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GRAND SECRETARY

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GRAND SECRETARY'S MONTHLY COMMUNICATION

OCTOBER 2026



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 – Annual Communication
- Secretary School – Irving, Oct. 24 and Houston, Nov. 7
- Monthly Law Reading – Filing IRS Form 990 – Jeremy Johnson, PM
- Statistics – Web Inquiries – Zachary Haston, PM
- Lodge Spotlight – Hillcrest Lodge No. 1318
- Texas Masonic Retirement Community – Family Day Blood Drive
- Come and Take It Celebration – Gonzales, Texas
- Grand Master's Calendar of Events
- Committee on Work Schedule – October & November 2026
- Cornerstone Leveling Ceremonies – October & December 2026
- 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 emailed to all Master Masons who are signed up to receive emails in the GrandView system. If you are not receiving these emails, each edition is also available on the Grand Secretary's Page at <https://grandlodgeoftexas.org/grand-secretary>.

For more content from the Grand Secretary's Office, please see our official website at: <https://grandlodgeoftexas.org/grand-secretary>. To stay connected with the Grand Secretary and other Secretaries across the state, see our facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1486287938821817>.

PLEASE READ

GRAND SECRETARY'S OFFICE

Annual Communication Accommodations

To view a preliminary schedule of events and find accommodations for the 2027 Annual Communication, please visit the following site:

[Texas Grand Annual Communication](#)

Please note that this site is NOT the Grand Lodge Website. The site includes several hotels offering group rates for our attendees. When contacting a hotel, please reference the applicable Group Rate and let them know you are with the Grand Lodge of Texas.

Referencing the group rate ensures that you receive the contracted rate and also helps us properly document and process our hotel reimbursements.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2027 Annual Communication!

SECRETARY SCHOOL

October 24th – Irving, TX (North)

Registration: 8 AM | Class: 9 AM

Irving Masonic Lodge No. 1218

132 East 2nd Street, Irving, TX 75060

November 7th – Houston, TX (South)

Registration: 8 AM | Class: 9 AM

Solidarity Lodge No. 1457

10510 Harwin Drive, Houston, TX 77036

*New to the chair or twenty years in, there is always something to learn.
Bring your questions.*

MONTHLY LAW READING – FILING IRS FORM 990

Every Texas Lodge is a tax-exempt organization, but the IRS expects a filing every year to keep that status. The Law Book puts the duty on the Worshipful Master, and for most Lodges the deadline is November 15.

Art. 284a. Duty to File IRS Forms. – All subordinate Lodges of the Grand Lodge of Texas must file either IRS Form 990, 990 EZ or 990-N with the U. S. Internal Revenue Service in a timely manner.

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

It is also the responsibility of the Worshipful Master to provide the Grand Secretary's office with a copy of the Form 990, 990-N or 990-EZ that is filed with the IRS, on or before November 15 of the tax year, and the Grand Lodge Finance Committee is directed to monitor the completion of the Forms required herein. (*Revised 2011*)

Which form? The IRS decides that based on the Lodge's size. Under current IRS guidance:

- **Form 990-N (e-Postcard):** gross receipts normally \$50,000 or less.
- **Form 990-EZ:** gross receipts under \$200,000 and total assets under \$500,000. A Lodge in this range may also file the full 990.
- **Form 990:** gross receipts of \$200,000 or more, or total assets of \$500,000 or more.

What happens if a Lodge doesn't file? The IRS automatically revokes tax-exempt status after three years in a row of missed filings. The revocation takes effect on the due date of the third return.

Worshipful Masters, this month please ask your Secretary or Treasurer which form your Lodge files and when it is due. Once it is filed, send a copy by November 15, either through GrandView or by email to Zachary Haston at zhaston@grandsecretaryoftx.org.

– Jeremy R. Johnson, PM

STATISTICS – WEB INQUIRIES

Over the past 5 years, the majority of our new initiates have been Millennials, and each year now Gen Z increases its percentage. I've posted that before. It's the natural course of things over time, but with it comes some important tendency shifts. Virtually everyone being initiated today has done at least some basic research on the internet before joining. Many, if not most, have learned not to trust everything they read and to look at the sources and motives behind it, and that's where we have an edge. We are the ultimate source on Masonry.

I don't think it would shock you to suggest that we are lagging on technology. Only 30% of our Lodges have a website listed in GrandView, many of which haven't been updated in years, even less have that website listed in places like Google Maps when people search for nearby lodges, and even less are on social media. In today's world, people look for you first on the internet, and to not be there greatly hurts our numbers. The internet is today's storefront.

To help with that very first step in the membership pipeline, prior to them even receiving a petition, we have set up an automated web inquiry and referral system to connect web inquirers with their local Lodges. We have partnered with bea Freemason.org, which has some wonderful information on it for seekers, and set up our own "Interested in Masonry?" section at grandlodgeoftexas.org with some good information and videos on it as well. The Grand Lodge of Texas website and the Be A Freemason website both receive a decent amount of traffic, and both now have forms set up on them which men can fill out to "Get in Touch" with their local Lodge or to "Be a Freemason." Those forms gather the name, contact info, and zip code of people asking about joining and sends that to us in real time. The automation we have set up will reply to the inquirer via email providing them with Lodge Contact Information and Stated Meeting nights for their 3+ closest lodges. We copy the Lodges on that email so they know they have someone inquiring about membership giving the Lodge the inquirer's name, email, and phone number so they can get in touch with them.

Right now, ultimately, this is just an aid to connect web surfers with their nearest Lodge for further questions and to get the ball rolling. It fails if the Lodge doesn't ever read their email, and one study from the Northern Jurisdiction found way, way too many of these men, who were asking, were never contacted back by the lodge after they filled out the online form. That's one of the reasons we're giving them 3+ Lodges instead of just one.

In the last two months, 456 (64%) of our Lodges have received at least one inquiry via email through this automated system, some have received several (Figure 1), and we're receiving new inquiries at a rate of over 2200/yr Statewide right now with no advertising or anything –

just an inquiry form on the Grand Lodge website and gathering the data from beafreemason.org.

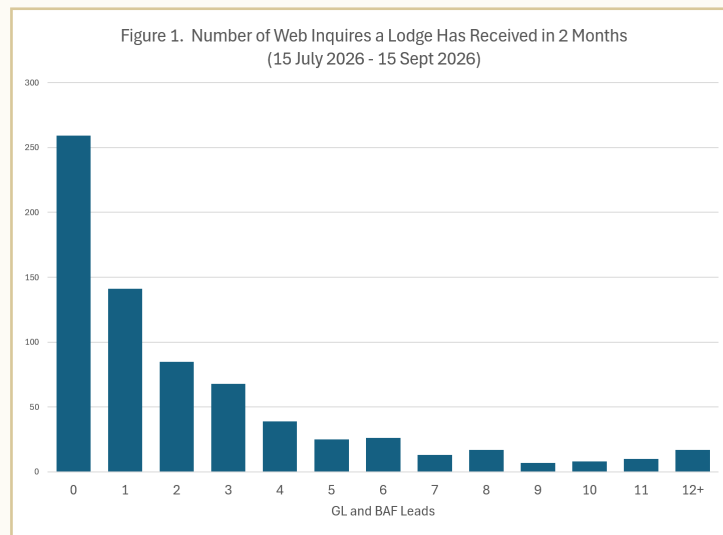
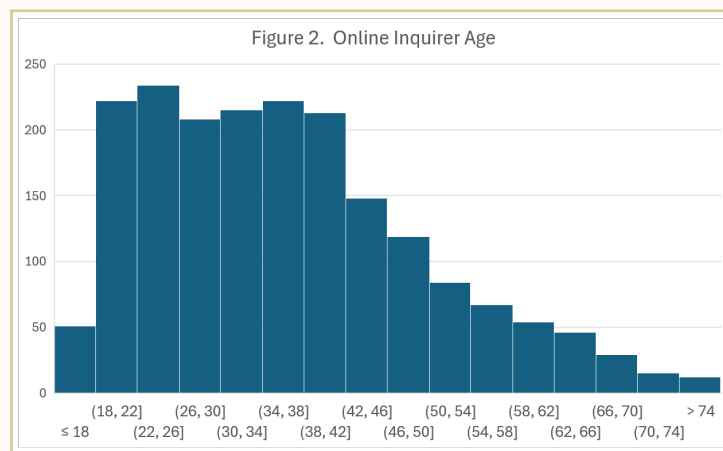
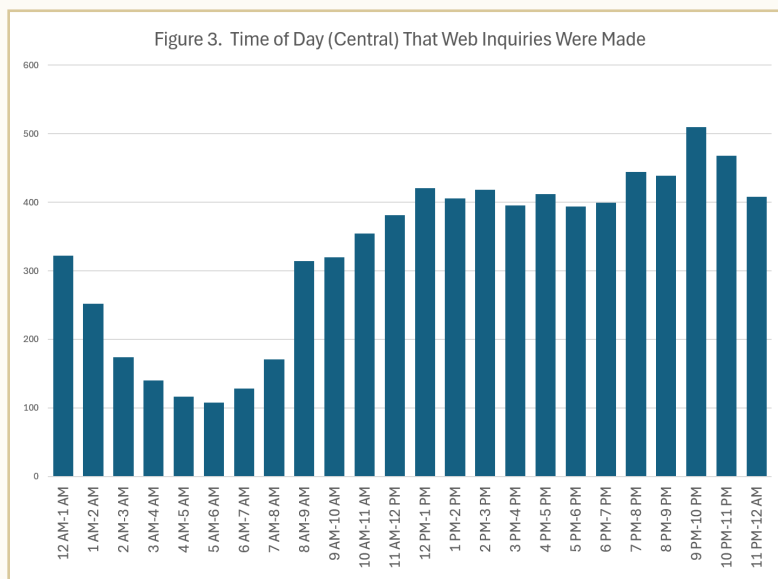


Figure 2 shows the ages of the men filling out these inquiry forms. You'll see most of them are in the 18-42 age range. Do note that a small amount have been under 18, teenagers interested. We do already say right there on our form that you have to be 18yrs old to join, but they missed that and are exploring. Set them up favorably for the future when you talk to them and find that out. Let me also point out that there are a lot more in the 18-26 age range inquiring here than we've been having joining. Have we been missing out on these guys? Have they been wanting to know, but we haven't had the web presence to reel that generation in? They're there on the inquiries. It'll be interesting to see if petitions jump in that age group from this.



More inquiries are made during the work week than on weekends. Saturday is our lowest day for inquiries, being 22% lower than Mondays. Friday night is a little low, and Sunday is low in the morning, but picks up nicely in the afternoon/evening. During the work week, the

12-1pm lunch hour is a little higher, as is 4-5pm, but even higher than both of those is right before bed in the 9-10pm hour, which was high both during the week and the weekends.



It should be noted that this whole automated system is new and rapidly being improved. It is working right now. Every inquirer gets routed to their 3+ closest lodges within a day or less. Next up will be to add a step asking the inquirer a few simple questions (what are you interested in, what days work for you, would you like a lodge near home or work, etc) which will both improve the quality of leads we forward to the Lodges (weeding out any fake emails and making them do a second brief task to get connected) and allow us to tailor some communications to them in the future.

Once this project is working well, and our Lodges are following up, the referral algorithm along with some different wording and approaches will be used for some other purposes including a large set of historical leads and some data that we have of Masons from other Jurisdictions that have moved here.

All of these things are meant to help connect web-searching men with their local Lodge, to help them find you. It's up to you guys to reel them in though. We've taken the first step. Things hinge on the second: the call from you to them. If just 10% of these inquirers get initiated, we would increase our incoming membership numbers by a third virtually overnight. That's not insignificant. And in Ohio, they found that 1 in 3 of those that were actually followed up with ended up joining. If we followed up with every inquiry we got, and got those kinds of results, we could DOUBLE our membership pipeline, again, virtually overnight. It may take a while to refine our systems and improve the Lodge follow-ups, but just as the insurance deal helped the Lodges greatly which took advantage of it, so too could this help those Lodges which take advantage of getting these referrals.

– Zachary Haston

LODGE SPOTLIGHT

Where Freemasonry Meets the Unexpected

A different approach to Masonic education

Who says Masonic education must always follow a familiar script? Sometimes, the most memorable way to explore the Craft is to connect it with the stories and interests that surround us in everyday life.

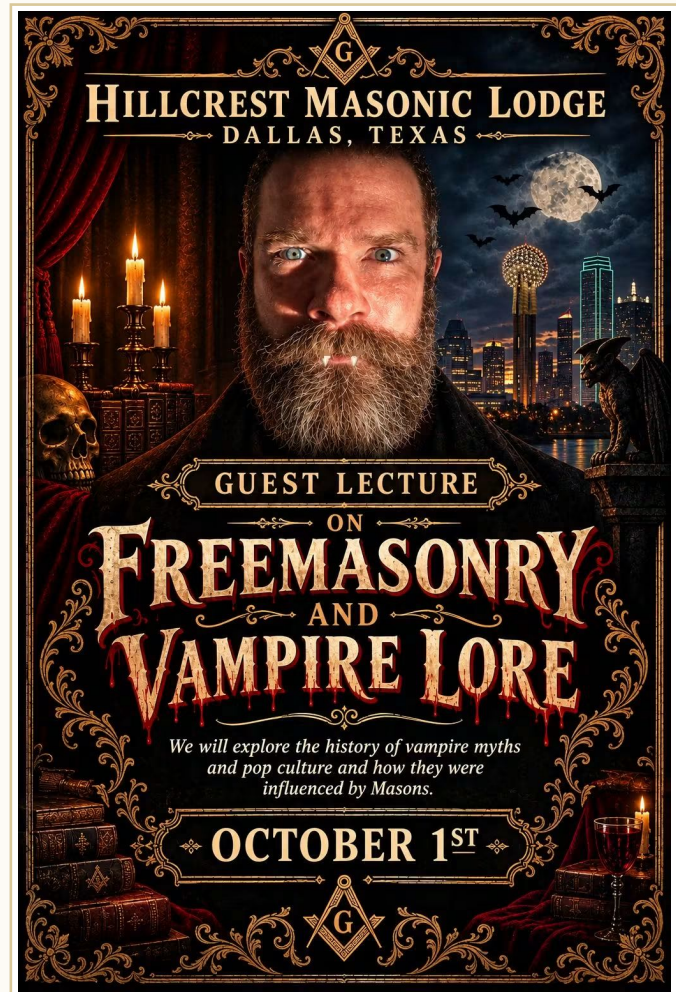
Waco Masonic Lodge No. 92 recently shared a wonderfully unconventional example: its Past Master, Brother Robert William Marshall, is taking his exploration of Freemasonry's influence on the horror genre to audiences in Dallas and Salt Lake City. On October 1, Hillcrest Masonic Lodge No. 1318 in Dallas will host his guest lecture, "Freemasonry and Vampire Lore," examining vampire myths, popular culture, and their connections to Masonic influences.

The subject may sound unexpected, but that is precisely what makes it a compelling spotlight on the Craft. Freemasonry has connections to history, literature, architecture, civic life, and the

stories people tell. Exploring those intersections offers a creative way to spark curiosity, invite conversation, and remind Brethren that learning does not end when a degree is conferred.

Waco Lodge even joined the fun with a playful social-media post suggesting that Brother Marshall take the spooky visitors occupying its Lodge Room along with him! It is a reminder that Masonic education can be thoughtful without being stiff, and that a little humor can help bring an interesting subject to life.

Perhaps the lesson for lodges across Texas is simple: think outside the box. Find a subject that captures attention, discover its connection to Masonry, and turn that curiosity into an opportunity for fellowship and learning.



Submitted by – Mike Mistry, P.M.

TEXAS MASONIC RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

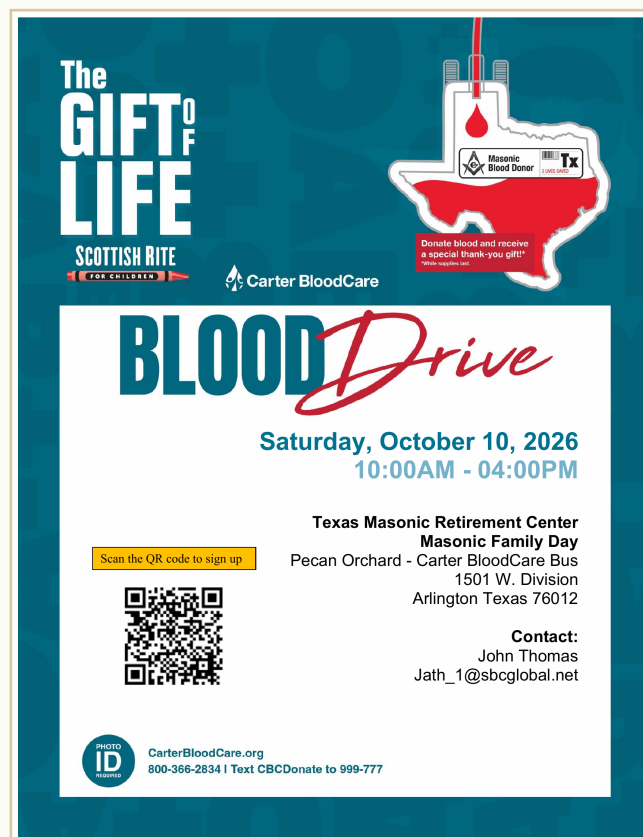
No Mason Left Behind Project

Donate to Help Older Texas Masons in Need

We hope you'll consider a donation today to the No Mason Left Behind Project. Your gift helps provide safe, comfortable living arrangements for older Texas Masons in need and their qualified wives, widows, mothers, and more at Texas Masonic Retirement Community. Your gift will be recognized with a plaque, desktop award, Honor Roll listing, and more based on your level of giving. Your donation is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Donate or learn more at YourTMRC.org/donate.

Masonic Family Day Blood Drive – Saturday, Oct. 10

Carter BloodCare and Scottish Rite for Children will have a blood bus in the Pecan Orchard at Masonic Family Day, Saturday, October 10, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM at Texas Masonic Retirement Community, 1501 W. Division, Arlington. Donors receive a thank-you gift while supplies last, and a photo ID is required. Scan the QR code on the flyer to sign up. Questions: John Thomas, Jath_1@sbcglobal.net.



The flyer is a vertical rectangular graphic with a dark teal background. At the top left, the text "The GIFT OF LIFE" is written in large, white, bold letters, with "SCOTTISH RITE FOR CHILDREN" in smaller white text below it. To the right of this, there is a graphic of a blood drop falling into a red outline of the state of Texas. Above the Texas map is a small logo for "Masonic Blood Donor" with a "Tx" symbol. Below the map is a red banner with white text that says "Donate blood and receive a special thank-you gift!" and "while supplies last". In the center, the words "BLOOD Drive" are written in large, bold, white letters, with "Drive" in a red script font. Below this, the date and time "Saturday, October 10, 2026 10:00AM - 04:00PM" are written in white. To the left of the date, there is a yellow button with the text "Scan the QR code to sign up" and a QR code below it. To the right of the date, the location "Texas Masonic Retirement Center Masonic Family Day Pecan Orchard - Carter BloodCare Bus 1501 W. Division Arlington Texas 76012" is written in white. Below the location, the contact information "Contact: John Thomas Jath_1@sbcglobal.net" is written in white. At the bottom left, there is a circular logo for "PHOTO ID NUMBER" and the text "CarterBloodCare.org 800-366-2834 | Text CBCDonate to 999-777".

The GIFT OF LIFE
SCOTTISH RITE
FOR CHILDREN

BLOOD Drive

Saturday, October 10, 2026
10:00AM - 04:00PM

Scan the QR code to sign up

Texas Masonic Retirement Center
Masonic Family Day
Pecan Orchard - Carter BloodCare Bus
1501 W. Division
Arlington Texas 76012

Contact:
John Thomas
Jath_1@sbcglobal.net

PHOTO ID NUMBER
CarterBloodCare.org
800-366-2834 | Text CBCDonate to 999-777

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.

COME AND TAKE IT CELEBRATION – GONZALES

Gonzales Lodge No. 30 invites all Brethren to the annual Come and Take It celebration on October 3, 2026. The celebration marks the “First Shot” of the Texas Revolution in 1835.

Saturday, October 3

- 8:00 AM – Coffee and donuts at the Lodge
- 9:00 AM – Laying of the wreath and the Grand Master’s program at Hero Square, one block south of the Lodge
- 10:30 AM – Parade

The Lodge will host a booth in the food tent. Questions: Michael Baker, Secretary.

GRAND MASTER'S CALENDAR OF EVENTS

In order to provide the most up to date information and prevent duplication, the Grand Master's Calendar can now be found in the Grand Lodge Gazette, emailed weekly by the Grand Lodge Committee on Communications. For full details, please visit the Grand Master's calendar page here:

[GRAND MASTER'S PAGE](#)

COMMITTEE ON WORK SCHEDULE

October & November 2026

COMMITTEEMAN	DATE	LODGE	CITY	DISTRICT	FORUM	EXAM
Cody Stewart	Sat, Nov 21, 2026	Knob Creek No. 401	Temple	48	8:00 AM	After
John Peters	Sat, Oct 3, 2026	Norton Moses No. 336	Leander	47	9:00 AM	1:00 PM
	Sat, Oct 10, 2026	Hardeman No. 179	Luling	35-A	9:00 AM	1:00 PM
	Sat, Oct 31, 2026	Triune No. 15	San Antonio	39-C	9:00 AM	1:00 PM
	Sat, Nov 7, 2026	Rambo No. 426	Dripping Springs	52	9:00 AM	1:00 PM
Cody Cockroft	Sat, Oct 3, 2026	Sugar Land No. 1141	Sugar Land	108	9:00 AM	N/A
	Sat, Oct 17, 2026	Blessing No. 411	Blessing	32	8:00 AM	After
	Thu, Oct 22, 2026	Huffman No. 1428	Huffman	30-D	6:30 PM	N/A
	Sat, Oct 24, 2026	Brazos Union No. 129	Bryan	29-A	8:00 AM	After
	Thu, Oct 29, 2026	Buffalo No. 554	Buffalo	24	6:30 PM	N/A
	Sat, Nov 7, 2026	South Houston No. 1295	Houston	30-H	8:00 AM	After
	Sat, Nov 14, 2026	Humble No. 979	Humble	30-D	8:00 AM	After
Steve Pepper	Sat, Oct 3, 2026	Lubbock No. 1392	Lubbock	93-A	9:00 AM	1:00 PM
	Sat, Nov 7, 2026	Canyon City No. 730	Canyon	99	9:00 AM	1:00 PM
Kevin Moss	Sat, Oct 24, 2026	H. A. McFarland No. 1338	Odessa	82	9:00 AM	After
	Sat, Oct 31, 2026	Brownwood No. 279	Brownwood	76	9:00 AM	After
	Sat, Nov 7, 2026	Azle No. 601	Azle	89	9:00 AM	After

For the full schedule and forum details, see <https://grandlodgeoftexas.org/committee-on-work>.

CORNERSTONE LEVELING CEREMONIES 2026

Effective 10/1/2026

For Information Contact:

Kevin T. Binder, State Cornerstone Coordinator

832-489-7778 | kevinbinder30@gmail.com

[Join our Cornerstone Facebook Group](#)

DATE	TIME	LODGE	LOCATION	GRAND LODGE REPRESENTATIVE
Tuesday 10/13/2026	Breakfast or Coffee & Donuts at 8:00am Open Castillian Lodge at 9:00am Open Grand Lodge at 9:15am Cornerstone Ceremony at 10:00am	Castillian #141 1284 W. Dallas Canton, TX 75103	New Athletic Complex for Canton High School	H.N. "Chip" Green, Jr. Grand Sr. Warden
Tuesday 10/13/2026	Lunch or Refreshments at 2:00pm Open Melissa Lodge at 3:00pm Open Grand Lodge at 3:15pm Cornerstone Ceremony at 4:00pm	Melissa #569 1709 Cooper St. Melissa, TX 75454	New Melissa Fire Station #2	John M. Wilkerson Grand Jr. Warden
Thursday 10/15/2026	Lunch or Refreshments at 11:30am Open Evadale Lodge at 12:30pm Open Grand Lodge at 12:45pm Cornerstone Ceremony at 1:30pm	Evadale #1366 43395 Hwy. 96 South Evadale, TX 75951	New Elementary & High School	H.N. "Chip" Green, Jr. Grand Sr. Warden
Tuesday 12/15/2026	Breakfast or Coffee & Donuts at 8:00am Open Anahuac Lodge at 9:00am Open Grand Lodge at 9:15am Cornerstone Ceremony at 10:00am	Anahuac #995 2100 S Main St. Anahuac, TX 77514	New Chambers County Justice Center	Justin B. Duty Deputy 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, PGM – 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.

NAME	EMAIL	RESPONSIBILITIES
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
Jimmie Shannon	jshannon@grandsecretaryoftx.org	Honesty & Integrity Awards; Lamar Medals; Forms and Lodge Supply Orders; Grand Lodge Service Awards; Golden Trowel Awards; Community Builder Awards; Masonic Disciplinary Violations
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 990s Collection
Jeremy Johnson	jjohnson@grandsecretaryoftx.org	Lodge Secretary Training; GS Newsletter

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.