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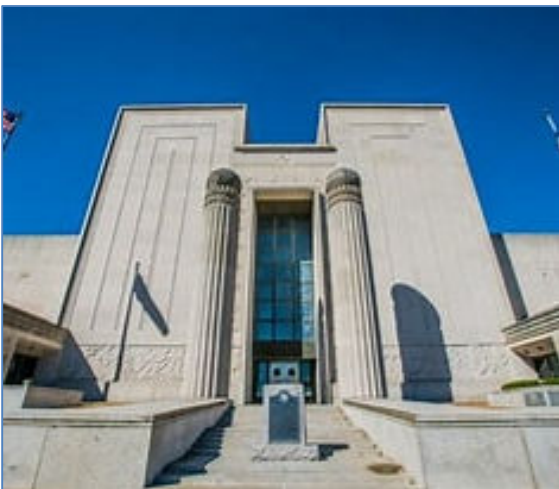
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## GRAND SECRETARY'S MONTHLY COMMUNICATION JANUARY 2025

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

- Featured Item: Get Ready for Grand Lodge Bundle \$50
- Secretary Updates: Pre-registration closing soon, 189<sup>th</sup> Communication, Dues and a New Year's Gift
- Masonic Minute: Happy New Year 6025 (not a typo)
- Grand (Officer) Line Statistics - Zach Haston
- Monthly Law: Title 1 Chapter 2 Art. 2 – Grand Lodge Communications
- Lodge Spotlight: New Braunfels Lodge No. 1109 Traveling Belt and more.....

**PLEASE COMMUNICATE THIS INFORMATION TO YOUR MEMBERS, AS APPROPRIATE.** I recommend you print this communication and bring it to your stated meeting for discussion. This communication is automatically provided electronically to all lodges with the capability to use the Grandview system. Individual Master Masons of The Grand Lodge of Texas can sign up by contacting the Grand Secretary's Office at (254) 753-7395 or [gs@grandsecretaryoftx.org](mailto:gs@grandsecretaryoftx.org), or by registering your membership through [the Member Portal](#).



### FEATURED ITEM

Just in time for the holidays, the store is offering a 'Get Ready for Grand Lodge Bundle' including: 2024 tie, lapel pin, belt buckle and enameled coin for just \$50 (a 52.6% savings). This is just in time for Christmas and will have you ready for the Annual Communication in January! Visit the GL Store at: [Grand Lodge of Texas Online Store – The Grand Lodge of Texas](#)  
While supplies last

### TEXAS FREEMASON MAGAZINE

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

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

## **GRAND SECRETARY OFFICE UPDATES**

### **Pre-Registration ends 1/6/2025**

Only 5 days left to pre-register for the Grand Annual Communication. After that time, you can still register but you must do so at the check-in desk beginning the Thursday of Grand Lodge.

### **189<sup>TH</sup> GRAND ANNUAL COMMUNICATION**

Registration is now open and we hope you will join us in Waco, Texas - January 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> 2025.

Please assist us by parking at one of the prescribed hotels where there will be a shuttle service to the Grand Lodge and back. We are hoping this will alleviate some of the parking around the building.

**Parking:** We have contracted with Waco Transit for a 45-person shuttle to drive between the prescribed hotels (Hilton and Courtyard) and a public parking lot on Washington Ave between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> St. The shuttle is expected to run every 15 minutes starting at 7am and concluding at 5pm. We have also talked to the Aloft hotel who agreed to shuttle guest back and forth. Please help us by riding the shuttle to and from Grand Lodge.

If you have WITH MOBILITY ISSUES and will be there both Friday and Saturday, please EMAIL Cindy in the Grand Lodge office (AFTER YOU REGISTER) to reserve a parking pass (while they last).

Please register at:

[Grand Lodge Masonic Membership Manager 2.0](#)

### **DUES ARE DUE**

Dues are due 12/31 each year. Please make sure your dues are paid before you get to Grand Lodge. Secretaries please remind the Worshipful Master to appoint a Committee on Members in Arrears (Article 319a).

### **NEW YEAR'S GIFT**

While looking through some unclaimed property for the Grand Lodge of Texas, I stumbled upon several Lodges who are owed money. This ranges from the \$20-30 range all the way up to several THOUSANDS of dollars. Brethren, please do a search for your Lodge specifically and do a generic search for "Masonic Lodge" then sort to find your city. If your Lodge doesn't want or need the money...please let us know...we love donations!

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### **FROM THE GRAND TREASURER**

To all masons in Texas,

Preliminary December 2024 financial statements and the 2025 Grand Lodge budget will be posted on Grandview as soon as they are available but before our Grand Communication. They may be on one or two statements.

Thank you,

Rick Townsend, Grand Treasurer

## **MASONIC MINUTE – ANNO LUCIS**

Happy New Year 6025!

There is confusion from time to time about the year designation A.L. on a Masonic document. The following references were found in a Comprehensive Dictionary of Freemasonry by Ernest Beha, New York, New York: Citadel Press, 1963.

Anno Domini (A.D.) This is the Latin for “In the Year of Our Lord”. The Masonic year, or “The Year of Light” is 4,000 years ahead of Anno Domini.

Anno Lucis (A.L.) This is Latin for “In the Year of Light”. The term is frequently used in Masonic procedure and expresses a year that is 4,000 beyond Anno Domini (“The year of Our Lord”). There is a reason for this, of course. The date of the creation of the world is generally assumed to be 4,000 years before the birth of Our Lord, and the creation of the world saw the beginning of Light. (“Let there be Light. And there was Light.”) Dr. James Anderson, in his 1723 “Constitutions”, refers to the 4,000 year-advanced “Anno Lucis” as “The Year of Masonry” and the idea was adopted. That is why a several Masonic certificates have two dates recorded thereon, the Year of Light (or the Masonic Year) and the accepted everyday calendar year (or the “Year of Our Lord”). So, therefore, if a person were made a Mason in 2025, his ‘Year of Light’ would be 6025!

Modified from an article found on the Grand Lodge of Iowa’s website: [Microsoft Word - Anno Lucis.doc](#)

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## **MONTHLY LAW READING**

### **TITLE 1 CHAPTER 2 ART. 2 COMMUNICATIONS**

The Grand Lodge shall meet in Annual Communication in the City of Waco at 1:30 p.m. on the Thursday before the third Friday in January unless the Grand Master and the majority of the Grand Lodge Trustees consider and declare the Grand Lodge of Texas shall meet in Grand Annual Communication in another designated location at 1:30 PM on the Thursday before the third Friday of that January, however, no business requiring reports of committees, balloting or voting by the membership of the Grand Lodge shall be conducted until the Grand Lodge is called to labor at 9:00 a.m. on the third Friday of that January, and while in session for the transaction of business no Constituent Lodge owing obedience to it shall hold any meeting either Stated or Called for any purpose except for funerals as provided in Article 359 for valid emergencies approved by the Grand Master. (Revised 2015)

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## **INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE**

*What matters most is not what is behind us or before us,  
but what is within us.*

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

This is a new segment for the New Year inspired by the many insightful quotes shared on Facebook. If you have one to share, please send it to Brother Jon Wych and it may just show up in the next newsletter!

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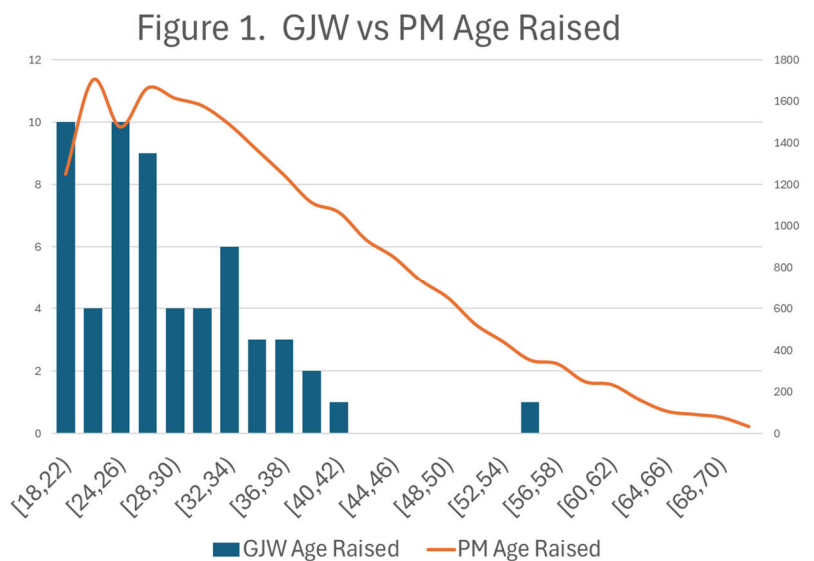
## GRAND LINE STATISTICS

Brethren, with the Grand Annual Communication coming up this month, I thought I would take a minute to look at the road to Grand Master (GM), both at the Grand Line, and who gets into it.

In the early days of the Grand Lodge of Texas, there wasn't so much a tradition of an advancing line. From 1838 to 1874, we had 10 Deputy Grand Masters (DGMs), 8 Grand Senior Wardens (GSWs), and 9 Grand Junior Wardens (GJWs) who would never become GM. Additionally, early on, the DGM was appointed by the GM to be his assistant, but without a real advancing line, that appointed DGM started to often be elected GM, and so with a Constitution change in 1848, the DGMs began to be elected as well. By the mid-1850s, we started to settle in on an advancing line, and from 1860 on (164 years), every DGM who didn't die in office has become GM, until last year. We did continue to have a couple of GSWs not advance, and several GJWs, until the last the last big abnormality in elections in 1883 when the long-time Grand Treasurer (15yrs) was elected DGM for 1884 without ever having been GSW or GJW. The GSW at the time was not present and was not elected to anything for that year, after which he would be elected DGM the following year and the GSW and GJW would hold over to allow him into that slot. As an aside, for that year without an office, he, like the many others before who did not advance, was referred to as "Past Grand Senior Warden." The title of "Right Worshipful" was only maintained by Past Grand Masters at the time, not Past DGMs, Past GSWs, or Past GJWs. That was later changed, but we haven't had any live and not progress to GM since then, and so R.W. Bart Henderson is the first and only living Past Deputy Grand Master (who did not become GM) to maintain the "Right Worshipful" title.

From 1884 until last year, we have had a very steady line from Grand Junior Warden advancing each year until they became Grand Master. The only exceptions have been for deaths: in 1993 the GSW died in office, in 1969 the GJW died in office, in 1951 the DGM died in office, in 1949 the GSW died in office, and in 1926 the GSW died in office. In each of those years, the line advanced as you would expect with the subordinate office jumping and two new people being elected into the line as GSW and GJW.

Having established a Grand Line, let's take a look at who gets elected Grand Junior Warden. First off, Figure 1 shows the age raised for GJWs elected from 1970 on. You'll note that they were raised a little younger than the average Mason, and even the average Mason who would become a Past Master. The median age raised for a GJW is 27 compared to a median age raised of 34 for our current living Past Masters. I don't really have an explanation for this. Maybe they're just drawn to the Fraternity more and younger. I'm just noting it and suggesting you not dismiss those 20-something guys that come in. Take good care of them. They could become your Grand Master!



Figures 2 and 3 show the number of years our GJWs took to go from being raised to being WM, and then from WM to DDGM. Both of these are fairly typical for our most active Brethren. Lodge size plays a part in how long it takes to become WM. The median is 7 years, which often means going through both Wardens, both Deacons, and a Steward or other office on the way to WM; however, there are a few that had shorter lines and a few that didn't start until later.

A whopping 96% of our Grand Junior Wardens have previously served as a DDGM, and with our GJWs, you can see in Figure 3 that they did so relatively quickly with a median of just 4 years to be appointed DDGM

after serving in the East. This Fraternity has a way of putting our best to work and not leaving them with nothing to do.

Figure 2. Years from Raised to WM  
(1970-2024 GJWs)

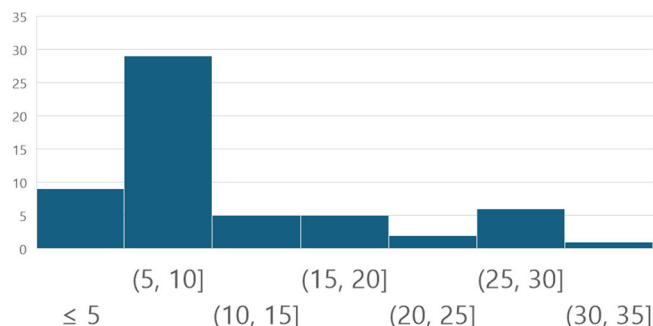
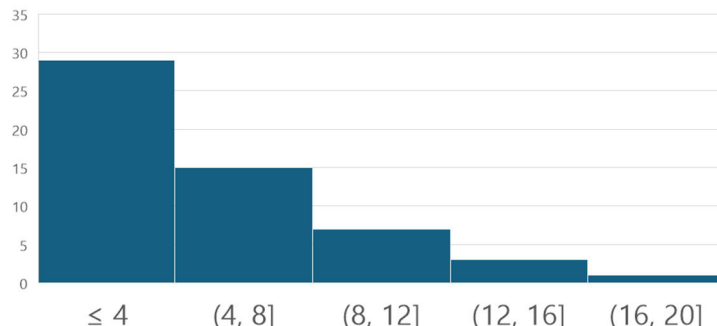
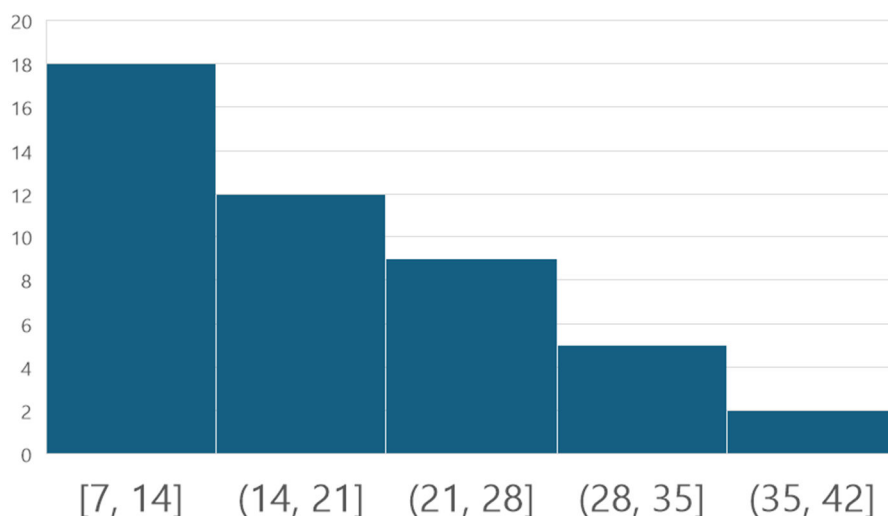


Figure 3. Years from WM to DDGM  
(for those elected GJW 1970-2024)



The one area where there is some spacing in our GJWs is in the time between DDGM and being elected to the Grand Line. The median is 17 years of work as a PM before being elected GJW (Figure 4); however, 18% were elected GJW as soon as 7-10yrs after serving as WM, so it can come relatively quickly. The majority though take longer.

Figure 4. Years From WM to GJW



During the years between WM and being elected to the Grand Line, these Brethren served in many ways. Some have continuously held various offices in local lodges. Since about 2000, a larger percentage of our GJWs had been put to work on Grand Committees or as District Instructors. Also, notably, 74% of our GJWs were given an appointed Grand Office (a Grand Deacon, Grand Orator, Grand Marshal or the like) prior to being elected GJW, the majority within 4 years of being elected, and 31% were holding an appointed Grand Office when they were elected to the Grand South.

Finally, I'll note that since plural memberships have been allowed, our Grand Officers have joined a lot of lodges. The average is an impressive 9 lodges for those elected GJW since 1995. I can't even imagine making that many Stated Meetings a month, much less that many called meetings and degrees!

In summary, those who would become Grand Master have tended to join Masonry a little younger than the rest, and energetically went through the lines in their lodges and on to be appointed DDGM soon thereafter. Where they have spent some time is working as a Past Master serving in many different ways before being elected by the Grand West. When you look at all the local lodge offices held, Grand Committees and District Instructor positions, our Grand Junior Wardens come with impressive résumés. They've been constantly working for this Fraternity in one way or another.

- Zachary Haston



## **LODGE SPOTLIGHT: NEW BRAUNFELS LODGE NO. 1109**



### **The Travelers Belt Program**

This month, we shine a spotlight on New Braunfels Lodge No. 1109 and WM Sandy Newman for their innovative and inspiring initiative, The Travelers Belt Program. Designed to encourage inter-lodge visitations throughout the state, this program builds on the spirit of camaraderie fostered by the beloved Traveling Gavel tradition. The Travelers Belt is a tangible symbol of brotherly connection, passed from one lodge to another as a reward for visiting in good numbers. This friendly competition promotes stronger bonds between lodges, revitalizes participation, and exemplifies the Masonic principles of unity and fellowship. Lodges across our great jurisdiction are encouraged to join in this meaningful program. Whether visiting old friends or forging new relationships, the Travelers Belt is a reminder that our fraternity thrives when we come together. Kudos to the brothers of New Braunfels Lodge No. 1109 for their creativity and dedication in enhancing the Masonic experience. Let's keep the Belt moving and continue building the ties that bind us as Masons!

The Traveling Belt is currently held at Randolph Lodge No. 1268 – stated meeting 1/20/2025, Shertz, TX

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### **BE A GRAND LODGE PHOTOGRAPHER (FOR A DAY)**

We want to see you BEST photos from the upcoming Grand Lodge Annual Communication! Here is how to participate:

1. Take lots of photos during the Grand Session. We are primarily looking for pictures that display Brotherhood and drive excitement for being a Texas Mason!
2. Then from your mobile device, go to the Grand Lodge of Texas web site, and click the three bars on the top right-hand side of the page. Then scroll down to Media and find "Grand lodge photo albums." Find the 'January' album and click on "Add Photos..." then "Choose Photos...". Finally, select your 10 best pictures and click the "add" button.

Note: photos will not appear in the gallery until approved by an admin.

- Russell Roberson, Photography Committee

### TX MASON APP

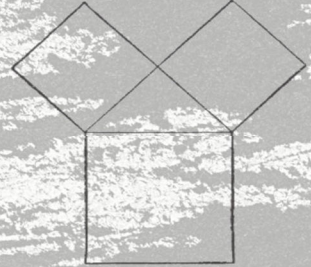
The TX Mason app is nearing **5,000** users! Please join the 4,966 Brothers using the TX Mason APP! This is separate from the GrandView App & has a searchable law book and monitor at your fingertips.

<https://grandlodgeoftexas.app/launch.html>

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## **Committee on Work Schedule Grand Lodge Exam**



Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup> 8:00 am

The meeting will begin behind the Grand East near the COW room to fill out the exam cards. Then, classes will be assigned and the groups will split up.

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

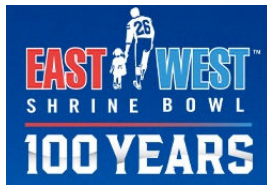
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### TAKE TIME TO READ

'Take Time To Read' calendars must be ordered by February 1, 2025. You can order them through the Scottish Rite Hospital by emailing [taketimetoread@tsrh.org](mailto:taketimetoread@tsrh.org) or calling Christie Steinborn or Lori Wendt at 214-559-7815.

If you would like more information on how you or your Lodge can participate in this great program, call the Grand Lodge TTTR committee chairman Bruce Dalton at 817-223-1471.

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

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## **GRAND SECRETARY OFFICE STAFF DIRECTORY**

### **Hours of Operation:**

8:30 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday – Friday

**Phone:** 254-753-7395

**Fax:** 254-753-2944

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715 Columbus Ave  
Waco, TX 76701

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PO Box 446  
Waco, TX 76703

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Dave McHam**

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

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

### **Cindy Huerta**

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

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

### **Jeremy Johnson**

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Lodge Secretary Training

### **Bruce Mercer**

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

Out-of-State Correspondence

### **Jeff Frayser**

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

Out-of-State Correspondence  
Dispensations  
Mergers

### **Justin Hancock**

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

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

### **Denise Gilmore**

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



## **SECRETARY INSTRUCTIONS**

The following information is intended primarily for the Secretary but may be meaningful to many of your members.

### **Lodge Suspense System:**

Suspense Dates – Lodge Secretaries should create a suspense system (a reminder system) to alert the Lodge that certain documents are due. This list is offered as a “starter kit” for your consideration:

- a.** January – The Worshipful Master should appoint a Committee on Members in Arrears (Article 319a).
- b.** May 31 – W. B. and Brandon Carrell Award nominations may be submitted to the Grand Lodge Committee on Public Education for evaluation and recommendation to the Grand Lodge Trustees (Article 14b).
- c.** Mid-June – Look for the Annual Returns Format from GL. (Downloaded from the Grand View System after June 24th. Notify the GS staff if you need the returns mailed as a printout).
- d.** June 23 – Lodge elections must be completed at the last stated meeting prior to midnight of June 23 (Art. 292). Notify us of the new Lodge Officers immediately so they can be printed in the Directory of Constituent Lodges (do not wait for installation). Submission will be available on the Grand View System from May 24 through midnight June 23.
- e.** June 23 – Endowed Membership checks must be in the Office of the Grand Secretary by June 23 to start earning interest in order to receive returns by the next year (Art. 318a). Changes to the amount of endowments must be voted on at the same meeting as the Lodge elections, and notification to the Grand Lodge must be before June 24th. Endowed Membership applications received at the Grand Lodge on or after June 24 must be for the amount that the Lodge reported.
- f.** July 15 – Statements of Availability due GS Office. (6a).
- g.** July 31 – Lodge installations must be performed from June 24 to prior to midnight July 31 (Art. 298).
- h.** August 15 – Annual Returns Report due to Grand Lodge (Art. 493).
- i.** August 15 – Resolutions due in GS Office (Art. 172).
- j.** September 15 – Lodge Minimum Audit Report 71 is due to the GS Office NLT September 15 (Art. 284).
- k.** September 15 – Vanguard Applications are due to the DDGM NLT September 15 and to the Grand Secretary NLT September 30 (refer to Vanguard Application Instructions).
- l.** October 1 – Lodge By-Laws that must be reviewed by the GL Committee on By-Laws due the GS Office NLT October 1 (Art. 219).
- m.** Nov 15 – Form 990-N, Electronic Notice (e-Postcard), must be filed with the IRS by Lodges that have gross receipts of \$50,000 or less or do not meet the requirements for filing the IRS 990 or IRS 990EZ. (Lodges must file the appropriate Form 990 no later than the 15th day of the fifth month following the close of the organization’s fiscal year.)
- n.** Dec. 28 – Proxy Certificates are due the GS Office NLT December 28 (Art. 4). You should always appoint a Proxy (in case of an emergency) but he would not vote if any of the top three officers were available. Remember, each brother can have no more than four votes. Therefore, a sitting Worshipful Master cannot be a proxy for another Lodge.