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GRAND SECRETARY'S MONTHLY COMMUNICATION DECEMBER 2025

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

- Grand Secretary's Office – Insurance Program, Grand Annual Communication and more...
- Product of the Month – Legacy Builder Award
- Statistics – Retention By Lodge – Zachary Haston
- Monthly Law Reading – When Can Lodges Meet – Jeremy R. Johnson
- Lodge Spotlight – Arlington Lodge – Calling over Coffee
- And more.....
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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](#).



PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

This is the last month to purchase your Legacy Builder Award and be part of the FIRST CLASS of recipients recognized at the Annual Communication! Although this is a GRAND LODGE award, 100% of the proceeds go to benefit YOUR LODGE. To participate simply ask your Secretary for a form 77b and add 5 additional units to your endowment (\$500). Then sit back and wait to hear your name called at Grand Lodge!

PLEASE READ

GRAND LODGE INSURANCE PROGRAM

15 minutes could save you 50% or more on your Property Insurance.

That's not a joke! If you missed the call, please see the replay video here:

[CLICK HERE FOR THE FORMS AND REPLAY OF THE VIDEO](#)

Additionally, If you have questions about your quote or any information pertaining to the Insurance Program, please email Brother Haston at zhaston@grandsecretaryoftx.org

ANNUAL COMMUNICATION INFORMATION

Registration is open: [CLICK HERE](#)

We look forward to seeing everyone in **January**.

If you know of a foreign dignitary or a Brother from another jurisdiction planning to attend, please direct them to the [Texas Grand Annual Communication](#) site and have them scroll to the bottom for the appropriate registration form. *Please note: This form is ONLY for foreign dignitaries and guests.*

Hotels: For hotel information please visit [Texas Grand Annual Communication](#).

Parking: If you are able, we HIGHLY encourage you stay at the sponsored hotels to help with parking along the side streets of Grand Lodge. Parking in the back lot of the Grand Lodge will be reserved for the following:

1. Grand Lodge Officers and Past Grand Masters
2. Staff of the Grand Lodge
3. Vanguard Recipients
4. Handicap with the following specifications:

a. WITH MOBILITY ISSUES – if you have a handicap sticker but can still get around, please save these spaces for our Brothers who can't.

b. Brothers who are attending both Friday and Saturday – last year several Brothers with passes just came on Saturday which made the parking lot look empty on Friday. In an attempt to better use the few spaces we have, we are limiting spaces to those attending both days. If you sign up for a pass and don't show up by 2:00 P.M. Friday, your pass will be reassigned.

5. If you fit any of the above criteria, EMAIL Jimmie in the Grand Lodge Office (AFTER YOU REGISTER) to reserve your parking pass. jshannon@grandsecretaryoftx.org.
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WELCOME TO WACO WEDNESDAY – JANUARY 14, 2026

Save the date!

Join us for **Welcome to Waco Wednesday**, the evening before our Annual Communication. Plans are being made to block off Columbus Ave directly in front of Grand Lodge. Food and Beverages will be available from Hotel 1928 and Southern Roots with sponsored booths by the Lion's Paw Social Club and Backstory Brewery.

GRAND LODGE OF TEXAS PARTNERS WITH AMITY



 Download the FREE App:

Scan the QR code for Apple or Google and follow the prompts.

Upcoming Amity Calls for Texas Masons

December 2nd – For all Master Masons

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84079306093?pwd=aAEf41e1fSKYkml0rh1bPmJC7iTZ37.1>

Meeting ID: 840 7930 6093

Passcode: 090600

One-Tap Mobile: +13017158592,,84079306093#

Additionally, there will be a second call on January 6th to review the basics from the December call and then go deeper into the features and admin tools. If you're a Secretary unfamiliar with Amity, it's recommended you attend both. Both sessions will be recorded and shared later. Join the 3,000+ Texas Masons already using Amity, the world's most popular Masonic app!

READ PORTIONS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR LODGE

MONTHLY LAW READING – When Can Lodges Meet?

As we are arriving at the holiday season, many lodges find that their Stated Meetings will fall on holidays such as Christmas, Christmas Eve, Saint John's Day, or New Year's Day. The law book has a couple of articles that address these types of meetings.

Art. 228: Meetings: Frequency – Every Lodge shall meet at least once in three months, and a Lodge failing to do so shall forfeit all its rights and privileges. It shall stand suspended, and its charter may be ordered returned; provided, the Grand Master, in his judgment, may grant such Lodge a dispensation to continue its work until the next Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge, at which time its charter shall be forfeited, unless the Grand Lodge otherwise directs.

Art. 238. Meetings on Saints John Days – No Lodge in this jurisdiction shall meet on Sunday, except for the purpose of conducting the funeral ceremony of a Brother as provided in Article 359 of the Laws of this Grand Lodge, or with the approval of the Grand Master, or to lay the cornerstone of a church building or house of worship. (See Article 225 for use of Lodgerooms on Sunday.)

Art. 5 Proxy Certified to Grand Secretary – June 24 is Saint John the Baptist Day, and December 27 is Saint John the Divine Day. These are feast days on which no Stated Meeting shall be held. Called Meetings may be held on June 24 for the installation of officers, and on either of such days to confer degrees or conduct funerals. No other business shall be attended to on either of such days. Should a Stated Meeting fall on either of such days it shall be held on the next following day which is not Sunday. – Jeremy R. Johnson, PM

RETENTION BY LODGE

I've previously shared (April 2024) some Statewide retention charts. This month I wanted to share retention on a lodge-by-lodge basis. The data set for these charts are for all the members raised between 2010 and 2018. A lot of the people who quit do so within the first several years after being raised, and a 2018 cut off checks the 7+ yr retention rate.

Figure 1 shows the ages of all those raised between 2010 and 2018 while Figure 2 shows the age of those who are still holding a local or Grand Lodge office or committee. Comparing them, you'll notice that those raised in their 50s are about 70% more likely to currently be holding an office than those who were raised in their 20s to low 30s, with those raised in their 40s being about the average.

Figure 1. Age Raised (2010-2018)

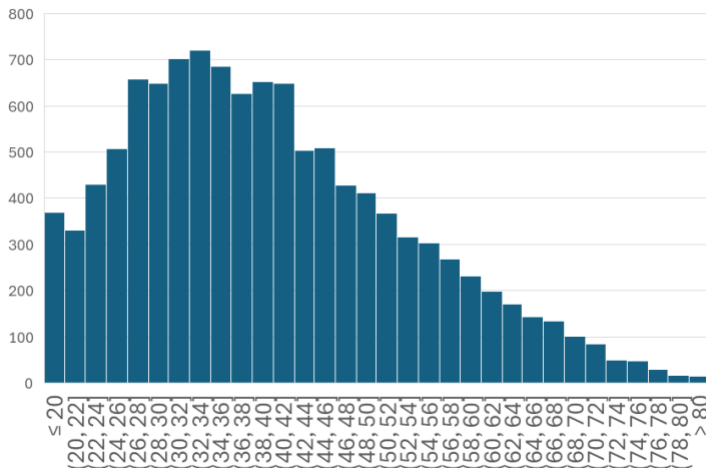


Figure 2. Age Raised (2010-2018) Who Are Still Active Office Holders or Committee Members

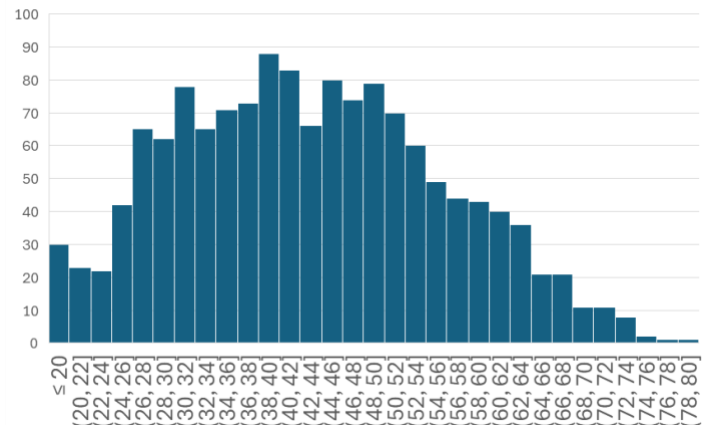
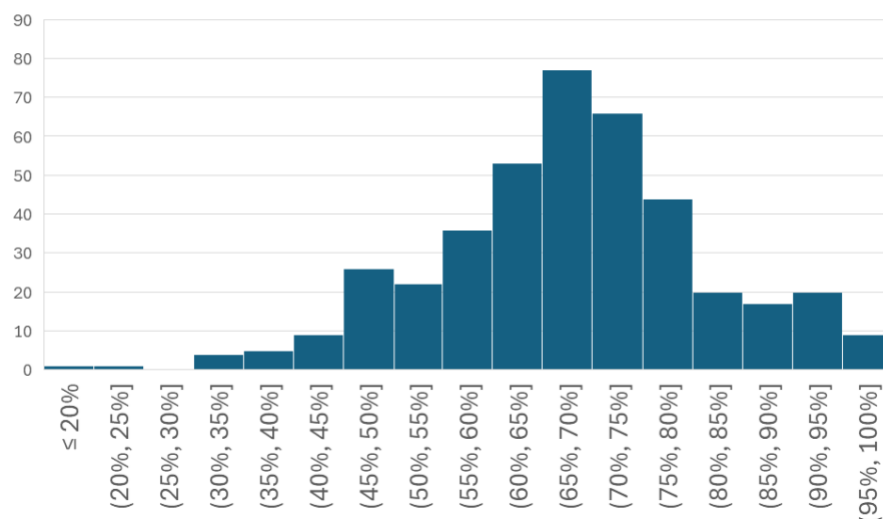


Figure 3 shows the range of membership retention of their 2010-2018 raisings by lodge. The average is about 2/3rds (68%) retained, but you can see that some lodges are retaining less than half while others are retaining almost all raised. Similar results were seen when looking at EA to MM progression; however, it should be noted that these are not necessarily the same lodges doing well or bad on both of these metrics. Some lodges are very good at getting people to MM, but not so good at retaining them.

Figure 3. Lodge Percentage Retained of 2010-2018 Raisings



It's interesting to note that a lot of lodges are not raising a future WM each year. This can be seen in Figure 4 where the average lodge is now raising a new WM once every 3 years and some once every 5 or more years. Half our lodges serve their own, not having raised anyone new at all in the last year. If we look at the

top 100 lodges, all of which are raising 3+ new MMs per year, Figure 5 shows that they’ve raised about 7 new WMs in the last 9 years, with some raising more than 9 in 9 years as some of their raised MMs go to help out other lodges.

Figure 4. Number of Lodge Raisings (2010-2018) Who Have Attained PM Somewhere (All Lodges)

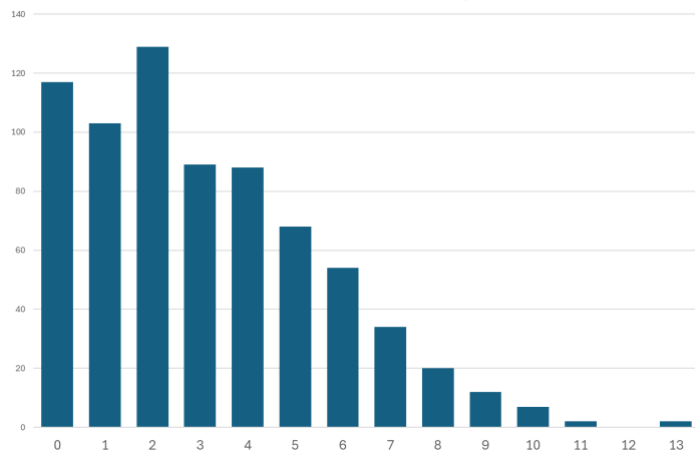
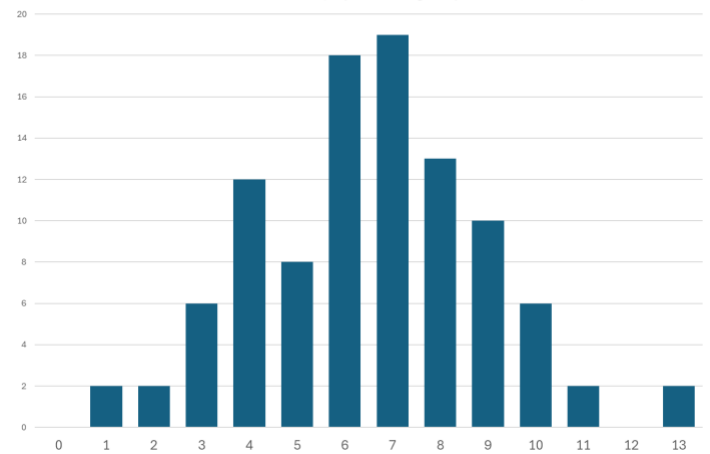


Figure 5. Number of Lodge Raisings (2010-2018) Who Have Attained PM Somewhere (Top 100 Lodges by Number Raised)



Finally, looking at the upwardly mobile, Figures 6 and 7 show the number of GL appointees a lodge has raised between 2010 and 2018. As most GL appointees have been in the Fraternity longer than this, the numbers aren’t large here, but it’s still worth noting that more of those lodges raising 3+ men per year raised a future GL officer or two in that time period than didn’t. GL appointees here include all GL Officers, DDGMs, DIs, and Grand Lodge Committee appointments.

Figure 6. Number of Lodge Raised (2010-2018) Who Have Received a GL Appointment (All Lodges)

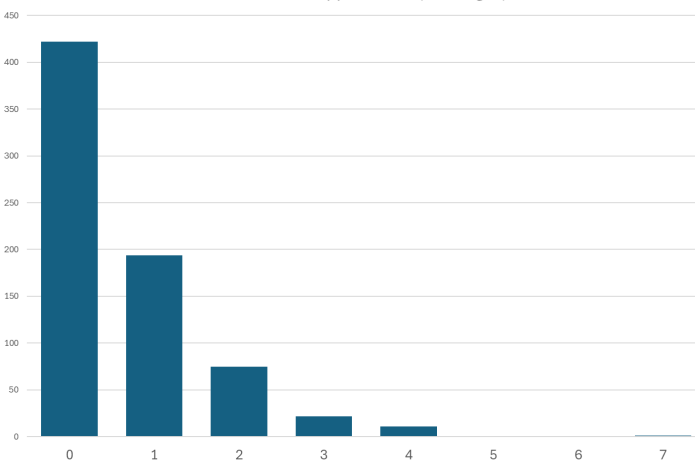
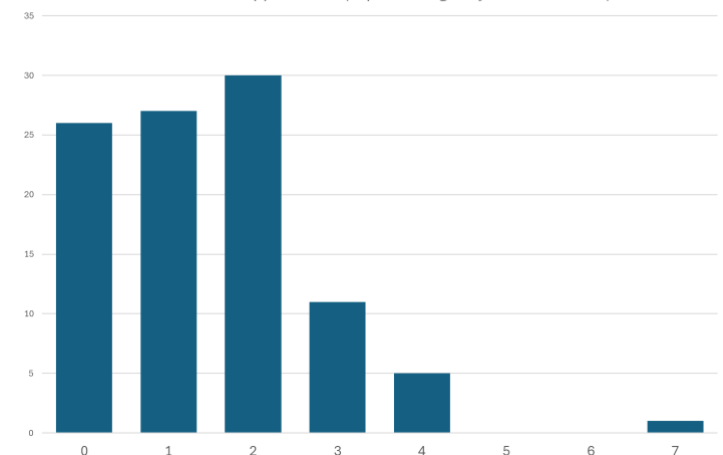


Figure 7. Number of Lodge Raised (2010-2018) Who Have Received a GL Appointment (Top 100 Lodges by Number Raised)



- The last two sets of charts should help to illustrate why I sometimes list restrictions in my charts on the dataset. There’s just a big difference statistically in our Jurisdiction between the lodges who are raising people and those who aren’t, and “showing all” sometimes can give the wrong picture because of this. That’s not necessarily concerning. I’m just trying to give the right picture. The only concerning part of any of this is the wide discrepancy in Figure 3. Losing 2 out of every 3 new MMs in their first years is not good, neither is losing half, not when the majority are losing only 1 out of 3, and many are losing less than that. – Zachary Haston, PM

Calling Over Coffee: A Simple Weekly Habit Strengthening Brotherhood Across Texas



At Arlington Lodge No. 438, a quiet tradition has grown into one of the most meaningful outreach efforts in the district. Every Tuesday at 9:00 a.m., a small group of Brothers gathers for fellowship, a warm cup of coffee, and a shared purpose: checking on every Brother on the Lodge roster.

After reviewing the upcoming Lodge calendar, each caller takes a page of the roster and begins reaching out—regardless of where a Brother lives, how long it has been since he attended Lodge, or whether they saw him recently. If there is no answer, a friendly message is left. In some cases, the callers discover disconnected numbers that lead to obituaries, often becoming the only way the Lodge learns of a Brother's passing. Families frequently return the

call with heartfelt gratitude, thankful that the Lodge cared enough to reach out.

When a Brother does answer, the conversation is simple and sincere:

"We're just checking on you. Is there anything you need? Here's what's coming up at Lodge."

Some Brothers are rushed but appreciative; others welcome the chance to talk. They may share health concerns, hardships, or the loneliness that often follows the loss of a spouse. The callers listen—patiently and without hurry. Many Brothers have returned to Lodge simply because someone took the time to call.

The Lodge's sickness and distress report has become far more accurate because of this effort. Brothers who would never call the Secretary or Worshipful Master often share important updates during these friendly chats. In several cases, callers reached Brothers only days before their passing, giving them one last moment of fraternal connection.

The goal is simple: **reach every Brother at least twice a year.**

When the roster is complete, the callers continue by reaching out to widows and members of appendant bodies. These conversations are met with deep appreciation. Sometimes the callers assist with small tasks—moving brush, mounting a TV, setting up a computer, or referring someone to a Brother with the right skills. Widows are often connected with the Blue Slipper Program offered by the Masonic Children & Family Services of Texas.

The inspiration for Calling Over Coffee began in 2015 when a Golden Trowel recipient was honored for personally calling his Lodge members. During the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the idea resurfaced as a way to maintain wellness checks. When Lodges reopened, the weekly calls continued—because the need for fraternal love and concern never ends.

Calling Over Coffee is a reminder that a small habit can have a profound impact.

A cup of coffee, a phone call, and a few minutes of genuine care are strengthening the bonds of Brotherhood—one conversation at a time.— Bruce Dalton, PM

NO MASON LEFT BEHIND PROJECT HELPS TEXAS MAONS & LOVED ONES

Your donation to the [No Mason Left Behind Project](#) helps older Texas Masons in need and their eligible loved ones move to a cozy private apartment at Texas Masonic Retirement Community. All meals, activities, medical care, and more are provided at no charge.

Here are stories of Texas Masons and their loved ones helped every day by your donations:

- Joe had multiple strokes that caused problems with talking and memory issues. He had to stop driving. When Joe's medical problems overwhelmed him, his years as a dedicated Mason allowed him to move to TMRC.
- Francis, age 95, moved to TMRC when a friend in Eastern Star took her aside and said it was time to move to a place where she could get the help she needed. Nearly blind, dependent on a walker, and needing help with daily life, Francis can live at TMRC because her grandfather, father, and husband were all Masons.
- George, age 81, an active Mason for decades, now lives at TMRC and gets help with rheumatoid arthritis. Some days the pain won't let up. The staff provides pain management, plus he no longer worries about making doctor's appointments, getting to the doctor, or having prescriptions filled. He does not feel like a burden to his family anymore.

[donate today at https://yourtmrc.org/donate/.](https://yourtmrc.org/donate/)

Upcoming Shriners Children's events in Texas

Please mark your calendars for the East – West Shrine Bowl and the College Showdown both occurring in North Texas in early 2026 (See times and locations below).



Feb 13, 2026 at 11 AM – Feb 15, 2026 at 2 PM

Shriners Children's College Showdown

734 Stadium Drive, Arlington, TX, United States, Texas 76011



2026 EAST-WEST SHRINE BOWL

Date & Time:

Tuesday, January 27, 2026 • 6:00 PM CT

Location:

Ford Center at The Star | Frisco, Texas

TX MASON APP

The TX Mason app is over 5,000 users! Please join the 5,489 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>

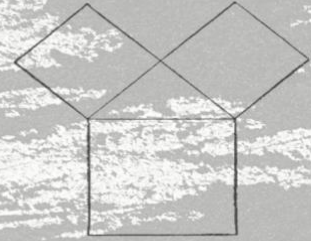


Grand Master's Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Time	Location	Address
Saturday 12/6/2025	150 th Anniversary Jewett Lodge No. 427	5:00 P.M.	Jewett Lodge No. 427	110 S Broadway St. Jewett, TX 75846
Friday 12/12/2025	Grand Chapter and Grand Council	9:00 A.M.	Grand Lodge	715 Columbus Avenue Waco, TX 76701



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>
Steve Pepper						
Thu, 15 Jan 2025	Grand Lodge		Waco			8:00 AM
Cody Stewart						
Sat, 6 Dec 2025	Temple	70	Mount Pleasant	6	8:00 AM	Following
Sat, 13 Dec 2025	St. Johns	53	Tyler	16	8:00 AM	Following
John Peters						
Sat, 6 Dec 2025	Triune	15	San Antonio	39-C	9:00 AM	1:00 PM
Cody Cockroft						
Sat, 6 Dec 2025	Hempstead	749	Hempstead	108	8:00 AM	Following
Sat, 13 Dec 2025	Bellaire	1336	Houston	30-B	8:00 AM	Following
Chuck Forsyth						

For more information go to: <https://grandlodgeoftexas.org/committee-on-work>

The Grand Lodge of Texas

Cornerstone Leveling Ceremonies 2025

For Information Contact:

Kevin T. Binder - State Cornerstone Coordinator
832-489-7778 - kevinbinder30@gmail.com



Date	Time	Lodge	Location	Grand Lodge Representative
Monday 12/1/2025	Lunch or Refreshments at Noon Open Brownwood Lodge at 1:00pm Open Grand Lodge at 1:15pm Cornerstone Ceremony at 2:00pm	Brownwood #279 601 Brown St. Brownwood, TX 76801	New Indoor Football practice facility	H.N. "Chip" Green, Jr. Grand Jr. Warden
Saturday 12/6/2025	Coffee & donuts at 9:00am Open Clear Lake Lodge at 10:00am Open Grand Lodge at 10:20am Cornerstone Ceremony at 11:00am	Clear Lake #1417 1707 Les Talley Dr. El Lago, TX 77586	New Lodge Building	Raborn L. Reader, Jr. Grand Master
Wednesday 12/10/2025	Breakfast or coffee & donuts at 8:00am Open Olive Branch Lodge at 9:00am Open Grand Lodge at 9:15am Cornerstone Ceremony at 10:00am	Olive Branch #792 201 Grindstone Rd. Brock, TX 76087	New School	Cody A. Stewart Committee on Work
Monday 12/15/2025	Coffee & donuts at 9:00am Open Forrest Lodge at 10:00am Open Grand Lodge at 10:15am Cornerstone Ceremony at 11:00am	Forrest #19 1030 12th St. Huntsville, TX 77340	New City Hall	Raborn L. Reader, Jr. Grand Master

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

Office Staff – the list below is intended to help you reach the person in the office responsible for what you are requesting. It is, however, recommended that you copy the GS@GrandSecretaryofTX.org email on ALL correspondence.

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

Justin Hancock

justinh@grandsecretaryoftx.org

Honesty & Integrity Awards

Lamar Medals

Forms and Lodge Supply Orders

Grand Lodge Service Awards

Golden Trowel Awards

Community Builder Awards

Jeff Frayser

fraternal@grandsecretaryoftx.org

Out-of-State Correspondence

Dispensations

Zachary Haston

zhaston@grandsecretaryoftx.org

Membership

Lodge Officer Maintenance

Esoteric Record Maintenance

Form 71 Collection

IRS Form 990's Collection

Jeremy Johnson

jjohnson@grandsecretaryoftx.org

Lodge Secretary Training

GS Newsletter

Jimmie Shannon

jshannon@grandsecretaryoftx.org

Masonic Disciplinary Violations

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. August 30 – Vanguard Applications are due to the DDGM electronically no later than August 30 and to the Committee on Masonic Education electronically via cme@grandlodgeoftx.org (refer to Vanguard Application Instructions).
- k. September 15 – Lodge Minimum Audit Report 71 is due to the GS Office NLT September 15 (Art. 284).
- 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 or Warden cannot be a proxy for another Lodge.