in numbers due to deaths. Most recently, COVID (the dip in the 2-4 years of service range), from which we have not fully recovered, affected these numbers. On an interesting note, a majority of members with 40-50 years of service (raised around 1980) continue to pay annual dues. Endowments began in 1981 and only partially caught on with that group. A majority continue to pay dues over 40 years later. Those in the 15- to-40-year range slightly favor endowments.

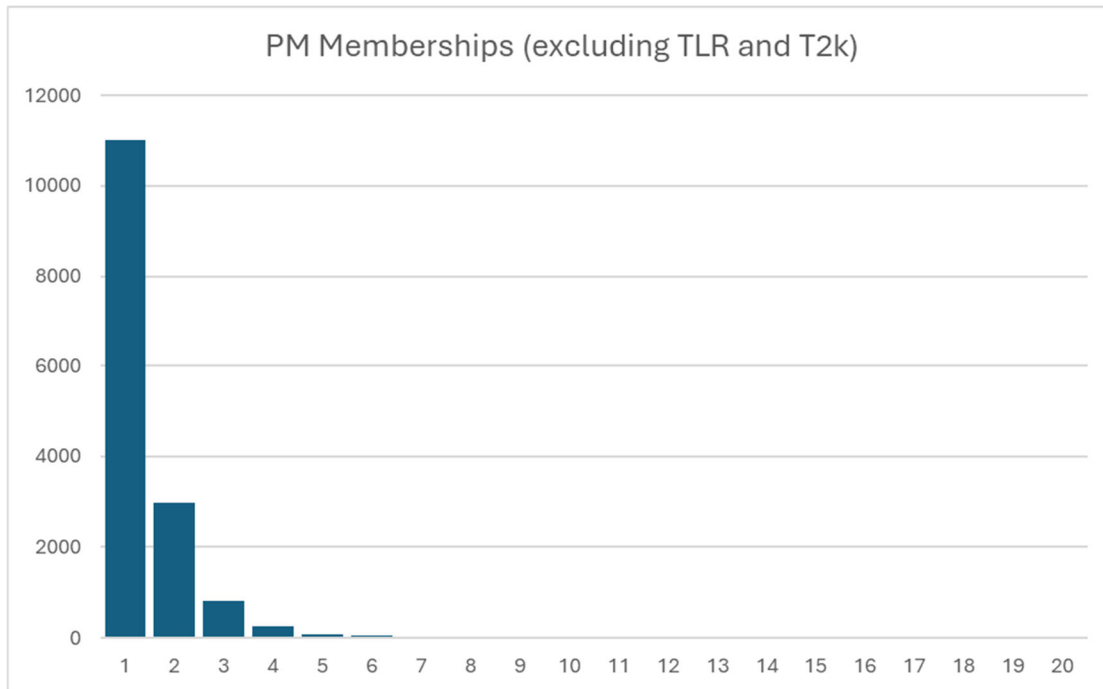


*Figure 7. Years of Service for Current Texas Master Masons*

Finally, 88% of our members hold membership in only one Lodge, and 9% hold only one additional membership (Figure 8), often because they moved and added a new Lodge while maintaining the old membership. If we look at Past Masters (Figure 9), 20% of them hold one additional membership, and 8% hold 3 or more memberships.



*Figure 8. Number of Memberships for Current Texas Master Masons*



*Figure 9. Number of Memberships for Texas Past Masters*

Nine Figures is probably enough for Part I. In short, we have an aging populace, spread across the state in mostly lodges of less than 80 members. Most Masons live close to their lodge, even in Texas, and most only belong to one Lodge, although a quarter of the Past Masters do have plural memberships. And finally, while we do have more Masons in the big cities, we are better represented on a percentage basis in the less populated areas. It is a broad overview, but a start. Next month I will get more into what individuals tend to do.

*Zachary Haston*

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### **SECRETARY SCHOOLS**

While change in our Fraternity occurs very slowly, the job of Lodge Secretary seems to evolve much more quickly. Each year, it seems, new technology is introduced, and Grand Lodge implements new policies and procedures to keep up with the ever-evolving times. In an effort to keep Lodge Secretaries updated, the Grand Secretary plans a full schedule of Secretary Schools, set to be announced after June 24th. We understand that some Secretaries need to attend training before the end of the Masonic Year for Vanguard purposes, and we are actively working toward a solution.

Additionally, similar to last year, we plan to hold Boot Camps geared toward Secretaries with less than three years of service. These in-depth schools will cover a variety of topics and commonly-asked questions relating to Grandview, as well as the day-to-day task that Lodge Secretaries are required to perform.

If you have feedback on previous Secretary Schools or topics that you specifically want included in upcoming Secretary Schools, please reach out to me at jrjohnson0821@gmail.com.

*Jeremy R. Johnson is the Secretary of Irving Lodge No. 1218 in Irving, TX and is the director of curriculum for this year's Secretary Schools.*

## **MASONIC MINUTE**

We have always heard of the term "Blue Lodge." What does the term "Blue" mean, and why are we using the "Blue Lodge" in present conversation?

Some authorities think that as blue has, from ancient Biblical times, been associated with truth, with Diety, with wisdom and hope; that, as Mackey taught, the blue of the Old Testament is a translation of the Hebrew "tekelet," which is derived from a root meaning "perfection," and the color blue came into Masonry as its color by natural association. Others believe that as our ancient Brethren met on hills and in vales, over which the blue vault of heaven is a ceiling, that the covering of a lodge is the clouded canopy or starry decked heaven. These allusions seem to connote that blue, the color of the sky, is that of all celestial attributes for which Freemasons strive.

Reference: "Why do we say 'Blue Lodge'?" *The WI Freemason*, Vol XVIII (Mar 1962), 7: 12.

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## **MONTHLY LAW READING**

Art. 405a was added in 1990 through Resolution No. 5. It prohibits the publication of the names of Petitioners, Candidates, EAs, and FCs. PGM Harvey, reporting on behalf of the Purposes and Policies Committee, stated, "Your Committee is of the opinion that the best method by which members of our Lodges might be informed as to the identity of petitioners for our Degrees is that of attendance and participation." Grand Master's Decision No. 7 (2015) held that the prohibition included "any written or electronic form, public or private, including lodge newsletters, databases, websites, e-mails, etc."

*Art. 405a. Publication of Names Prohibited. The names of Petitioners, Candidates, Entered Apprentice Masons and Fellowcraft Masons shall not be published in a Lodge newsletter or any news media, public or private. (Adopted 1990).*

*Chris Livingston, Chairman, Masonic Jurisprudence Committee*

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## **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.

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## RESOLUTION NO. 9

Brethren – due to the high number of calls to my office, Resolution No. 9 is presented here as amended. If you have any questions, they should be directed to your DDGM. Please DO NOT call our office with legal questions. – Brad Billings, Grand Secretary

**WHEREAS**, the proud history of Texas Masonry began in ale houses and taverns, and as H. L. Haywood wrote in his book *More About Masonry*:

*The result was that Masonic fellowship was good fellowship in it, as in a warm and fruitful soil, acquaintanceship, friendship, and affection could flourish - there was no grim and silent sitting on a bench, staring across at a wall. Out of this festal spirit flowered the love which Masons had for their lodge. [... T]he lodge was a home, warm, comfortable, luxurious, full of memories, and tokens, and affection ...*

and

**WHEREAS**, in many Masonic Grand Jurisdictions in the United States and abroad, Masons may responsibly enjoy alcoholic beverages on lodge premises following their meetings in furtherance of fellowship and brotherly love, and consistent with the virtue of Temperance, thereby strengthening their fraternal bonds; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1951, this Grand Lodge of Texas voted to prohibit the possession or consumption of “intoxicating liquors” on the premises of any building owned by this Grand Lodge or its constituent lodges, as codified in Article 508(3) of the Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas; yet Article 224 of the Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas permits its constituent lodges to meet in buildings where alcoholic beverages may from time to time be served and, within specified boundaries, partake thereof on the premises; and

**WHEREAS**, the inconsistency between Articles 224 and 508(3) affirmatively penalize lodges that own, or exclusively lease, their own lodge buildings, and permits those lodges that rent or lease their lodge rooms from other facilities to effectively exempt themselves from the language of Article 508(3); and

**WHEREAS**, previous resistance to removing this arbitrary prohibition has focused on the indefinable possibility that, should a Member engage in overindulgence or intemperance while on lodge property and then cause damage or harm, both the constituent lodge and this Grand Lodge might be exposed to legal and/or financial liability; notwithstanding the fact that the prohibition of lodges to purchase, sell, or serve alcoholic beverages to any person would remain in effect, thereby absolving themselves or this Grand Lodge of “dram shop liability” under Section 2.02(b) of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code; and

**WHEREAS**, the Texas Supreme Court has held that social hosts owe no statutory or common law duty to third parties injured by their intoxicated adult guests (*Graff v. Beard*, 858 S.W.2d 918 (Tex. 1993)), said holding rendering previously-raised concerns about financial liability of this Grand Lodge and its constituent lodges moot; and

**WHEREAS**, the inconsistency between Articles 224 and 508(3) is arbitrary and serves no purpose that promotes the good of Masonry, but instead actively stifles it unless the lodge instead rents its lodge room from another facility where alcoholic beverages are permitted, leading to disparity and potential disharmony among its constituent lodges; and

**WHEREAS**, should Brethren of a lodge that owns or has exclusive use of a lodge building wish to strengthen their fraternal bonds following a lodge meeting, our Laws currently require them to remove themselves to another location, frequently being one where alcoholic beverages are sold and consumed, to which the Brethren would likely drive motor vehicles, which additional effort and driving distance could temper a Brother’s enthusiasm in continuing their fellowship at such other location; and

**WHEREAS**, the possibility or likelihood of overconsumption or intemperance at an establishment where the consumption of alcoholic beverages is actively encouraged may significantly increase the likelihood that a

Brother, returning home from such an offsite gathering of Brethren, might get into a motor vehicle accident that could cause harm to himself or other persons; and

**WHEREAS**, in December 1991, this Grand Lodge's Committee on Membership Maintenance recommended that lodges hold "table lodges" as means of increasing interest and fellowship, and said report was adopted by this Grand Lodge by unanimous vote, recognizing the importance to and heritage of Freemasonry that Brethren be allowed to congregate informally as a lodge for purposes other than Stated or Called Meetings; and

**WHEREAS**, buildings of the Shrine and the Scottish Rite, two Masonic appendant bodies, often permit alcoholic beverages to be consumed, stored, sold, and even manufactured on their premises, yet neither of these bodies have ever been sued into insolvency; and

**WHEREAS**, rather than our Grand Lodge continuing to enforce a sweeping, blanket and absolute prohibition on possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages upon all Constituent Lodges, said prohibition applying only to some lodges but not others depending upon the physical location of each lodge room, our Grand Lodge should hereby resolve to permit each Constituent Lodge to consider, by regular vote of its Members and proper adoption into its By-Laws, whether the responsible possession and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages in the building should be permitted;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that a new Article 224c to the Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas be adopted as follows:

*Art. 224c. **Possession or Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages on Lodge Premises.** A Lodge or an individual Mason may not possess or consume any alcoholic beverage, as defined by the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code, within any building owned by the Grand Lodge of Texas or any of its Constituent Lodges, except as follows:*

*(1) Small quantities of any such beverages or liquors required by existing rituals of any organization listed in Article 225 in the conferring of its degrees or orders, or in the ceremonies in observance of special occasions required by existing regulations of such organizations, which meet in a building owned by the Grand Lodge of Texas or any Constituent Lodge; and said beverages or liquors may be securely stored on the premises; and further, this prohibition shall not apply to space properly leased for commercial purposes. Constituent Lodges may meet in buildings where alcoholic beverages may from time to time be served. Constituent Lodges of the Masonic Grand Lodge of Texas may meet in buildings where other appendant Masonic organizations may, from time to time, serve alcoholic beverages, so long as such service is not in progress while the Lodge is open there; and further, be it enacted, that Constituent Lodges may let, lease, or rent portions of their buildings to other appendant Masonic organizations who may, from time to time, serve alcoholic beverages, so long as such service does not occur in the Lodgeroom of the building. [moved from Art. 508]*

*(2) Where a building is owned by a Constituent Lodge, the Lodge, by vote of its Members, may amend its rules and regulations to permit the possession, storage, use and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages on its owned property, with the exception of Lodge rooms, subject to the following restrictions:*

*(a) No alcoholic beverages may be consumed on Lodge premises for at least four (4) hours prior to or during any tiled Stated or Called Meeting, or any other function requiring use of the Lodge room;*

*(b) Only persons of legal drinking age under the laws of the State of Texas may possess, use or consume an alcoholic beverage on Lodge premises;*

*(c) No Lodge funds shall be expended on the purchase of alcoholic beverages in any amount, nor shall any Officer, Member or guest of the Lodge serve alcoholic beverages to any person other than him- or herself;*

*(d) Alcoholic beverages purchased by a Member and stored on Lodge property may not be accessed by any Member during the proscribed periods specified in Art. 224c(2)(a) above, except that a Steward or a Brother who cooks food for the benefit of and consumption by other Members and/or*

*guests of the Lodge may use reasonable quantities of alcoholic beverages as called for by the recipe of preparation of said food, with the requirement that any liquid containing such alcoholic beverages be heated to boiling for a period of no less than fifteen (15) seconds so as to evaporate the alcohol content from the finished product; and*

*(e) All applicable State and local laws and regulations regarding the possession, use and consumption of alcoholic beverages shall be observed.*

*(3) Except as permitted in subsection (1) above, no alcoholic beverage may be stored, served, consumed, or possessed in the Lodge room of any building owned by the Grand Lodge of Texas or any of its Constituent Lodges.*

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Article 508 is hereby amended as follows:

Art. 508. **Certain Other Masonic Disciplinary Violations.** It shall also be a Masonic disciplinary violation for a Lodge, a committee or any combination of Masons, or an individual Mason:

Subsections (1)-(2) and (4)-(38) – No changes.

Subsection (3) to be subdivided and amended as follows:

~~(3)(a) To consume, possess, have in possession, or sell intoxicating liquor or an alcoholic beverage in any portion of the Grand Lodge Memorial Building, or on the premises of any building or portion of any building owned, occupied or used by any Constituent Lodge, unless said Lodge has duly amended its rules and regulations in conformance with Art. 224c(3); provided, however, that this prohibition does not apply to use of said beverages as permitted by Art. 224c(1) small quantities of any such beverages or liquors required by existing rituals of such organization in the conferring of its degrees or orders, or in the ceremonies in observance of special occasions required by existing regulations of such organizations; and further, this prohibition shall not apply to space properly leased for commercial purposes. Constituent Lodges may meet in buildings where alcoholic beverages may from time to time be served. Constituent Lodges of the Masonic Grand Lodge of Texas may meet in buildings where other appendant Masonic organizations may, from time to time, serve alcoholic beverages, so long as such service is not in progress while the Lodge is open there; and further, be it enacted, that Constituent Lodges may let, lease, or rent portions of their buildings to other appendant Masonic organizations who may, from time to time, serve alcoholic beverages, so long as such service does not occur in the Lodgeroom of the building.~~

*(b) To violate any part of Article 224c(3) by: (i) consuming an alcoholic beverage in a building owned, occupied or used by a Constituent Lodge during any Stated or Called Meeting or during the four (4) hour period prior to any such meeting on the premises; (ii) expending Lodge funds on any alcoholic beverage or allowing the Lodge or any Officer, Member or guest thereof to serve an alcoholic beverage to any person other than himself; (iii) consumption of alcoholic beverages on Lodge property in an amount that would lead the Member to act in an intemperate or irregular manner, which would damage the reputation of the Member, the Lodge, the Grand Lodge of Texas, or the fraternity of Masonry; or (iv) violating any applicable law or regulation regarding the consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages while in a building owned by a Constituent Lodge;*

*(c) Attending any meeting or function on Lodge property while in an intoxicated state due to alcohol consumption, as intoxication is defined under the laws of the State of Texas.*

## **TEXAS MASONIC RETIREMENT COMMUNITY**

Tour Texas Masonic Retirement Community – Springtime Perfect Time to Move.

It is a perfect time for a new beginning with a move to Texas Masonic Retirement Community in Arlington. Call us at (817) 275-2893 to schedule a personal tour. Remember – no deposit required. Enjoy activities with like-minded friends, all meals, weekly housekeeping, onsite security, and more. [Watch a video tour](#) for a quick overview or learn more at [YourTMRC.org](http://YourTMRC.org). We look forward to hearing from you.

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## **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.

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## **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:

<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Register by</u></b>	<b><u>Link</u></b>
Houston.....	Apr 05 - Apr 06 .....	03/30/2024 .....	<a href="#">Houston</a>
San Antonio.....	Apr 19 - Apr 20 .....	04/13/2024 .....	<a href="#">San Antonio</a>
Tyler .....	May 31 – June 1 .....	05/25/2024 .....	<a href="#">Tyler</a>
Lubbock.....	Aug 23 - Aug 24 .....	08/17/2024 .....	<a href="#">Lubbock</a>

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## **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.

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## **UPCOMING TRUSTEES MEETINGS**

The Grand Master may call additional meetings of the Trustees as needed. The scheduled meetings:

- Friday, April 5, 2024, at 10 AM in the Grand Master’s Office
- Friday, October 11, 2024, at 10 AM at the Texas Masonic Retirement Center in Arlington
- Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at 2 PM in the Grand Master’s Office

Zoom links will be sent out for those who want to join virtually. We are limited in the number of Zoom participants, however, all interested Master Mason are encouraged to join.

## TEXAS MASONIC CHARITIES FOUNDATION

Applications for the Texas Masonic Charities Foundation's High School, Community Grant, and Teacher Honorariums close on March 31.

Application and match updates (period to date): \$175,000 in High School Scholarship matches were approved and paid in February (182 Lodges) who applied in January. The TXMCF is anticipating matching \$125,000 for High School Scholarships in March for Lodges who applied in February. Through February, 72 Lodges have applied for Community Grant matches and 45 Lodges have applied for Teacher Honorarium matches. In April, the TXMCF will pay out High School Scholarship matches for Lodges who applied in March and will pay out the Lodges who applied for Community Grants and Teacher Honorariums.

Payment processing (after the application is approved): TxMCF is using a bill payment service called Melio Payment Systems. Upon receiving the email directed to the Lodge Secretary on record with Grandview, the Lodge will be required to enter Bank ACH (Free) or Mailing Instructions (For a Fee) to receive their payment. Payment processing is 7-15 days depending on the option you select. Pay close attention to your email spam or junk folder for these instructions.

### **Mission:**

Promote societal enrichment through quality charitable programs benefiting the students and teachers within our communities.

### **Vision:**

To provide a financial and grant based platform by which the Texas Mason can perpetually invest in his community and the long-term prosperity of our great state.

### **Board of Directors:**

Cody Cockroft	President	cody.cockroft@txmcf.org
Craig Enderli	Vice President	craig.enderli@txmcf.org
Ronald Wise	Treasurer	ronnie.wise@txmcf.org
Richard Daniel	Secretary	richard.daniel@txmcf.org
H. Chip Green	Director	chip.green@txmcf.org
John Hollowell	Director	john.hollowell@txmcf.org
Jerry Bob Daniel	Director	jerry.b.daniel@txmcf.org
Sam Gibbins	Director	sam.gibbins@txmcf.org

Apply online for the 2024 Grant Programs: High School Scholarships; Community; Teacher Honorariums

<https://txmcf.org/grant-request>



HOPE THOUGHT CHARITY... SERVANT LEADERSHIP... OPERATIONAL TRANSPARENCY

TXMCF is a Texas Non-profit 501(c)3 Charitable Organization

Website: <https://txmcf.org/>

Phone: 254-300-1375

## IRS FORM 990

All subordinate Lodges of the Grand Lodge of Texas must file either IRS Form 990, 990 EZ, or 990-N with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service in a timely manner.

It is the responsibility of the Worshipful Master to ensure that a completed IRS Form 990, 990-N, or 990 EZ, or such other form as may be hereafter defined by the IRS, in order to preserve the tax-exempt status of Lodges. The form must be filed every year on or before the 15th day of the 5th month after the close of the tax year. For example, if a Lodge tax year ends in June, its Form 990, 990-N, or 990-EZ is due by November 15 of that tax year.

It is also the responsibility of the Worshipful Master to provide the Grand Secretary's office with a copy of the Form 990, 990-N, or 990-EZ that is filed with the IRS, on or before November 15 of the tax year, and the Grand Lodge Finance Committee is directed to monitor the completion of the Forms required herein. **Please be aware that the Grand Secretary's office no longer has the ability to file 990s on your Lodge's behalf.**

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## WIDOWS & ORPHANS COMMITTEE

The Grand Lodge Committee on Widows and Orphans is requesting that all members of Texas Freemasonry get registered, and then update your spousal, and other family information on your Grand Lodge website, via the Grandview member portal. This is an important tool to assist Grand Lodge in identifying widows and potential orphans within our family in Masonry. Please reach out to Bro. Daniel Cloud (Chairman) or Bro. Jon K. Wych (Vice Chairman) with any questions or concerns.

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## ONLINE SHOP

The new Grand Lodge of Texas shop is open and ready for orders. You will find all the 2024 Grand Master items available for immediate purchase. You will also find select items from previous years available at a significant discount. All Lodge forms and Lodge Awards are now available as well. There is also an option available to pick up your online orders at Grand Lodge.

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## PAST MASTERS APRON

If you see a Brother wearing the "Lone Star Apron," please tell him "Thank you."

These custom aprons are hand embroidered and display the five-pointed star and Past Master's emblem emblazoned in silver bullion. A portion of the price of each of these specially designed aprons is gifted to the Grand Lodge, and to date, members of the Grand West and participating Lodges have contributed nearly \$40,000 through their purchases.



Orders are ONLY fulfilled twice a year, so if you are giving one to your outgoing WM, now is the time to place the order. Thank you for supporting your Grand Lodge.

Orders received before April 3, 2024, will be deliverable in Late May. Regulation Texas Past Master Aprons are now available for purchase through the Craftsman's Apron website. To make your purchase, please click on the following link.

[Regulation Texas Past Master Apron](#)

## INTERNET COMMITTEE HELP DESK

### **Don't take the bait: Beware of Masonic Phishing emails**

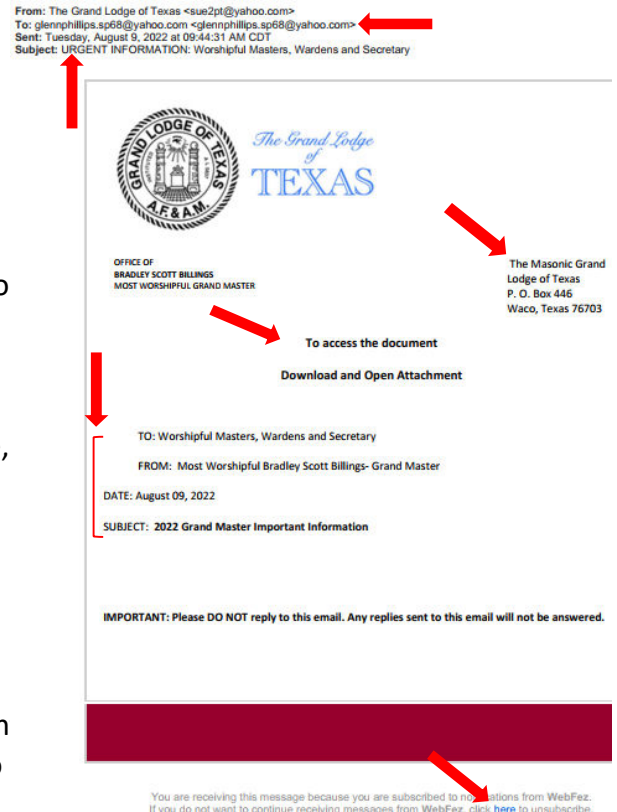
Official Communications from the Grand Lodge will come from the Grandview email address "Grand Lodge of Texas" [no\\_reply@gvsoftware.com](mailto:no_reply@gvsoftware.com). Have you ever received an email from an almost-correct email address that seemed dodgy, maybe a bit urgent, or asking you to "click on a link?" That is a Phishing email. Do not take the bait. All of us have received such phishing emails at some point. Phishing emails are a product of cyber criminals seeking to commit malicious acts and have major security concerns. You may click on a link in one of these emails or texts that looks legitimate, and it will install ransomware or other programs that will lock you out of your data and steal your personal information. It is common for cyber criminals to use familiar names or pretend to be someone you know. They often imply that immediate action is required. The more the Grand Lodge of Texas digital profile grows, the more attractive we become to cyber criminals. In 2023, five Master Masons reported falling victim to a Masonic phishing attempt.

#### Signs of a Phishing Email:

- Inconsistencies in Email Addresses, Links & Domain Names
- Inconsistencies between sender and message
- Threats or a Sense of Urgency or Unusual Request
- Asking for contact only via email because they are busy o in a meeting
- Grammar and spelling errors
- Visual format misalignment
- Suspicious attachments / Unfamiliar Extension: .zip, .exe, .scr
- Request for Credentials, Payment Information or Other Personal Details

#### General Recommendations for all Masons:

- Be vigilant in verifying emails before clicking on links or opening attachments emails
- Never use the same password for more than one accoun
- Report any potential Masonic related phishing emails to [internet@grandlodgeoftexas.org](mailto:internet@grandlodgeoftexas.org)



If you are a phishing attack victim and believe your identity has been stolen, report the incident to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) [www.identitytheft.gov](http://www.identitytheft.gov) for a step-by-step recovery plan.

To raise awareness, it is important to take the time to forward your phishing text or email to [spam@uce.gov](mailto:spam@uce.gov) as well as report it to the organization that was being impersonated in the email. You can also report phishing emails to [reportphishing@apwg.org](mailto:reportphishing@apwg.org). This is the Anti-Phishing Working Group, which includes entities such as security vendors, ISPs, law enforcement agencies, and financial institutions.

To seek help with technical issues please send an email to [internet@grandlodgeoftexas.org](mailto:internet@grandlodgeoftexas.org) and be sure to leave your Masonic ID & a mobile number so they can reach out to you.

A Craig Enderli Jr. - Internet Committee Chairman [craig@grandlodgeoftexas.org](mailto:craig@grandlodgeoftexas.org)

**COMMITTEE ON WORK SCHEDULE**

**Date**                      **Lodge**                      **No**                      **City**                      **District**                      **Forum**                      **Exam**  
**Chuck Forsyth - Chairman**  
**(432) 528-5197, [cforsyth@swbell.net](mailto:cforsyth@swbell.net)**  
 Sat, 16 Mar 2024..... Phoenix ..... 275 .... Weatherford ..... 65 ..... 9:00 AM ..... following

**Steve Pepper - Secretary**  
**(940) 256-0028, [srpepper54@gmail.com](mailto:srpepper54@gmail.com)**  
 Sat, 9 Mar 2024 ..... Quannah ..... 689 ..... Quannah ..... 90 ..... 9:00 AM ..... 1:00 PM

**Kenneth Young**  
**(281) 433-2360, [kyoung.cow@icloud.com](mailto:kyoung.cow@icloud.com)**  
 Sat, 16 Mar 2024.....Winnie-Stowell..... 1377 ..... Winnie..... 107..... 9:00 AM ..... following  
 Sat, 23 Mar 2024 ..... C. A. Fortner ..... 1304 .....Channelview ..... 30-F ..... 9:00 AM ..... following

**Cody Stewart**  
**(903) 348-1150, [CodyStewartCOW@gmail.com](mailto:CodyStewartCOW@gmail.com)**  
 Sat, 9 Mar 2024 ..... Burleson ..... 649 ..... Burleson ..... 63 ..... 8:00 AM ..... following  
 Sat, 16 Mar 2024 ..... Lewisville ..... 201 ..... Lewisville ..... 84 ..... 8:00 AM ..... following

**John L. W. Peters**  
**(830) 609-8093, [txcommitteeonwork@proton.me](mailto:txcommitteeonwork@proton.me)**  
 Sat, 9 Mar 2024 ..... Mt. Hiram ..... 595 ..... Copperas Cove .....69 ..... 9:00 AM ..... 1:00 PM  
 Sat, 16 Mar 2024 ..... Rising Star ..... 429..... Center Point ..... 51 ..... 9:00 AM ..... 1:00 PM

**CORNERSTONE LEVELING CEREMONIES**

<b><i>Date</i></b>	<b><i>Time</i></b>	<b><i>Lodge</i></b>	<b><i>Location</i></b>	<b><i>Grand Lodge Representative</i></b>
Thursday 3/7/2024	10:00 AM Activities start at 8:00 AM	Buda 800 207 San Antonio Buda, TX 78610	Hays County CISD 1 ceremony for 3 buildings	Thomas F. Griffin Past Grand Master
Saturday 4/6/2024	5:00 PM Activities start at 3:00 PM	James A. Smith 395 12823 Demetra Farmers Branch, TX	New Event Center	TBD
Saturday 4/6/2024	10:30 AM Activities start at 8:30 AM	Brooklyn 386 103 E Hwy 80 & 740 Forney, TX 75126	Themer Elementary School	Wendell P. Miller Past Grand Master
Friday 4/12/2024	4:30 PM Activities start at 2:30 PM	Princeton 1436 116 S. 4th St Princeton, TX 75407	Princeton Fire Station No. 2	Ken C. Curry Past Grand Master
Saturday 4/13/2024	10:00 AM Activities start at 8:00 AM	Greenville 335 2615 Stonewall Greenville, TX 75401	New Lodge Building	TBD
Saturday 4/20/2024	10:30 AM Activities start at 8:30 AM	Brooklyn 386 103 E Hwy 80 & 740 Forney, TX 75126	Warren Middle School	Wendell P. Miller Past Grand Master
Saturday 5/4/2024	10:30 AM Activities start at 8:30 AM	Brooklyn 386 103 E Hwy 80 & 740 Forney, TX 75126	Ed Wilson Elementary School	Wendell P. Miller Past Grand Master



# *Celebrating 150 Years*

## Library of the Grand Lodge of Texas

Est. 1873

Celebrate this anniversary and contribute to the continued preservation of the history and legacy of Freemasonry in Texas through the purchase of three limited-edition lapel pins!



**Bronze \$50**



**Silver \$75**



**Gold \$150**

Contact the Library & Museum at 254-753-7395 or  
[inquiries@TXMasonicMuseum.org](mailto:inquiries@TXMasonicMuseum.org) to order!

No limit on purchases while supplies last. Additional shipping fees may apply.

## 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

### **Physical Address:**

715 Columbus Ave  
Waco, TX 76701

### **Mailing Address:**

PO Box 446  
Waco, TX 76703

### **Brad S. Billings - Grand Secretary**

[gs@grandsecretaryoftx.org](mailto: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](mailto:internet@grandlodgeoftexas.org) and please leave a mobile number and your ID so they can reach you.

### **Dave McHam**

[dave@grandsecretaryoftx.org](mailto:dave@grandsecretaryoftx.org)

In-State Affiliations

Specialized Reporting

GL & Lodge Procedures

Vanguard Application Collection

### **Cindy Huerta**

[cindy@grandsecretaryoftx.org](mailto:cindy@grandsecretaryoftx.org)

Annual Returns

Lodge By-law Revisions

Relief Assistance Request

Endowed Memberships

### **Jeff Frayser**

[fraternal@grandsecretaryoftx.org](mailto:fraternal@grandsecretaryoftx.org)

Out-of-State Correspondence

Dispensations

### **Jeremy Johnson**

[jrjohnson0821@gmail.com](mailto:jrjohnson0821@gmail.com)

Lodge Secretary Training

### **Bruce Mercer**

[bruce@grandsecretaryoftx.org](mailto:bruce@grandsecretaryoftx.org)

Out-of-State Correspondence

### **Justin Hancock**

[justinh@grandsecretaryoftx.org](mailto:justinh@grandsecretaryoftx.org)

Honesty & Integrity Awards

Lamar Medals

Forms and Lodge Supply Orders

Grand Lodge Service Awards

### **Denise Gilmore**

[denise@grandsecretaryoftx.org](mailto: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.