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GRAND SECRETARY'S MONTHLY COMMUNICATION SEPTEMBER 2024

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

- Grand Lodge Store: 2024 Law Books are now in stock
- Secretary Schools and Bootcamp, Resolutions and Committee Day
- MASONIC MINUTE – Circumambulation: A symbolic journey – Billy Hamilton
- The Statistics of Ritualistic Certificates - Zach Haston
- Livingston Law – *"Cause the Law Book to be read in Lodge"*
- Matching Funds - Texas Masonic Charities Foundation
- 75th Anniversary of the Grand Lodge Memorial Temple
- Lodge Spotlight –Master Masons Degree in the U.S.S. Lexington - Oso Naval Lodge No.1282 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](#).

THE LAWS OF THE GRAND LODGE OF TEXAS A.F. & A.M.

The Corporate Charter, the Constitution and Ancient Charges, the
Statutes and Masonic Forms



FEATURED ITEM

The 2024 Law Book is now fully stocked and available
in the Grand Lodge Store!

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

TX MASON APP

Please join the 4,819 Brothers using the TX Mason
APP! This is separate from the GrandView App & has a
searchable (updated) law book and monitor at your
fingertips. <https://grandlodgeoftexas.app/launch.html>

LODGE MINIMUM AUDIT REPORT – FORM 71

All subordinate Lodges of the Grand Lodge of Texas must file a Minimum Audit Report on Form 71 and submit to the Grand Secretary's office no later than September 15 (per Art. 284).

GRAND SECRETARY OFFICE UPDATES

SECRETARY SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

Secretary Schools (Hours 1:30 – 7pm*)

*Time includes optional social hour

Saturday, September 28 – S P Waltrip Lodge No. 1328 - 9119 Ranglely, Houston , TX 77055

Saturday, October 26 – Arlington Lodge 438 1415 W. Abram, Arlington , TX 76013

Secretary Bootcamp (Hours 9am – 6pm*)

*Time includes optional social hour

Saturday, November 16 – Grand Lodge of Texas - 715 Columbus Ave, Waco, TX 76701

2024 LAWBOOK UPDATE

The 2024 version of the Law Book is now available digitally in the app and for the WM, SW, JW and Secretaries in Grand View. The Grand Secretary's office will be mailing out the supplemental 'Law Updates' packets to the constituent Lodges this month when they are received from the printer.

COMMITTEE DAY

If you are currently serving on a Grand Lodge committee (or have interest in serving in the future), we hope you will join us Saturday, November 23rd at the Grand Lodge building in Waco for Committee Day. Doors will open at 9 am and Committee Reports will start at 10am. The plan is to conclude by 3pm.

This event is open to all Master Masons and is a great opportunity to learn more about how your Grand Lodge works. This is the "Save the Date", more information will be included in future editions of this newsletter.

RESOLUTIONS

The resolution cut off date of August 15th has now passed and the slate of legislation to be presented for our Grand Lodge session in January 2025 is set. The Grand Secretary's office will send confirmation emails to all who have submitted resolutions and statements of availability (SOA) by September 10th to confirm. If you have submitted either a resolution or SOA and do not receive an email by the 10th, please call the office.

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.



Please save the date for the 100th East/West Shrine Bowl at AT&T stadium in Arlington, TX, January 30th, 2025. The East-West Shrine Bowl is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the best college football players to showcase their talent as top NFL draft prospects. Legends like Tom Brady, Walter Payton and John Elway played in the East-West Shrine Bowl. Make plans now to come and be a part of this milestone event for one of Masonry's greatest charities!



SAVE THE DATE - DEDICATION CEREMONY

Wednesday, Oct 30, 2024 | Time TBD
815 Market Street | Galveston, TX 77550

ABOUT OUR NEW PATIENT HOUSING FACILITY & PARKING GARAGE

Shriners Children's Texas will host a Dedication Ceremony celebrating the construction of its new patient housing facility and parking garage on Wednesday, October 30. The new additions, located on the south side of the hospital along Post Office Street. The garage addition will provide improved parking and accessibility for outpatient and surgical visits, as well as additional spaces for hospital employees and guests. The 40-unit housing facility will provide a much-needed sanctuary for patients and their families who travel from all over the United States, and the world, to receive Shriners Children's Texas amazing, specialty pediatric care.



MASONIC MINUTE –

Circumambulation in Freemasonry: A Symbolic Journey

Circumambulation, or the act of moving around a sacred object or space, is a significant ritual practice of many religious and spiritual traditions. In Freemasonry, the journey of circumambulation is a metaphor for the internal journey that each Mason undertakes. As the candidate is guided around the lodge room, they symbolically pass through the different stages of life and spiritual development. Each circuit around the lodge represents a step forward in the pursuit of knowledge, self-improvement, and understanding of the divine.

Circumambulation predates Freemasonry and has roots in various ancient cultures and religions. Inspired by Albert Mackey's *The Symbolism of Freemasonry* (1869), PGM Jewel P. Lightfoot wrote in his *Commentaries*, "In ancient Greece, when the priests were engaged in the right of sacrifice, they and the people always walked three times around the altar, singing a sacred hymn. In making this procession, great care was taken to move in imitation of the sun." He also said, "Among the Romans, the ceremony of *circumambulation* was always used in the rites of sacrifice and expiation, or purification." In a third example, "Among the Hindus...the priest, having first adored the sun, while directing his face to the *east*, walks toward the west by the way of the south, saying: 'I follow the course of the sun,' which he thus explains: 'As the sun in his course moved around the world by way of the south, so do I follow that luminary to obtain the benefit arising from a journey around the earth by way of the south.'" (Lightfoot, 1934, p. 178-179).

Freemasonry, drawing on these ancient practices, incorporates circumambulation as a means of connecting the candidate with the sacred space of the lodge and the spiritual path of the Craft. Evidence shows that it was used in the earliest rituals of speculative Masonry. In Samuel Pritchard's *Masonry Dissected*, we see that when the candidate is asked how the Junior Warden disposed of him, his answer is: "He carried me up to the North-East Part of the Lodge, and brought me back again to the West, and delivered me to the Senior Warden" (Pritchard, 1730, p. 7).

In England, it is often called *perambulation* in the Masonic ritual, which hearkens back to the legal history of setting the boundaries of a county or parish by physically walking it. In volume 19 of the *Yale Journal of Law & Humanities*, Allegra di Bonaventura writes: "These perambulations were annual Rogation rites (occurring on the three days preceding Ascension Thursday in the Christian liturgical calendar) at which the inhabitants of an English parish gathered to walk, mark and verify its bounds. As the processional party passed through the landscape, men struck bounds, markers and sometimes children with sticks, stones, or other gear. When the bounders reached significant points along the way, adults might lift a child upside down, memorably touching the spot with the child's head" (Bonaventura, 2007, p. 117). Children were often taken on these journeys as witnesses and made to interact with landmarks and significant areas to engrave the memory into their old age. This is supported by a diary entry of no less than Dr. John Dee, the famous magician and advisor to Queen Elizabeth, who wrote the following entry for 1597: "May 4th, I, with Sir Robert Barber, curate, and Robert Talsley, clerk of Manchester parish church, with diverse of the town of diverse ages, went in perambulation to the bounds of Manchester parish" (Dee, 1842, p. 58).

Colonists brought the legal ritual to the New World, which continued on both sides of the Atlantic until the ceremonial procession of perambulation began to be replaced by the surveyor and Gunther's chain in the 17th century. Yet it continues in our ritual, setting the boundaries of our sacred space within the lodge where we work to advance the candidate spiritually toward the light of Masonic knowledge. Thus, circumambulation is but one example of how Freemasonry has adapted and reinterpreted ancient symbols and rituals to create a rich, universal, and deeply personal tapestry of meaning.

MONTHLY LAW READING

At installation, the Worshipful Master submits to fifteen specific charges, is invested with the jewel of his office, and then the Installing Master carefully enumerates several instruments. Among them is the Book of Constitutions, which the newly installed Worshipful Master is directed to “cause to be read in your Lodge, that none may pretend to ignorance of the excellent precepts it enjoins.” I encourage the Worshipful Master to remember that part of the Installation ceremony and cause the Law Book to be read in Lodge.

This does not have to be a significant undertaking. Article 172 about Resolutions, Law Changes, and Charter Petitions does not need to be read aloud to the Lodge. But it might be a good idea to read Article 413 on the Ballot before you ballot on a petitioner.

If you are in a pinch and need a quick law provision to read at Stated Meeting, I direct your attention to Article 16: Side Degrees. “Side degrees’ are prohibited by this Grand Lodge.”

Memorize it if you are so inclined. Other quick gems include Articles 90 and 130. I caution, however, that reading one that just says, “Repealed” does not count.

Chris Livingston, Masonic Jurisprudence Committee



75th Anniversary Celebration Saturday, December 7th

2pm - Memorial Temple open for self-guided tours

3pm - Representation of the Grand Lodge of Texas (includes public program)

6pm - 75th Anniversary Gala @ The Baylor Club inside McLane Stadium
(Open to Masons, Families, and Guests)

Gala Tickets \$100 each ~ choice of beef or salmon

Table Sponsorship - \$1,000 (8 tickets plus custom sponsor belt buckle)

Tickets available by calling 254-523-0602

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.

RITUAL CERTIFICATES

Ritual preservation is important to Freemasonry, and in Texas we currently use a Committee on Work to harmonize the ritual across the State. In addition to forums where the work is exemplified, they also hold exams and issue esoteric certificates of proficiency authorizing said certificate holders "to give instructions in the esoteric work and lectures." We have 5 members of the Committee on Work, 153 District Instructors (some at-large), and currently 1014 individual certificate holders all doing their part to maintain the ritual of our Fraternity. Of course, there are many others, uncertified, who know and share the work as well.

Figure 1 shows where the certificate holders live. They're fairly well distributed across the State with individual Districts having between 0.4% and 10% of their members certified, averaging 3.4%. Every District has at least one person in it holding a certificate.

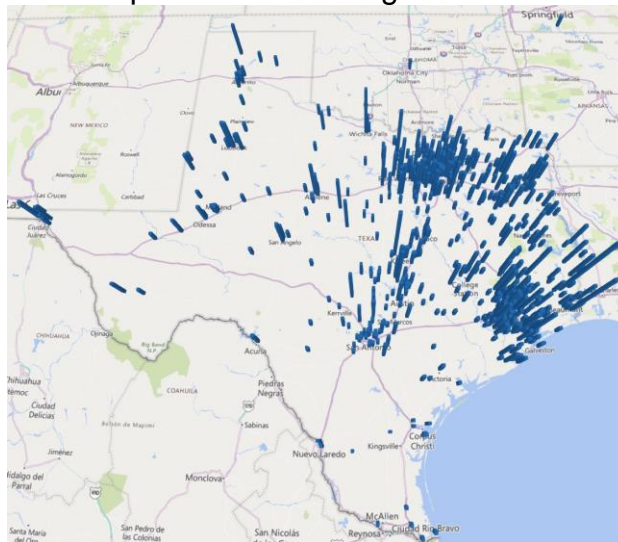


Figure 1. Location of Esoteric Certificate Holders

Being active Masons, 73% of certificate holders currently hold an office of some type, and they average membership in just over two lodges each, further distributing their knowledge.

While the percentage of our members who have been tested for an esoteric certificate isn't high, their dispersement among the various lodges is very good. Figure 2 shows certificate holder penetration on a lodge basis. 5 out of every 6 lodges have someone in their lodge who holds a certificate, and lodges have a median of 2 certificate holders (Figure 3). Before you ask, the lodge with 27 certificate holders is Sweet Home at the Texas Masonic Retirement Community. They know their work there!

Figure 2. Lodge Certificates

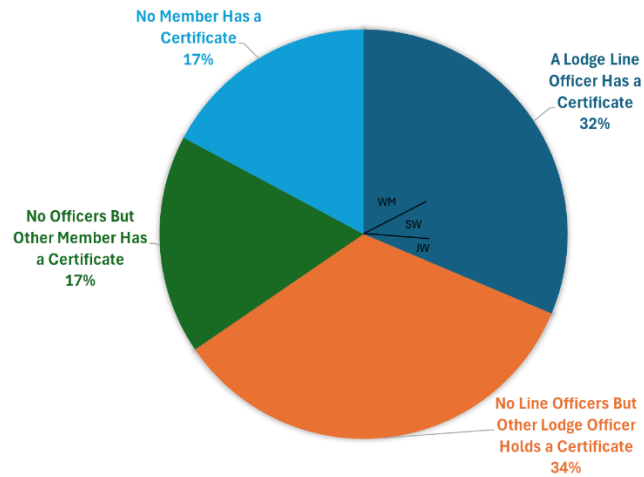


Figure 3. Number of Lodge Certificate Holders

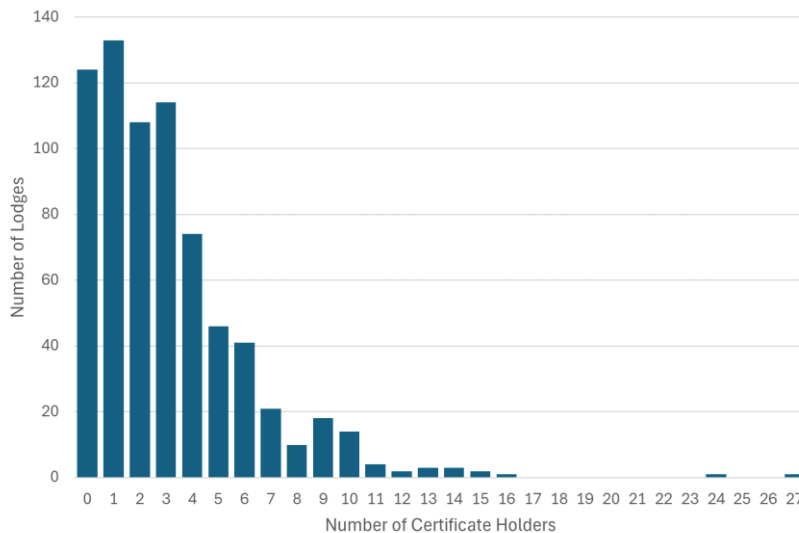
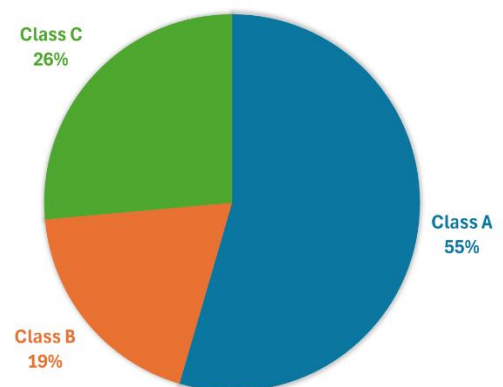


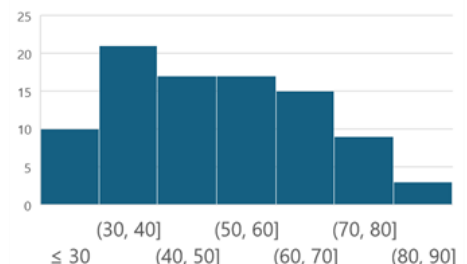
Figure 4. Current Certificate Class Held



Class C certificate exams cover the degree proficiencies and the opening/closing ritual, Class B certificates add in conferral of the degrees, and Class A certificates cover all the above plus the lectures. Many people start with a C and advance to an A certificate. Last year, 39 people upgraded their C certificate to a B, 18 from a C all the way to an A, and 28 from a B to an A certificate. These people should all be thanked for their service to the Fraternity. Figure 4 shows the current overall certificate class held.

Last year we had 93 first-time C Certificates awarded: 6 non-officers, 23 appointed officers, 16 Junior Wardens, 15 taking the exam the year before being installed as WM, 12 getting a certificate while sitting in the East, and 21 taking the exam for the first time AFTER serving in the East (if you don't learn how to open and close beforehand, you sure will learn during your year as WM!). The progressive line from JW up to PM accounted for 2/3rds of the first-time certificates, and if you include all the appointed officers it comes to 87 of the 93 (94%). A few of those appointed officers will not ever become WMs, and so this correlates well with the 87% (881 of 1014) of all our certificate

Figure 5. Age of First-Time C Certificates



holders being past masters. Opening and closing are all that's left to learn to get a C certificate after you're raised, and going through the chairs is a big incentive to learn that. Once you start working in the degrees and conferring them, testing for B and A certificates, and getting that all right, is a natural progression.

The Committee on Work works expends enormous effort preserving the ritual in this State. They do all these Forums and Exams, they have DIs (who retest on everything every year) in every District, and they have certificate holders in 5 out of every 6 lodges helping the new guys learn the work. It's not a perfect system. We do have 124 lodges without any member holding a certificate, but I would not have predicted how widespread the certificate holders are, and I'd have to say they're doing a lot of good for us.

- Zachary Haston

LODGE SPOTLIGHT: OSO NAVAL NO. 1282

Oso Naval Lodge No.1282 will host a Master Masons Degree aboard the U.S.S. Lexington, on September 7, 2024 in Corpus Christi, Texas. They will be raising a Brother from Corpus Christi Lodge No.189 beginning at 8pm sharp (boarding begins at 7pm).

All Master Masons who attend are encouraged to take photos on the flight deck and around the ship prior to the degree. Then Most Worshipful Grand Master of Texas, Tommy F. Chapman, will confer the degree assisted by the Knight of Mecca of Hella Shrine.

Dennis Yates, Secretary
Oso Naval Lodge No.1282



THE TEXAS MASONIC CHARITIES FOUNDATION

As you plan for your 2025 matching grant cycle, we would like to remind you of some key information:

- The matching grant program includes graduating senior scholarships, community grants, and teacher honorariums.
- The grant cycle will begin January 1st, 2025 and conclude March 31st, 2025. Checks will be distributed electronically each month. Checks need to be cashed by July 1st, 2025.

- We hope to have the final matching dollars set by December 1st, but for planning purposes please use the 2024 rates of \$1,000 for scholarships, \$250 for Community Grants, and \$250 for Teacher Honorariums.
- Lodges are reminded these funds are only to be used for external or public grants, not internal. Each lodge is responsible for maintaining proper documentation to support their grants.

Finally, our Foundation can only be successful through the generosity of our donors. While the investments and Grand Lodge returns fund a significant portion of our programs, your private gifts have enabled us to do more for our teachers, students, and recent natural disasters. We ask you to share the following link with your lodge members and encourage them to give as they are able.

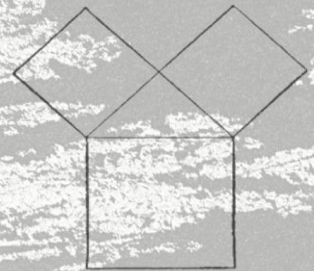
<https://givebutter.com/2024GrandMasterAppeal>

TEXAS MASONIC CHARITIES FOUNDATION

Phone: 254-300-1375 - PO Box 2156, Waco, TX 76703, USA - www.txmcf.org



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>
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Kenneth Young

Sat, 14 Sep 2024	Billy W. Tinsley	1458	#N/A	#N/A	9:00 AM	following
Sat, 21 Sep 2024	Madison	126	#N/A	#N/A	9:00 AM	following
Sat, 28 Sep 2024	Brookshire	1066	#N/A	#N/A	9:00 AM	following

Chuck Forsyth

Sat, 14 Sep 2024	Cross Plains	627	Cross Plains	74	9:00 AM	following
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Steve Pepper

Sat, 7 Sep 2024	Dumas	1009	Dumas	102	9:00 AM	1:00 PM
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John Peters

Sat, 7 Sep 2024	Uvalde	472	Uvalde	53	9:00 AM	1:00 PM
Sat, 21 Sep 2024	Llano Grande	1173	Weslaco	40-B	9:00 AM	1:00 PM

Cody Stewart

Mon, 2 Sep 2024	Gus Garrison	1273	Winnsboro	11	8:00 AM	following
Sat, 7 Sep 2024	James A. Smith	395	Farmers Branch	14-F	8:00 AM	following
Sat, 21 Sep 2024	Mantua	209	Alstyne	4-A	8:00 AM	following
Sat, 28 Sep 2024	Castillian	141	Canton	12	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 9/1/2024

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Lodge</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Grand Lodge Representative</i>
Monday 9/16/2024	Coffee & Donuts @ 10:00 AM Open Brownwood @ 11:00 AM Open Grand Lodge Representation @ 11:15 AM Cornerstone Ceremony @ Noon	Brownwood 279 601 Brown St. Brownwood, TX 76801	New Appraisal District Building	Tommy F. Chapman 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	Wendell P. Miller Past Grand Master
Saturday 11/2/2024	Coffee & Donuts @ 9:00 AM Open Midlothian @ 10:00 AM Open Grand Lodge Representation @ 10:15 AM Cornerstone Ceremony @ 11:00	Midlothian 584 1414 N. 9th St. Midlothian, TX 76065	New City Hall & Library building	TBD

Join the Texas Cornerstone State coordinator Kevin Binder's Facebook Group
<https://www.facebook.com/share/CiHNBy12zSaqwVhh/?mibextid=K35XfP>

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

New Grandview 2.0 Dashboards

On August 7, the Grand Lodge of Texas will enable the 2.0 interfaces in Grandview. Once enabled Lodge users will be presented with this image on their dashboards, inviting them to try the new ones at their own pace. They can switch back to the classic dashboard anytime should they have a problem.



The 2.0 dashboards will remain in this optional configuration until Monday, October 1st, 2024, when they will become the default dashboards for all Grand View Systems. Please take the time to enable the 2.0 dashboards to begin familiarizing yourself with the new dashboards and ease the conversion in October.

Craig Enderli, Chairman Internet Committee

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

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

That is a question for your DDGM.

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

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

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

Dave McHam

dave@grandsecretaryoftx.org

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

Cindy Huerta

cindy@grandsecretaryoftx.org

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

Jeff Frayser

fraternal@grandsecretaryoftx.org

Out-of-State Correspondence
Dispensations

Jeremy Johnson

jrjohnson0821@gmail.com

Lodge Secretary Training

Bruce Mercer

bruce@grandsecretaryoftx.org

Out-of-State Correspondence

Justin Hancock

justinh@grandsecretaryoftx.org

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

Denise Gilmore

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. 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.