



T E X A S

FREEMASON



2023 Grand Annual Communication

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Masonic Memorial Temple of the Grand Lodge of Texas

The Texas Freemason Magazine is an official publication of the Grand Lodge of Texas A. F. & A. M. It is published four times a year for the members of Texas Lodges and subscribers. Spring and winter issues are available in print. Summer and fall issues are available in PDF format at <https://grandlodgeoftexas.org>. Opinions expressed by the Editors and contributing writers do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Grand Lodge of Texas Copyright 2020, by the Trustees of the Grand Lodge of Texas. All rights reserved.

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

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

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A WORD FROM THE Grand Master



My Brothers all,

In the words of Texas singer/songwriter Pat Green, my tenure in the Grand East is on “the Sunday side of a road trip weekend.” As I continue to look forward, I am reminded of the hourglass and how, to my amazement, a journey that began in 2017 will reach its end in 11 short weeks. When I get one of those rare and brief moments to pause and reflect, it has been a crazy schedule of events; only one open weekend and a grand tour of Texas. This year has provided some of the most memorable moments in my life, and I am amazed we were able to fit it all in. One of the things I am looking forward to most as a Past Grand Master is having the time to mentally unpack and revisit this unbelievable journey.

When the Grand West elected me to serve in 2019, I felt the Craft was looking for something a bit different, and it was with that in mind that I and the 2022 team approached each event. I realize that not everyone was thrilled with everything that was done, but I hope that at least one thing has inspired each of you.

At the very least, I hope that we embodied the excitement that began with my election as Grand Junior Warden.

And we are not done yet. There is still more to come with exciting events set for Luckenbach and Fredericksburg, a unique trip to El Paso, a short visit to the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma, and the Grand Tiler’s Retreat at Big Bend, culminating with the Grand Annual Communication.

Brethren, if you are not planning on joining us in January, you are robbing yourself of one of the greatest displays of Masonry this state has to offer.

It is truly a family reunion of the most dedicated Masons of Texas. If you have attended any of the events this year, you will have noticed that the 2022 team has put their unique stamp on each one. The annual meeting of Grand Lodge will continue that trend. We encourage you to join us in person in Waco.

One of the greatest accomplishments this past year was the incredible teamwork. I know every Grand Master believes that he has the best team, but this one travels in packs and always shows up!

My aim was to inspire them, but as it turns out it was the team who inspired me. There is no way I could have completed this grueling schedule, with all the work it entailed, without the remarkable Masons who served alongside me and carried me when I needed it. To each team member, officer, DDGM, DEO, DCO, DI, and all the members of all the lodges we visited, you have my eternal gratitude.

To my family, you have been one of the most crucial parts of the 2022 team. Thank you for your love and support throughout this once in a lifetime journey. At age 3, Grayson has seen more of this great state than many Texans will likely see in their lifetime.

To my wife Brittany, thank you so much for your patience, time, understanding, and selfless efforts on behalf of this great Fraternity. Only you and I can know of the daily sacrifices you have made to make this year a success. Thank you for letting me live my dream. I love you!

It truly takes a village, and I am so blessed to be surrounded by those who God has seen fit to put in my life.

Finally, It is an important lesson for us all, no matter our station, that we must return to the Entered Apprentice’s working tools to measure and layout the next portion of life. As I think back to Pat Green’s words, I am reminded that although we often look at Sunday as the week’s end it is in fact the first day of the new week. I am looking forward to embarking on this new journey with you all.

Sincerely & Fraternally,

Brad Billings
Grand Master 2022



A WORD FROM THE Deputy Grand Master



Brethren,

Greetings. It is my ardent hope that this communication finds you and your Lodges well. The temperatures in our magnanimous state are beginning to cool off and the holiday season is just before us. A day does not pass that I do not intentionally reflect upon the honor and privileged it is to be a Texas Freemason. This is especially true during seasonal change, and more particularly during the fall season. It is thought that the name of fall originated in the 1500s when deciduous trees shed their leaves and the phrase “fall of the leaf” was coined. For millennia before this, however, peoples and cultures reaped their sowings by harvesting their crops and prepared for the winter to come.

Our great Fraternity is entering this masonic year’s harvest season as a result of the many good works that have been conducted by so many of you and your lodges. There is still much good and noble work to be done for the Grand Lodge of Texas, and I am excited and honored to work alongside each of you to see our goals to success.

As the Deputy Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas, tradition would suggest that I will have the privilege and honor to serve the Masons of Texas as the Grand Master in 2023. As such, I wanted to provide an update to the progress my team and I have made to date.

My platform will be based on a Code of Honor and Leadership. As Masons, we know that the three principal tenets of Freemasonry and the three principal masonic virtues can only be so if a man is well founded with integrity and character. Our Fraternity is a grouping of such men who have a faith in a Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul. This results in an organization of exclusivity – one which should open its doors only to the right men who fundamentally share in the same beliefs for the betterment of society. We are going to focus on the quality of our current members and our prospects. In both cases, we must be prudent and always on guard. We must do a better job engaging our current members (those actively attending to the Fraternity) and those that have lost the passion or was never provided the fuel to ignite their passion. In my observations, I am acutely aware that we must do a better job educating our brothers in the petition and investigation procedures. In January, I will be providing the District Deputy Grand Masters with a comprehensive program that should be taught at each of our lodges. The most important thing that we can do for our Fraternity is the investigation on a man’s character and integrity and keeping those with woeful shortcomings out.

I am discontinuing the District Education Officer and District Communication Officer appointments in 2023. Instead,

I am requiring my District Deputy Grand Masters and District Instructors to serve as the District Service Team to reinforce their relevancy to our great Fraternity and to streamline the leadership attributes that I believe are most relevant. With enthusiasm, I am requesting that the active Master, Warden, and Secretary’s Associations (MWSA) across the state continue their noble works and coordinate, in unison, with the District Deputy Grand Masters and the District Instructors. I am convinced that more effective communications between the various Masonic Districts and Grand Lodge will occur, and educational programs will be had on a more frequent and larger scale. In addition, I want to encourage the various Masonic Districts who do not have an active MWSA, to consider standing one up. My team and my District Deputy Grand Masters will provide your District the assistance it needs.

I recommend that you and your lodges invest into the Officer Leadership Training (OLT) program in 2023. Consider not it being a lawful requirement, but rather an opportunity to advance your leadership skills and the well-being of your lodge. The program was re-calibrated in 2022 with much more focus on leadership and succession planning. In my travels, observations, and discussions with the 2022 attendees, the program was very successful. I am in communications with the Chairman of the Committee on Masonic Education and Services, and we are coordinating to expand the educational topics of the program to include conflict resolution strategies, strategic planning, and more applicable financial and budgeting tools. You may have observed my focus on these subject in the 2022 – 2023 Vanguard Application which is available on

Grandview. The Additional Lodge Leadership Training module included in 2022 was successful, so I am directing the committee to convert the class to a full, non-certificate 301 program to include esoterica, symbolism, hands-on workshops, and masonic history/tradition. In addition, we will likely expand the number of offerings and location of OLT in 2023.

I will have a Blue Envelope Appeal in 2023. For a \$100 donation, you will receive a boot bag and you can recognize a \$25 tax benefit. The difference of \$75 will be directed to the Texas Masonic Charities Foundation for their use in matching funds for Texas scholastic scholarships.

I am excited with the Grand Master's paraphernalia. Much work has gone into

the design and procurement of the coins, clothing line, lapel pins, etc. Our First Lady, Teresa, has designed an attractive necklace and charm that will be well suited for your ladies. I encourage you to purchase a set and help her realize her charity goals for the year which are also obligated to the Texas Masonic Charities Foundation.

I will be leading a more conventional year in 2023 while I satisfy the demands of my necessary vocation. My schedule has been assembled for over five months and my excitement is growing in anticipation of the many events that we will be involved in, including sixteen Grand Master Conferences across the state. I look forward to attending the many historical observances, the many lodge anniversaries, banquets, cornerstone ceremonies, Grand Master Official visits,

and many other great and laudable undertakings.

In closing, I want each of you to know that I am very excited for the times and opportunities before us. We are bound by honor and we each have a responsibility to lead with integrity for the benefit of society. I thank you for the confidence that you have entrusted in me to serve you in the capacity as a Trustee of the Grand Lodge of Texas. If I do not see you during the fall season, I hope to practice Freemasonry with you at the Grand Communications from January 19 to January 21, 2023.

"May the God of love and peace delight to dwell with and bless you".

G. Clay Smith
Deputy Grand Master



Join Tranquility Lodge No. 2000

Membership in Tranquility Lodge No. 2000 is open to all Master Masons in Texas under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Texas, A. F. & A. M., or members in Good Standing of those Grand Lodges that are in Fraternal Communication with the Grand Lodge of Texas.

The regular membership is \$100.00 as a joining fee, the annual dues are \$25.00 per year, and an Endowment is \$500.00.

Membership Committee

Dale Gordon

Phone: 903.609.5660
Email: dalegordon5660@icloud.com

W. Corey Harris

Phone: 817.903.7071
Email: corey.harris87@gmail.com

Charles Wilson

Phone: 936.328.4700
Email: charleswilson2017@hotmail.com

R. W. Robert Schooler

Phone: 949.375.2351
Email: rschooler@live.com

Our goal is to have the funds necessary to be an effective charitable organization. The website with history of Tranquility Lodge No. 2000 is www.tl2k.org

Meetings are held quarterly at various cities in Texas with the annual meeting held in Waco each July.

Stated Meetings 2023

02/18/2023 10:00-2:00 PM Scottish Rite Cathedral, San Antonio
04/22/23 12:00-4:00 PM NASA Space Center, Houston
07/15/23 10:00-2:00 PM Lee Lockwood Library, Waco

Please download and complete the membership application form, and send it with a copy of your current Blue Lodge dues card and check to:

Tranquility Lodge No. 2000
C/O Randal Smallwood, Sec
P.O. Box 390
Plantersville, Texas 77363
Phone: 832.444.3519
Email: tranquilitylodge2000@gmail.com

2023 Grand Annual Communication

DAY ONE

FIRST SESSION

Thursday Afternoon
January 19, 2023

- 1:00 p.m. Musical Prelude, W. A. Craig Enderli, Jr. – Grand Musician
- 1:30 p.m. Pre-formal Opening Ceremonies, R. W. Thomas Griffin, Past Grand Master, Presiding
- 1:45 p.m. Formal Opening Ceremonies, M. W. Bradley S. Billings, Grand Master, Presiding

Masonic Service Awards, M. W. Bradley S. Billings, Grand Master

Vanguard Lodges Awards, M. W. Bradley S. Billings, Grand Master

Memorial Service W. Kevin T. Binder, Chairman, Committee on Memorials
- 6:00 p.m. 2023 Grand Annual Communication Welcome Party for all Masons and Guests, Karem Shrine, 400 Karem Circle, Waco, Texas 76712

DAY TWO

SECOND SESSION

Friday Morning
January 20, 2023

9:00 a.m. Opening of the One Hundred Eighty-Sixth Grand Annual Communication of The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas, by M. W. Bradley S. Billings, Grand Master

11:30 a.m. Ladies Luncheon and Activity – Waco Hilton – Painting with Twist

Noon* Grand Lodge Called from Labor

Sam Houston Hall of Fame Luncheon

THIRD SESSION

Friday Afternoon
January 20, 2023

1:00 p.m. Prelude of Percussion Music by W. Michael Coté II, Grand Musician

1:15 p.m. Grand Oration by R. W. Christopher D. Livingston, Grand Orator

Followed by presentation of W. B. and Brandon Carrell Humanitarian Award

Sam Houston Medal Award and William M. Beck Award

Masonic Home and School Ex-Student speakers

2:00 p.m. Grand Lodge called from Refreshment

5:00 p.m.* Grand Lodge Called from Labor

*Approximate starting time

DAY THREE

FOURTH SESSION

Saturday Morning
January 21, 2023

8:30 a.m. Grand Lodge Called from Refreshment to Labor (Elections at 10:00 am)

9:00 a.m. Coffee honoring Brittany Billings and Teresa Smith in the Lower Level, Grand Lodge Building. All Ladies are invited.

FIFTH SESSION

Saturday Afternoon
January 21, 2023

1:30 p.m. Musical Prelude

2:00 p.m. Open Installation of Officers

Remarks by the Most Worshipful Grand Master

Closing of Open Installation by M. W. G. Clay Smith, Grand Master

Grand Lodge Called From Refreshment to Labor

Closing of the One Hundred Eighty-Sixth Grand Annual Communication of the

Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas by the M. W. G. Clay Smith, Grand Master



2022-2023 Summary of Proposed Resolutions and Recommendations

Resolution No. 1: Resolution No. 1: Creating the Anson Jones Endowment Fund to allow members to purchase per capita relief for Lodges.

Resolution No. 2: Changing the name of Pentagon Lodge No. 1080 to Pentagon-Highland Park Lodge No. 1080.

Resolution No. 3: Amending Article 57 regarding the deadline for Lodges Annual Returns.

Resolution No. 4: Amending Articles 384, 385, 387, and 392 by removing the need for a physical Certificate of Good Standing when pluraling with another Lodge or Lodges.

Resolution No. 5: Amending Articles 60 and 222 to allow for the use of an Electronic Seal when authenticating official documents.

Resolution No. 6: Amending Article 223 adding additional Volumes of Sacred Law as paraphernalia for Lodges in Texas.

Resolution No. 7: Changing the name of Rising Star Lodge No. 429 to Rising Star Ranger Lodge No. 429.

Resolution No. 8: Amending Article 319 to better describe the status of members in arrears.

Resolution No. 9: Amending Article 333 to add the Pledges to the Order of Business.

Resolution No. 10: Removing Article 339 in its entirety.

Resolution No. 11: Amending Article 339a to remove restrictions on Lodges creating 501c(3)s.

Resolution No. 12: Amending Article 225 to add the Tall Cedars of Lebanon of North America as authorized users of Lodge Rooms.

Resolution No. 13: Amending Article 411 to automatically disqualify petitioners for providing false information on petition.

Resolution No. 14: Changing the Grand Lodge Retirement Benefits from restricted to unrestricted funds.

Resolution No. 15: Amending Article 172 by changing language in paragraph 9 regarding the number of copies of the Proposed Resolutions sent to the Lodges from the Grand Secretary's Office.

Resolution No. 16: Changes language in several Articles expanding on the requirements to hold the position of Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Grand Senior Warden, and Grand Junior Warden.

Resolution No. 17: Amendment to Article 512a changing the language of "Status of a Mason Under Indictment or Held to Answer".

Resolution No. 18: Amendment to Chapter 2, Title 1, Article 2b allowing the broadcast and local viewing of the Annual Communication.

Resolution No. 19: Amendment to Article 508 changing the language for the use of a Masonic cipher/code book.

Grand Master Recommendation No. 1: Amends Articles 245 and 248 regarding the Lodge consolidation process.

Grand Master Recommendation No. 2: Adding a permanent Real Estate Committee and providing for their participation with the Civil Law Committee in the real estate approval process under Art. 340.

Grand Master Recommendation No. 3: Adds Article adopting 4 "Landmarks" of Freemasonry.

Grand Master Recommendation No. 4: Separating the Committee on Masonic Education and Service into two separate permanent committees and defining their respective duties.

Grand Master Recommendation No. 5: Amends Article 273 regarding what is allowed on a Past Masters Apron.

Grand Master Recommendation No. 6: Creating an alternative arbitration procedure for resolving Masonic Disciplinary Charges.



Committee on Credentials

By Jerome Weilmuenster, Staff Writer

One of the most important committees working at our Grand Annual Communication is the Grand Lodge Committee on Credentials. Before the Annual Communication, the committee provides a list of members who will be qualified to vote during the meeting. According to the Laws of the Grand Lodge, those entitled to vote are described as follows:

Section 1. Voting by “Lodges and Members” and Otherwise

All questions shall be determined by a majority of votes cast as follows:

- (a) *Unless otherwise permitted, all resolutions and recommendations requiring a vote at the Annual Communication shall be taken by Lodges and Members. (Revised 2017)*
- (b) *The vote “by Lodges and Members” shall be in the following manner: The Masters, Wardens, or the proxy of Lodges, in the absence of the Master and Wardens, present and entitled to vote shall vote as one body and shall collectively constitute the “Lodges;” and the Grand Officers, Past Grand Masters, Past Deputy Grand Masters, Past Grand Wardens, Past Worshipful Masters, present and entitled to vote, shall vote as one body and shall collectively alone constitute the “Members.”*
- (c) *When the vote is taken “by Lodges and Members” each Lodge represented by its Master or Wardens or Proxy is entitled to three votes, to be cast by its representatives collectively; and Grand Lodge Officers, Past Grand Masters, Past Deputy Grand Masters, Past Grand Wardens, or Past Worshipful Masters, present and entitled to vote, shall vote as one body and alone constitute the other body of “Members”, and each Member shall be entitled to one vote.*

Moreover, this counting/inventory process continues until the end of the Grand Annual Communication, as the Committee on Credentials is responsible for a correct count at any given moment.

If you plan to attend the Grand Annual Communication as a voting member, Brother Bobby Bain, Chairman of the Committee on Credentials, recommends very strongly that you read the pertinent parts of the Grand Lodge Lawbook. This may well prevent any questions and/or holdups when you arrive in Waco.

Before the first day of the meeting, members of the committee prepare packets for all attendees who will be qualified to vote. These packets contain ID badges, electronic voting devices, and other material including a schedule of events for the ensuing three days. As attendees arrive, members of the committee hand out these packets. Having an absolute correct inventory of packets dispensed is critical to the voting process.



Statements of Availability



Jim Rumsey
For Grand Junior Warden

Pine Tree Lodge No. 1396

Raised: June 19, 2003
Worshipful Master: 2009
Secretary: 2011 – 2015
Endowed Member: 2010
Life Member: 2015
Golden Trowel: 2014

Robert E. Lee Lodge No. 431

Worshipful Master: 2020
Secretary: 2013-2020
Golden Trowel: 2017
Endowed Member

Tusculum Lodge No. 86

Reconstituting Charter Member

Hillcrest Lodge No. 1318

Worshipful Master: 2021

Tranquility Lodge No. 2000

Endowed Member

Texas Lodge of Research

Worshipful Master: 2014
Endowed Member

Union Lodge No. 82

Reconstituting Charter Member

St. Alban's Lodge No. 1455

Endowed Member

Ocean Lodge No. 230

Reconstituting Charter Member

Claud L. Austin Lodge No. 1450

Endowed Member

MASTERS', WARDENS' & SECRETARIES' ASSOCIATIONS

10th Masonic District of Texas: 2009 - Present
Charter President: 2009
14th Masonic District of Texas: 2018 – Present

GRAND LODGE OF TEXAS

Grand Junior Deacon: 2020
District Deputy Grand Master – District 10-A: 2012
District Deputy Grand Master at Large: 2022
Grand Representative of the Grand Lodge of Norway: 2021 - Present
Committee on Work: 2018-2023
Chairman: 2021
Committee on Membership: 2013-2018
Chairman: 2014

Committee on Special

Assignments: 2022
Chairman: 2022
Special Committee for the 185th Grand Annual Communication: 2020
Grand Master's Planning Teams: 2014, 2022
Grand Master's DDGM Training Teams: 2014, 2021, 2022
State Coordinator: 2022
Regional Coordinator: 2014-2021
Esoteric A Certificate: 2007-Present
Lifetime Certificate – Committee on Work Chairman: 2021
Sam Houston Hall of Fame Member: 2017
Patron, Grand Lodge Library and Museum: 2020

EDUCATION

The University of Texas at Tyler
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD): Organization Development
Master of Science (MS): Human Resource, Training & Development
Bachelor of Science (BS): Industrial Engineering
Kilgore College
Associate of Arts (AA): Criminal Justice

PERSONAL PROFILE/ PROFESSIONAL PROFILE/ CIVIC INVOLVEMENT

Married to Afton Rumsey
Self Employed at Rumsey Insurance Agency
Shriners Hospital for Children, Texas (Galveston) Board of Governors: 2018-Present

Grand Lodge Constitution Article IV, Section 6 Disclosure:

Has received reimbursement for budgeted operating expenses as a member of the Committee on Work.



Kevin Dean Moss
For Committee on Work

Sunrise Daylight Lodge No. 1433

Raised February 27, 1989
Worshipful Master 2020-2021
Senior Warden 2019-2020, 1994-1995
Junior Warden 1993-1994
Treasurer 1992-1993

Meridian Lodge No. 268

Iredell Lodge No. 405

Worshipful Master 2019-2020
Senior Warden 2018-2019, 2021-2022
Secretary 2022-2023

Webb Lodge No. 1454

Worshipful Master 2021-2022
Senior Warden 2020-2021
Secretary 2022-2023

GRAND LODGE OF TEXAS

District Deputy Grand Master, District 68 – 2022
Esoteric A Certificate: 2022 – Present

PERSONAL PROFILE/ PROFESSIONAL PROFILE/ CIVIC INVOLVEMENT

Owner Operator Avante Graphics Printing Company 1986-1999
Printing Sales 1999-2004
Owner Operator Kevin Moss Financial Management 2004-Present
Orientation/Retention Ministry Leader Woodland West Church of Christ

FAMILY

Married Joyce Ann Moss – January 22, 2011
Sons Trey, Dean, and Andrew
Grandchildren Calley, Cassidy, and Linkin



Cody Alan Stewart
For Committee on Work

Sulphur Springs Lodge No. 221

Raised: December 14, 1991
Endowed: 2020
Worshipful Master: 2010-11
Secretary: 2012-13
25-year Service Award: May 1, 2017

Sulphur Bluff Lodge No. 246

Worshipful Master: 2015-16
Endowed: 2013

Texas Lodge of Research

2015-Present

GRAND LODGE OF TEXAS

District Deputy Grand Master District 7 2017
District Deputy Grand Master at Large 2022
District Instructor 2013-Present
Esoteric A Certificate: 2012 – Present
Grand Lodge Membership Committee, 2021 – 2022

**PERSONAL PROFILE/ PROFESSIONAL PROFILE/
CIVIC INVOLVEMENT**

Mfg. / Engineering, Montgomery / KONE Elevator: 1987-1996
Police Officer, Commerce PD: 1991-93
Police Officer, Sulphur Springs PD: 1993-99
Area Superintendent, Buster Paving / APAC: 1999-2003
Owner, Eternity Creations Awards & Engraving: 2003-Present
Advisor, Boy Scouts Law Enforcement Explorers 1997-2002
Planning & Zoning Board of Directors, City of Sulphur Springs 2010-12
Ordained Elder, The Way Bible Church 2014

EDUCATION

Sulphur Springs High School, Sulphur Springs, Texas: 1987
Bachelor of Science, Industrial Technology /
Industrial Engineering, Texas A&M-Commerce: 1999

FAMILY

Married Janna Kay Stewart August 18, 1990-Present
Daughter Kalan



Matthew Alan Burke
For Library and Museum Board

St. John's Lodge No. 5

Raised February 27, 1989

Matagorda Lodge No. 7

Endowed

Union Lodge No. 82

Brazoria Lodge No. 327

Endowed

Gray Lodge No. 329

Lone Star Lodge No. 660
Worshipful Master: 2021-2022

East Bernard Lodge No. 817

Endowed

Bay City Lodge No. 865

Worshipful Master 2019-2020

Park Place Lodge No. 1172

Endowed

Old Ocean Lodge No. 1284

Endowed

Memorial Lodge No. 1298

Texas Lodge of Research

GRAND LODGE OF TEXAS

Sam Houston Hall of Fame
Patron of the Library and Museum

**PERSONAL PROFILE/ PROFESSIONAL
PROFILE/ CIVIC INVOLVEMENT**

ICS Inc General Contractors
1999-Present
Burke Cattle Co. 2010-Present
National Rifle Association –
Life Member
Safari Club International – Life Member
Houston Safari Club – Life Member
Brazoria County Fair Association –
Life Member
BCFA – Board of Directors
2009-Present
BCFA – Executive Board Member
2012-2016
BCFA – President 2015
BCFA – Lifetime Executive Board
Member – 2016
Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo –
Life Member

HLSR Committeeman: Gate Keepers
2004-2009
HLSR Committeeman: Corral Club
Equipment 2010-2012
HLSR Committeeman: Main Corral
Club 2013
HLSR Captain: Corral Club
Equipment 2014-2016
HLSR Assistant Club Chairman:
Corral Club Equipment 2017-Present
Central Emergency Medical Service:
Board of Directors 2015-2018

EDUCATION

Columbia High School – Class of 2000
Brazosport College – 2000-2002

Statements of Availability



Paul Dennis Underwood
For Library and Museum Board



John D. Denson
For Masonic Home
and School Board

Mesquite Lodge No. 928
Raised - July 9, 1973

Johnson City Lodge No. 561
Affiliated - May 21, 1996
Master - 2000-2001
Secretary 2003-2005
Endowed
Golden Trowel - 2018

Union Lodge No. 82
Charter Member

Blanco Lodge No. 216
Endowed

Ocean Lodge No. 230
Charter Member

Phoenix Lodge No. 275

Live Oak Lodge No. 304
Endowed

San Marcos Lodge No. 342
Endowed

Tranquility Lodge No. 2000

Texas Lodge of Research

Rambo Lodge No. 426
Endowed
Golden Trowel - 2014
40 Year Service Award

Sweet Home Lodge No. 576

Buda Lodge No. 800

Park Place Lodge No. 1172
Endowed

Oso Naval Lodge No. 1282
Endowed
Secretary, 2015 - 2016

Richland Hills 1348
Endowed

Sunset Lodge No. 1388
Endowed
25 Year Service Award
Treasurer, 2014 - 2015

Wimberley Lodge No. 1445
Endowed

Fort Worth Stock Show No. 1460

Claud L. Austin Lodge No. 1450
Endowed

Texas Lodge of Research

GRAND LODGE OF TEXAS
Grand Master - 2020
Masonic Home & School of Texas -
Board of Directors - 2011-2015,
Vice President 2011-2013, Treasurer
2012-2015

District Deputy Grand Master, District
52 - 2008-2009
Masonic Home Graduates
Advisory Committee
Member 2007-2014, 2015-2016,
Chairman 2013-2014
Take Time to Read Committee
Member 2011-2014, Chairman 2013-2014
Grand Lodge -
Balloting Chairman - 2009
Grand Representative, Grand Lodge of
Connecticut 2018 - Present
Sam Houston Hall of Fame -
\$5,000 Patron

EDUCATION

Masonic Home & School Graduate - 1970
University of North Texas Graduate -
BBA, Accounting - 1974
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor -
Kambach Management Center - 1982
Center for Creative Leadership,
Greensboro, NC - 1983

PERSONAL PROFILE/ PROFESSIONAL PROFILE/ CIVIC INVOLVEMENT

Bob Bullock - Comptroller of
Public Accounts
Auditor/Director 1974-2005
Multistate Tax Commission
Director of Audit and Administration
1988-1991
Underwood Consulting/Auditing
Owner - 2005-2018
Masonic Home & School of Texas
Ward of Hillsboro Lodge No. 196
Resident Student 1962-1970
Masonic Home & School Graduate - 1970
Masonic Home Ex-Students Association,
President 2009,
Vice-President 2008,
Treasurer, 2007
McCaulay Memorial Masonic
Scholarship Fund
President - 2009, Vice-President 2008,
Treasurer - 2007
Shriners Hospital for Children/Houston
Board of Governors, 2011-2020
Credentialing Committee Chairman,
Transportation Committee Chairman,
Budget & Finance Committee
Donor Relations Committee
Process Improvement Committee

FAMILY

Widowed - married to Rebecca Cumbie
Underwood - 50 years
Three adult children, ten grandchildren

Bethesda Lodge No. 142
Raised: February 7, 2007
Worshipful Master: 2010, 2015
Endowed Member: 2009
Golden Trowel: 2019

Robert E. Lee Lodge No. 431

Moran Lodge No. 863
Secretary: 2021 - Present

Texas Lodge of Research

MASTERS', WARDENS', & SECRETARIES' ASSOCIATIONS

10th Masonic District of Texas:
2009 - Present
Charter Member: 2009

GRAND LODGE OF TEXAS

District Deputy Grand Master:
Masonic District No. 10-B: 2016

PERSONAL PROFILE/ PROFESSIONAL PROFILE/ CIVIC INVOLVEMENT

Superintendent of Schools at
Moran ISD
Cisco College - Adjunct Faculty
Northeast Texas Community College -
Adjunct Faculty
Union Hill ISD -
Assistant Superintendent
Longview ISD - Director of
Agricultural Programs
Damon ISD - Teacher
Stephen F. Austin University:
Notable College of Education Alumni
Texas Agricultural Teachers
Association: Teacher's Media Award
Texas FFA: Honorary Lonestar Degree
ESC Region Four: Teacher of the Year:
Damon ISD 2012
State Board for the Texas FFA State
Rodeo Committee: 2015-2021
Founding Board Member: Gregg
County Youth Expo

EDUCATION

Stephen F. Austin State University
Doctor of Education (EdD):
Educational Leadership
Master of Education (MEd):
Elementary Education
Sul Ross State University

Master of Science (MS):
Animal Science
Tarleton State University
Bachelor of Science (BS): Agricultural
Services and Development
Minor: Animal Science
Weatherford College
Associate of Applied Science (AAS):
Farm and Ranch Management

FAMILY

Married to Kristi Denson
Daughters, Minnie and Maddie



Bert V. Massey, II
 For Masonic Home
 and School Board

Brownwood Lodge No. 279

Raised - March 30, 1965
 Worshipful Master, 2010 - 2011
 Endowed Member
 Golden Trowel Award-2014
 Fifty-Year member

Bangs Lodge No. 926

Tranquility Lodge No. 2000

GRAND LODGE OF TEXAS

District Deputy Grand Master,
 District 76 - 2014
 Civil Law Committee
 Member- 2007-2016, Vice Chairman -
 2014-2016
 Governmental Affairs Committee
 2013 to Present
 Grand Master's Strategic Planning
 Committee - 2014
 Square and Compass Holdings
 Member - 2011-2017; President 2017
 Masonic Children and Women's
 Services- Board Member

EDUCATION

Brownwood High School, Brownwood,
 Texas, Graduated May, 1961
 University of Texas, Austin, Texas,
 Bachelor of Arts - 1967
 University of Texas, Austin, Texas,
 School of Law, Doctor of Juris
 Prudence - 1969

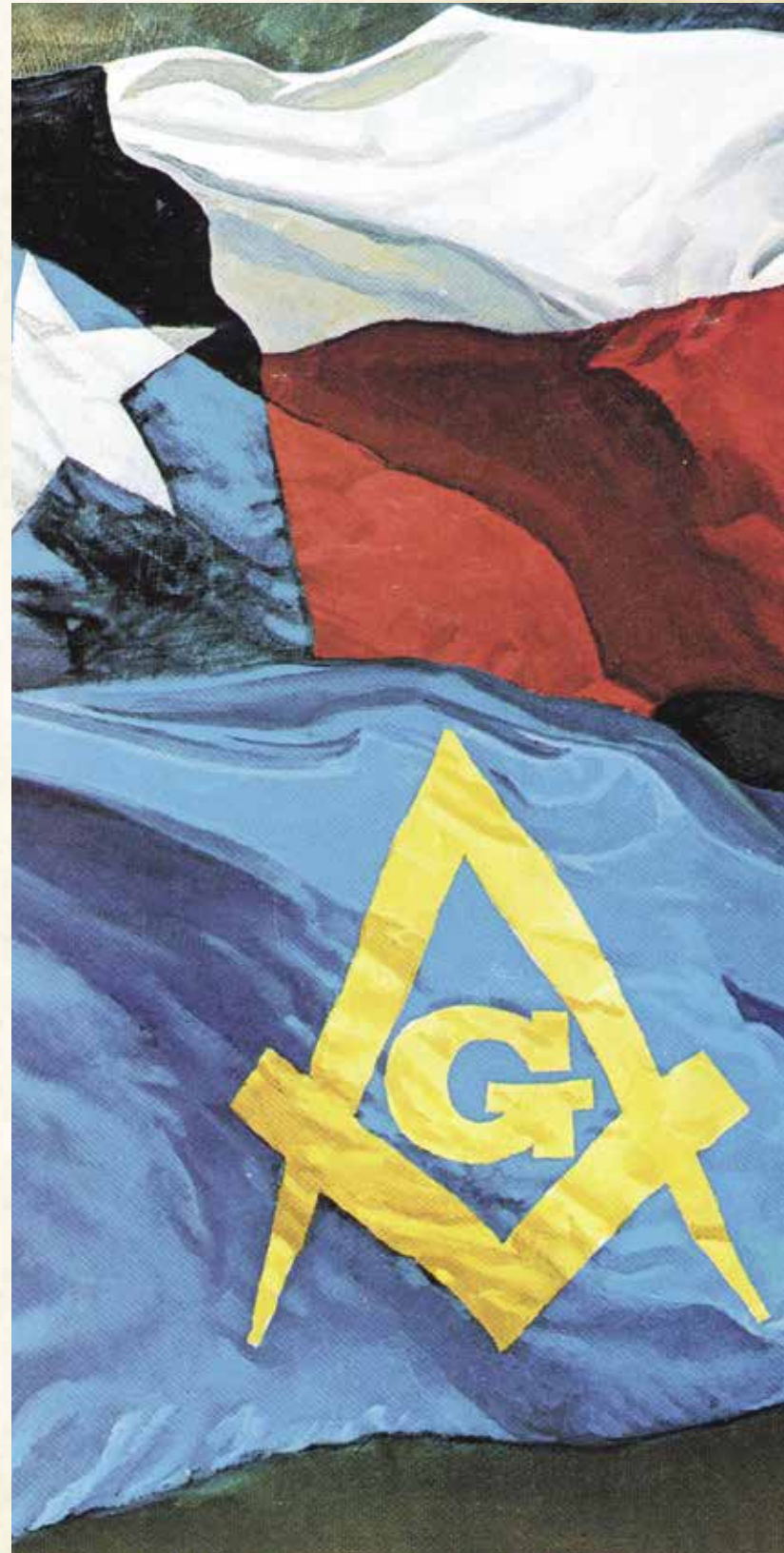
**PERSONAL PROFILE/ PROFESSIONAL
 PROFILE/ CIVIC INVOLVEMENT**

Bert V. Massey, II, Attorney at Law
 The Brown County Abstract Company,
 Inc. - Fonner President
 Texas Bar Foundation - Life Member
 Independent title Agents of Texas -
 General Counsel on Title
 Insurance Matters
 Texas Land Title Association -
 Member; President 1981-1982
 Named Honorary Life Member -
 June, 2000
 Named Title Person of the Year- 1984
 Founder and chairman - TL TAP AC -
 1982 to Present
 American Land Title Association -
 Fonner Director, Former
 Chairman ALTA Political
 Action Committee
 Brownwood City Council - 1978-1984
 City of Brownwood, Mayor - 1984-2010

Brownwood Chamber of Commerce,
 President - 1980-1981
 "Team Brownwood Distinguished
 Industrial Service Award" - 1993
 "Distinguished Industrial Development
 Award" from Brownwood Industrial
 Foundation, Brownwood
 Brownwood Economic Development
 Corporation - Former Board Member
 Groner Pitts Award for Lifetime of
 Service - 2010
 Member and Deacon, First Baptist
 Church of Brownwood
 Texas Scottish Rite Hospital, Board of
 Trustees - January 2016 to Present
 Member and President - Brown County
 Water Improvement District No. 1
 (MUD)
 Texas Municipal League, Board of
 Directors - 1991-1996
 Chairman International Conference
 of DeMolay State, Jurisdictional and
 Provincial Master Councilors - 1963

FAMILY

Wife - Melinda Brooks Massey,
 Married June, 1969
 Children - Sarah Massey McNeese
 (Brownwood, Texas)
 Rachel Massey Browne
 (Houston, Texas)
 Bert V. Massey, III (Austin, Texas)
 Grandchildren - Cora McNeese
 (Brownwood, Texas)
 Liam McNeese (Brownwood, Texas)
 Rory McNeese (Brownwood, Texas)
 Sammy Browne (Houston, Texas)
 Nate Browne (Houston, Texas)



On the Masonic Road

By Bill Crow, Staff Writer



So, you think you have been everywhere and seen all that there is to see ... Think again, there is a small town in Kerr County, Texas that has a reputation of being small (in size only) but big in grit, history, and pride.

In 1821, Stephen F. Austin, known as the “Father of Texas,” made a contract to bring 300 families to the Spanish province, which now is Texas. By 1823, probably more than 600 to 700 people were in Texas, hardy colonists from the various portions of the United States at that time, who settled not far from the Gulf of Mexico.

There was no regular army to protect them, so Austin called the citizens together and organized a group to provide the needed protection. Austin first referred to this group as the Rangers in 1823, for their duties compelled them to range over the entire country, thus giving rise to the service known proudly, as the Texas Rangers.

In the mid 1850’s, as Kerr County was establishing a new county seat, a small community to the south was being established as a major trade area between Comfort, Texas, and Kerrsville (later changed to Kerrville) and Bandera and Fredericksburg, Texas.

On November 25, 1859, the first post office was established and called Zanzenberg after the ancestral home of the town founder Dr. Charles Ganahl. Originally opened in the home of Dr. Ganahl, the post office stayed there until 1872 when it was moved to the south side of the Guadalupe River where a sizable community was building. When the post office was reopened it was called Center Point due to its location on the trade routes mentioned above.

Founded largely by settlers from western Tennessee, the community continued to grow as relatives and neighbors from Tennessee converged on the banks of the Guadalupe to call Zanzenburg/Center Point their new home.

On September 1, 1857, the first Native Texan of Center Point, Texas, was born as Daniel C. Nowlin, son of Dr. James Crispin Nowlin and Ann Gathings Nowlin. At the turn of the century Center Point, Texas was a thriving trade center and remained so until, like so many communities in America, it became the victim of progress as the emergence of new highways passed it by.

Most likely you will never hear a Texan make a statement like, “Where the Heck is Center Point, Texas, or what is so important about that little Texas town”? Well if you are from a major metropolitan city or no nothing about Texas history or even less, are from another state you might find yourself in a potential gunfight with the local folk of Center Point, Texas. Center Point Texans are proud folk and rightly so ...

We spoke briefly opening this article about the Texas Rangers, and their proud heritage among Texans. So, what does Center Point, Texas, and the Texas Rangers have in common to be parts of a Freemason Magazine feature article? Well to be specific, three things, aside from being a great community; Center Point shares a proud Texas legacy, a Cemetery, and the greatest Texas Masonic Lodge at the cross roads of commerce and travel from Comfort, Texas, and Kerrville and Bandera and Fredericksburg, Texas, on the Guadalupe River.

“In 1874, the Frontier Battalion of Texas Rangers was formed with Major John B. Jones as its commanding officer. There were six

companies of Texas Rangers in the Frontier Battalion, which when fully recruited; each company consisted of a captain, orderly sergeant, second sergeant, first and second corporals, and twenty-six privates. Jim Gillette, who served in Company "A" of the Frontier Battalion under Jones, wrote his memoirs in a book entitled, "Six Years with the Rangers" and gives us a firsthand account of Major John B. Jones:

Major John B. Jones would travel from one company camp to another patrolling the state and constantly monitoring the conditions and needs of the frontier. Ultimately, he selected Company "A" as his escort. The Rangers were very busy and lived in the saddle, as Jim Gillette's recollections continue:

"The last guard would call the camp early, so we generally had breakfast and were ready to move southward by daylight. We did not stop a single time for dinner on this return trip, just traveled at a steady gait all day long without dinner until nearly night. We all wondered why we marched the live-long day without dinner, but it was not until many years afterward when I became a Mason that I learned the reason for our forced marches. Major Jones was in line to be made *Most Worshipful Grand Master of Masons in Texas* and he had to be in Houston on the first Tuesday in December for the annual meeting of the *Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas*. If there were other Masons in the company besides Major Jones, I never knew it."

So, we see two extremely strong fraternities, Free and Accepted Masons and the Texas Rangers, both sharing the same code of ethics, the common drive to seek truth and light, and above all, be with like men whom they could not only trust, but men they knew who had their back. The Texas Ranger legacy embedded in Free Masonry has continued to the present day to ultimately include virtually every appendant body of law enforcement.

Major John B. Jones, a Mason, a Texas Ranger, Soldier, Patriot, Gentleman, and above all, a Texan, was a member of Corsicana Lodge No. 174 and his sword is honorably displayed in the Lodge to this day.

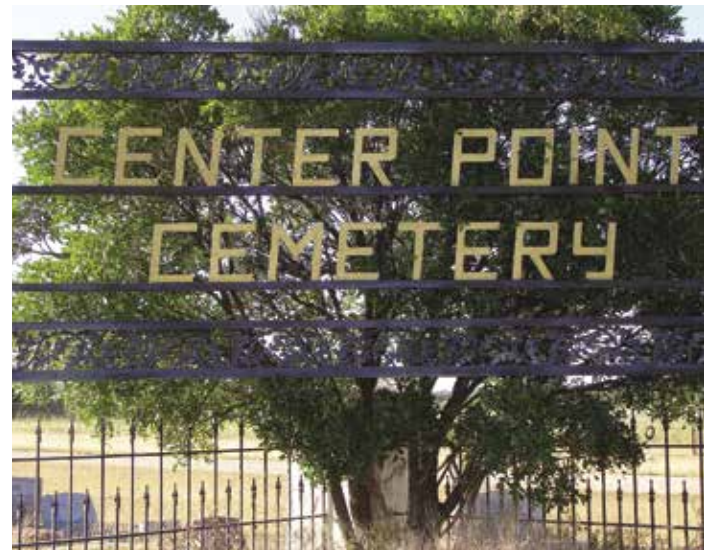
In 2010, the Former Texas Rangers Foundation created the Major John B. Jones Masonic Ranging Company in his honor, in order to pay homage to this legendary Texas Ranger and to acknowledge the great privilege and honor bestowed upon him by the *Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas*. The Former Texas Rangers Foundation encourages all Texas Masonic Lodges to join this organization and become an assigned 'Camp' of the Ranging Company.

On the last Saturday of October every year the Major John B. Jones Masonic Ranging Company 'Camps' meets for its annual meeting and soiree in Fredericksburg, Texas at the Texas Rangers Heritage Center. An Entered Apprentice Masons Outdoor Lodge is opened and there are Texas Ranger history presentations as well as a talk by our *Most Worshipful Grand Master*."

Some say the Texas Rangers and the history and legacy of the Texas Rangers is as legendary as the Alamo. There are great essays and history about the Texas Rangers and about the efforts of Major

John B. Jones, the first Commander of the Frontier Battalion to bring the Texas Rangers and Texas Masonry into recognition and brotherhood from two fraternal organizations. History tells us Major John B. Jones served as *Most Worshipful Grand Master of Texas* in 1879.

Did you know Center Point, Texas, is famous as the unofficial cemetery of the Texas Rangers? Take a walk through the tombstones of the Center Point, Texas, cemetery and you'll soon notice many graves with metal crosses standing beside the markers. These crosses signify a Texas Ranger's grave. More Texas Rangers are buried in the Center Point cemetery than in any other graveyard in Texas. With 40 Rangers at rest in Center Point, that's more than in the State Cemetery in Austin. Why are so many Rangers buried here? The answer to that question isn't entirely clear, but it is certain the Rising Star Masonic Lodge has something to do about those little Texas Ranger's Crosses.



"Mike Cox, the author of "Gunfights and Sites in Texas Ranger History," believes it might have begun as a simple matter of convenience. The area has long been a favorite retirement spot. Since a number of Rangers had retired nearby, it made sense they would be laid to rest there. With a fair number already interred in the cemetery, more and more Rangers from other parts of Texas started requesting to be buried there as well. In fact, modern Rangers are known to request to be buried beside their brothers in arms in Center Point. Cox calls the little cemetery the "unofficial Arlington of the Texas Rangers."

Founded in 1872, the cemetery now holds over 1,452 graves. The first Texas Ranger to take his rest in Center Point was George Moore, who died in 1886. A road trip out to Center Point to take rubbings on the historical tombstones is a great way to spend an afternoon in the Hill Country. A partial list of Rangers buried at the cemetery includes: W. D. C. Burney, N. Coldwell, J. A. Gibbens, H. T. Hill, F. L. Holloway, R. J. Irving, Sr., R. J. Lange, J. H. Lane, S. T. Lane, Jr., T. Lane, M. A. Lowrance, J. L. McElroy, S. G. McElroy, A. S. Moore, F. M. Moore, G. K. Moore, G. R. Moore, G. W. Moore, H. C. Moore, James Moore,

FEATURE

J. T. Moore, M. F. Moore, D. C. Nowlin, J. C. Nowlin, R. W. Nowlin, P. Alonzo Rees, N. O. Reynolds, W. H. Rishworth, J. L. Sellar”.

Rising Star Masonic Lodge No. 429 and its members are a significant part of the Center Point, Texas, landscape. This great Lodge is deeply involved in leadership and community service and awareness and the Lodge identifies itself by a mural depicting the Lodge Building and several Masons on horseback, as was the means of travel when the Lodge was chartered in 1875. The mural, on its own merit, is recognized by Texas Masons across the state and by visitors worldwide.

Chartered on June 5, 1875, Rising Star Masonic Lodge was first located in a building which was destroyed by fire in 1900, along with all the Lodge records. Lodge meetings were held in the Guadalupe Valley bank building from 1902 until the Lodge moved the current site in 1964.

Charter members of the Lodge were Miles A. Lowrance, Joshua D. Brown, William D. C. Burney, H. B. Dollahite, Alonzo Rees, A. S. Moore, John F. Moore, Sidney B. Rees, Theodore Wiedenfeld, Stephen G. Wray, George W. Wools, James M. Witt, Samuel H. Wellborn, F. M. Moore, and Thomas C. North. (1986)

The first six Worshipful Masters of Rising Star Masonic Lodge were all Texas Rangers. Some rode from Hondo, Texas taking three days to get to Center Point, riding during the full moon. It is said that the qualifications of a Mason and a Texas Ranger were parallel as Texas was rising in the early days of the frontier.

Each year the Lodge strongly supports and works in the John B. Jones Ranging Company annual meeting in Fredericksburg. Significant representation and participation from both the Rising Star Ranger Lodge Degree team and Fredericksburg Lodge are always noted and appreciated.

Rising Star “Ranger” Lodge is “Ranger Camp No. 1” of the John B. Jones Ranging Company. This is a key connection of Masons and



Texas Rangers present and historical. The annual meeting for John B. Jones Ranging Company will be held Saturday October 29th 2022 in Fredericksburg on the grounds of and near the Ranger Heritage Center. Rising Star Ranger Lodge will open a tiled outdoor Lodge under the big oak tree during that meeting.

Rising Star Masonic Lodge has many objectives and special venues for its members and visitors from all over Texas as it celebrates with outdoor Masonry in the Beautiful Texas Hill Country at Camp Alzafar along the Guadalupe River. The outdoor flora, and degree team work is spectacular. Masons all over Texas have attended and they say the outdoor Lodge meetings are a sight to behold.

And, if that is not enough to catch your interest and plan a journey to center Point, Texas, the Cemetery and Rising Star Lodge No. 429, if you are there for a Stated Meeting, or just visiting, you will meet great men, many or most who are Masons, get a great meal, and if you are very lucky, be mystified by a magician.

The Worship Master is Drew Elson.

He and the Lodge welcome all visitors. Stated Meetings are the third Thursday of each month, meal 6:30 PM: meeting 7:30 PM. You can contact the Lodge at:

421 San Antonio St, Center Point, TX
PO Box 429, Center Point, TX 78010-0429
(830) 688-3348
Email: 429RisingStar@gmail.com

Meetings: Third Thursday of each month,
Meal 6:30 PM: Meeting 7:30 PM

Texas Masons are great men and fellowship is our connective tissue to build and maintain our Brotherhood. Do something for someone each day and your life will take on a greater meaning for you and the person that was blessed. It's Great to be a Texas Mason. ★



Whataburger and a Lot More Than Making Good Men Better

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

Over the years of my friendship with John Deacon, we have covered a lot of topics. Some topics we have covered and continue to cover from several different angles. I have learned much from him and he gives me a lot to think about. And it is no doubt a fact, that at least the one time of the month when we meet and talk about Masonry, he fully inserts himself into my life.....and I guess to some degree his influence is also felt most of the rest of the time. It is hard to prepare for my monthly visit with him because he sometimes just shows up without warning. Such was the case this month. It was Monday before last and we were having a cool spell.... which in South Texas in the Fall means high temperatures in the 90's instead of the 100's. I was at my desk at the counter which faces the front of the building. The whole front of the shop is a series of large windows facing the parking lot and nothing can enter or leave without Roger and I seeing it. He kind of showed up all of a sudden. We actually heard him a couple of seconds before we saw him. A big black Ford F-350, sputtering and misfiring pretty bad, pulled up to our front door followed by a huge cloud of black smoke. I heard Roger mutter under his breath, "Who in the world is this?" Whoever was inside turned off the motor and as the smoke began to clear I could see a rather large cowboy, obviously in a state of distress, behind the wheel. "That's your crazy friend John and that truck he calls Blackie," he said shaking his head.

John just sat there like he expected us to run out and wait on him in the parking lot. There was no way that I was going out there. He loves that truck and considers it a part of the family and anytime anything happens to it, he becomes the biggest drama queen there is.....and I preferred dealing with it all from a sitting position in the cool of my office. As we sat there watching, with great effort, he slowly dragged himself out of the truck. We saw him reach out and lay his hand on the front fender as if offering some comfort to an ailing friend. I heard Roger mumble, "My God, more than likely all he needs is a fuel filter. He probably hasn't changed it in forever." "I agree," I replied. "But as much grief as I have to endure from him, let's have a little fun with him before we let him off the hook." Roger chuckled and nodded his head as John walked in the door.

He walked up to the counter in front of me and in a voice that sounded a little quivery said, "Brother Chris, you have to help Blackie. He's a hurtin bad. I am afraid it's not good." "Well, good morning to you too my Brother John, and what a fine day it is too." "Brother Chris," he whined. "Blackie is sitting out there in front of your shop in an obvious state of sickness and distress and all you can do is make jokes. Have you no feelings at all?" Just then Roger bolted out the door to the shop and I couldn't tell if it was to laugh out loud or to lose his breakfast.

I got one of my technicians to take Blackie to the back and check him it out. I told John that we might as well go have something to eat while we waited for the diagnosis. If you can believe it, John was real hesitant to leave that danged truck. "Don't be ridiculous John," I said disgustingly. "This is no hospital and that truck is not alive so cut it out." I immedi-

ately felt bad cause he looked like he might cry. "Come on John," I said a little softer. "Let's run up to Whataburger and get us a hamburger.....or two or three and it will be better when we get back." Reluctantly he followed me out to my truck and climbed in.

He was totally quiet on the short trip down the road to the Whataburger. I actually believe that whatever ails you can be cured by a big juicy Whataburger. I actually feel sorry for the rest of the world... aka... the rest of the US of A that they don't have Whataburger. It's just one more reason I thank the Great Architect every day that I live in Texas. He acted surprised when I pulled into the drive-through and as I pulled up to the menu board I told him, "I come here a lot of days for lunch by myself and I get my food and sit here in my truck and eat. I get a lot of good thinking done that way." He smiled and said, "Because I am on the road all the time, I do the same, and I am not too proud to say that I am pretty much addicted to most everything on the menu." "What a revelation," I thought as the speaker crackled with the familiar voice of Becky the drive through girl. "What'll it be today sir," she asked in her usual chipper voice? "I have a rider today," I replied. "So I am going to need a couple of minutes to check the menu." "Let me know when you are ready," she answered.

I turned to John and immediately knew something was wrong. He was staring at the menu like it was printed in Chinese. "What's wrong John," I asked. "It's gone," is all he would say. "What's gone?" "The Sweet and Spicy Bacon Burger is gone," he said with obvious emotion in his voice. God bless Becky because she heard him and she said, "The picture is gone but we've still got it." Well that made him happy and he began to order. He ordered two Sweet and Spicy Bacon Burgers and an Avocado Bacon Burger, all with fries and all with jalapenos, and an extra-large drink. I ordered my usual Patty Melt meal and before I told her we were done he added three lemon pies. I finally told Becky we were done and moved up to the window to pay. Before I stopped John informed me that he was going to pay but he left his wallet on Blackie's seat. Heck I wasn't even listening, this wasn't my first rodeo. Becky commented that I must be feeding the whole shop and I gestured towards John and said, "Nope, only him." She leaned out the window towards my truck and gave John a once over look and said to me in a low voice, "Heck Chris, this might only be a snack for him." I laughed and agreed and pulled up to the second window to get our food. John was trying to get me to tell him what Becky said as the window opened and the Assistant Manager, Jerry, poked his head out and said hi. They must be able to talk to each other on those headsets because he was already laughing as he glanced past me at John. I heard John snort when Jerry asked me if I needed him to double bag my order or if I wanted it all at once or in shifts. John leaned over and said, "Keep the fire hot cause we'll be back for the second course in a minute." Jerry's face went blank and I waved as we drove away.

Visit <https://grandlodgeoftexas.org/whataburger-and-a-lot-more-than-making-good-men-better/> for the rest of the story.

EDUCATION AND COMMITMENT

A Come and Take it – Spotlight

By Roger B. Landry, Staff Writer

It was a beautiful morning in the town of Gonzales, Texas this past October 1st. It seemed as though the entire town was on hand as hundreds of Texas visitors arrived for the weekend celebration.

As always, there was a large contingent of Texas Masons who were all ready to share in the 187th anniversary of the start of our Texas independence.

In the fall of 1835, the freedom seeking Texian settlers and immigrants were to be pushed no more. They had been loaned a small cannon for protection against the attacks of Indian raids. They were determined to hold onto it after the return of the cannon was demanded by the Mexican government. This single event had set the stage for what would change the trajectory of Texas history.

The Gonzalez settlers and small band of militia, after a verbal refusal to return the cannon, expected an arrival of Mexican forces, and on the morning of September 29, 1835 they were prepared. The brilliant military move to stall the approaching Mexican forces outside of town, by stating that they would have to wait there until the settlement leader had returned from his travels, allowed them to buy precious time needed to bring in reinforcements. Within two days the settlement forces had grown to over one hundred sixty strong, considerably more than the Mexican forces of one hundred. Seeing that they were clearly outnumbered and after a brief skirmish, the Mexican forces returned to Mexico and the seeds of an independent Texas had begun to grow.

Fast forwarding to modern times, the annual celebration of this event includes one of the largest downtown parades held in any Texas city. Many youth groups from around the State, Civic organizations, businesses, and of course Texas Masons, love to take part in this terrific family oriented festivity. Seeing the look on the children's faces as they wave at the floats and the patrons as they travel by, is something quite remarkable.

The weekend long event for the Masons began with a barbecue luncheon at Kruez Barbecue in Lockhart Texas. This was followed by a fellowship gathering at JJ's Steaks and spirits in Gonzales that was well attended by the Masons, numerous Grand Lodge officers, as well as visitors, friends, and families. Early the next morning, the Masons gathered at the local community center with the town's Mayor, along with other visitors where they were provide with fresh coffee and donuts. Soon afterwards, they all made their way over to the parade grounds.

After the wonderful and extensive parade, the Masons traveled to Shriner Texas, where they enjoyed the historical setting of the famous Spoetzl Brewery founded in 1909. Later that evening, they took part in the amazing 175th anniversary celebration of Gonzales Masonic Lodge No. 30 at its Lodge building built in 1891.

The weekend celebrations concluded with a wreath ceremony at the 62nd Annual Memorial Service held at the old downtown Texas Heroes Square along with firing of the cannon. In celebrating this anniversary that still draws hundreds from all across the state, the citizens of this great state, as well as our nation, are reminded that many of the courageous early settlers who fought and died for the independence of Texas were Freemasons.

Over the last several months, hundreds of Texas Masons have enjoyed the gatherings, the fellowship, and wonderful experiences, as they have reunited around Texas Masonic historical observances. These "bucket list" visits will be remembered for many years to come by those who have been able to attend. If you have not been able to as of yet, I encourage you to make plans to visit these wonderful and historic celebrations next year.



A Look Back

Address of R.: W.: Lynn B. Milam, Grand Orator – Grand Annual Communication 1922

Most Worshipful Grand Master, Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master, Grand Wardens, and My Brethren. The subject of this address is its salutation: “My Brethren.”

Words expressive of the tone spirit of Freemasonry in epitome;

Words expressive of the guarding care and protection of a common father;

Words expressive of the agonies of the same mother;

In a higher sense, words expressive of the one God over all of us, his obedient, though oft-times erring, children.

In them are sounded the natus of love and confidence, of respect and esteem. What wonder it is that in all ages of the world, peoples living by and under the law regarded the severing of these relations as heinous crimes, and from Cain’s murder of Abel, fratricide is next in point of abhorrence and stain to blasphemy of the most high treason of the State, and the murder of parents.

From the family group to the tribe, from the tribe to the nation, from the nation to the confederation of mankind, is the orderly and logical development of the germ thought that man are brethren and that each man is his brother’s keeper. And without such conception of high right and duty, man would exist for himself alone, serving alone his needs, his passions and his lusts, and life would be but a vulgar scuffle for existence.

But the Divine Power that fashioned man in His own image breathed into him a vital spirit which says to him that it is not good for man to live alone.

Where is there more eloquently inscribed or deeply wrought the living truth of man’s brotherhood than in the principles and tenets of Freemasonry? Our reward for its practice is our own practice of this truth. When we observe it, we are happy and at peace; when we transgress it, we grieve and suffer. Hate makes men blind. Blindness and darkness are the absence and negation of Light, and Freemasonry is Light.

Enlightenment is not the property of any single people or country or clime. Light is the natural heritage of the human race. As Light is humanly universal, so is Freemasonry potentially universal.

In lands of freedom, Masonry practices and inculcates its doctrines of Liberty, Equality, and Brotherhood, freely, without constraint, out in the open air. In lands of tyranny, there are always the faithful few, who at risk and under high restraint, still keep alight the fires upon its altars. And where no Masonry exists, the people strive and grope and stumble toward their ultimate goal—the realization of the blessings it has brought to others.

How far has this great Craft of ours extended? Who can determine its boundaries? In our land and State, its hand rocked the very cradle of Liberty and in every hamlet our people do American Masonry honor by the practice of its teachings or respect for its influences. In the junior republics and commonwealths of the new world, Freemasonry is firmly grounded and at work for the elevation and betterment of mankind. In Britain, the scions of the Plantagenets, the Tudors and the Stuarts wear as honors the apron of the Craft. In France, in Belgium, Scandinavia, our brethren hail us. In Portugal and Spain, the fires of Inquisition burn no more, while Masonry, once practiced at the risk of death and torrent grows greater with the years. On Caesar’s seven hills, under the walls of a despotism of thought and conscience, our brethren meet unscathed and unafraid. Amid the Pyramids and in the black tents of the Bedouins, the Master’s sign is seen, and being seen, is answered. In the palaces of the Mings and Manchus goes on the search for the Lost Word. Even in India, the land of a thousand creeds, Pathanand Parsee, Jain and Sikh, Buddhist and Braham, Gentile and Jew, pledge brotherhood at altars such as that.

And thus, my brethren, from deep to deep, from heart to heart, comes the cry from each Mason of the true Mother Lodge, Mankind, “We be of one blood, ye and me.”

With our dedication to Freemasonry comes our dedication to human-kind and its higher welfare which means liberty—not license—but that rational freedom of thought and conscience and action that neither demands nor expects to receive sacrifice of the like rights that reside in others. For this, men of every blood and creed have, smiling, died.

The Galveston Scottish Rite

By jim hoffpaur, Staff Writer



It seems that sitting around at the Cathedral chewing the fat is a hallmark of members of the Galveston Scottish Rite. That's what the old-timers did and that's what has launched the Valley into its current campaign – cleaning out the vault, logging physical assets therein, sorting through receipts, and updating records. Judging from the progress made through the years on the island, one should not be surprised at the successes already achieved.

One day while chatting in the Valley Secretary's office it became the plan of Valley Secretary Roy DeGesero, 33° Inspector General Honorary, IT Director Kevin Thompson, and Brother Dick Gray, among others, to "reconceive what we want to do in the library." Little did anyone know, that decision would lead to several thousand hours of work by Valley members joining the venture. Still, under the leadership of Galveston Personal Representative Brack Jones, Jr., 33° IGH, the team plunged ahead.

Unfortunately, though time-saving, the Valley had been following the seven-year rule of accountants: burning all financial records until about 1900. Boxes of books, including original first editions by Albert Pike and Mackey, memorabilia, regalia, 1890 - 1920 sheet music, three pens brought down and used by Pike, journals of first Deputy Inspector General of Texas Phillip Crosby Tucker and 1867 minutes from the original formation meeting of San Felipe Lodge of Perfection, Reunion programs and listings of Lodge, Chapter, Council, and Consistory officers, billing and receipts of building, maintenance, reunion, et al, have been located.

DeGesero estimates another year of steady work is necessary. On most Sunday afternoons you will find Brother Gray meticulously excavating the vault with DeGesero categorizing, logging, and labeling the findings. Since January 9, 2020, Gray has logged 777 hours in the vault.

"I wanted to get more involved and be of more service," says Gray who owns a condo within blocks of the Cathedral. "Roy said the vault needed some attention. Like everyone, I was curious as to what was down there."

All saved in the vault from the 1928 fire at the current location, some of his findings have been remarkable. Invoices and checks from 1906, spittoons, decks of cards artifacts from Galveston leaders plotting the city's future as far back as the early days of the depression, thirty-six

invoices submitted by M. C. Bowden, 32° Valley member (1907) and contract engineer of the current building, and a Bowden request to find all dimensions from the old building and an estimated cleaning cost of \$189.71 for 48,500 bricks to be reused from the burned building dated February 28, 1928.

"Amazingly, in current numbers, it cost over \$40,000 to put on a reunion back in the 1920s," says Gray. "During the March Reunion of 1908, cigars at a cost \$209.50 were bought. That's \$6,747.99 in current money. Later, in the August Reunion that summer and additional \$74 - or \$2,383.54 - went to the purchase of more cigars." Secretary DeGesero chimed in quickly, "We have sheet music from the 1890s. One even has a George Sealy seal on it." A railroad tycoon, Sealey played a key role in the establishment of Galveston's John Sealy Hospital.

The Valley of Galveston, Texas' first Scottish Rite venture, was the brainchild of Albert Pike. Officially elected Grand Commander of the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite in 1859, Pike first proposed initiating the Order in Texas in 1860. However, before the proposal went any further the Civil War broke out. Due to his ties with Native American Affairs and the Confederacy being more sympathetic to its cause, Pike joined the South and served as a brigadier general assigned to command of Indian tribes west of Arkansas and north of Texas until war's end. Pardoned by then President and fellow Freemason Andrew Johnson after the war Pike returned from Canada on August 30, 1865. He then summoned the Supreme Council into session in Charleston, SC in 1865. In July of 1866 Grand Commander Pike asked Philip Crosby Tucker of Galveston to be the new Deputy Inspector General of the SCR in Texas. Tucker accepted on August 1 but, due to a serious illness, did not go to New Orleans to receive his degrees until February 1867. There, on February 2nd he received degrees 4 - 32 of the Order under James C Bachelor, 33° Sovereign Grand Inspector General of the Valley of New Orleans assisted by H. R. Samuel M Todd 33° and H R Swansley 32° members of that Valley. On February 13, 1867 Tucker was appointed DSI of Texas.

Though Yellow Fever and the just-ended war had virtually shut Galveston down in early 1867, Tucker was able to have the San Felipe Lodge of Perfection of the new Galveston Scottish Rite constituted on

May 15, 1867 at Masonic Hall. Of the estimated 12,000 population, 8,000 cases of the fever were recorded with deaths reaching a total of 1,100.

Having met with fellow 32^o Scottish Rite Masons Jonathon S. Beers and George Krausse, Tucker selected initiates from local Freemasons. He then communicated the 4th to 16th degrees to Nahor Briggs Yard and 4^o – 14^o to all others present. Yard was selected the Lodge's first Venerable Master. Krausse was appointed Assistant Expert. Non – Texas Scottish Rite members Beers and James Sorely 14^o were present.

Galveston Chapter of Rose Croix was chartered August 23, 1882, Council of Knights Kadosh October 6, 1898 and Galveston Consistory on November 18, 1899. At the time of the chartering of the Rose Croix Galveston, after an edict by Pike to stop communicating and begin conferring degrees across the Jurisdiction, Valley members realized that to preserve the Scottish Rite and ensure its growth they must begin exemplifying each degree. Costumes and props were made and a few basic scenes were painted for use in the Scottish Rite lodge room of Masonic Hall. Petitions for degrees increased rapidly and membership grew. This was attributed in no small part by the never-before seen use of stage properties and equipment.

Previously, Pike had made good on his pledge to make the Scottish Rite part of the Freemasonic family of Texas. In the Fall of 1880, he went to Galveston and commutated degrees to twenty Brethren. On December 2, 1881 he made his first official visit to San Felipe Lodge of Perfection before eighteen officers and members. Six days later thirty-two members attended a Stated Meeting. Pike, who died in April of 1891, made his final visit the Valley of Galveston in July and August of 1881.

For the next fourteen years Galveston was the centerpiece of Scottish Rite Masonry in Texas. During this time membership grew rapidly. By the late 1920s, before the disastrous 1928 fire, it was common to have up to 270 candidates for a reunion.

Sovereign Grand Commander of the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite James D. Richardson 33^o visited the Valley in 1907 and witnessed an entire reunion. "My pleasure has been enhanced by being afforded the opportunity of seeing that which I have never seen before, namely the conferring at a reunion of every one of the degrees of the Rite from 4th through 32nd inclusive," was his parting comment.

That first meeting of San Felipe Lodge of Perfection on May 15, 1867 was held at Harmony Hall on the site of the current Temple at the corner of 22nd (now Kempner Street) and Church Street. However, the Valley made a few changes in location over the years. In the 1870s it met in the historic Hendley Building at 2000-2016 Strand Street two blocks north and seven blocks south of its original home. The structure was finished in 1859. Amongst the oldest commercial building in the famous Strand District, it has withstood numerous hurricanes and even the stresses of battle during the Civil War. In 1883 the body moved into Masonic Temple, a two-story structure at the corner of 21st and Post Office Streets two blocks north and one block east of today's home. Following the disastrous Great Storm of 1900, the Valley had an opportunity to return to its original site and purchase Harmony Hall in 1902 for \$18,500 from

Harmony Club Association. Suffering little damage due to its location, the building was not in use at that time. After minor repairs, the previously used rental site was again the home of the Galveston Scottish Rite.

After a large growth in membership, the Valley engaged in an extensive remodeling program. The Egyptian Lodge room motif, interior, reading and lounge, auditorium, and ladies' restroom were updated. White Georgian marble now covered lobby and staircase. A large pipe organ, gift of the William Browning Lockhart Family, was installed in the auditorium before the Cathedral was formally reopened May 28, 1914.

Tragedy came around 5 p.m. on Sunday, February 5 1928. Fire was discovered in the northeast corner of the second-floor stage area. Within hours only a shell of the structure remained. Entire contents of the first-floor library and much of the reading-room and lounge area furnishings were hustled from the burning building to the Kahn & Levy Building across the street by Masons who worked within the downtown area. Cleaning and evaluation of the site began immediately. Everything salvageable was saved for reuse. On March 8th a meeting of the Masonic Temple Association and the four Scottish Rite bodies produced a plan to build a structure "more lavish than the one that had been destroyed." It was decided that every fireproofing technique known at the time would be incorporated in the rebuilding.

In April, after numerous meetings it was decided to hire the following firms: Alfred C. Finn Company of Houston (architectural designers), M. C. Bowden Co. of Galveston (contract engineers), A. T. Vick Company of Houston (construction / electrical engineers) and A. J. Warren Company of Galveston (contract plumbers). Finn began his career with Sanguinet & Staats in Dallas. Along with Jesse Jones, he was credited with changing the face of downtown Houston in the 1910s and 20s. He built the Rice and Lamar Hotels, designed the San Jacinto Monument, Foster and Rusk Buildings, and the Houston Music Hall and Chronicle Building. He worked with Kenneth Franzheim and J. E. R. Carpenter to erect Sam Houston Hall, Jefferson Davis and Ben Taub Hospitals, Sam Houston Coliseum, Ezekiel W. Cullen Building at the University of Houston, U S Post Office in Galveston, Melba Theater in Dallas, and China Springs Air Force Base near Waco. He was also a co-designer of the Chicago Tribune Tower in Chicago. Finn was a member of Gray Lodge's York Rite, Arabia Temple Shrine, and the Scottish Rite.

Finn, using groundbreaking techniques for the period, had the super structure build of I-beam, concrete, and hard-fired brick - nothing flammable was used on exterior or interior. The main entrance of the building consisted of four massive artistic bronze doors. French plate-glass windows of Italian process Amorite and contoured gray polished granite stairways ensure fire and hurricane proofing. Stone archways boast the Art Deco period design. The Italian marble stairway and wainscoting, salvaged from the burned-out building, were meticulously cleaned and reassembled. Upstairs, the large 360 plus vaudeville-era seating, 1,256 pipe Pilcher organ donated in memory of William B. Lockhart (replacing the previous organ lost by the fire – also donated by his family), original carved plaster canvas backdrops, and the grand Egyptian Lodge room make Galveston's Cathedral the envy of most Valleys of the Southern Jurisdiction.

Northeast Corner

By John R. Clements, Past Master of Greenville Lodge No. 335 & President of the Board of Trustees for the Masonic Home and School

Where is the Northeast corner of the lodge room? It seems like a straightforward question to answer. All Masons know where the northeast corner of the lodge is! It is one of the first places a new Mason is shown. The lesson one would think is a simple one to understand. However, little is known about the place itself. The fact that the lodge's cornerstone should give Masons a true sense of what becoming a Mason is all about and the struggles that we all travel through in this life. The Bible says in Job 5:7: "Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." The northeast corner shows Masons that charity is the beginning of becoming a servant to our fellow Masons and all humanity. The Northeast corner reminds us that the starting point represents a symbolic dualism between light and darkness. When we all stood in the Northeast Corner, few understood the far-reaching effects it would have on us as Masons. It is not hard to see man locked in a spiritual and physical battle with "rulers of the darkness of this world."

Among the most powerful of these enemies are poverty and hopelessness.

Historically, the north side of the lodge room, due to the sun's position during the winter, is called a "place of darkness." Dark long days prevent light from penetrating the northern part of King Solomon's temple, hence the "place of darkness." The east represents the start of a new day where all things are possible. Each day, as Masons, we stand in that corner, deflecting the cold of darkness while reflecting the brightness of hope for the hopeless - as boldly displayed in the Texas Grand Lodge, "Fiat Lux" or "Let there be light." We must stand erect and pursue our sacred duty to honor God and serve man. We stand unafraid, looking into the darkness, seeking those who are poor and hopeless, and offering assistance to relieve their pain.

It all comes down to the one thing many children face, poverty. Mahatma Gandhi said, "Poverty is the worst form of violence." As you may see, people living on the streets are not just in economic poverty but also in mental and bodily poverty. Masonry has a proud tradition of assisting people in poverty, whether it is economical, mental, or bodily poverty. I could go on and on with Shrine and Scottish Rite hospitals, Knight Templar education and the Templar Eye Foundation, Texas Masonic Charities Foundation Scholarship Program, and Masonic Children & Family Services of Texas to describe how Masons assist people in poverty through the good works of Masonry.

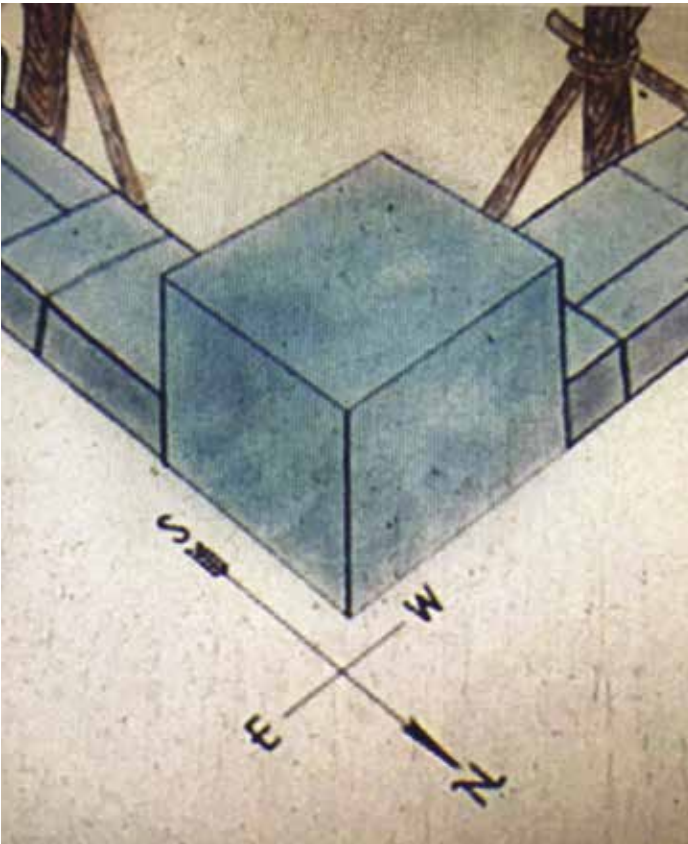
Our charities, though well-meaning, pay for someone to obtain an education as a marketing strategy or publicity used to promote Masonry to the world. However, I would argue that much more is happening here than meets the eye. Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke Chapter 10. He defined the idea of neighbor to a group of scholars who asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus describes how the Priest and the Levite chose to pass by the man in poverty, who has been beaten by robbers, leaving him in economic, mental, and bodily poverty. However, when the Samaritan walked up on the man in poverty, he stopped, took pity on the man, helped the man in poverty up, bound his wounds, took the man to an inn, stayed with the man overnight to take care of him in the inn, and the next day, gave the innkeeper money for their overnight stay, and said, "Whatever the expense beyond this amount, I will pay on my way back through." Indeed, this Samaritan, Brother Sam, was a Mason! Did Brother Sam seek recognition or publicity for his acts? Recognition and publicity were not part of Jesus' parable.

Brother Sam's actions are what Grand Lodge refers to as "Acta-non-Verda," Action, not words! That is what the northeast corner is all about, acting to bring light to a place that was in darkness by humbly taking pity and showing mercy to the man in poverty. By showing mercy to the man in poverty, Brother Sam was not looking for the Golden Trowel, Community Builder Award, or any Masonic recognition or marketing. No, he was taking action without seeking nor wanting any recognition from anyone at all. As Masons, we love our Fraternity. After all, our pillars are Faith, Hope, and Charity. However, I would sincerely ask the question: why do you seek to do good works as a Mason? Are you doing so, or simply talking about doing so to seek recognition, Masonic or otherwise, or are you acting as Brother Sam did, in humility by showing mercy?

Nothing will ever separate us from our obligation to serve God and Man. When placed in the northeast corner and at the altar, let us not forget the Good Samaritan lesson from Luke Chapter 10, both for Brother Sam, that showed humble mercy to the man in poverty, but also that Brother Sam did not seek recognition for doing so. This lesson reminds us of the many blessings we bestow as fellow Masons on our communities without reward and recognition.

Masonic Child & Family Services of Texas provides its Parent Autism Training Program. The program is quiet, behind the

EDUCATION AND COMMITMENT



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scenes, but in direct combat with mental poverty for some of society's most vulnerable children. Since 2021, the Parent Autism Training Program has changed over 114 children's and families' lives throughout the great State of Texas by teaching autistic children and their families how to effectively communicate with one another to perform the simplest and basic interactions that the rest of us all take for granted in our day to day lives. The impact of showing mercy to these families and their children who are in economic, mental, and physical poverty caused by children with autism is immediate, profound, and life-changing for these families, with over 95% of the autistic children and their families seeing these life-changing results after the Parent Autism Training Program.

Yes, the program is costly, but the life-changing benefits the program provides far outweigh the program's costs. Brother Sam was not worried about the cost of picking up and carrying that man in poverty. He worked independently and without any reward or recognition. Like the Parent Autism Training Program, these services are the heart of the Northeast Corner, quiet and without reward, an investment in the future of our Fraternity and for mankind, for Masons to assist in providing light in the darkness. It is a large part of who we are as Masons. New EA's

are given the lesson early, not in full Masonic regalia or head table invitations, but quietly behind the scenes to dispel the darkness with their light in the world. Some people think that if the program is not getting publicity at banquets or award nights, we should not be providing money for it; it is costly and not worthy of our time or treasure. Our Brother, the man in poverty in the ditch would beg to differ. I encourage you to continue bringing light into the darkness of the world and to follow the example of Brother Sam by doing so without reward or recognition and instead do it by showing mercy to those who need it most, those in poverty.

I would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to Brother Mark Oliver and Shannon Davis for assisting me in the writing of this article.

TEXAS FREEMASON

The Grand Lodge of Texas
715 Columbus Ave
Waco, TX 76701



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No Mason Left Behind Project



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"I get up every morning and thank God I have a place to call home," said Judy.

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